



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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Email: vsc_mail@cuyahogacounty.us
1849 Prospect Avenue • Room 200 • Cleveland, OH 44115



MINUTES

DATE: December 17, 2008 9:45 a.m.

PRESENT: Frank Pocchi, President
Bob Potts, Vice President
Mel Baher, Commissioner
Daniel Weist, Commissioner
Thomas Zung, Secretary
Robert E. Schloendorn, Executive Director
Tom O'Donnell, Asst. County Prosecutor

VISITORS: Lee Trotter, Deputy County Administrator

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to dispense with the reading of the minutes of December 3, 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, Pocchi. **NAYS:** None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Dan Weist to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Level III Board Appeals meeting of December 3, 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, Pocchi. **NAYS:** None. Motion carried. The President noted that today's Level III Appeals meeting has been postponed to Friday, December 19, 2008 due to emergency conditions.

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. (No items were set aside.)

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

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Thomas Zung to accept cases approved on the Consent Agenda for the month of November 2008.

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

A motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Bob Potts to accept cases denied on the Consent Agenda for the month of November 2008.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to accept indigent burials approved for November 2008 as listed on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of those set aside, to be addressed in Executive Session. (None were set aside.)

Agenda Item E1. State of the Commission and Finance Report

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Thomas Zung to accept the report of the Executive Director as submitted.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

The "Food and Shelter Monthly Allowance Guideline" was discussed to address circumstances where a client, who is in receipt of county food stamps, is requesting a food voucher from our commission. Bob Schloendorn suggested that the guideline be revised to allow Eligibility Specialists the ability to grant the full allowable food amount if the client has a medical stating a special or restricted diet is required. The Board agreed and will approve the revised guideline at the next meeting. Until then, the Eligibility Specialists are to continue subtracting the food stamp amount from the CCVSC standard monthly allowance.

The Union Contract has been signed by the CCVSC and Teamsters Union Local 436 and is scheduled to be on the BOCC agenda January 8, 2009. Bargaining unit employees will receive their increase retroactive to January 1, 2009 once the contract is signed by the county commissioners.

The 2009 pay schedule has been approved by the Board. Non-bargaining employees will receive their increase the first pay-period of 2009.

The Executive Director gave the Board a briefing on the progress of the Planning Commission's report on establishing a Veterans Home in Northeast Ohio.

Mr. Lee Trotter, Deputy County Administrator, made a presentation to the Board and requested that the CCVSC consider extending its current lease at 1849 Prospect Ave. He stated that the county will have space available in the future to accommodate the CCVSC. The Board listened and asked that Mr. Trotter discuss the CCVSC's needs with the BOCC and get back to the CCVSC by January 2009. The CCVSC wants assurances that it can acquire the ground-level space that was selected during the open bid process. The CCVSC reserves the right per 5901.07 to reject space that does not meet its needs. Mr. Trotter's demand that all funds be encumbered in the initial year of the lease did not seem reasonable or practical and the Board will seek further guidance on that requirement.

The Board recessed at 11:15 a.m. and reconvened at 11:20 a.m.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Dan Weist to go into Executive Session to discuss the real estate proposal.

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:21 a.m.)

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

AYES: Potts, Zung, Baher, Weist, Pocci. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:35 a.m.)

No action was taken by the Board as a result of discussion in Executive Session.

With no further business, a motion was made by Dan Weist and seconded by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:36 a.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 Terry Walker, Social Worker/Case Management Officer (216-698-2379)

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

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

CUYAHOGA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

Progress Report on the State of the Commission

November, 2008

Issued by:

The CCVSC Commissioners

Frank Pocci – President, AMVETS

Bob Potts– Vice President, VVA

Thomas Zung – Secretary, VFW

Daniel T. Weist – DAV

Mel Baher – American Legion

December 17, 2008

Submitted By: Robert E. Schloendorn – Executive Director

The following report summarizes the progress and state of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission as of November 30, 2008:

Executive:

