



Sullivan County Veterans Committee Meeting Agenda - Final

100 North Street
Monticello, NY 12701

Chair Luis Alvarez
Vice Chair Nicholas Salomone Jr.
Committee Member Amanda Ward
Committee Member Catherine Scott
Committee Member Matt McPhillips

Thursday, April 9, 2026

12:00 PM

Government Center

Call To Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Opening Remarks - Luis Alvarez, Chairman

Reports:

1. Commander's Reports - Veterans Service Agency
 1. Veterans Service Agency - Director's Report

[ID-8295](#)

Discussion:

Public Comment

Resolutions:- None

Adjourn

Sullivan County

Legislative Memorandum

File #: ID-8295

Agenda Date: 4/9/2026

Agenda #: 1.

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

April 9, 2026 - 12:00 PM

Director's Report

- *Local Activities*
 - On four separate dates in February and March, our Clerk Sheldon Dillon helped to distribute up to 21 pallets of food, on each occasion, with Sharon Ferber at the Community Assistance Center to distribute pallets of food. On many occasions after loading pallets, Sheldon will personally deliver the food enabling him to gather information on veterans in need.
 - On January 7th, our office staff began formulating an SOP for State Veterans Home admission. We are working with Public Health Nursing (PHN) for PRI screening and medical documentation. The next meeting with PHN and Office for the Aging will be scheduled this month. VSO Zack Jones will continue to update which facilities offer specialty care for specific client needs.
 - During the month of February our office collected nearly 1,000 Valentine's Day Cards for our annual Valentine's for Vets program. These cards were created by students from local schools, community members and organizations, and distributed to veterans at the following locations.
 - Achieve Rehab & Nursing Facility
 - Arcadia Residence
 - Albany VA
 - Care Center at Sunset Lake
 - Castle Point VA
 - New Swan Lake Adult Home
 - Roscoe Rehab & Nursing Facility
 - On February 4th, the Tri-Valley Central School District adopted the Cold War Veterans Tax Exemption under the alternative provisions set forth within New York Tax Law 458A&B. I would like to thank Chris Knapp, Director of Real Property for his assistance in gathering the information needed to get this finalized.

- The NY Senate Bill S1183 100% disabled property tax exemption key changes from latest amendments:
 - Mandatory statewide adoption (this language removed the local option)
 - Exemption stacking (in addition to alternative exemptions)
 - New effective date (applies on or after October 1, 2026)
 - Eligibility is not final. Further amendments are needed to clarify the 100% permanent and total disability definition originally intended to benefit this small number of veterans.
- On February 5th, I attended the Sullivan County Veterans Coalition meeting. Some of the topics that were discussed:
 - Updating their application for financial assistance to a digital format to speed up the process
 - Leadership changes within the American Legion County structure
 - Future events and programs
- On February 11th and March 11th, I attended the Vet Fest planning meetings. It has been decided that the Sullivan County Veterans Festival and Stand Down will take place on Saturday, August 8, 2026 and it will be located at the Loch Sheldrake Fireman's Park.
- On December February 15th, I completed Naloxone training given at the Liberty Elks Lodge, by Sullivan County Public Health Nursing.
- In February and March, I attended the NYS Dwyer Coalition meetings. Topics covered include:
 - Visibility and statewide alignment
 - Conference updates (information on Suicide Intervention Conference and Veterans' Mental Health Training Initiative)
 - Program support and collaboration (This conversation reinforced that collaboration across counties remains one of the Coalition's strongest assets when supporting new programs)
 - Legislative updates - NYS Tax Law changes
 - Veteran services and outreach (Counties shared different approaches to outreach, including partnerships with VSAs, community events and peer mentorship models) These efforts continue to demonstrate that a strong local relationship is key to connecting veterans to services and maintaining program impact.
- On March 10th, 11th and 25th, I attended and completed the supervisor training provided by Authentic Communication Matters, Inc.
- On March 17th, I attended the Veteran Pillar of Sullivan County Drug Task Force meeting. New programs for suicide prevention and substance abuse treatment were discussed along with the *My Reasons for Living Lockbox* program. New locations with high veteran

populations were identified to distribute new information.

- On March 30th, I attended the Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties' *National Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day* memorial ceremony.
- Our office has continued to conduct wellness checks for elderly veterans and those suffering from food insecurity within the community. Working closely with our Divisional and County partners we have located and assisted many veterans that have never contacted our office or enrolled with VA healthcare. A higher number of our elderly clients are struggling with the cost of groceries and heating their homes.
- I have continued to distribute food every Sunday thru Liberty PBA and many local pantries.

▪ *The Good News*

- The hiring freeze for VA Health Care workers was lifted in January and they will start hiring new employees.
- The VA's plan to reduce benefits due to medication treating disabilities has been reversed.
- The VA is to invest an all-time high of nearly \$5 Billion to improve healthcare infrastructure. Majority of funding used to improve existing facilities.
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VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

April 9, 2026 - 12:00 PM

1. Veterans referred to Sullivan County Transportation for VA Medical Appointments:

	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Castle Point</u>	<u>Local</u>
January	3	29	27
February	2	27	25

2. Veterans/Dependents buried in Sullivan County Veterans Cemetery through April 1, 2026:

Veterans Buried Alone 1,184

Dependents 148

Veterans/Spouses 706

Total Burials in Veterans Cemetery - 2,038 (+9 since Dec. 2025)

3. Contacts:

January	192
February	253

4. Applications:

January	12
February	27

5. Homeless Veterans:

January	0
February	0

6. New Veterans

January	6
February	1

7. Phone Calls

January	615
February	722