

Mayor's Veteran Council

Meeting Minutes (kp)

3 pm Nov. 17, 2025

Members In attendance: John York, Marc Plante, Steve Ordway, Lou Chipola, Doug Cotrau; Mayor Donchess

Members Absent: Don Vincent; Michael Bichrest; Christopher DiTullio

Also in attendance: Kathleen Palmer (Mayor's Staff)

Veterans Day parade debrief: John and Steve brought up issues regarding vehicular entrances to Holman Stadium being problematic. Incoming vehicles were encroaching on lined-up personnel and were potentially hazardous. There were also cars parked in the closest lot that made lining up difficult. They said it was the worst, most difficult they've seen. John wondered if there was an event concurrently happening at the stadium that day, possibly a football game?

John suggests that only the Sargents Avenue entrance be for incoming vehicles, and that the Amherst Street entrance and the Merrimack-to-Artillery Lane entrance be blocked off.

Parade was also a little over \$600 over the budgeted \$5,000, primarily due to paying the reenactors.

Pearl Harbor Day: Observance slated for 9 am Sunday, Dec. 7th. Lew asking if Bicentennial Park will be unfenced and accessible for the traditional throwing of the wreath into the river, usually done at that site. The Main Street bridge should be accessible, regardless. Mayor/staff will ask Liz Hannum to confirm park's status. **[POST-MTG UPDATE: Dir. Hannum asserts that yes, the park will be 100% accessible for this event.]**

Doug asked if an electronic DPW sign could be placed adjacent to that park to advertise the observance in advance. Mayor/staff will inquire with DPW.

Lew presented a list of veteran-related calendar observances, to see if the council felt there might be opportunities to acknowledge them in some way. Don in absentia voted against this, feeling that the council does enough.

It was also brought up that the 2-Hour Parking Only sign needs to be removed at the site of veterans-only parking, as it is causing confusion. Mayor to see if that is a possibility.

American Legion and VPW had nothing to report. DAV report was to note two areas where tattered flags need attention: Vietnam Memorial at Ledge Street (both US flag and POW flag), and Soldiers & Sailors Monument (US flag; there is also no POW flag there).

Lew mentioned that there is still graffiti on all sides of the Fairmount Street bridge over the Veterans Memorial Parkway. The Mayor texted Dir. Fauteux about it.

Meeting adjourned: 3:17 pm

Next meeting: regular time, 2 pm, Monday, January 12, 2026