



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, December 4, 2025

12:00 PM

Government Center

1. Call To Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Opening Remarks - Luis Alvarez, Chairman

4. Reports:

Veterans Service Agency - Director's Report

[ID-7945](#)

5. Commanders Reports - Veterans Service Organizations

6. Public Comment

7. Resolutions: None

8. Adjourn

Sullivan County

Legislative Memorandum

File #: ID-7945

Agenda Date: 12/4/2025

Agenda #:

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

December 4, 2025 - 12:00 PM

Director's Report

- *Local Activities*
 - On four separate dates in October and November, 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 October 7th and November 12th, our monthly VSO training provided by NYS DVS was completed and was attended virtually. Some of the topics covered included:
 - Bilateral factors
 - Pyramiding
 - Medal of Honor Pensions
 - Legislative & Executive Actions and Proposals
 - On October 17th, I attended the Drug Task Force Zoom with ATI and VA mental Health staff. Projects and programs for 2026 were discussed.
 - On October 27th, I attended a meeting with Gavin Walters and Deborah Worden of ATI. Gavin is the Executive Director for The Dwyer Coalition Peer Support Project. New programs focused on suicide prevention and veteran's engagement were discussed.
 - On October 30th, our office met with Sheila Lashinsky and Diane Garritt of the Monticello and Woodridge Kiwanis clubs. ARC staff member Ken McManus along with Aktion Club members, James Sanitelli and Gary Walling delivered gifts and cards to our agency to be distributed to local veterans for Veterans Day thru ATI and the VSA.
 - On November 3rd, Sheldon Dillon attended and participated in the Tri-Valley School's DAV Field of Flags Ceremony.
 - On November 6th, Sheldon Dillon attended the Tri-Valley School Veterans Day Ceremony.
 - On November 7th, Sheldon Dillon participated in the Monticello High School's Veterans

Day Ceremony, where he gave a speech to the students and was able to answer their questions afterwards.

- On November 7th, I met with The Daughters of The American Revolution. During the meeting we discussed Pension and long-term care options available thru VHA and NYS. DAR provided our office with holiday gifts for veterans in need.
- On November 10th, Sheldon attended the Liberty Elementary School's Veterans Day Ceremony.
- On November 10th, I attended the coffee and comradery program at ATI. During the meeting I covered Presumptive service connection under the PACT Act.
- On November 11th, we held our Veterans' Day Ceremony in the lobby of the GC. I would like to thank all that attended. All future Ceremonies will be held in the Legislative Hearing Room.
- On November 13th & 14th, our office staff attended advanced appeals training provided by Eagle law and NACVSO. The training was very informative and provided up to date case law and procedures for well-grounded arguments.
- 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.
- I have continued to distribute food every Sunday thru Liberty PBA and many local pantries.

■ *The Good News*

- We have seen an increase in VHA community care referrals for specialty care.
- A landmark procedural victory occurred at the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC), removing a cumbersome and too-common administrative delay for many Veterans seeking Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU). (Total Disability due to Individual Unemployability).

Since 2001, the Court precedent of *Bowling v. Principi* forced the Board of Veterans' Appeals to send extraschedular TDIU cases - cases where the Veteran does not meet the standard rating percentage minimums for TDIU eligibility but whose service-connected disabilities still prevent them from securing and maintaining substantial gainful employment - to VA's Director of Compensation for review before the Board could decide the case. This process led to many lengthy and unnecessary delays. Sometimes, it would take years for the Director of Compensation to provide their advisory opinion.

This made the already-long Board of Veterans' Appeals process even longer for Veterans seeking justice in these cases. Furthermore, under the Appeals Modernization Act, the Director of Compensation's opinions would then force the Veteran to file a new notice of

disagreement, sending the case to the bottom of the appellate pile again.

Now, thanks to the Court's decision in Witkowski v. Collins, this needless process is gone.

VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY REPORT

December 4, 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>
September	0	53	37
October	4	51	30

2. Veterans/Dependents buried in Sullivan County Veterans Cemetery through Nov. 26, 2025:

Veterans Buried Alone 1,183

Dependents 146

Veterans/Spouses 700

Total Burials in Veterans Cemetery - 2,029 (+53 since Dec. 2024)

3. Contacts:

September	280
October	270

4. Applications:

September	23
October	17

5. Homeless Veterans:

September	0
October	0

6. New Veterans

September	2
October	10

7. Phone Calls

September 817

October 745