



**City of Biddeford  
Veterans Committee**

January 27, 2025 at 4:30 PM  
City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting Online  
Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799  
Meeting ID:  
Passcode:

1. Roll Call
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes
  - 3.a Review/ Approval of minutes from November 25th, 2024 Veterans Committee meeting.
4. Old Business
  - 4.a Status of Budget Proposal (\$5,000) to cover cost of flags for Veterans' graves
  - 4.b Status of Resolution for Bridge Renaming
5. New Business
  - 5.a Flags in City Parks- Discussion with Recreation Director Lisa Thompson
  - 5.b Update on Facilitating VBA & VHA connection to city veterans for 24 February 2025 meeting
  - 5.c National Vietnam War Veterans Day- 50th Anniversary Remembrance on 29 March 2025
6. Discussion/Review
7. Adjourn

**City of Biddeford**  
**Veterans Committee Agenda**  
November 25, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.  
City Hall Council Chambers

1. Meeting was called to order at 1630 hours (4:30 p.m.).
  - a) Members in attendance: Roger Beaupre (Chair); Eric Gates (vice chair); Quang Mihn Le; Fred Oliver
  - b) Members absent: Jen Fullmer; Ben Neveux
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Minutes from the October 28, 2024, meeting were review and approved.
4. Old Business
  - a) Bridge Naming Proposal:
    - i) Discussed Ms. Carrisa Cross’ proposal to name a bridge in town after veterans. The committee considered the October 28 suggestion to name a bridge after Wallace Nutting—former resident of Saco, former member of the Maine National Guard, a retired U.S. Army 4-star general officer, and former mayor of Biddeford. The committee thought a bridge connecting Biddeford and Saco (Bridge #3423, adjacent to Mechanics Park) might be the best choice.
    - ii) Ms. Cross expressed concern about linking only one veteran’s name to the bridge and selecting a bridge that impacted two communities—Biddeford and Saco.
    - iii) Following discussion and comments from the floor, the committee unanimously voted to recommend naming Bridge #3423 the General Wallace H. Nutting Veterans Memorial Bridge.
    - iv) The Committee will prepare a draft resolution for consideration and approval at the 17 December 2024 City Council meeting and work with Mayor Grohman to coordinate this with the Saco Mayor and City Council. **(For action: Roger Beaupre and Jake Hammer)**
  - b) Flags on Veterans Graves
    - i) Continued discussion from previous meeting regarding memorial flags placed on veterans’ graves in the four cemeteries in Biddeford. Lionel Lamontagne, AMVETS Post 1, pointed out flags were in place on the appropriate graves at Woodlawn Cemetery (city’s sole public cemetery) but not at the other cemeteries.
    - ii) Jim Thibodeau and Gene Foster, AMVETS Post 1, mentioned cemetery support staff removed flags from graves after Memorial and Veterans Day holidays and reused them for future holidays—the employees were cutting off the dirty/damaged part of the flag poles, which, in turn, made the flags short and more prone to touch the

ground and not appear uniform throughout the cemetery/cemeteries. This was done out of budget concerns, as it costs about \$4,200 to buy flags for all the veterans graves in the city.

iii) Roger Beaupre proposed asking the City Council to add a \$5,000 budget line for flags if AMVETS Post 1 will accept responsibility to handle the receipt and distribution of flags to organizations that will place them on graves in the four cemeteries. Made the point that city supplements cost of other “private” events so we could make the case for city paying for flags for private cemeteries in town.

(1) St. Joseph’s cemetery has the most veterans’ graves, accounting for about half of all the flags needed. American Legion Post 26 historically accepts responsibility for placing flags there.

(2) AMVETS Post 1 handles/arranges for flag placement in Woodlawn, St. Mary’s and Greenwood cemeteries.

iv) AMVETS representatives agreed to receive and distribute flags to all other Veterans organizations (American Legion Post 26).

v) The committee unanimously agreed to propose a \$5,000 budget line for flags on graves to the City Council. **(For action: Roger Beaupre)**

vi) The floor brought up Christmas wreaths (part of Wreaths Across America) but since there is no requirement for wreaths on graves the discussion ended.

c) Veterans service organizations access to schools:

i) Fred Oliver spoke with Lisa Vadnais, Biddeford School Board member, who said, as far as the Superintendent of Schools is concerned the local veterans service organizations are authorized access to the schools. But school leaders need to know what these organizations want/need.

ii) The recommendation was made to connect the veterans service organizations with Shelley Kane, the school department’s Community Outreach & Development Director. She will be invited to the Veterans Committee’s January 27, 2025, meeting to learn about how the service organizations desire to support and interact with the students. **(For action: Jake Hammer)**

iii) Committee members unanimously agreed.

## 5. New Business

a) Flags in city parks — Lisa Thompson. Ms. Thompson could not attend. Will reschedule for January 27, 2025, meeting.

b) Committee communications process.

- i) Addressed the importance of keeping all official correspondence on the city E-mail to properly meet Freedom of Information requests.
  - ii) Committee members expressed difficulty accessing the Outlook system when the city adopted two factor authentication and required using Microsoft Outlook specifically to access their committee E-mail (via the Outlook app or Microsoft's website).
  - iii) If committee members are experiencing challenges accessing the "@biddefordmaine.org" E-mail through Microsoft Outlook, they need to contact Jerry Gerlach to find a fix.
- c) Facilitating Veterans Benefits and Veterans Health Administrations (VBA and VHA, respectively) connection to city veterans.
- i) Based on Mayor Grohman's interested in helping VA connect with our city's veterans we will invite representatives from VBA and VHA and Maine Bureau of Veteran Services (MBVS) to attend the committee's February 24, 2025, meeting to share their challenges reaching and informing veterans of potential benefits and exploring ways the city might be able to assist/facilitate. **(For action: Eric Gates)**
6. Discussion/Review: Discussed the wisdom of meeting in December (December 23<sup>rd</sup>). Committee members unanimously agreed to forgo the December meeting and meet next January 27, 2025.
7. The meeting adjourned at 1732 hours (5:32 p.m.).