The Executive Director

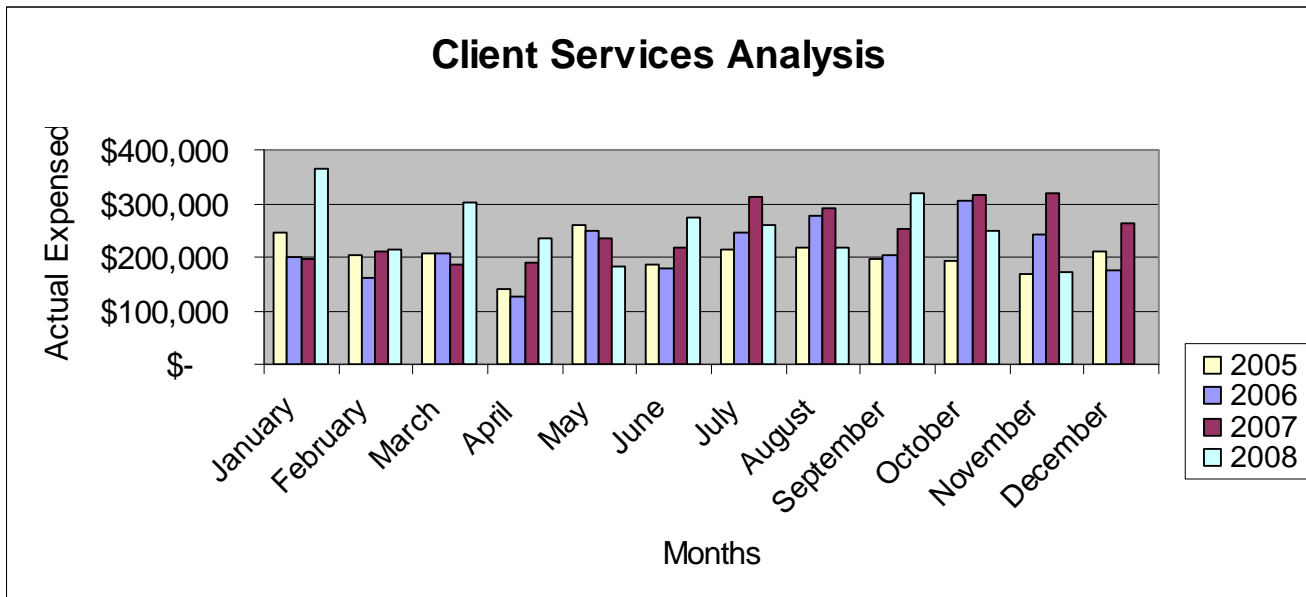
- Continued discussions with Central Services and met with major contractors on new space.
- Concluded Union Negotiations.

Finance Department

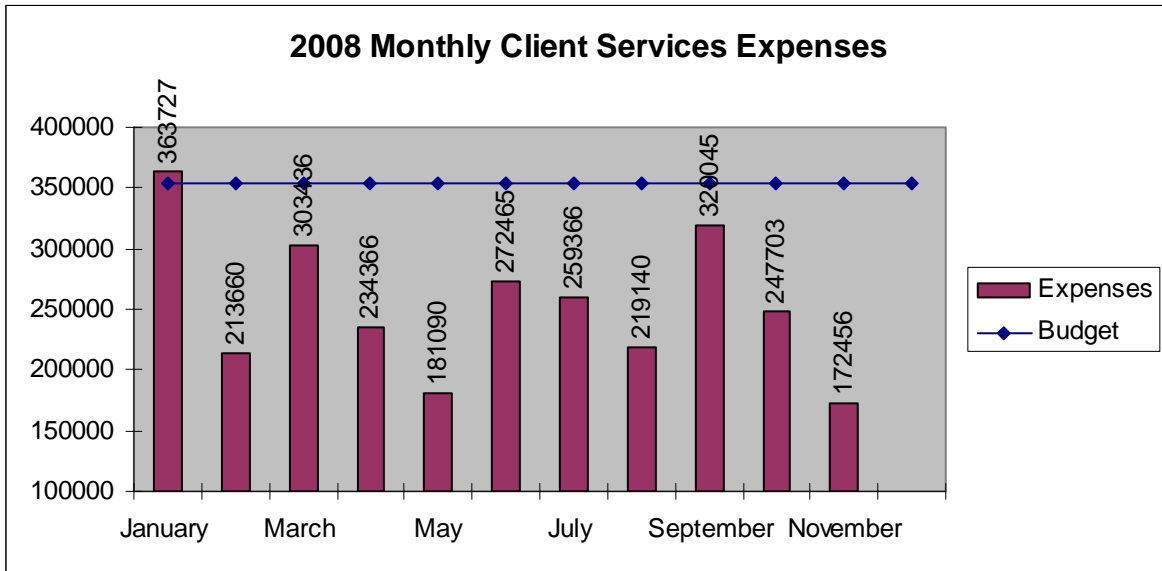
Below are selected November reports from the CCVSC Finance Department. The following charts/graphs depict the overall expenditures by area and type.

