



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**BOROUGH OF THE BRONX**  
**COMMUNITY BOARD 7**



**HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT    LEURYS ACOSTA, CHAIRPERSON    KARLA CABRERA CARRERA, DISTRICT MANAGER**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Chad Royer</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>November 19, 2025</b>
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	<b>6:30 PM</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<u><a href="#">Tracey Towers</a></u> <b>40 West Mosholu Parkway South, Bronx, NY 10468          (Building 40, Community Room B)</b>
<b>Members In Attendance:</b>	<u>✓</u> Chad Royer <u>✓</u> Alfred Grant <u>✓</u> Bernard Wright <u>✓</u> Jean Hill <u>✓</u> Craig Rijkaard <u> </u> Jake Wilson <u>✓</u> Tobie Buford
<b>Minutes done by:</b>	<b>Chad Royer</b>

**I) Introduction**

**II) Review Of Previous Minutes**

A) The October 15, 2025, meeting minutes were approved, motioned by Alfred Grant, seconded by Tobie Buford.

**III) Review From Previous Meeting**

A) Regarding the Veterans Breakfast at Lehman College on Saturday, November 15, 2025, the event was well attended, and everyone was appreciative of how well the event was run. The Veterans Committee gave out citations of merit to members of the New York Grey Cadets and two members of the Lehman College community, Navy Veteran Jessica Adames and Army Veteran Zacharie Tyler Boutoille.

**IV) New Business**

A) **Information From Veterans Affairs Medical Center: Samuel Cottes, Program Specialist**

1) **More services for women Veterans are coming to the VA. Now women Veterans can make appointments to get mammograms**



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2) Veterans can try to get their discharge status changed if it is less than honorable. If it is less than ten years, it can possibly be done, but if it has been more than ten years, then there are advocacy groups that can help.

3) If any Veteran has a VA disability (from getting injured), that person can apply for benefits. A Veteran can receive a VA disability letter and apply to receive financial benefit. There is a program called Energy Affordability Program where a Veteran can earn a \$38 credit off his or her electric bill. If a Veteran has National Grid for gas, they can earn a \$40 credit of his or her gas bill.

4) The VA can provide a Veteran and family a special burial plot for free, but the tombstone would be extra.

5) Samuel Cottes can be reached at [Samuel.Cottes@va.gov](mailto:Samuel.Cottes@va.gov)

#### **B) Discussion Of City Council's Veterans Initiative**

1) In September of 2023, Bronx Community Board 7 passed a resolution for a letter of support to go to the city council to increase the Veterans' Initiative budget from @\$2.8 million to \$3.2 million. This increase in funding would help some of the nonprofit Veteran service organization receive funding from the city of New York to be able to operate amidst a slew of expenses and budget cuts. The budget had not been granted the additional monies needed to support Veteran organizations for about 6 years, and the request for additional funding would be directed to the incoming city council and mayor's office whose terms start in January of 2026.

2) Motion by Alfred Grant for a letter of support to the incoming 2026 City Council to increase the Veterans Initiative budget to \$6.2 million, seconded by Jake Wilson. 6 yay, 0 nay, 0 abstentions. Motion carries.

#### **C) Discussion On Placement Of Needle Exchange Vans In The Community**

1) At the November 2025 General Meeting, there was a discussion involving needle exchange vans that were placed in areas of the community where the use of needle activity was present. That van

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THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT:

229-A EAST 204TH STREET ♦ BRONX, NY 10458 ♦ PHONE: (718) 933-5650

E-MAIL: [KCABRERACARRERA@CB.NYC.GOV](mailto:KCABRERACARRERA@CB.NYC.GOV) ♦ WEBSITE: [NYC.GOV/BRONXCB7](http://NYC.GOV/BRONXCB7)



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operates the needle exchange service under the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Several parks, including St. James Park and Aqueduct Walk, have high numbers of needles/sharps that were previously discarded and picked up, and the van would serve as the site for clean needle exchange from anyone who used needles.

2) The board passed a resolution for a letter of support in addressing restrictions to the location of the vans, since the presence of the vans drew in many people who used and continue to use needles. However, the timing of the placement of the vans was not completely addressed because there was not much information on the timing of the presence of the users in the area, or presence of the discarding of the needles/sharps. One major concern that was mentioned included the presence of the discarded needles while children were present and while schools are in session.

3) The committee agreed to a possible recommendation of time and time restriction of the presence of the vans using the following language:

**:Recommendation to include time frame of 7:00am to 6:00pm when schools are in session." (No vote was taken.)**

**V) Adjournment**

**A) The next meeting for the Veterans Committee will be on January 21, 2026.**

**B) Motion to adjourn meeting by Alfred Grant, seconded by Deahna Penn.**