



Sullivan County
Veterans Committee
Meeting Agenda - Final

100 North Street
Monticello, NY 12701

Chairman Luis Alvarez
Vice Chairman Nicholas Salomone Jr.
Committee Member Terry Blosser-Bernardo
Committee Member Catherine Scott
Committee Member Matt McPhillips

Thursday, August 7, 2025

12:00 PM

Government Center

- 1. Call To Order and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Opening Remarks - Luis Alvarez, Chairman**
- 4. Commander's Reports - Veterans Service Organizations**
- 5. Directors Report:**
 - Veterans Service Agency - Director's Report
- 6. Discussion:**
- 7. Public Comment**

[ID-7643](#)

Resolutions:

- 1. Urge the NYS Legislature to pass Assembly Bill 2025-A,74 and Senate Bill S1183**

[ID-7616](#)

Adjourn

Sullivan County

Legislative Memorandum

File #: ID-7643

Agenda Date: 8/7/2025

Agenda #:

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

August 7, 2025 - 12:00 PM

Director's Report

■ *Local Activities*

- Our Administrative Assistant April Barschow has achieved accreditation by The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers and cross accreditation with DAV, to provide a wider range of services to our local veterans and surviving spouses. April has already assisted with claims submissions and will receive her full access PIV card soon.
- On six separate dates in June and July, our Clerk Sheldon Dillon assisted Sharon Ferber at the Community Assistance Center to distribute pallets of food.
- On May 20th, I attended the drug pillar meeting along with ATI, Vet 2 Vet staff, VA Mental Health, and Camille O'Brien, Department of Community Services Drug Task Force Coordinator. Our discussion revealed that Veterans involved with the treatment court would also benefit from the resource guide our office created.
- On July 10th, Camille and Peer Court Navigator Emma Carlson visited our office to further discuss VA programs and treatment options.
- On Tuesday June 17th, I met with Congressman Josh Riley and the Veterans' Advisory Board in Binghamton. Over 18 directors and advocates from Counties in the Hudson Valley participated. Topics discussed included cancelled VA programs, to increased wait times for medical appointments. Community Care billing was also identified as needing reform. Congressman Riley will address these concerns in a new Bill.
- Our office has continued to conducted 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 vets 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.
- Our annual required VSO training provided by National Association of County Veteran Service Officers was completed July 14th-18th and was attended virtually. Some of the topics covered were:
 - Proposal to Reduce

- National Cemetery Administration
 - Asbestos Exposure
 - Combat Related Special Compensation
 - VA Palliative Care and Pension
-
- *VA & PACT Act Updates*
 - Since President Trump took office, VA has reduced the inventory of backlogged disability claims by more than 74,000. Veterans are also getting their claims processed more quickly - the average wait time for a Veteran's claim to be processed fell from 141.5 days on Jan. 20, 2025, to 131.8 days on June 21, 2025.
 - The VA announced it processed over 2 million disability benefits claims in FY25, achieving this milestone faster than ever before. They completed 2 million claims by June, a month ahead of schedule compared to FY24.
 - *The Good News*
 - As the 118th Congress ended, the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) celebrated a series of significant legislative victories that will impact our members and the veterans we serve. The passing of the CVSO Act and Veterans Benefits Improvement Act increased communication with veterans' representatives as well as increased federal funding to County VSA's. NACVSO also advocated for the passing of The Keeping Military Families Together act. This law extends the eligibility for veteran spouses' to be interred with their loved ones in National Cemeteries. These accomplishments represent the culmination of years of hard work, partnership, and a continued commitment to improving services for our nation's veterans.
 - The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) signed a historic memorandum of understanding (MOU) on July 15th, during NACVSO's annual conference at the Louisville Convention Center. The agreement formalizes a collaborative framework that will allow cross-accredited service officers to represent claimants under the VFW's accreditation, enhancing responsiveness, increasing coverage, and streamlining the delivery of VA benefits assistance across all levels of government.
 - VA has now implemented a mobile exam unit to accommodate housebound veterans requiring a compensation or pension exam. The request for the mobile unit to come to the veterans' home should be submitted with the claim. A letter from the veterans' care provider stating they are homebound is helpful. QTC and LHI both have mobile units.
 - We have continued strong advocacy for surviving spouses and veterans within our county. VSO's Zack Jones and Joseph Putnam have achieved a high success rate on claims and appeals awarding the highest possible ratings and retroactive payments for our veterans and surviving spouses.

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT**August 7, 2025 - 12:00 PM****1. Veterans referred to Sullivan County Transportation for VA Medical Appointments:**

	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Castle Point</u>	<u>Local</u>
May	4	39	22
June	4	44	29

2. Veterans/Dependents buried in Sullivan County Veterans Cemetery through July 25, 2025:

Veterans Buried Alone 1,174

Dependents 146

Veterans/Spouses 686

Total Burials in Veterans Cemetery - 2,006 (+30 since Dec. 2024)**3. Contacts:**

May	206
June	205

4. Applications:

May	23
June	22

5. Homeless Veterans:

May	2
June	2

6. New Veterans

May	8
June	4

7. Phone Calls

May	686
June	748

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File #: ID-7616

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Agenda #: 1.

Narrative of Resolution:

Urge the NYS Legislature to pass Assembly Bill 2025-A,74 and Senate Bill S1183

If Resolution requires expenditure of County Funds, provide the following information:

Amount to be authorized by Resolution: \$0

Are funds already budgeted? Choose an item.

If 'Yes,' specify appropriation code(s): Click or tap here to enter text.

If 'No,' specify proposed source of funds: Click or tap here to enter text.

Specify Compliance with Procurement Procedures:

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY TERRY BERNARDO, DISTRICT 9 LEGISLATOR URGING THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 2025-A.74 AND SENATE BILL S1183 TO AMEND THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHING A REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS WHO HAVE A ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY

WHEREAS, the NYS Assembly and NYS Senate have bills before them regarding to amend the Real Property Tax Law in relation to establishing a real property tax exemption for veterans who have a one hundred percent services connected disability, and

WHEREAS, a new subdivision 11 would read as follows:

11. A COUNTY, CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE OR SCHOOL DISTRICT MAY ADOPT A LOCAL LAW OR RESOLUTION TO INCLUDE THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF ANY SERIOUSLY DISABLED VETERAN WHO;

(A) (I) WAS DISCHARGED OR RELEASED THEREFROM UNDER HONORABLE CONDITIONS;

(II) HAS A QUALIFYING CONDITION, AS DEFINED IN SECTION ONE OF THE VETERANS' SERVICES LAW, AND HAS RECEIVED A DISCHARGE OTHER THAN BAD CONDUCT OR DISHONORABLE FROM SUCH SERVICE; OR

(III) IS A DISCHARGED LGBT VETERAN, AS DEFINED IN SECTION ONE OF THE VETERANS' SERVICES LAW, AND HAS RECEIVED A DISCHARGE OTHER THAN BAD CONDUCT OR DISHONORABLE FROM SUCH SERVICE; AND

(B) (I) IS CONSIDERED TO BE PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED AS A RESULT OF MILITARY SERVICE;

(II) IS RATED ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DISABLED BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS;

(III) HAS BEEN RATED BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AS INDIVIDUALLY UNEMPLOYABLE; AND

(IV) WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, OR HAS RECEIVED PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND HAS APPLIED SUCH ASSISTANCE TOWARD THE ACQUISITION OR MODIFICATION OF A SUITABLE HOUSING UNIT WITH SPECIAL FEATURES OR MOVABLE FACILITIES MADE NECESSARY BY THE NATURE OF THE VETERANS' DISABILITY AND THE NECESSARY LAW THEREFOR SHALL BE FULLY EXEMPT FROM TAXATION AND SPECIAL DISTRICT CHARGES, ASSESSMENTS AND SPECIAL AD VALOREM LEVIES, PROVIDED THAT SUCH VETERAN MEETS ALL OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County

Legislature urges the New York State Legislature to pass Assembly Bill 2025-A.74 and Senate Bill S1183 immediately, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk to the Legislature is hereby directed to send certified copies of this resolution to Assemblywoman Paula Kay, Assemblyman Brian Maher and Senator Peter Oberacker urging them to pass these two bills.