Client services include: Financial Assistance for Medical, Food, Infant Layette, Personal Hygiene, Shoes & Clothing

Comparative Chart Analysis



Actual 2008 Expenses



Total 2008 Expense Analysis

	Total Budget	YTD Expenditure	YTD Encumbr	Remaining Expenditures	2008 Projection	Budget Variance
Salaries	1,629,691	1,380,492	-	127,075	1,507,567	122,124
Fringe Benefits	607,036	548,640	-	9,160	557,800	49,236
Commodities	47,618	34,711	-	10,450	45,161	2,457
Contract Services	580,233	277,422	110,883	110,883	388,305	191,928
Controlled Expenditures	267,425	267,425	-	-	267,425	-
Client Services	4,296,807	2,787,454	33,000	344,000	3,131,454	1,165,353
Other Expenditures	587,369	290,216	22,549	22,549	312,765	274,604
Capital Outlay	81,850	41,313	902	902	42,215	39,635
Total Expenditures	8,098,029	5,627,673	228,776	625,019	6,252,692	1,845,337

Assistance Department:

November financial assistance totaled \$172,456, down from \$247,703 issued during October and down from \$320,894 issued in November of 2007. Year to date client assistance for 2008 is \$2,787,454 and YTD for 2007 was \$2,721,319 up \$66,135.

The November Financial Assistance Department activity report follows below.

Indicator	November 2008*
Number of clients seeking hardship assistance	698
Total applications taken	656
Applications Withdrawn/Denied	(218)
Total applications approved for hardship assistance (with trans.)	438
Transportation only approvals	(206)
F/A applications approved	232

*2007 numbers are not presented because the Paradox system inflated the number of visitors. These numbers were not a true comparison.

Indicator	YTD 2008
Number of clients seeking hardship assistance	8994
Total applications taken	6796
Applications Withdrawn/Denied	(2115)
Total applications approved for hardship assistance (with trans.)	4681
Transportation only approvals	(2177)
F/A applications approved	2504

During November, 2008, 41 veterans applied for assistance for the first time bringing the 2008 YTD total to 566. In October of 2007, 48 veterans applied for assistance for the first time bringing the 2007 YTD total to 481. Of the 41 new applicants, 24 were approved, 3 were denied and 14 were withdrawn.

Listed below is a breakdown of appeals for the month of November, 2008.

Number of workdays	17
Cases on hand beginning of month	15
Cases received	+16
Cases worked	<u>-23</u>
Cases on hand end of month	8

<u>Appeal Officer Appeals</u>	Nov. 2008	YTD
Cases approved	0	59
Cases denied	16	205
Cases withdrawn, no show	2	81
Cases withdrawn	2	54
No determination at Level II (Referred to Level III)	0	2
Cases referred back to Financial Asst./Social Worker	2	27
*Cases not eligible for appeal	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	23	439

<u>Board Appeals</u>	Nov. 2008	YTD
Cases approved	11	118
Cases denied	9	71
Cases withdrawn	0	8
Cases verifying fraud	0	15
Fraud/Fraudulent application	0	1
Cases Referred back to financial Asst./Social Worker	0	1
Client not eligible (not a veteran)	0	0
Board agreed with Level II (no assistance granted)	0	0
No action taken by the Board	0	0
Asst. rescinded due to false statements on application	0	1
Fraud expunged	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	20	216

Medical and Other Transportation:

November medical assistance expensed for transportation totaled \$4,578 for the month, \$4,486 for bus tickets and \$92 for taxi services.

Medical and Dental Programs:

Medical payments for November amounted to \$1,513 with \$943 expensed for Dental and \$570 for Vision. Year to date medical expenses totaled \$38,337. Dental payments year to date are \$32,133 and Vision year to date payments are \$4,535.

\$0 in Miscellaneous Medical payments were expensed in November. Year to date Miscellaneous Medical payments are \$1,670.

Memorial Affairs Department:

\$8,919.41 was expensed during November, 2008 for indigent veteran funeral expenses, down \$27 from October, 2008. During November, 10 indigent burials were approved. The burials were for 1 Air Force, 1 Marine, 2 Navy and 6 Army veterans.

Following are the 2008 Year to Date statistics for Memorial Affairs:

	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>2008 YTD</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>2007 YTD</u>
DD14 Search	157	1,892	324	3,511
Benefits Counseling	589	9,411	1,266	11,344
Undelivered-Incorrect Headstones/Research	32	580	138	1,967
Presidential Memorial Certificates	146	2,151	431	4,319
National Cemetery Referrals	266	2,595	201	2,766
Blue Star Service Banners	2	35	0	35

Veterans Service Officers:

Following are some of the major statistics reported by VSO Melinda Halliburton for the month of November, 2008 for the Brecksville satellite office.

	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Compensation DIC Claims & Follow ups	33	521
Pension claims and follow ups	8	166
Medical	9	163
Power of Atty. to Service Organizations	8	150
Misc. Applications/Correspondence	62	1,033
All Other	<u>25</u>	<u>332</u>
Total	145	2,365

Following are some of the major statistics reported by VSO Robert Erb for the month of November 2008 for the Wade Park satellite office.

