



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, July 9, 2026

12:00 PM

Government Center

1. Call To Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Opening Remarks - Luis Alvarez, Chairman

4. Reports:

5. Commander's Reports - Veterans Service Organizations

6. Veterans Service Agency - Director's Report

[ID-8483](#)

7. Discussion:

8. Public Comment

9. Resolutions:

TO AMEND THE RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE SULLIVAN
COUNTY VETERAN'S CEMETERY ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO.
475-01.

[ID-8497](#)

10. Adjourn

Sullivan County

Legislative Memorandum

File #: ID-8483

Agenda Date: 7/9/2026

Agenda #: 6.

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

July 9, 2026 - 12:00 PM

Director's Report

- *Local Activities*
 - On five separate dates in April and May, 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 April 9th and May 15th, I attended NY State Department of Veterans Services training that covered the following topics:
 - Adjudication errors
 - Inadequate exams
 - TDIU
 - Lay Evidence
 - Mental Health (VA has been cited for changing PTSD diagnosis to unspecified trauma to reduce the rating percentage)
 - On April 13th & 27th and May 4th, I attended the ATI Coffee and Camaraderie sessions with 5 local veterans to discuss VA and county programs and services available.
 - On April 17th, I attended the Sullivan County Drug Task Force meeting. This meeting was well attended by VA and County representatives to discuss effectiveness of existing programs and implementation of new programs and services coming to the Hudson Valley.
 - On May 11th, I attended the "Personalities in the Workplace" training at Resorts World. The training was well attended and very effective.
 - 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.
 - On May 14th, I met with State Veterans Home representatives from Montrose, Stony Brook, and St Albans to further review eligibility criteria.
 - On May 16th, Sheldon Dillon attended the 12th Annual Hudson Valley Renegades

Veterans Appreciation Day baseball game, making contact with veterans and advocates from the Hudson Valley region.

- This year's Memorial Day Service was conducted at the Sullivan County Veterans' Cemetery and was very well attended by veterans, families, and community members. We were honored to welcome Retired Command Sergeant Major Auxier as our Guest of Honor. His remarks were well received and contributed significantly to the success of the ceremony.

Looking ahead to next year, I would recommend that all Veterans Service Agency ceremonial events be conducted at the Government Center. This location offers several advantages, including ADA accessibility, public restroom facilities, protection from inclement weather, and a more efficient setup and breakdown process for Department of Public Works personnel.

- In April and May, I attended the Sullivan County Veterans Coalition meetings. Some of the topics that were discussed:
 - The Monster Classic Run/Walk (Howie will provide further details)
 - The Sullivan County Veterans Festival and Stand Down
 - Will be on August 8, 2026 at the Loch Sheldrake Fireman's Park from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.
 - I have requested representatives from the Vet Center and Castle Point VA Medical Center to table at the event, to distribute up to date information on VA Programs to include housing assistance.
- In April and May, I attended the NYS Dwyer Coalition meetings. Topics covered include:
 - Preventing Veteran Homelessness : Communities can help prevent homelessness by identifying challenges early and connecting Veterans to resources before a housing crisis occurs. Effective prevention strategies include:
 - Housing assistance and rental support
 - Employment and workforce development programs
 - Benefits counseling and financial assistance
 - Access to healthcare and supportive services
 - Community-based outreach efforts
 - Peer support and social connection
 - Family and caregiver support
 - Collaboration among government agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations
 - Early intervention remains one of the most effective tools for preventing Veteran homelessness.
- Networking within the Division of Community Resources has prevented 3 county

veterans and their families from becoming homeless in the past 2 months.

- On June 14th, The Veterans Service Agency also successfully conducted the annual Flag Day Ceremony in partnership with the Liberty Elks Lodge BPOE. Guest Speaker Doug Sandberg, a United States Air Force veteran, delivered an outstanding presentation. Jeff Radio provided event coverage and support, helping to make the ceremony a successful community event.

- On June 17th, I met with Legislator Cat Scott to discuss burial eligibility for the County Veterans' Cemetery.

The current eligibility criteria require the veteran to have entered the military from Sullivan County or be a current resident at time of death. However, there is no provisions for veterans who have maintained homes or property that they have continuously paid taxes on while living outside the County. Hopefully a Resolution or amendment can be explored.

- The NY Senate Bill S1183 100% disabled property tax exemption key changes from latest amendments:
 - Mandatory statewide adoption (this language removed)
 - Exemption stacking (in addition to alternative exemptions)
 - New effective date (applies on or after October 1, 2026)

Currently working with Chris Knapp of Real Property to gain accurate data on eligible county veterans.

- 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 through Liberty PBA and many local pantries.

▪ *The Good News*

- The Veterans Service Agency recently assisted a homeless veteran who relocated to Sullivan County from Kingston, New York. Working collaboratively with community partners, resources were coordinated to assist the veteran with housing and essential household needs.

Upon arrival at our office the veteran communicated he relocated to Ferndale as he found an affordable rental. He expressed he had no food, furniture or appliances to prepare meals. He was also in need of financial assistance as recent car trouble cost him most of his savings and has fallen behind on electric bills and car insurance.

