

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED



Tolland Veterans Recognition Commission

BY-LAWS

OF THE

TOLLAND VETERANS’

RECOGNITION

COMMISSION

February 16, 2023



BY-LAWS OF THE Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission

PREAMBLE

We seek to honor and support all the Tolland men and woman who are serving or have served in the United States Military. We aim to promote comradery amongst ourselves and through community support, assist service members and Veterans.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the Commission are—

- 1) to build community ties and relationships to support local active military and Veterans
- 2) to promote, strengthen, and solidify comradery which results from one's service to their country
- 3) to preserve the integrity and dignity of a Veteran's service and sacrifice
- 4) to provide community outreach to bring awareness of important issues and raise monies for Veteran focused events

ARTICLE I

OFFICIAL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission is to serve Tolland's veterans, their spouses, and their families with dignity and compassion. To be their principal advocate in ensuring they receive the benefits to which they are entitled and to promote the health, welfare, and quality of life of all veterans in recognition of their service to this community and nation.

ARTICLE II

TOLLAND VETERANS' RECOGNITION COMMISSION

The Tolland Veterans Recognition Commission (TVRC) was established The Tolland Town Council on February 13, 2007. It was formed by way of vote for Ordinance #77 of Chapter 47A. It was established to serve the active service members and Veterans who reside in the Town of Tolland. The Commission consists of 5 members with voting privileges and 2 alternates without voting privileges. The Commission members meets once a month on the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. to discuss the status of the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission's progress towards serving the local active military and Veterans. This meeting is held at the Tolland Town Hall (21 Tolland Green Extension, Tolland, CT 06084), 2nd Floor, Conference Room A and is open to the public. Location may vary pending availability.



ARTICLE III NATURE

The Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission is a town entity that consists of 7 uncompensated civilian persons. The Commission resides strictly for the purpose of serving Tolland residents who are active members of the armed forces or Veterans thereof. The Commission shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for propagation of principles affiliated with any political office or members.

ARTICLE IV OBLIGATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Section 1. The Commission shall hold a monthly meeting, as stated in Article II, where Commission Members shall discuss Commission and Veteran related topics. This meeting will be open to the public. The meetings shall follow the Agenda [*Figure 1.*] located in the enclosures of this document.

Section 2. The Commission will make all efforts to be involved in community events to display the presence and support of the Tolland Veterans Recognition Commission to all town Veterans. Only through grassroots cooperation can the Commission make it known its existence and demonstrate its willingness to assist Veterans.

Section 3. The Commission shall make all decisions with an intended positive impact of Veterans in the Town of Tolland, for which the Commission strives to improve.

Section 4. Commission members shall attend no less than ten of the twelve monthly meeting and has an obligation to attend no less than eight of twelve coffee houses or social hours. No member has to attend both events but must attend one of them each month.

When pertaining to local town events and outreach, Commission members shall make every attempt to attend (complete setup, attend event, complete takedown) events as regularly as possible. It is required that all members attend at least four larger town events each year, whether is be a holiday event or town celebration or festivity.

Section 5. Alternates shall be as involved as the rest of the Commission as it relates to attending events, meetings, and festivities.

ARTICLE V ELIGIBILITY OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

An individual is eligible to serve of the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission only if—

- 1) Has served in the Armed forces of the United States at any time during:
 - (1) the period from April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918; or
 - (2) any time after December 7, 1941
- 2) was honorably discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorably during or after that period of time.



ARTICLE VI

APPOINTMENT OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS

Section 1. Commission Vacancy: The *Commission Vacancy* will be posted on the Town of Tolland Webpage. The posting will be placed by the Town Manager.

Section 2. Application Process and Requirements: The *application process and requirements* will consist of the:

- 1) Applicant applying to the posting on the town's webpage.
- 2) Applicant completing the Commission Vacancy Application [Figure 2.] located in the enclosures of this document. The Application can be requested from any of the current Commission members.
- 3) Applicant composing a letter to the Commission on the topic of why they would like to be a Commission Member or Alternate.
- 4) Applicant confirming their character of separation by furnishing a copy of their DD214 (all copies).

Section 3. Submitting Application: The process of *submitting the application* is the applicant must apply to the online posting through the town's webpage and then submit the following to the Commission: The Commission Vacancy Application, the letter to the Commission, and a copy of DD214.

Section 4. Interview: Once the submitted documents have been reviewed by the Commission, the applicant will be presented with an opportunity to have an *interview* with the current Commission members.

Section 5. Voting On Candidates: Once all applicants have been interviewed, the Commission will hold a vote on candidates they choose to fill the vacant seat, whether it be a member or alternate seat. After a majority vote is reached, the candidate will be passed along to the Town Council for the formal appointment.