	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Compensation DIC Claims & Follow ups	58	551
Pension claims and follow ups	26	287
Medical	8	76
Power of Atty. to Service Organizations	21	217
Misc. Applications/Correspondence	24	351
All Other	<u>35</u>	<u>507</u>
Total	172	1,989

November performance indicators report for the VSO division indicates the following activities were accomplished:

**November
2008**

	VETERAN				DEPENDENT			
	2007	YTD '07	2008	YTD '08	2007	YTD '07	2008	YTD '08
Compensation/DIC Claims	48	518	52	548	2	48	0	15
Follow-up Pending Claims	114	1044	89	1509	3	81	5	58
Pension Claims	27	394	34	295	27	178	10	128
Follow-up Pending Claims	61	481	57	771	38	376	25	363
Medical	18	214	26	380	4	26	1	52
Notice of Disagreements	11	113	6	129	0	10	1	6
Appeals & Waivers	12	97	9	88	0	14	9	7
Eligibility Verification Reports	1	62	1	58	2	31	0	39
Change of Address	8	87	8	86	2	9	3	9
Education Assistance	4	56	3	58	0	13	0	20
Cert. Eligibility - Home Loan	4	55	1	36	0	2	0	2
Insurance Discharges, Request for copy	0	3	0	3	0	17	1	15
Headstone/Marker Application	90	1359	100	1431	6	191	6	118
Referrals to Other Agencies	2	166	10	149	0	37	2	22
P of A Service Organization	71	909	56	671	17	225	10	120
Misc. Application/Corresp.	238	2026	213	3556	432	371	33	505
Ohio Veterans Home	3	79	12	71				
Burial Benefits					9	55	2	51
High School Diploma Applications	2	39	2	35				
Discharge Upgrades	9	48	6	63				
10-10 EZ Forms	1	13	1	27				
TOTAL	<u>724</u>	<u>7763</u>	<u>686</u>	<u>9964</u>	<u>162</u>	<u>1691</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>1552</u>

% Chg - 11.3%
% Chg. YTD 21.8%

TOTAL (Vet + Dep)

	'07	YTD '07	'08	YTD '08
	480	4883	385	5104
	42	591	29	470
	522	5474	414	5574

Interviews: Service Dept. Clients	436	4404	363	4786	44	479	22	318
Fin. Asst. Referrals	39	533	29	450	3	58	0	20
Office YTD	475	4937	392	5236	47	537	22	338
Phone Calls	2323	24452	2182	19463				

Information Systems:

ClientTrack (Primary focus)

The agency is on a month-to-month contract with ClientTrack. The ClientTrack Help Desk still answers the phone, but that is the only contact we have with them. Land (Customer Support) came during mid-November to talk with us and review the situation. Basically nothing has come from our discussions with Steve (Sales VP) or Land. There are still many unanswered e-mails and Issues which were reported long ago. We appear to have been unofficially abandoned as a client by ClientTrack. Reporting is being done by a combination of manual and automated processes until eVetAssist is installed and running in January, 2009.

eVetAssist

A trial version of SQL Server 2005 was installed on the KnowledgeTree server, per John Yang's request. A licensed copy was also ordered and approved by the ADP Board. We reviewed our data versus John Yang's list of data to be pre-loaded. We have some of the information he requested, but not all of it. We will communicate that to John in writing. The ISC is setting up a VPN account so John can interact directly with the database on our server.

The VSC will be capturing data for eVetAssist from January 1 onward. Plans are to go "live" when John Yang returns from vacation in mid-January. This enables us to report on a full year's worth of data from one system. We are not planning to convert any of our historical data because of the poor quality of information converted from the original Paradox system.

High speed county network

AT&T installed most of the required networking equipment to support fiber connections in the Public Defender's computer room. Testing and cutover to the new high speed network will begin in mid-December. The VSC should be "live" during December. The resulting network should be at least seven times faster than our current T-1 connection.

VSO Scanning

The VSO's are now scanning paperwork created since the Recorder's office scanned and microfilmed their original documents in February, 2006. The process is tedious, but is going well, particularly with the help of our two new VSO's. The scanned files will be microfilmed once the scanning is completed and the original paper documents will be destroyed once the Ohio Historical Society and the Ohio Auditor approve their destruction. Scanning of critical documents will then become a part of the normal daily process, similar to the Financial Assistance process.

County Ombudsman Office:

No new information or problems were reported regarding the CCVSC.

Ohio Veterans Home Network:

During November, four veterans were transported to the Sandusky home for tours and admission evaluations.

Department of Veterans Services:

The next Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee is scheduled for January 15, 2009.

Submitted by:

**Robert E. Schloendorn
Executive Director**