



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCHI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**DANIEL T. WEIST**  
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
**THOMAS T. K. ZUNG**  
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America  
**BOB POTTS**  
COMMISSIONER

**ROBERT SCHLOENDORN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**JAMES L. STOLZ**  
SERVICE OFFICER MANAGER

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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### MINUTES

DATE: March 5, 2008 9:50 a.m.

PRESENT: Frank Pocci, President  
Bob Potts, Vice President  
Thomas T.K. Zung, Secretary  
Daniel T. Weist, Commissioner  
Mel Baher, Commissioner  
Robert E. Schloendorn, Executive Director  
Thomas P. O'Donnell, Asst. County Prosecutor

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Pocci followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Mel Baher to dispense with the reading of the minutes of February 20, 2008 and to accept the minutes with the necessary corrections and/or additions. (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes.)

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Thomas Zung to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Level III Board Appeals meeting of February 20, 2008 and to accept the minutes with the necessary corrections and/or additions. (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes.)

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Dan Weist to dispense with the reading of the correspondence since we have a Consent Agenda, with the exception of those items set aside, to be addressed during the regular order of business, and with any corrections and/or additions. (One item was set aside.)

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Mel Baher to accept cases approved on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of VSC case file #80818 and #81090 that were set aside, picked at random as part of the quality assurance program, to be addressed in Executive Session.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Mel Baher to accept cases denied on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of VSC case file #82789 that was set aside, picked at random as part of the quality assurance program, to be addressed in Executive Session.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **Agenda Item E1. Commissioners Reports**

#### Thomas T.K. Zung

- March 1<sup>st</sup>, VFW Euclid Post 1056 held their Mortgage Burning party. Guests and FVW members were served pork roast, side dishes, and party trays. The post donated extra party trays to the veterans at the VOA on 152<sup>nd</sup> street, who were very appreciative.
- I visited the Greater Cleveland Volunteers of America located on East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street, a veterans' service group that houses needy homeless veterans. I met with Director Michael Salois and his staff. They have 52 rooms, all single private modules. Women vets now have easier access to their own facilities. The VOA has recreation rooms and a learning center to assist vets with employment. Counseling and social services are also available. Their rule is simple; we help homeless veterans get on their feet. VOA provides temporary housing and assists the veterans in finding permanent residency, but has zero tolerance with drugs and/or abuse alcohol.
- I informed the VOA of our services and advised them to contact the CCVSC if we can be of assistance.

#### Frank Pocci

- I attended the American Legion Post 91 General Meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Post 91 continues to support many charitable requests in their area. The post officers are currently reviewing and will amend, if necessary, the current post by-laws.
- February 28<sup>th</sup> I brought in a WWII veteran who may be eligible for a service-connected pension improvement. I had him scheduled to see Service Officer, John Murphy, who submitted the necessary documentation for the vet.
- February 29<sup>th</sup> I attended the Italian American War Veterans General Meeting. One of the guests at the meeting was Ray Saikus. Ray approached me regarding our (CCVSC) position on the reuse of Memorial Day flags used to decorate veterans' graves. I advised Mr. Saikus that the VSC's position on the proper use of the flags is unchanged and that the County Commissioners (who purchase the flags) have required interaction with the cemeteries to ensure the honorable placement, display, and disposition of the flags.
- March 1<sup>st</sup> I attended the Democratic rally in Lakewood, Ohio where I had the opportunity to speak with Governor Strickland and asked for his future support of veterans' issues. The Governor assured me that veterans are very important and he will continue his support. He mentioned his support for GOVA becoming a cabinet-level office and how this would better coordinate and support veteran issues and activities.
- I did not attend the AMVETS General Meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> due to the icy weather conditions.

OLD BUSINESS:

**Agenda Item F1. Executive Director – Submitting Personnel Requests**

No personnel items were submitted to the Board.

Bob Schloendorn noted that he has received a response from Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones concerning the reuse of the Memorial Day flags. Commissioner Jones agreed that donating the flags to decorate veterans' graves at the Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio would be an appropriate reuse of the flags. The matter is closed.

The Executive Director distributed to Board members a disc provided by the VA on how to avoid or manage foreclosures.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion took place on SB 289. The Board concurred that any usurpation of the commissioner's authority should be managed similar to the school districts that are put on graduated watches for performance. Also, since commissioners are appointed by judges of the Common Pleas Court, a director should have no authority to insert himself into a commission without using the judicial process. Dan Weist is scheduled to represent the CCVSC at a Finance Committee meeting in Columbus, Ohio to discuss SB 289.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

**Agenda Item H1. Presentation by Memorial Affairs Manager, Laurene Rutkowski.**

For the benefit of the Board and guests, it was previously decided that each manager will attend rotating Board meetings to speak about their department's role and activities. Frank Pocci turned the meeting over to Laurene Rutkowski, Manager, for a presentation on the responsibilities of the Memorial Affairs Department.

**MEMORIAL AFFAIRS**

- **DD214** - Search for document to verify services for necessary funeral arrangements.
- **Free County Graves** - Cleveland Memorial Gardens and West Park Cemeteries have graves located in veteran's sections for indigent veterans only.
- **Indigent Burial Benefits** - Veteran has no savings or insurance to cover the expense of his/her funeral.
- **VA Burial Benefits** - Veteran was in receipt of pension or compensation from the VA or died in a VA facility or VA contracted nursing home.
- **Burial Flag** - The VA provides a U.S. flag at no cost, to drape the casket of a veteran who served honorably in the armed forces. The funeral home can arrange this for you.
- **Government Headstone** - The Department of Veterans Services provides the headstone at no charge. We will assist in filling out the application.
- **Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery** - Referrals done daily. Transportation is covered if veteran was receiving service connected disability at the time of death.
- **Blue Star Service Banner** - Families of service members that are called up to active duty in the military are entitled to a banner if they reside in Cuyahoga County.

- **Presidential Memorial Certificate** - A certificate which bears the President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the veteran's service in the armed forces. Applications are taken daily in our office.
- **Military Honors** - Locates DD214's for department or funeral homes to order military honors. Assists families with arranging memorial services.
- **Memorial Day Flags** - Orders and distributes cemetery flags to organizations in the decorating of veterans graves.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Dan Weist to go into Executive Session to discuss client cases, personnel and policy issues.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:30 a.m.)

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Bob Potts to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular order of business.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (12:00 p.m.)

Two VSC case files, pulled from the Consent Agenda's list of cases approved for further investigation, were reviewed and found in order. A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Bob Potts to accept VSC case file #81090 and #80818.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Case file #82789, pulled from the Consent Agenda's list of cases denied, was reviewed and given to the Executive Director for further investigation.

With no further business, a motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Frank Pocci  
President

Thomas Zung  
Secretary

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Requests for Financial Assistance: Jennifer Mazzeo, Manager/Senior Investigator (216-698-2621)

Filing claims with the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs: Jim Stolz, Service Officer Manager (216-698-2639)

Memorial Affairs: Laurene Rutkowski, Manager (216-698-2655)

Mobile Meals Program: Jeff Sedlak, Social Worker/Case Management Officer (216-698-2615)

Executive Director: Bob Schloendorn (216-698-2611)

Commissioners: Lorri Slivka, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2646)