



# TOWN OF SUFFIELD

**MEETING MINUTES  
VETERANS MEMORIAL EXPANSION COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 12, 2022 6:00 p.m.  
IN-PERSON MEETING ONLY**

**Location: Suffield Police Station Conference Room  
911 Mountain Road Suffield, CT**

---

**Meeting Name: Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee**

**By: Rebecca Sypek - Recording Secretary**

**Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting**

---

## **Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee Members Present**

Dave Gauthier, Chairman  
William Moryto, Vice Chairman  
Salvatore Covino  
David Shute  
Kevin Goff  
Chris Nikolis

## **Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee Members Absent**

Tom Elmore  
Fredrick (Fritz) King  
Raymond Hartford

Dave Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked for a roll call identifying members present at the meeting.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Approval of the Minutes**

The below changes were requested by Kevin Goff for the minutes for the Regular Meeting held on November 14, 2022:

1. Under Discuss Dave's meeting with the Board of Selectmen, change sentence from "Kevin Goff moves to approve and Fritz King seconds" to "Kevin Goff moved to approve and Fritz King seconded."
2. Under Discuss Timeline/Schedule, add list of names add to memorial:
  1. Frederick L. Fitch and John B. Toomey were added under the Korean War

2. James A. McCormack and Alan E. Thompson were added under the Persian Gulf.
3. Under Applicant Review Status, change:
  1. Sentence one from “There is two corrections...” to “There are two corrections...”
  2. Sentence two from “The First Selectmen has taken this Committee’s approval paperwork from Phase One and locked it away in order to preserve the Committee’s work for future reference if need be” to “The First Selectman has taken this Committee’s approval paperwork from Phase One and secured it in order to preserve the Committee’s work for future reference.”
4. Under Discuss the extent of additions and changes to Veterans Park, change:
  1. Sentence one from “...what their idea was for the scope...” to “...what their concept is for the scope...”
  2. Sentence two from “...Committee to come up with an idea...” to “...Committee to come up with a proposal...”
  3. Sentence four from “...along with the addition of the expended memorial itself” to “...along with the addition of the expanded memorial itself.”
  4. Sentence six from “Tom also recommended getting a budget projection when the time comes before getting design ideas created so that designs can be created in the appropriate scope” to “Tom also recommended setting a budget before requesting a design so that an appropriate design and scope will be created.”

With those changes noted, William Moryto motioned to approve the minutes and everyone seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Discuss Dave’s meeting with the Board of Selectmen**

Dave Gauthier went to the last Board of Selectmen meeting to continue previous discussions about the memorial expansion. The Board approved the Committee’s proposal to add a memorial to generally honor all Suffield veterans. There was a discussion about the Committee’s idea to honor veterans who moved to Suffield; however, the Board did not approve this because they felt there would be complications with names being added continuously and a high potential for error. The Board requested that the new expansion be of the same high quality as the existing memorial and reiterated that they are pleased with the work this Committee has done thus far.

### **Discuss the extent of additions and changes to Veterans Park**

Dave Gauthier asked the Board of Selectmen what their concept was for the addition to Veterans Park. They pushed back on the Committee and said to come back to the Board with a proposal.

Dave had a meeting with Chris Matejek, Head of Public Works, and Kevin Goff, Chairman of the Permanent Building Commission, as well as a meeting with the Planning and Zoning department to discuss potential future expansion options. Planning and Zoning said that as long as any memorial expansion meets their requirements for distance away from the roads and sidewalks, there shouldn’t be an issue. The Board has not asked the Committee to do anything aside from collect names of veterans to memorialize and work with Chris and the Permanent Building Commission to come up with a concept for the expansion at this time. Dave said that he does want to include upgrading the sidewalks to be ADA compliant in any proposal the Committee brings to the Board. He also has a meeting with Rogers Memorial Studio to discuss what he thinks could potentially be done for an expansion to the memorial.

Dave recommended the Committee use the existing grading map of Veterans Park to reserve a space for the new memorial/s. Kevin created a concept map with ideas of where the new memorial/s could potentially be placed. Dave had the Town Engineer and building official look at a proposed new sidewalk addition for ADA compliance, and they said it looked good.

Dave believes the new memorial should have space for roughly 300 names but will seek Rogers Memorial Studios professional opinion on that as well.

There was discussion about adding names of any veterans who wanted to make a donation on brick pavers to help raise funds for the expansion; however, this brings up the same set of issues of qualification discussed in prior meetings. There are many pavers that need to be replaced regardless, which would be an issue to discuss with public works.

The idea of adding a flag for each service branch was previously discussed; however, the cost of replacing the flags on, minimally, a yearly basis will need to be taken into consideration. Dave did remind the Committee that the Board wanted the memorial expansion to be grand so they may be open to a very nice plaque or multiple plaques and that they may not approve the reoccurring costs to replace flags.

### **Discuss and approve Phase two war/conflict requirements**

Dave Gauthier has looked at multiple potential criteria for approving Veteran names to be added to the new memorial. He found a list of Conflict Zones and dates that the IRS deem as part of combat pay. Although it's very specific, it's also very lengthy. If the memorial listed each Conflict Zone it would be a large departure from the existing memorial and would cause Veterans to continuously become eligible, which the Board of Selectmen is looking to avoid. The prior memorial, and most surrounding town memorials, only focus on major Wars and Conflicts, which would exclude some people who have qualified for combat pay.

William Moryto recommended an eligibility requirement be that the Veteran has an expeditionary medal, which specifies that you served in support of the specific War/Conflict, regardless of your actual deployment location. The memorial would then list the overall War (i.e. Global War On Terror) versus the specific location the veteran was deployed to or the specific operation the veteran served in. This is a potentially good criteria but the Committee will need to do more research to confirm it will give the Committee the information needed to confirm eligibility.

Bill also discussed the GWOT service medal versus the campaign medal and if deployment to the theater of war should be a requirement, since the initial criteria did not require it. Since individuals enlisted to serve, and their location of service was not a choice but at the needs of the military, all service members on active duty during the time of war should be considered for placement on the monument, regardless of where they were stationed.

Dave also brought up the idea to include veterans who became residents of Suffield after first enlisting into active duty and get redeployed from Suffield versus only allowing veterans who are residents of Suffield at the time of their first enlistment into active duty. These are odd cases and would be few and far between but it is worth the Committees consideration. The Committee will think on this idea since this would be a change from the prior memorial's qualification criteria.

### **Other Business and Next Steps**

None

### **Public Comment**

None

A Regular Meeting of the Veterans Memorial Expansion Committee will be held on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6 p.m.

William Moryto motioned to adjourn, Salvatore Covino seconded at 7:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Sypek  
Recording Secretary