My staff immediately contacted Sharon Ferber of the Community Assistance Center and sent

our Clerk Sheldon to the office with two bags of food. I contacted AMVETS Vice Commander Gary Hill to acquire household items the veteran needed. I advised the vet to contact the Coalition to apply for financial assistance.

Within three hours I delivered more food, microwave oven, utensils a bed and dresser to the veteran.

This rapid and effective response was made possible by cooperation within the Division of Community Resources and local veteran's organizations.

- The NY State Dwyer listing of County allocations and veteran population is a graphic example of how hard work and great training produce results for Sullivan County veterans: Suffolk County has a veteran's population of 48,220. Sullivan county has a veteran population of 3,484 yet Sullivan County brings in the same \$192,400.00 in monthly benefits for our vet's and surviving spouses.
- Sullivan County has maintained one of the highest rates of allocated funding statewide for their veterans.
- Our office takes great pride in obtaining the maximum benefit allowable by law, and that's what we do.
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VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

July 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>
March	3	35	31
April	1	41	31

2. Veterans/Dependents buried in Sullivan County Veterans Cemetery through June 30, 2026:

Veterans Buried Alone 1,186

Dependents 148

Veterans/Spouses 716

Total Burials in Veterans Cemetery - 2,038**(+21 since Dec. 2025)****3. Contacts:**

March	308
April	259

4. Applications:

March	27
April	24

5. Homeless Veterans:

March	2
April	1

6. New Veterans

March	5
April	4

7. Phone Calls

March	646
April	795

Sullivan County

Legislative Memorandum

File #: ID-8497

Agenda Date: 7/9/2026

Agenda #:

Narrative of Resolution:

TO AMEND THE RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE SULLIVAN COUNTY VETERAN'S CEMETERY ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO. 475-01

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

Amount to be authorized by Resolution: Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

RESOLUTION NO. INTRODUCED BY VETERAN'S COMMITTEE TO AMEND THE RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE SULLIVAN COUNTY VETERAN'S CEMETERY ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO. 475-01

WHEREAS, Resolutions Nos. 82 and 169 of 1983 created the Sullivan County Veteran's Cemetery, and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 22 of 1984 created the Rules for Operation of the Sullivan County Cemetery, and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 475-01 amended the Rules for Operation of the Sullivan County Cemetery, and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Public Works is directed to adopt rules and regulations subject to approval of the Sullivan County Legislature, and

WHEREAS, this Committee recommends the adoption of the following amended rules,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby adopts the following rules:

1. Definitions. Except as otherwise provided, the following terms shall mean:

- 101. Commissioner - Commissioner of Public Works
- 102. Director - Director of Veteran's Services Agency
- 103. County - County of Sullivan

104. Cemetery - Sullivan County Veteran's Cemetery

105. Eligible Family Members- One spouse, dependent child(ren), dependent parent(s)

2. Assignment of Space.

201. Gravesites shall be assigned by the Director at the time of burial.

202. One gravesite shall be assigned to each deceased eligible veteran and the eligible family members of such veteran to a maximum of three (3) persons per gravesite or on an adjoining parcel.

3. Burial of Spouse and Dependent Children.

301. The spouse or dependent child(ren) who shall predecease an eligible member of the armed forces of the United States or veteran, shall be buried in the cemetery if the surviving veteran shall certify that he or she requests that eligible family member be buried in the cemetery.

302. The veteran must have been a resident of Sullivan County or a property owner at the time of his or her entry into the military or at the time of death to be eligible.

4. Records.

401. The Director shall maintain a record of the assignment of gravesite, and the name, service, date of death, date of interment of each person buried in the cemetery - the name of the eligible family member(s) or veteran to whom such gravesite is assigned. A duplicate record shall be maintained by the Commissioner.

5. Flowers and Flags.

501. Cut flowers may be placed on a gravesite at any time; artificial flowers may be placed on a gravesite only between October 10 to April 15; temporary potted flower containers are authorized. Width cannot exceed that of gravesite. No planting allowed.

502. All gravesites shall be decorated by the Commissioner or designee within seven (7) days prior to Memorial Day of each year, with small United States flags in the form commonly used by veteran's organizations for such purpose. An avenue of flags will be placed by the Commissioner or designee along the walkway for seven (7) days before Memorial Day until seven (7) days after Flag Day; also Veteran's Day.

503. All floral items shall be removed by the Commissioner when faded or unsightly. All gravesite flags shall be removed within seven (7) days after Memorial Day.

6. Burial.

601. Except as may be otherwise provided by any law or rule or the religious beliefs of the deceased or eligible family member, a body shall be buried in at least a 20- gauge metal casket or line vault of suitable size or appropriate container for cremated remains. Cremated remains buried above a casket in-line shall be within one (1') foot of the bottom of the existing

gravemaker.

7. Monuments and Markers.

701. Authorized gravesite markers shall be placed at ground level in a foundation of sand. Family members must provide all grave markers for dependents, upon approval of Director.

8. Other requirements.

801. Only County approved grave diggers are authorized to open and close the cemetery gravesites for initial burials. All other openings and/or closings will be accomplished under the direct supervision of the Commissioner or his designee.

802. The Commissioner and the Director may make appropriate exceptions to the provisions herein as necessary in their discretion.