

MINUTES

LOWELL VETERANS COMMISSION

DATE: Wednesday, 13th of May 2026 at 5:00 PM

Location: Mayors Reception Room City Hall

Meeting:

a. Call to Order: 5:00 PM

b. Pledge of Allegiance

c. Roll Call Attendance

PARADISE, PAUL

GAFFNEY, JAMES III

COTE, RICHARD A.

HARMON, JAMES (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

PEEPLES, MICHAEL

CEROVAC, ROBERT

GAUTHIER, PHILIAS

PIMENTEL, NAYELI (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

PEEPLES, JEAN, SUB COMMITTEE MEMBER

ERIC LAMARCHE, DIRECTOR OF VETERANS' SERVICES (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

MICHAEL PEASLEY, LOWELL MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

ELISABETH PARROTT, LOWELL VET CENTER

Discussion:

1. Guest speakers:

- a. Elisabeth Parrot, Director of the Lowell Vet Center updated the Veterans Commission regarding the services available to Veterans. She provided brochures and business cards.
 - Services provided include Hidden Gems Program, re-adjustment counseling for deployed combat zone Veterans, mortuary services, support to National Guard activated, behavioral health, bereavement for families, individuals, group, couples, and family counseling. Also new client walk-in's, crisis intervention and emergency care coordinated with the Veterans Administration and medical referrals. Also discharge assistance, Veterans education and employment counseling. The Lowell Vet Center works closely with the City of Lowell, UMass Lowell, and many other Lowell based organizations. There are over three hundred Vets Centers throughout the country and the Lowell Vet Center services the Middlesex and Essex Counties, as well as part of New Hampshire's Counties. The Lowell Vet Center also has an office in Danvers MA.
 - The Lowell Vet Center has been a part of the VA since 1979.
 - The Lowell Vet Center participates in many Lowell community service events such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day, October's Truck or Treat event, and many more. Elizabeth Parrot is scheduled to speak at the Veterans Commission's Memorial Day event May 22, 2026.

- b. Michael Peasley of the Lowell Memorial Auditorium updated the Veterans Commission on the services available to Veterans and the Veterans Commission. He spoke about the upcoming Veterans Day event. He has blocked out the dates for the events sponsored by the Veterans Commission.
 - Last year's successful Veterans Day event at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium was reviewed and plans for next Veterans Day event will include expanding the event to include more vendors (much like the many vendors who attended the Trunk or Treat event) such as Veterans Administration and many more.
 - There will be a Veterans ceremony conducted by the Lowell Memorial Auditorium on May 25, 2026, at 9:00 AM at the Veterans Park adjacent to the Top Donut Shop.

2. Chairman Paul Paradise updated the Veterans Commission about:

- The Bridge Club of Lowell's purchase of the convent building in Lowell. The Bridge Club has remodeled the building, and it will house 30 apartments for Veterans in need.
- The Veteran Outreach Program in the Worster Community he attended recently.
- The Veterans homeless population of Lowell is at an astounding number of only ten, which is amazing for the size of the City of Lowell.

3. The meeting place of future Veterans Commission meetings was discussed as the Lowell Telecommunication Center is still under construction following a water leak. Member Jay Gaffney has taken the lead and was asked to acquire the Mayor's Reception Room for our next meeting, June 10, 2026.

4. **Upcoming Events: Memorial Day** at the new Veterans Park Lowell, 150 Douglas Road, Lowell, MA on May 22, 2026, at 10:00 AM.

