



City of Melrose – Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 21, 2025

Location: City Hall, Cassidy Conference Room, Melrose, MA

Meeting Commenced: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:00 p.m.

Attendees: Tamara Shovelton, Bob Driscoll, Jim Keen, Jim Muschett, Kathy Childress

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Members checked in on general updates and well-being before proceeding to the agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes from September Meeting

The minutes from the September meeting were reviewed and approved.

3. Project Updates and Discussions

a. Memorial Day Event Planning

The Board revisited discussions from three years prior when the new administration proposed reevaluating the Memorial Day Parade. At that time, the administration expressed willingness to support whichever direction the Veterans Advisory Board chose. The Board reaffirmed its preference not to continue the parade but to instead host a Memorial Day Concert at Memorial Hall featuring a military band, with the Melrose High School Band as the opening act. Target Date: Memorial Day 2026 (if not feasible, Memorial Day 2027).

b. Agenda and Minutes System

The Board reviewed the new agenda and minutes submission process implemented by the City Clerk's Office.

c. Review of Massachusetts Guidelines for Veterans Advisory Boards

The Board reviewed and discussed the Massachusetts Guidelines for Local Veterans Advisory Boards, ensuring understanding of their purpose, responsibilities, and compliance expectations under state law.



d. The Knoll Cleanup and Beautification

Updates were provided on the fall cleanup and flower planting at The Knoll. The Student Memorial Garden continues to be maintained by student volunteers.

e. Gold Star Memorial Irrigation

Concerns were raised regarding whether the irrigation system had been installed or activated. The DPW confirmed that the department could use 'Wet & Forget' for cleaning, but formal approval and documentation are required prior to application.

f. Lighting and Infrastructure Improvements

The Board discussed researching costs for installing solar lighting at The Knoll where needed.

g. Vietnam Reflection Area Bricks

Inventory shows approximately 108 bricks available for Vietnam Veterans and 8 for non-Vietnam Veterans, though some may already be sold. Verification is required.

h. Westin Monument

A brief discussion took place regarding maintenance and updates related to the monument at the tower.

4. Financial Accounts

Director of Veterans Services Tamara Shovelton provided clarification that her office maintains fiscal oversight of veterans' accounts and authorizes all expenditures in alignment with municipal guidelines.

5. Membership

The Board discussed the possibility of adding new members to the Veterans Advisory Board.

6. Welcome Home Sign (Historic District)

Director of Veterans Services Tamara Shovelton reported attending a Historic Commission meeting regarding the Welcome Home Sign located at City Hall. The Historic Commission provided written procedures for installing signs within the Historic District. It was noted that the current sign, installed approximately 2½ years ago, did not follow the required approval process and therefore does not meet historic district compliance standards. The Board expressed strong disappointment about the required removal of the existing sign. While members were unhappy with the decision, they ultimately agreed not to formally oppose it provided that the existing sign could remain temporarily in place while the Veterans Services Department, Veterans Advisory Board, and Historic Commission work through the proper application and approval process for a new, compliant sign.



Director of Veterans Services Tamara Shovelton subsequently met with the Planning Department, which confirmed that the current sign may remain in place while the Veterans Services Department and Veterans Advisory Board proceed through the appropriate steps to obtain the necessary permissions and permits for a new sign installation.

Alternative display options were discussed, including:

- A banner across Main Street (deemed too expensive)
- Using the kiosk (not visible enough)
- Reinstalling the previous banner version (not preferred)

The Board also discussed updating the city website to improve visibility of the Welcome Home sign usage.

7. Veterans Day 2025 Events

The following schedule was confirmed:

- November 8: Food Drive at Shaw's (Setup 7:00 AM; Event 8:00 AM–4:00 PM)
- November 10: Veterans Breakfast and Assembly at Memorial Middle School (8:30 AM–11:00 AM) – Lead: Jim Kelly
- November 11: Veterans Day Ceremony at The Knoll (11:00 AM)

8. New Initiatives

- Stars and Stripes Program: Proposal to reintroduce a program allowing residents to purchase and dedicate flags in honor of individuals, with certificates presented to families once flags are retired.
- Hometown Heroes Banners: Discussion on launching a banner program, potentially starting in Franklin Square.

9. Next Meeting

The next Veterans Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Shovelton

Director of Veterans Services

City of Melrose