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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Thomas Sheridan, City Manager

**From:** Jena Stasik, Community Relations Manager, Military Veterans Commission Members

**CC:** Greg Hannan, Community Development Director, Katie Behnke, Economic Development Manager

**Date:** December 5, 2024

**Subject:** 2025 Military Veterans Commission Goals Presentation

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### **Background**

The Military and Veterans Commission was established by City Council in February 2023. Five members were appointed by City Council and come from a variety of backgrounds. Each member has served in the military, with the branches represented including the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Commission is to act in an advisory capacity to City Council and the City Manager to create and maintain an atmosphere contributing to the respect and appreciation for past and current members of the United States Armed Forces, and to enrich the lives of Hudson residents and visitors through honoring said military members and recognizing the tremendous value of their service to the United States of America.

### **2024 Objectives In Review**

*Supporting and enhancing area military and veterans' celebrations with a focus on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.*

- Grow participation in the annual Memorial Day parade by conducting outreach to local organizations.
  - **City staff conducted outreach to organizations that previously participated in the Memorial Day parade, as well as to some new organizations.**
  - **56 organizations participated in the parade in 2024.**
- Increase the emphasis on patriotic themes and honoring fallen service members during the Memorial Day parade.
  - **Adopted new guidance for participants in the Memorial Day Parade, emphasizing patriotic themes and honoring fallen service members.**
  - **Military and Veterans Commission members handed out approximately 1500 American flags to parade attendees.**
- Increase attendance at the Memorial Day Ceremony
  - **Attendance appeared to increase in 2024.**

- **Military and Veterans Commission worked with city staff to publicize the Memorial Day Ceremony via the city website and social media well in advance of the ceremony.**
- **Developed a banner that was carried in the parade to encourage parade attendees to make their way to the cemetery for the ceremony.**
- Grow attendance at the Veterans Day ceremony by conducting community outreach.
  - **The Veterans Day Ceremony hosted 86 attendees in 2024 which was about a 40% increase in attendance from 2023.**
  - **Military and Veterans Commission worked with city staff to publicize the Veterans Day Ceremony via city website and social media well in advance of the ceremony.**
  - **Military and Veterans Commission had 10 participating organizations in the Veterans Day Ceremony.**

*Supporting military and veterans outreach activities to include interaction with local schools, recruiters, and veteran's needs (relocation, support, etc.)*

- Develop a system to connect veterans to resources available in our community.
  - **Members of the Military and Veterans Commission participated in a panel with Veterans and members of the Laurel Lake Retirement community. This led to the creation of a Speaker and Presentation Form now housed on the Military and Veterans Commission webpage.**
- Create a list of local veterans that can be drawn upon to assist with activities at local schools and informally assist with recruiting and serving fellow veterans.
  - **This item is still in progress. The Military Veterans Commission may seek out partnerships with organizations, such as the Summit County Veterans Commission, to fulfill this goal in 2025.**

*Establishing community recognition programs of veterans and service members (i.e., acknowledgement or sculpture on Veterans Way)*

- Display veteran appreciation banners on SR 91 and SR 303 around Veterans Day.
  - **Veterans' appreciation banners were displayed approximately one week before both Memorial Day and Veterans Day.**
- Create and display banners to honor local veterans to be displayed around Veterans Day.
  - **This item is still in progress.**
  - **The commission, with the assistance of city staff, have explored some vendors that solicit, vet, and produce veteran specific banners that would be compatible with the cities banner hardware.**
- Explore a partnership with local artists to create and display a public art piece to honor local veterans.
  - **This item is still in progress.**
  - **The Military and Veterans Commission was introduced to the WWI memorial project located in front of the Boy Scout Cabin by community member, Chris Bach, and anticipates a rededication ceremony in late spring or early summer 2025.**

## **2025 Objectives**

*Supporting and enhancing area military and veterans' celebrations with a focus on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.*

- Continue to grow participation and attendance at the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony and the Veterans Day Ceremony.
- Host a 9/11 remembrance event.

*Supporting military and veterans outreach activities to include interaction with local schools, recruiters, and veteran's needs (relocation, support, etc.)*

- Develop a system to connect veterans to resources available in our community.

- Participate in or host events with local organizations that have veteran populations and/or serve the veteran community, such as a Veterans Recognition Reception prior to Veterans Day.
- Host a veterans stand down event to connect Veterans Service Organizations to local veterans.
- Connect with Hudson City Schools to learn if there are any areas the Commission could assist with regarding Veterans events or recruitment ideas.
  - Create a list of local veterans that can be drawn upon to assist with activities at local schools and informally assist with recruiting and serving fellow veterans.

*Establishing community recognition programs of veterans and service members (i.e., acknowledgement or sculpture on Veterans Way)*

- Continue working with the Mr. Chris Bach to complete the WWI memorial and plan/host a rededication ceremony in late spring or early summer 2025.
- Develop a banner recognition program to honor local Veterans throughout the year.