ARTICLE VII

RE-APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Section 1. Town Council Liaison: The *Town Council Liaison* is a component of the Tolland Town Council and the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission has no bearing on the selection or placement of the *Town Council Liaison*. However, there is high hope and a heavy expectation that the *Town Council Liaison* will be an active member of the Armed Forces or an honorable Veteran thereof.

Section 2. Chairman: The *Chairman* shall be considered and voted upon by the Tolland Town Council for an appointment period of three years. Applicants will apply through the town's webpage when there is a vacancy.



Section 3. Secretary: The *Secretary* shall be considered and voted upon by the Tolland Town Council for an appointment period of three years. Applicants will apply through the town's webpage when there is a vacancy.

Section 4. Finance Officer: The *Finance Officer* shall be considered and voted upon by the Tolland Town Council for an appointment period of three years. Applicants will apply through the town's webpage when there is a vacancy.

Section 5. Military/Veteran Liaison: The *Military/Veteran Liaison* shall be considered and voted upon by the Tolland Town Council for an appointment period of three years. Applicants will apply through the town's webpage when there is a vacancy.

Section 6. Project Officer: The *Project Officer* shall be considered and voted upon by the Tolland Town Council for an appointment period of three years. Applicants will apply through the town's webpage when there is a vacancy.

Section 7. Alternates: The *Alternates* shall be considered, selected, and voted upon by the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission for a Town Council appointment period of three years.

ARTICLE VIII

INCREASE OR DECREASE OF COMMISSION SIZE

The increase or decrease of the membership size assigned to the TVRC will be decided by the Commission and Town Council. This will be determined by way of a vote, for or against, by both the Commission and Town Council. The vote performed by the Commission shall represent its opinion, however, the Council vote will be the official ruling of whether or not the TVRC membership is expanded or decreased.

ARTICLE IX

WITHDRAWAL OR REMOVAL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Section 1. Self-Withdrawal: A member of the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission can opt to step-down or *self-withdrawal* from their position; either mid-term or at the end of their 3-year term. This request will be in a letter format stating they wish to discontinue their service and then sent to the Town Council for official approval and recognition.

Section 2. Commission Removal Request: If the Commission identifies that a member is not properly satisfying their duties within the Commission, whether it be due to (1) lack of cooperation and fulfillment of their obligations in accordance with these By-Laws, (2) the disapproval of all other members regarding the behavior of the Member to include but not limited to ARTICLE X, (3) any non-compliance to the TVRC By-Laws, or (4) the member displays a lack of attitude and motivation to serve the Town's Veteran population. A vote must be taken amongst all Commission members with voting rights to get approval to push forward a request for member removal.



- (1) Votes for Removing Alternate Members: A majority vote from the voting members must be met in order to set forth a request to the Town Council for removal of an alternate.
- (2) Votes for Removing a Member with Voting Rights: A minimum vote of 4 to 1 in support of requesting the removal of a member with voting rights must be met in order to set forth a request to the Town Council for official removal.

Section 3. Town Council Removal: The Town Council reserves the right to remove a member of the Commission when (1) a member has conducted themselves in a disgraceful way that does not align with and a violation of the Town Council's Code of Ethics, (2) a member has committed crimes against any persons, to include the Town of Tolland and/or the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission, (3) a member has been requested to be removed by the Commission by a minimum vote of 4 to 1 supporting removal.

ARTICLE X

ROLES OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Section 1. Town Council Liaison: The *Town Council Liaison* for the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission shall be the lead resource and line of communication for all things concerning cooperation between the Town Council and the Commission. They will also provide legal guidance where needed. The *Town Council Liaison* is not a part of the Commission and has no Commission voting rights.

Section 2. Chairman: The *Chairman* shall act as the principal representative for the Veterans' Recognition Commission for all matters discussed with, or referred to them by the Commission. They speak on behalf of the Commission, active Service Members, and Veterans alike. The position of *Chairman* has Commission voting rights and shall serve as the tie-breaking vote when required.

Section 3. Secretary: The *Secretary* shall be charged with the administration of the procedures and policies for the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission during monthly meetings and other official events. The *Secretary* shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office and shall also be authorized, in event of the death or resignation of the Chairman, to summon the Commission for the vote of a successor. They shall choose an unofficial stand-in Chairman until the vote is completed. The position of *Secretary* has Commission voting rights.

Section 4. Finance Officer: The *Finance Officer* shall be the custodian for the funds for the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission. The *Finance Officer* shall sign all checks disbursing funds, and collect all generated revenue and money donations for the Commission. They shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office and shall make reports upon the condition of the treasury when called for by the Chairman. The position of *Finance Officer* has Commission voting rights.



Section 5. Military/Veteran Liaison: The *Military/Veteran Liaison* shall act a primary resource for all active Military Personnel and Veterans seeking support or guidance. They shall perform such other duties as are usually incident to the office, provide assistance, and be at the forefront of public events for the building of the community relations. The position of *Military/Veteran Liaison* has Commission voting rights.

Section 6. Project Officer: The *Project Officer* shall be charged with the administration, research, and development of large Veteran related projects and services. This includes but is not limited to; project facilitation, gathering project information, project coordination, fundraising, and tracking progress of significant project checkpoints. The position of *Project Officer* has Commission voting rights.

Section 7. Alternates: The *Alternates* shall share such Commission responsibilities and Veteran services as may be necessary, adhering to the same By-Laws. Although *Alternates* do not have traditional Commission voting rights, shall they temporarily sit in an active Commission Member's vacant seat who is momentarily absent, they may vote within the confines of that period. The placement of an *Alternate* in a vacant Commission Member's seat will be decided by the Commission's Chairman.

ARTICLE XI

COMMISSION LINE OF SUCCESSION

Section 1. A clear line of succession is paramount when it is necessary for one member sitting in a particular role and position to assume another member's vacant position and role.

Section 2. The line of succession will derive from the structure of ARTICLE X, in which a member who is not able to fulfill their role or obligation will be replaced, temporarily by the below-listed position or role. [Example, in the event the Chairman is unwilling or unable to assume their role and a temporary fill-in is necessary, the Secretary will undertake the responsibilities of both positions. Same for the Finance Officer filling in for the Secretary, so on and so on.] The line of succession shall repeat this process for all roles.

Section 3. A vacated role will require Commission vote to decide a permanent replacement. The majority vote will decide such replacement. Since there will be a vacant role, an Alternate member will temporarily sit in a role lesser than Chairman and will have full voting rights to ensure an odd number of votes. The senior serving Alternate will assume this responsibility.

ARTICLE XII

VOTING PROCEDURES

When voting is necessary, all five Commission members with voting rights will place a vote. The Chairman will place his vote last and break any preceding tie that may have occurred.

Alternates cannot typically place a vote, however, when an Alternate is assigned by the Chairman to temporarily fill in a vacant seat, they may cast a legitimate vote in place of the vacant member.



ARTICLE XIII CODE OF CONDUCT

Active Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission members are strictly prohibited from encouraging or contributing to activities that validate or promote any of the following categories. It is the firm intention that the Commission produce an environment that is accepting and neutral for all. Any persons attending Commission events or meetings are highly encouraged to follow the Code of Conduct that the Tolland Veterans' Commission strongly believes in and unremittingly adheres to.

Section 1. Dialogue: *Dialogue* at monthly meetings, gatherings, or events will be completely open-minded and neutral to all topics. The mission of the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission is to create and maintain an environment that flourishes utilizing open dialogue and encourages Veterans to engage with one another.

Section 2. Community: *Community* is what makes this Commission strong and supplies the support and resources needed to assist Tolland Veterans. Welcoming the attendance, dialogue, and support of the town's residents, veteran or not, is critical in the Commission's mission. Presenting ourselves as professional and hospitable not only is proper, but shows the deep roots of professionalism in our service members.

Section 3. Discrimination: *Discrimination* has no place in Commission dialogues or communications. It is the explicit intent to curb any and all speech that is discriminatory in nature based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or branch of service.

Section 4. Politics: The commission shall be completely nonpolitical and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office. Resolving issues and hardships in the Veteran community must involve cooperation from all facets, government and citizen alike, however no endorsements or sponsoring of officials is permitted.

Section 5. Transparency: *Transparency* is paramount in everything the Commission does and is strictly enforced per the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

ARTICLE XIV MONIES AND REVENUE

The Finance Officer is the primary member charged with maintaining records of the various monies and revenue that the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission receives and generates. A monthly breakdown will be presented at each monthly meeting to the Commission for transparency and discussion.

Section 1. Budgets Monies: Allotted *budget monies* will be utilized and concentrated on projects, events, or issues that are deemed important by the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission and the Veterans they represent. *Budget monies* will not be utilized for personal



gains, or use, and will only be applied to projects, events, and/or outreach that have received a majority vote by the Commission.

Section 2. Fundraising: All *fundraising* monies will be tracked and added to the available monies for use towards future *fundraising*, projects, events, and/or outreach. Use of these funds will only be utilized after a majority vote of approval from the Commission. Any revenue generated during an event will added to the overall wallet less cost of any materials or supplies.

Section 3. Donations: All *donations* will be tracked and added to the available monies for use towards fundraising, projects, events, and/or outreach. Use of these funds will only be utilized after a majority vote of approval from the Commission. Identifiable (non-anonymous) patrons of donations will be sent a letter at the end of the year thanking them for their contribution. This letter will consist of all information needed towards tax entitlements if that individual so chooses to do so.

