

CGS § 27-135. **Local Veteran's Advisory Committee.** Veteran's service contact person.

(a) Any city or town . . . may, by ordinance, establish a local veterans' advisory committee.

(b) Any city or town that has not established its own local veterans' advisory committee and does not otherwise provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate a city or town employee to serve as a veterans' service contact person.

Torrington has never established a Veterans' Advisory Committee.

Torrington has not designated a city employee to serve as a veteran's service contact person.

For decades, Len Dube and Bud Atwood have provided the requisite statutory responsibilities relative to local veteran's services and benefits.

The services provided by Len and Bud were all generated out of the Veteran's Service Office at the Field House at Fuessenich park. This office is manned by volunteers, there is no city oversight and no municipal authority over the function so the VSO – most of their funding comes from the Soldiers, Sailors Marines Fund and donations. Most of the services provided out of the VSO are regional in nature – serving most of veterans in Litchfield County.

After Bud Atwood passed away in October 2019, the Veteran's Service Office was in a state of flux and confusion as to who was "in charge".

I met with many (over a dozen) of the veterans that volunteer out of the VSO and they all agree that they are in need of guidance on governance and leadership. They felt a committee of nine would be effective. They asked that the committee membership consist of 2/3rd Torrington residents and 1/3 from other towns in the County.

It is my recommendation that the Council consider adopting an ordinance to fulfill the obligations of CGS § 27-135 and establish a board that can also function as oversight of the VSO.

Chapter 197 – VETERAN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

§ 197-1. – Creation and purpose.

There is hereby established a Local Veteran’s Advisory Committee which shall have the responsibility of carrying out locally the duties and purposes of this section and, within their charter, powers and as otherwise provided by law, may make available to such local committees the necessary funds to carry out their duties and responsibilities. The Committee may:

- A. Act as the coordinating agency in all matters concerning veterans and their dependents, coordinating the activities of public and private facilities concerned with veterans’ reemployment, education, rehabilitation and adjustment to peacetime living;
- B. Cooperate with all national, state and local governmental and private agencies in securing services and benefits to which a veteran or his dependents may be entitled;
- C. Use the services and facilities of the veteran’s organizations so far as possible to carry out the purposes of CGS § 27-135.
- D. Encourage and coordinate vocational training services for veterans.

§ 197-2. - Composition; appointment; terms; officers; compensation.

- A. The Local Veterans’ Advisory Committee shall be comprised of nine regular members. At least two-thirds of the members shall reside in the City of Torrington and one-third of the members may reside in towns within Litchfield County. The members shall be appointed by the Mayor of the City of Torrington.
- B. Full terms for members shall be four years. For purposes of establishing this committee, three (3) of the regular members of the Veteran’s Local Advisory Committee first appointed shall be designated to serve a first term of two years, three (3) additional members shall serve for a first term of three years and three (3) members shall be appointed to serve a first term of four years. Thereafter, subsequent four-year terms will be filled in accordance with the appointment terms herein.
- C. Said Committee shall select from its members a Chairman, Vice Chairman and a Secretary, who shall serve for one year.
- D. All members of said Committee shall serve without compensation.
- E. The Committee shall hold regular meetings and shall designate the time and place thereof and may, from time to time, adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for the conduct of its meetings and execution of its duties. Six members shall constitute a quorum.