



Department of Veteran Services
294 Main Street • Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone 413-772-1571 • Fax 413-772-1401
www.greenfield-ma.gov

Christopher Demars, Director
Laura Thorne, Assistant
Stacey Geneczko, Deputy Director
Jeffrey Cochran, VSO

UPPER PIONEER VALLEY VETERANS' SERVICES DISTRICT

Veteran Resource and Referral Center located in Greenfield, satellite locations throughout the district

UPVVSD Advisory Board Meeting

Date: ~~Tuesday 7, 2025~~ *October 7, 2025*

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: UPVVSD Office, 294 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

Member Towns

Ashfield
Bernardston
Buckland
Charlemont
Colrain
Conway
Deerfield
Erving
Gill
Greenfield
Hawley
Heath
Leverett
Leyden
Monroe
Montague
New Salem
Northfield
Plainfield
Rowe
Shelburne
Shutesbury
Sunderland
Warwick
Wendell
Whately

Chairperson's Statement - This meeting is not being recorded by the UPVVSD Advisory Board. If any other persons present are recording this meeting, you must notify the chairperson at this time.

Call to Order: Chairman Dennis Brennan

Roll Call of Members:

Prior Meeting Minutes: (January 2025): Reading of minutes, motion to approve minutes.

New Business:

- Chris, Stacey and Jeff Recertified as National Service Officers
- Attending EOVS Annual Training Oct 20-23 2025
- Request for FY26 Memorial Flags being sent to Towns after meeting
- Request Veterans Advisory Board Members to inquire with their town on the status of Hero Act and adopting new provisions or not for Tax Exemptions for Veterans. If accepted what percentage rate did they vote on for approval. (Attached bulletin BUL-2024-5)
- FY27 Budget being developed. One new line item for software being added this year.

Old Business:

- FY26 Budget was approved and we are currently looking to add any unused money back into the FY27 as credit for the towns.

Next Meeting: Proposed January 6, 2026, 5:00 P.M.

Adjournment:

EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY BE CALLED

**Please note that the list of topics was comprehensive at the time of posting, however, the public body may consider and take action on unforeseen matters not specifically named in this notice. Posted in accordance with M.G.L. c 30A § 18-25.*



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January 7, 2025 5:00 PM UPVVD Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Member Towns

Ashfield
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Conway
Deerfield
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Chairpersons Statement and Meeting called to order: 5:00 PM by Chairman Denis Brennan

Roll Call of Members: Present - Bernardston, Colrain, Leyden, Northfield, Shelburne, Shutesbury and Director of UPVVD Chris Demars

-Approval of prior meeting Minutes: (Oct 2024) motion presented by Town of Shelburne seconded by Town of Shutesbury, vote passed unanimously.

-New Business:

District Budget reviewed for FY26. Motion presented by Town of Shelburne seconded by Town of Shutesbury, vote passed unanimously.

-Election of Officers and responsibilities discussed. Motion Presented by Town of Bernardston seconded by Town of Leyden, Vote passed unanimously for Dennis Brennan of Northfield as Chair, Richard LaPierre of Shelburne as Vice Chair and Michael Aldrich of Greenfield as Secretary.

-Chris Demars informed the board that the Van replacement will be put on hold and a request for the FY 2027 Capital budget to replace the Van. Advisory Board will vote on assessment to District at a future meeting.

-Chris discussed possible Chapter 115 impact to town of Leverett due to ongoing pending housing plans for the Kittredge Estate. Town of Leverett Rep not present. Leverett has no Chapter 115 recipients at this time, but it could add tens of thousands to the town's future budget.

-Office personnel attend the Annual EOVS annual training and are in compliance for the State of Massachusetts Veteran Services.

-Old Business:

Need a handful of Towns to get their flag orders in. Reps from each town have the list of who is delinquent. Chris has mailed, called and emailed the towns that have not given their orders yet.

-Still need to update UPVVD Website on all towns' websites. Chris will review again.

-Next meeting date: set for Oct 7, 2025 at 5pm at the UPVVD offices

-Motion to adjourn: 5:30 P.M. by Shelburne, seconded by Shutesbury, meeting adjourned



Bulletin

BUL-2024-5

RECENT LEGISLATION

TO: Local Officials

FROM: Kenneth Woodland, Chief, Municipal Finance Law Bureau

DATE: August 2024

SUBJECT: An Act Honoring, Empowering and Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans ("HERO" Act) Chapter 178 of the Acts 2024.

To keep you informed of legislative developments, the Division of Local Services ("Division") periodically publishes a **BULLETIN** summarizing new laws that affect municipal budgets and local tax assessment, administration and collection. Each issue usually contains a cumulative summary of session laws enacted to that time and indicates whether the Division has issued any further implementation guidelines. This edition of the **BULLETIN** instead focuses on a recent legislative change affecting municipal finance found in [Chapter 178 of the Acts 2024](#) (hereinafter "Act"), entitled [An Act Honoring, Empowering and Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans \("HERO" Act\)](#).

These changes provide two new local options that increase certain veteran exemption amounts and changes how to determine eligibility for the motor vehicle exemption for a veteran with a 100% disability rating or is unemployable due to their service-connected disability.