- a. Troop 25 of Lowell will attend and assist the Gold Star Mother of Lowell to lay a wreath at the Veterans Memorial. A back up, in the event the Gold Star Mother is unable to attend was discussed. Secretary Michael Peebles nominated Veterans Commission member Jay Gaffney to lay the wreath.
- b. Chairman Paul Paradise confirmed that the Veterans Police Department Escort (in uniform) will also assist the Gold Star Mother.
- c. The City of Lowell will provide a wreath, two porta pottys from Throne Depot, seating, and the permits are in place.
- d. The ROTC Commander will attend with the ROTC troop who have a new routine to perform.
- e. Chairman Paul Paradise and Veterans Commission member Phil Gauthier will work on having the State Police Detail Unit and the Horse Mounted Honor Guard showcased during the event.
- f. Additional details of the event include:
 - Veterans Vehicle and Humvee on display.
 - Fire Department attendance.
 - Playing of Taps. A back up will be to use a cell phone to play Taps.
 - Reverend Imogene Stulken of UML to read a list of the recently fallen US Military Soldiers lost in the War with Iran. She will also provide a prayer.
 - Having the ROTC ring a bell after each fallen soldier's name is read.
 - Speaker Secretary of Veterans Services of Massachusetts.
 - Speaker Veterans Commission member Jay Gaffney.
 - Providing American Flags for the children to hold.

- Decorations and bunting. Including a display of the names of the fallen Soldier of the War in Iran.
- Special Note: On street parking only. No parking in the school parking lot. Attendees are suggested to carpool.

5. **The 4th of July Event.** Chairman Paul Paradise reported on the idea of a 4th of July event of having muscle car owners to chauffeur Veterans from the Lowell Vets Center to the City of Lowell's 4th of July Event at LeLacheur Park proceeded by a Police escort. The muscle cars would be displayed on the plaza outside of the park and the Veterans would be honored by having their names and service to our country recognized. Prototype flyers describing the event were given to guest speaker Elizabeth Parrott of the Lowell Vet Center in hopes that she will help the Veterans Commission make this event possible. Additional tasks to be discussed at the next meeting include:

- Invite the Road Runner Club to participate.
- Having an old US Military Jeep on display.
- Permits are necessary.
- Invite Bridge Club members to attend.
- Honoring Veterans with a Pin from the City of Lowell.

6. **Veterans Day Events:**

- a. The plan is to hold the event at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. Chairman Paul Paradise suggested more discussion to take place during the first meeting of the Veterans Commission following the summer break.
- b. Another event is to have the Veterans Commission attend the UMass of Lowell Hockey Night during their Veterans Appreciation Night with a giant thank you card for guest to sign for the Veterans at Walter Reed National Medical Center and possibly solicit donations for Veterans in need by "Passing the Helmet". Chairman Paradise will call the Ethics Commission on how to solicit donations.

7. **New Business:**

- a. Hometown Hero Banners are in and are being installed.
- b. The Ladd Memorial Plaza adjacent to the City Hall has been "Flagged Out" with American Flags and looks amazing.
- c. Google email is soon to release the Veterans Commission GMail account, and the files will be available to access.
- d. The Veterans Commission Website and social media platforms are still under construction.
- e. The ordering of Banners for future events: "*Sponsored by the Veterans Commission of Lowell*" will be put in place soon.
- f. The Veterans Commission participation in providing a float in the City of Lights Parade to honor Veterans will be to have holiday tree decorated in red, white, and blue lights, an eagle at the top of the tree, American Flags, bunting, and US Military logos. A meeting with the City Manager and the Case Office is needed for approval and direction. More details will be discussed after the summer break at the September meeting.
- g. The Open House Lowell VA Clinic May 21, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

- h. Approval of meeting Minutes of Veterans Commission meeting of April was granted.

8. Conclusion:

Move to adjourn.

Adjourned Time: 5:39 PM

- a. Move –Chairman Paul Paradise
- b. 2nd –Secretary, Michael Peebles
- c. Unanimous approval

Regularly scheduled meetings of the Lowell Veterans Commission are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month Lowell TeleMedia Center, 246 Market St, Lowell, MA 01852 starting at 5:00 PM. The following is a list of scheduled meetings: September 10, 2025, October 8, 2025, November 12, 2025, December 10, 2025, January 14, 2026, February 11, 2026, March 11, 2026, April 8, 2026, May 13, 2026, and. June 10, 2026.