

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
Town Hall Auditorium**

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Vito Riccio called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call was conducted by the Secretary.

- Members' Present: Vito Riccio, David McCaffrey, Gary Prior, Joseph Kelley, Steven Ellis, and Town Liaison Todd Rolland.
- Members' Absent: Michael Murdza, Bob Socha
- Members' Excused: Sherri Marquis, William McGurk, Bob Thiesing, Mel Thorne

Vice-Chair Vito Riccio formally seated Gary Prior as a voting member for this meeting in place of William McGurk. With four voting members present, a quorum was confirmed. No Zoom participants were present.

3. Opportunity to Add Urgent Agenda Items

A motion was made by Secretary McCaffrey to add an urgent agenda item under Item 5 – Administrative Updates for a piece of correspondence. Motion seconded by Gary Prior. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes (February 4, 2026)

A Motion was made by Vito Riccio and seconded by Steve Ellis to approve the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Administrative Updates – Communication Protocol

5.1 Chair Resignation Correspondence

Secretary McCaffrey read an email from Chair Sherri A. Marquis submitting her formal resignation effective immediately, requesting the Vice-Chair to assume duties and facilitate the election of a new chair.

Motion made by Joseph Kelley and seconded by Gary Prior to table the resignation until Vice-Chair Riccio has an opportunity to speak with Ms. Marquis. Motion passed unanimously.

5.2 Hartford Foundation Grant Scope Change Request

Secretary McCaffrey summarized draft correspondence regarding:

- A proposed scope modification request to the Hartford Foundation to repurpose the full \$10,000 grant for architectural design services (instead of the prior 50/50 split between design and groundbreaking).
- Proposed sample correspondence to the Board of Selectmen regarding architectural scope adjustments.

Motion made by Vice Chair Vito Riccio and seconded by Steve Ellis to authorize the Vice-Chair to submit the scope change request to the Hartford Foundation. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee agreed to delay BoS notification until the Hartford Foundation approval is received.

6. Old Business

6.a Architectural Concept Development

The committee reviewed status updates related to the architectural design direction:

- The architects await authorization to refine and blend Rendition 1 with elements of rendition 2 into a single, unified design.
- Following the February 20 coordination meeting, the architects advised they cannot provide cost estimates, which will require independent third-party estimating.
- The committee discussed sequencing: final design >> cost estimating >> CIP submission >> approval pathway.
- Vice-Chair Riccio confirmed he now has committee authorization to re-engage the architects and will reach out to them immediately. These comments were to inform the formal vote under New Business.

6.b Board of Selectmen Follow-Up

No formal action required at this time; committee noted that BoS notifications would proceed after Hartford Foundation decisions are received.

7. New Business

7.a Funding Subcommittee Report

Vice-Chair Riccio (subcommittee chair) provided updates:

- **Membership:**
 - Chair: Vito Riccio
 - Treasurer: Mel Thorne
 - Secretary: Steve Ellis
 - Member: Bill McGurk (confirmed interest via email)
- Ongoing outreach to 19 charitable organizations; no commitments yet.
- Subcommittee needs: mission statement, project photos (site, construction, final vision), and estimated costs for concrete, pavilion, landscaping, and amenities.
- Guest Roger Thibodeau, an experienced construction engineer, and US Air Force veteran, volunteered to assist with construction-related estimating and guidance.

7.b Project Costing & CIP Preparation

- Cost estimating remains dependent on finalized design refinement.
- Committee reaffirmed the need for independent estimators separate from architectural services.
- Secretary McCaffrey will circulate necessary materials.

7.c Hartford Foundation Grant – Reallocation Discussion

Covered under Item 5 via formal vote; no additional action required.

8. Public Comment

Guests were invited to participate throughout. Roger Thibodeau offered input and confirmed willingness to assist during the construction and estimating phases.

9. Summary of Committee Actions (Formal Votes)

1. Added urgent administrative item to agenda.
2. Approved Feb 18, 2026 minutes.
3. Tabled Chair Marquis's resignation
4. Approved submitting Hartford Foundation scope modification request.

10. Implementation & Follow-Up Assignments

- Vice-Chair Riccio: Send Hartford Foundation scope change request.
- Secretary McCaffrey: Contact architects regarding design blending and initiate phase-2 coordination; distribute design materials.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting the Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee will be held Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 3:00 PM. Architects plan to present Phase 2 materials at this meeting.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn was made by Joseph Kelley and seconded by Steve Ellis. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at **3:35 PM**.



Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey
Secretary, Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee