

MINUTES

LOWELL VETERANS COMMISSION

DATE: Wednesday, 10th of June 2026 at 5:00 PM

Location: Mayors Reception Room City Hall

Meeting:

a. Call to Order: 5:01 PM

b. Pledge of Allegiance

c. Roll Call Attendance

PARADISE, PAUL

GAFFNEY, JAMES III

COTE, RICHARD A.

HARMON, JAMES (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

PEEPLS, MICHAEL

CEROVAC, ROBERT (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

GAUTHIER, PHILIAS (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

PIMENTEL, NAYELI (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

PEEPLS, JEAN, SUB COMMITTEE MEMBER

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

Discussion:

Chairman Paul Paradise updated the Veterans Commission about The **Memorial Day** event at the new Veterans Park Lowell, 150 Douglas Road, Lowell, MA held on May 22, 2026, at 10:00 AM. The event was very successful, and the Chairman thanked the Veterans Commission members for their organization and participation as well as following list of participants:

1. Gold Star Mother Irene Finneral, who laid a wreath at the flagpole at Veterans Memorial Park to honor all Veterans. Supported by Navy Veteran and Lowell Police Officer Liam Phillips.
2. Lowell Police Honor Guard.
3. Lowell High School JRROTC Color Guard.
4. Lowell High School Air Force JRROTC who performed Military routines.
5. Massachusetts State Police Detail Unit and Horse Mounted Honor Guard.
6. Speaker Reverend Imogene Stulken of UMass Lowell who also read a list of the recently fallen US Military Soldiers lost in the War with Iran.
7. Liam Phillips, Navy Veteran and Lowell Police Officer who rang the ceremonial bell after the name of each fallen US Military Soldiers were announced.
8. Speaker Erik Gitschier, Mayor of Lowell.
9. Speaker Rita Mericier, Lowell City Council.
10. Speaker from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Veterans Services, Deputy Secretary Dr. Gayle-Bennett, retired Brigadier General.

11. Speaker Elisabeth Parrot of the Lowell Vet Center, who also provided vendor table with services provided to Veterans by the Lowell Vet Center.
12. Speaker James Gaffney, Lowell Veterans Commission member and Vietnam Veteran.
13. Emcee and host Eric LeMarche, Director of Veterans' Service of the City of Lowell.
14. Students from the Reilly Elementary School and the Sullivan Middle School who sang "In Flanders Fields."
15. Kristen Jordan of the VFW who sang the National Anthem.
16. City of Lowell DPW for their coordination of the chairs and other essentials for making the event possible.
17. Lowell Telecommunication Center for broadcasting the event.
18. All of the many attendees, local Veterans, City Officials, VFW members, and the support of the American Legion of Chelmsford Massachusetts who provided the ceremonial bell.

Nex year's Memorial Day Event planning will include more community members and organizations such as:

1. Hidden Battles.
2. The Bridge Club of Lowell.
3. National Guard.
4. Parks and Recreation.
5. More vendor tables for other organizations to attend (much like what was exhibited at the Trunk or Treat event at the Lowell Vet Center last fall).

The 4th of July Event. Chairman Paul Paradise reported on the revisions to the 4th of July event of having muscle car owners to chauffeur Veterans during the City of Lowell's 4th of July Event at LeLacheur Park. The muscle cars would be displayed on the Spinners baseball field proceeded by the Spinner's mobile van and followed by a Rolls Royce Limo escorting decorated Vietnam Veteran James Gaffney. The Veterans would be honored by having their names and service to our country recognized. Volunteer drivers and muscle car owners from the Road Runner Car Club have been lined up to escort Veterans. Chairman Paul Paradise will meet with the CASE Office next Friday to get approval for the event. In the event this is not possible, an alternative to hold this event on Veterans Day at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium was approved.

New members of the Veterans Commission were discussed as there is currently an open position. Chairman Paul Paradise report he has 3 individuals lined up who may join the Veterans Commission.

Veterans Day Events were discussed, and the plan is to hold the event at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. More vendor participation (Lowell Vets Center etc.) to help expand the event with more food and activities. Chairman Paul Paradise suggested more discussion to take place during the first meeting of the Veterans Commission following the summer break. An additional 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". Participation by the Veterans Commission in the Golden Gloves Veterans Night was suggested as well.

The Veterans Recognition Program was discussed to help recognize and honor Veterans. Including honor for Veterans of the Quarter and Veteran of the Year. Nominations are being asked for which can include former members of the Veterans Commission. More discussion will take place at the next meeting.

Member James Gaffney suggested the Veterans Commission should adopt a catchphrase and supplied a number of suggestions that will be submitted to the CASE Office and the Law Department of the City of Lowell for approval. A possible challenge coin and moto was discussed as well.

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 future meetings. The following is an update from the LTC:

- a. Adam McCune of the LTC reports by email: *"We are much closer than we were hustling a few weeks ago. My hope is we are open at some point in June"*.
- b. A reply by email back to Adam McCune: *"Hopefully, after the summer break we will be back to the LTC in September. We will keep in touch"*.

New Business:

- b. A suggestion was made to invite the two State Representatives who attended the Memorial Day event to speak at an upcoming Veterans Commission meeting during a meet and greet.
- c. Invite Senator Steve Panagiotakos to speak at the next Veterans Day Ceremony sponsored by the Veterans Commission.
- d. Google email is soon to release the Veterans Commission GMail account, and the files will be available to access.
- e. The Veterans Commission Website and social media platforms (Facebook page) are still under construction.
- f. Order new business cards for the Veterans Commission.
- g. The ordering of Banners for future events: *"Sponsored by the Veterans Commission of Lowell"* will be put in place soon by Eric LeMarch, Director of Veterans Services.
- h. 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.
- i. Donations for Veterans and how the Commission could go about that. Eric LeMarche previously reported about a program called Chapter 60 Community Funds for Veterans that it may be possible to help with donations.

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

b. Conclusion:

Move to adjourn.

Adjourned Time: 5:20 PM

- a. Move –Chairman Paul Paradise
- b. 2nd –Secretary, Michael Peeples
- 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 9, 2026, October 14, 2026, November 11, 2026, December 9, 2026, January 13, 2027, February 10, 2027, March 10, 2027, April 14, 2027, May 12, 2027, and. June 9, 2027.