1. Generally, what are the municipal finance related provisions in the "HERO" Act?

[Section 23](#) adds two new veteran property tax exemption clauses, [Clauses 22I and 22J](#), to [General Laws, c. 59, §5](#), which is the statute that establishes local property tax exemptions for individuals and organizations. Additionally, [Section 24](#) changes how eligibility for the motor vehicle exemption for a veteran with a service-connected disability is established under [G.L. c. 60A, § 1](#).

2. When do these provisions go into effect?

As the Act contained a preamble, the Act's effective date is the date it was signed by the Governor – August 8, 2024. However, for exemptions allowed under [G.L. c. 59, § 5](#), the exemption qualifying date is generally July 1. Changes in property tax exemption laws will generally apply prospectively as of the next qualification date after the effective date of the amendments. As such, municipalities will be able to adopt [Clauses 22I and 22J](#), as described herein, for Fiscal Year 2026.

Conversely, the change under [G.L. c. 60A, § 1](#) is effective presently for calendar year 2024 excises.

3. How does a municipality implement these changes?

[Clauses 22I and 22J](#) are local options that must be accepted by a city or town to apply in that municipality. Acceptance requires a vote of the legislative body (town meeting, town council or city council) subject to the municipality's charter. [G.L. c. 4, § 4](#). No local action is needed for the change under [G.L. c. 60A, § 1](#) to go into effect.

4. What would be the impact of [Clause 22I](#)?

[Clause 22I](#), if accepted, would increase the amount of the tax exemption granted to veterans on their domiciles under [Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F](#) annually by a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) determined by the Department of Revenue (DOR) based on the consumer price index (CPI). This would work like the annual COLA adjustment determined by DOR that is already a local option for certain senior exemption amounts and financial means standards. See [G.L. c. 59, § 5, Clauses 17E, 17F and 41D](#).

For example, if a Clause 22 recipient will receive a \$400 exemption and the community accepts this option, and the CPI increases by 5%, the total exemption amount would increase to \$420.

5. What would be the impact of [Clause 22J](#)?

[Clause 22J](#), if accepted, provides an additional exemption up to 100% of the amount of the tax exemption granted to veterans on their domiciles under [Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F](#). This would work like the optional additional exemption that is already a local option under [G.L. c. 59, § 5C½](#) for all persons granted exemptions on their domiciles as veterans, seniors, blind persons, and surviving spouses. [Clause 22J](#) will not apply in a year in which the city or town already uses [G.L. c. 59, § 5C½](#) to grant an additional exemption to all persons granted exemptions. It is an option for cities and towns that do not use that general additional exemption to be able to just grant one for persons granted veteran exemptions. As with the general additional exemption, the application of the [Clause 22J](#) additional exemption cannot reduce the tax owed below what the taxpayer would owe on 10% of the current assessed valuation of the domicile. However, unlike the general additional exemption, the exemption granted to veterans can result in the taxpayer paying less than the taxes paid in the preceding fiscal year. To implement, the city or town must vote to accept the statute and establish the additional exemption percentage before the July 1 beginning of the fiscal year in which that percentage will first apply. The voted percentage will continue to apply in subsequent years unless and until another percentage is voted before the July 1 beginning of a later fiscal year.

6. How does the change to G.L. c. 60A, § 1 effect the veteran motor vehicle excise process?

This section changes how eligibility for the motor vehicle exemption for a veteran with a service-connected disability is established under G.L. c. 60A, § 1. Currently, the Medical Advisory Board (MAB) within the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) determines that the veteran has the qualifying disability. Under the amendment, eligibility will be based on a disability determination by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), as is the case with other motor vehicle and property tax exemptions available to veterans. Now, a veteran will qualify for a motor vehicle exemption if the VA determines they have a 100% disability rating or deems them unemployable due to their service-connected disability.

7. What is the impact in a community that adopts both Clause 22I and 22J?

Both Clauses would operate together. For example, if a Clause 22 recipient will receive a \$400 exemption and the community accepts Clause 22I, and the CPI increases by 5%, the total exemption amount would increase to \$420. If the community further accepts Clause 22J (or G.L. c. 59, § 5C½) and increases by the maximum 100% the amount of the tax exemption granted to veterans, in this example, the total exemption will increase to \$840.

8. Do any of these provisions effect the state reimbursement?

As Clauses 22I and 22J are local options that must be accepted by a city or town to apply in that municipality, there is no additional state reimbursement for the cost of the additional exemptions.

Conversely, the veteran exemptions granted pursuant to the new provisions in G.L. c. 60A, § 1 will be fully reimbursed by the Commonwealth.

**SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE VOTES
(Consult with municipal counsel)**

ADJUSTED EXEMPTION AMOUNT CLAUSE 22I

VOTED: That the city/town accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22I, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue, to be effective for applicable exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, _____.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL VETERAN EXEMPTION CLAUSE 22J

VOTED: That the city/town accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22J, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F by **[insert percentage increase up to 100% e.g., 50%, 70%, 100%]** of the personal exemption amount, subject to the conditions in Clause 22J, to be effective for applicable exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, _____.