

Final Minutes

Discussion 2026 Budget for Departments Veterans Services

Thursday February 19, 2025

Attended by:

Phil Rooney – Chairperson of Sub Committee

Hossan Behery – Member of Sub Committee

Julian Munnich – Member of Sub Committee

Paul Carew – Veterans Services Director

Kurt McDowell – Golf Course Manager

Travis Farley – Executive Director – Natick Community Organic Farm

Lauren Mercer – Director of Parks and Recreation

Angela Snell – Director of Community Services

Gloria Huang – Finance Administration

Tien Nguyen – Finance Administration

Todd Gillenwater – Chair Natick Finance Committee

John Townsend – Deputy Town Administrator/Finance Director

Absent:

Kat Monahan – Member of Sub Committee

Patricia Demeo – Member of Sub Committee

The meeting was called to order at 7:00. Motion to open meeting made by Todd Gillenwater and seconded by Hossan Behery Community Services – consisting of six department budgets were discussed at this meeting. This was the first department discussed at this meeting. Separate Meeting Minutes have been issued for each discussion.

The discussions in these minutes are a summary of our meeting. The discussions were influenced by the written responses to questions previously submitted prior to the meeting by subcommittee members. We have attached the written responses from department leadership at the end of meeting minutes.

Our discussion with Paul began at 7:07.

Paul informed us the department has been busy delivering services. Many volunteers assist in the delivery of services. The department tends to veteran graves at cemeteries in Natick. Assist in veterans obtaining services such as dental, medical, counseling, etc.

The committee's discussion with Paul concluded at 7:23.

The General Government Subcommittee voted 3-0 to recommend favorable action on the 2026 Budget with no override. The guidance from the Finance Committee Chair was to discuss and vote on the 2026 Budget information with no Override.

Veterans Services Responses for 2025 Budget Significant Items and 2026 Budget Specific Questions of Finance Committee General Government Sub Committee

2026 Budgets General Questions

The 2026 Budgets (with and without override) as presented by the Town Administration; did you actively participate in the preparation? Do you agree with the data?

Paul reviewed the veteran's budget with the Community Services Director

Can you represent to the public that your ability to safely perform the department duties and service all departments with adequate risk protection can be done without an override? If not, please give detailed reasons. Yes

Are there any open or pending department legal issues? None

Veteran Services 2025B Significant Items

You informed us that during 2024 you would be organizing and formalizing information concerning the services his office provides. This was to ensure when you decide to retire there is adequate documentation for your successor. Have you completed this task?

No, this is an ongoing process, the responsibilities and role of a Veterans' Services Officer are governed by the state and federal mandates that outline these responsibilities, processes and procedures.

I am working with the Director of Community Services to document Natick specific processes for duties such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Veteran Square dedications, training opportunities, etc.

2026 Specific Budget Questions Veteran Services

Why are Telephone costs down 20%?

Why are Postage costs down 17%?

Why are Care of Graves costs down 38%?

Responses from Department - Paul Carew Veterans Agent

Telephone costs are down, a lot of the communication is email.

Postage costs are down, most of my VA submissions are via direct access, scan and send to the va. Also used to respond to veteran clients.

New vendor for flags, DOC, has saved a lot of money. I also managed to get ahead in items, flag holders for our graves.