



**City of Biddeford
Veterans Committee**

November 25, 2024 at 4:30 PM
City Hall Second Floor Council Chambers & Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/98997521139>

Meeting ID: 989 9752 1139

Join Zoom Meeting Online

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

1. Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes
 - 3.a Approval of minutes from October 28th, 2024 Veteran's Committee Meeting.
4. Old Business
 - 4.a Bridge Naming Proposal
 - 4.b Flags on Veterans Graves
 - 4.c Veterans Service Organizations access to schools
5. New Business
 - 5.a Flags in City Parks - Lisa Thompson; Biddeford Recreation Director
 - 5.b Committee Communications Process
 - 5.c Facilitating Veterans Benefits and Veterans Health Administration's connection to city veterans
6. Discussion/Review
7. Next Meeting Discussion
8. Adjourn

Ad hoc Veterans Committee

Minutes for October 28, 2024 Meeting

1. Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.
2. Members present: Roger Beaupre (Chair), Jen Fullmer (Secretary), Eric Gates (Vice Chair), Fred Oliver, Jacob Hammer (Staff Liaison)
 - a. Members absent: Quang Minh Le, Ben Neveux
 - b. A quorum was present.
3. Meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance.
4. Reviewed and approved minutes, with corrections, from the June 24th and September 23rd meetings.
5. Gene Foster, American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 1 Biddeford, presented their concerns, highlighting:
 - a. Transportation to VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Portland.
 - i. It is on the public bus route and veterans are entitled to reimbursement for travel to scheduled appointment, but it is not always convenient. Are there other options?
 - ii. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) historically operated a shuttle service for veterans going to/from the VA Hospital at Togus, but not sure of similar service to CBOC Portland and there is not a post in or near Biddeford.
 - iii. Recommend reaching out to Maine Bureau of Veterans Service to see if they can shed light on transportation options. **(For action: Jen Fullmer)**
 - b. Challenge of placing flags on veterans' graves at the cemeteries in town—St Joseph's (Catholic Diocese), Greenwood (private), St. Mary's (Catholic Diocese) and Woodlawn (public).
 - i. Typically, American Legion Post 26 coordinated flag placement at St Joseph's and AMVETS coordinates support for the other three cemeteries.
 - ii. City historically has been involved in providing a degree of logistics support for all cemeteries, includes ordering and distributing about 32 gross (4,600) flags.
 - iii. Understanding is once flags are placed on a veteran's grave it is up to the family of the veteran to remove the flag.
 - iv. The Veterans Committee might be able to facilitate a discussion between key agencies (e.g., Public Works, owners of each cemetery, veterans groups and perhaps Heart of Biddeford) to iron out responsibilities and process(es).
 - c. Like American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVET does not know who to contact in public schools to share information on youth programs.

- i. The three organizations offer leadership/civics training and scholarship opportunities but have found it challenging to make contact with the right people to share the information and deadlines.
 - ii. Fred Oliver mentioned this to Lisa Vadnais, a School Board member and neighbor, after the last Veterans Committee meeting and will follow up with her. **(For action: Fred Oliver)**
- 6. Bridge naming. Followed up on Carissa Cross' request at the September 23rd meeting to name a bridge after/in honor of veterans.
 - a. Recommendation from the floor to consider naming a bridge after Wallace Nutting, retired Army 4-Star general and former Biddeford mayor.
 - b. Committee positively discussed the concept.
 - c. Will draft a bullet background paper outlining Nutting's biography and contributions for consideration and recommendation to the City Council. **(For action: Eric Gates)**
- 7. General Assistance (GA) for Veterans. Jake Hammer shared a synopsis of how GA serves veterans:
 - a. GA is meant to cure emergencies (i.e., rental assistance, utilities/heat, food) and is meant for all people, not just veterans.
 - b. There is much support available for veterans to include through Preble Street, Volunteers of America and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program.
 - c. At this point in time, there are no unhoused veterans in Biddeford—the response to an unhoused veteran is typically swift and effective between the three previously mentioned agencies.
 - d. Must remember there are people who served in the military and were discharged under less than honorable conditions and are not entitled to all the benefits and programs available to honorably discharged veterans.
- 8. Veterans Affairs service. Eric Gates shared a collection of information on provided by the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA).
 - a. It included (see attachments):
 - i. Snapshots of the number of recipients of VBA benefits in York county (number of recipients and monthly dollar value of benefits) and a drill down into Biddeford specifically (number of recipients and value of annual benefits);
 - ii. VBA outreach initiatives; and,
 - iii. Ways a veteran can reach VBA for assistance.
 - b. This information does not include benefits provided by the Veterans Health Agency (VHA).

- c. Per Eric's discussion with contact at VBA their biggest challenge is making contact with/getting information to veterans. Is there a way the city can facilitate this? Consider inviting VBA and VHA representatives to future committee meeting and actively publicizing in local paper (Courier) and through veteran service organizations in town.
9. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for November 25, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

Bridge Naming Recommendation

In Memory of

GEN Wallace H. Nutting, USA (Ret.)

The Biddeford ad hoc Veterans Committee recommends the City Council approve efforts to name the bridge connecting Biddeford with Saco on Route 111 (Bridge # ___) in honor of a veteran who served our country and communities with great distinction, Wallace Hall Nutting. The following summarizes some of his many accomplishments and contributions:

- Although born in Newton, Massachusetts on June 3, 1928, he spent year formative year in York County, Maine
 - o Attended school in Saco
 - o Served as a member of the Maine National Guard from 1942-1944
- Graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1950 and served 35 years in the U.S Army
 - o Served combat tours in Korea and Vietnam Conflicts
 - Earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his service in Korea for personally directing an attack on an enemy force (battalion strength) that was about to attack friendly forces; his action resulting in the destruction of 350 enemy forces and he personally supervised the rescue of wounded friendly forces
 - Earned Soldier's Medal in Korea for rescuing a wounded Korean woman from a minefield
 - Served two tours in Vietnam in command positions
 - o Completed many other staff, command and training assignments completing his career as Commander in Chief U.S Southern Command (SOUTHCOM; 1979-83) and U.S. Readiness Command (1983-85)
 - Ambler M. Moss, Jr., Ambassador to Panama at the same time Nutting served as CINC, SOUTHCOM, said, "The times were challenging...the security issues too numerous to mention. It is no exaggeration to say that Wally Nutting set the tone and policies for SOUTHCOM's successful management of the Panama Canal treaties. His example inspired a new generation of Panamanians."
 - o Retired as a General Officer (O-10)
- Continued a life of service following retirement from the Military
 - o Served as the Mayor of Biddeford, 2003-2007
 - At that time, the Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce president said, "General Nutting has set the bar to a new, higher level. He has done it by

deeds, not words. He has led by example, and his legacy will be one of outstanding achievement.”

- Served in several Maine organizations to include:
 - Maine Cancer Research and Education Foundation member
 - York County YMCA Board
 - Pine Tree Council of the Boy Scouts of America
 - Founding member and Chairman of University of Southern Maine Senior’s College Board
- When recognized by the West Point Association of Graduates with the 2008 Distinguished Graduate Award, Senator Susan Collins said, “I am equally impressed and grateful for General Nutting’s extraordinary commitment to public service. He has sought out opportunities to serve and lead the people of Maine, and has done so in a way that sets a powerful example of public service.”
- Wallace H. Nutting represented the finest of American’s veterans and the naming of bridge in memory of him serves to remind all citizens of the valuable contributions of America’s service men and women while in the military and beyond