ARTICLE XV COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is paramount in everything the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission stands for. By utilizing strong communication and holding grassroots outreach, the Commission's aim is to make local active military members and Veterans aware the existence of support and resources. The Commission's goal is to be there when needed most, to provide guidance, assistance, and possible resolutions to whatever hurdles may arise.

Section 1. Grassroots:

- 1) *Coffee House:* Held 2nd Tuesday of every month, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Tolland United Congregational Church (45 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT 06084).
- 2) *Social Event:* Held 2nd Tuesday of every month, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at The SPOT Bar and Grill (200 Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084).

Section 2. Social Media:

- 1) Town Webpage: <https://www.tollandct.gov/veterans-recognition-commission>
- 2) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TVRCAdmin/>
- 3) Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8552303>
- 4) The Patch: <https://patch.com/connecticut/tolland/veterans-corner-1>



ARTICLE XVI VOLUNTEERS

Section 1. *Volunteers:* *Volunteers* are unpaid helpers who have signed up to support the TVRC at events and/or festivities for the sole purpose of helping Tolland Veterans.

Section 2. *Volunteer Sign Up:* Volunteers may reach out to the Commission anytime to express their willingness to help at events. This may be done by email, Facebook messenger, or completing the Volunteer Sign Up sheet [Figure 3.] located in the enclosures of this document. This signup sheet will be made available at any event attended by the Commission.

Section 3. *Volunteer Use:* When the Commission feels it will need Volunteers present at an event, the list of volunteers gathered by the Volunteer Sign Up sheet will be utilized to confirm which Volunteers have the appropriate availability and skillset. Volunteers will be given all details and as much advance notice as possible as to not create confusion, chaos, or a breakdown of willingness to help.

ARTICLE XVI VOTING PROCEDURES

When voting is necessary, all five Commission members with voting rights will place a vote. The Chairman will place his vote last and break any preceding tie that may have occurred.

Alternates cannot typically place a vote, however, when an Alternate is assigned by the Chairman to temporarily fill in a vacant seat, they may cast a legitimate vote in place of the vacant member.

ARTICLE XVIII REVIEW & REVISION OF TVRC BY-LAWS

Section 1. *Frequency:* The *frequency* by which Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission By-Laws shall be subject to review and revision will be every quarter of the year. Frequent reviews and revisions allow for the commission to ensure it is appropriately tuned with the commission and Veteran population.

Section 2. *Review Process:* Prior to the quarterly review, the By-Laws manager shall send a digital copy to all Commission members for examination with no less than seven days of an examination period. The *review process* and discussion shall take place during a traditional meeting and will require the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission to have dialogue on any text brought forth by any commission member with concerns or ideas. The discussion shall end with a vote on whether or not the revisions shall be made. Changes will be accepted only when a majority vote is reached.



Section 3. Revisions: *Revisions* shall be made by the manager of the By-Laws immediately following a majority vote for changes and/or additions. The revision draft shall be presented to the Tolland Veterans' Recognition Commission at the very next meeting for review and a final approval vote.

Section 4. Re-Assessments of Member Roles: A re-assessment in regards specifically to Commission Member roles will transpire at a minimum of once every year.



ENCLOSURES



AGENDA
TOLLAND VETERANS' RECOGNITION COMMISSION
[IN-PERSON / VIRTUAL / HYBRID MEETING]
[LOCATION]
[DATE – TIME]

1. **ROLE CALL** (*Secretary*)
2. **CALL TO ORDER** (*Chairman*)
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** (*Everyone*)
4. **MOMENT OF SILENCE** (*Everyone*)
5. **OLD BUSINESS APPROVAL** (*Commission*)
6. **CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS:**
 - 6.1. FINANCE OFFICER
 - 6.2. PROJECT COORDINATOR
 - 6.3. CHAIRPERSON
 - 6.4. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON
7. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - 7.1. FINANCE OFFICER
 - 7.2. MILITARY/VETERAN LIASON
 - 7.3. PROJECT COORDINATOR
 - 7.4. SECRETARY
 - 7.5. CHAIRPERSON
 - 7.6. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON
8. **PUBLIC PETITIONS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*5-minute limit*)
9. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (*Secretary*)
10. **ADJOURNMENT** (*Chairman*)

[Figure 1.]



Tolland Veterans Recognition Commission

Commission Vacancy Application (Member or Alternate)

Applicant Information

Full Name: _____ Date: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

City State Zip Code

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Position Applying for: Commission Member Alternate Member

Military Service

Branch: _____ From: _____ To: _____

Type of Discharge: _____ Rank at Discharge: _____

If other than honorable, explain: _____

Disclaimer and Signature

*I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.
If this application leads to selection, I understand that false or misleading information in my application or interview may result in my release.*

Signature: _____ Date: _____

[Figure 2.]



 VOLUNTEER SIGN UP 				
NO.	FULL NAME	PHONE	HOURS AVAILABLE	SKILLSETS
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[Figure 3.]