

Veterans Advisory Committee

Meeting Agenda

June 23, 2025

In Attendance	Committee Member	In Attendance	Committee Member
x	William Dauphinee USMC		Rich Marino USMC
x	Robert Dell, USCG	x	Joe Meehan, USN
	Barry Forgeng, USMC	x	Chet Ruminski, USN
x	Barry Kenyon, USN		Laureen Sendel-Grant, USA
x	Carter LeBrocq, USA	x	Stacy Spizziri, USA
x	Michael Lewis , USAF	x	Joyce Snyder, BOS Liaison

Summary

The June 23, 2025, Veterans Committee meeting began with a poignant remembrance of USCG Captain Gordon Bell. Following the approval of prior minutes, the committee discussed updates on several key initiatives including Veterans Park development, Tennis-Lukens Cemetery restoration, American 250th anniversary events, budget considerations, and community outreach. A significant breakthrough was reported regarding land access and funding commitments for Veterans Park from developer Mr. Nicoletti. The committee also delved into event planning for 2026 and 2027, limitations on fundraising, and recent membership changes.

Topics & Takeaways

1. Remembrance of Captain Gordon Bell

- **Takeaway:** A moving account of Gordon Bell's final days and details of his military funeral concluded with a moment of silence. Gordon was a committee member since 2018.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

- **Takeaway:** The motion to approve the prior meeting minutes passed unanimously.

3. Veterans Day 2025 Planning

- **Takeaway:** The event is scheduled for November 11 at 11 a.m. Discussions included the flag ceremony. A reminder was issued for the flag to be brought to the next meeting.

4. Tennis-Lukens Cemetery Grant Application & Restoration

- **Takeaway:** The American 250 grant application for \$10,000 (for a cemetery sign, restoration, and landscaping) was not approved due to an overwhelming number of statewide requests and limited funds (\$500,000 spread across many counties).
- **Takeaway:** The committee remains hopeful, as another, more specific grant opportunity will open in November 2025, with announcements expected in Spring 2026. Despite budget tightness, the Township still considers this restoration a priority.
- **Takeaway:** Discussion clarified that municipal governments cannot establish crowdfunding pages (e.g., GoFundMe), nor can individuals donate directly to a government committee. However,

independent "friends of" groups can raise funds, which must be managed separately from the Township. The previous proposal from Lifelines Preservation Services for a \$6,000 crowdfunding initiative for gravestone cleaning was noted.

5. Land Access & Mr. Nicoletti's Update (Veterans Park)

- **Takeaway:** After persistent follow-up, Mr. Nicoletti has agreed in writing to convey the necessary land parcel to provide road access to Veterans Park. This is a significant step forward.
- **Takeaway:** Mr. Nicoletti has also agreed to cover the full cost of engineering services for the park, estimated to be around \$200,000. This is seen as a major breakthrough that should enable the project to move forward with visible progress by 2026.
- **Takeaway:** The Township is committed to the project and will hold Mr. Nicoletti accountable to his written commitments before any further development on his part.

6. American 250th Celebration Planning (2026)

- **Takeaway:** A tentative date of July 4, 2026, at Fischer Park was discussed.
- **Takeaway:** Planned activities include wrapping trees in red, white, and blue, music, food trucks, and historical games for children.
- **Takeaway:** There is a strong desire for Revolutionary War-era elements, including a cannon (the Township's existing cannon is unsafe to use, and options for a replica or working cannon are being explored) and appearances by historical reenactors (e.g., George and Martha Washington, who have roots in Pennsylvania). Elementary school teachers may be involved for revolutionary-era games.

7. Encampment 2027 Planning

- **Takeaway:** Efforts are underway to connect with Revolutionary War reenactor groups, leveraging existing contacts from Civil War groups.
- **Takeaway:** A proposal to digitize encampment history was discussed, including creating an overlay map of historical sites on present-day Towamencin, potentially with QR codes for self-guided tours that link to narrated information. Brian Hagan has been consulted on this.

8. Veterans Social Planning

- **Takeaway:** Target dates for the social are Saturday, September 12th or 19th, pending venue availability.
- **Takeaway:** The preferred location is the Mainland Golf Course banquet room, with an estimated attendance of 50 people. The event will be catered and funded from the committee's budget.

9. 2026 Budget Proposal

- **Takeaway:** The budget request for 2026 is due July 25th, with a hearing scheduled for October 15th.
- **Takeaway:** A proposal was made to increase the allocation from the current \$7,500 to \$15,000. This increase is primarily to cover the costs of the Tennis-Lukens Cemetery restoration (sign, gravestone work, landscaping), especially given the denial of the recent grant. Quotes for restoration were approximately \$9,500, with a sign estimated at \$2,500.

10. Fall Newsletter Article

- **Takeaway:** An article for the Township newsletter is due in late August for the September issue.
- **Takeaway:** Content ideas include updates on Veterans Park, Tennis-Lukens Cemetery, 2026/2027 event plans, and general committee activities. Chet volunteered to draft the article.

11. Membership Changes

- **Takeaway:** Carter LeBrocq announced his resignation from the committee. The committee expressed regret and requested a formal resignation email.

- **Takeaway:** With Carter's resignation, the committee is now down three members.

12. Next Meeting

- **Takeaway:** The committee voted unanimously to skip the July meeting. The next scheduled meeting will be August 25, 2025.

Summary of Actions

Bring Veterans Day flag to next meeting.

Reapply for new grant for Tennis-Lukens Cemetery.

Email formal confirmation of Barry's resignation.

Draft and submit 2026 budget request.

Write fall newsletter article.

Secure banquet room for Veterans Social.

Send formal invitation to George & Martha reenactors.

Coordinate with Brian Hagey on encampment overlay map/QR codes.

Confirm written land agreement date with Mr. Nicoletti.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

3. OPENING COMMENTS – Remembrance of Capt. Gordon Bell, USCG

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Meeting of May 19, 2025

6. OLD BUSINESS

Upcoming Events- Veterans Day November 11, 2025

Update on Status of Work to be performed at Tennis-Lukens Cemetery

- America 250 Grant Application

Engineering Plans for Veterans Memorial Park Development

- Update

America 250 Township Committee

- Report from Carter LeBrocq - The Veterans Committee representative

Towamencin 2027 Encampment Celebration Sub-committee - 100% Veterans Committee

- Sub-committee report

Fall Veterans Social Event

7. NEW BUSINESS

- Budget Request for 2026

- Article for Fall Newsletter
- New Committee Members

8. NEXT VETERANS COMMITTEE MEETING – July 28, 2025??

Minutes