



American Legion
MEL BAHER
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans
FRANK POCCHI
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans
DANIEL T. WEIST
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars
CLAYTON E. UZELL
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America
BOB POTTS
COMMISSIONER

JON REISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115



MINUTES

DATE: April 1, 2015 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Daniel T. Weist, President
Mel Baher, Vice President
Frank Pocci, Secretary
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Clayton E. Uzell, Commissioner
Brian Gutkoski, Asst. County Prosecutor
Lorri Slivka, Executive Secretary

EXCUSED: Jon Reiss, Executive Director

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Dan Weist followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Clay Uzell and seconded by Frank Pocci to dispense with the reading of the Consent Agenda and to accept the agenda with the necessary corrections and/or additions. (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes.)

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

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

Mel Baher – American Legion

- Sunday, March 1st – the American Legion 13th District Spring Conference was held at American Legion Post 610 in Brook Park, Ohio. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. I presented the District financial report for January 2015, as District Finance Officer.
- Saturday, March 7th – I attended the OSAVSC Second District meeting for training at the VFW Post in Perrysville, Ohio. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. and ended at 12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 12th – I attended the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 17th – I attended the American Legion Post 91 annual St. Patrick's Day celebration.

- Monday, March 23rd – I attended the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting at American Legion Post 610 in Brook Park, Ohio. I presented the February 2015 financial report for approval, as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, March 26th – I attended the American Legion Post 91 executive committee meeting held at 7:00 p.m., where I serve as an elected board member.
- Friday, March 27th – I departed for the OSAVSC Spring Conference in Dublin, Ohio. I attended the Friday evening mandatory session for reappointed commissioners. I also attended the mandatory Saturday morning session for reappointed commissioners. I attended the afternoon training session with my fellow commissioners.

Upcoming Events:

- Wednesday, April 1st – the American Legion 13th District Council meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 469 in Cleveland, Ohio. I will be presenting the executive board approved financial report for February 2015, as District Finance Officer.
- Wednesday, April 8th – My wife and I, along with some of my fellow commissioners and Executive Director Jon Reiss, will be attending the pre-screening of the film “Last Days in Vietnam” to be held at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square at 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, April 9th – the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday, April 23rd – the American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 27th – the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting is scheduled at 7:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 469 in Cleveland, Ohio. I will be presenting the March 2015 financial reports, as District Finance Officer.

Bob Potts – VVA

- March 3rd – I attended the Chapter 249 board meeting and membership meeting.
- March 4th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- March 7th – I attended the District 2 training in Perrysville, Ohio.
- March 11th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- March 18th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- March 25th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- March 27th – I attended the OSAVSC Spring Conference in Dublin, Ohio.

Clay Uzell – VFW

- March 4th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- March 7th – I attended training for District 2 at VFW Post 8586 in Perrysville, Ohio at 10:00 a.m.
- March 8th – I attended the District 4 VFW Conference at Post 3809 in Middletown, Ohio and gave District 4 safety statistics.
- March 11th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- March 18th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- March 23rd – I attended the Past President’s Dinner at Parma Post 1978 and called bingo for the ladies.
- March 25th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- March 27 & 28th – I attended the OSAVSC Spring Conference in Dublin, Ohio along with my fellow commissioners and executive director.

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- I will be giving my financial report at the monthly AMVETS meeting on April 7th.
- The honor guard served their monthly duty at the Ohio Western Reserve Cemetery.

Other Activities:

- During March, I attended one open and one appeals meeting at the CCVSC.
- I referred one veteran to our service department and am currently working with a WW2 veteran to take him to the Parma Vet Center for him to apply for benefits for loss of hearing and a hearing aid.
- March 27-29th, I attended the OSAVSC Spring Conference in Dublin, Ohio along with the other commissioners from the CCVSC.
- I attended the meeting of the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Post 34 the morning of March 27th.
- March 22nd – I attended the ITAM Department of Ohio meeting at Post 1 in Lorain where I gave my report as state adjutant.

Following are some VA news items for March 2015

Washington – The federal initiative to provide timely decisions on disability payments to Veterans has crossed a major milestone in its final sprint to eliminate the backlog of Veterans’ benefits claims. The major transformation effort to apply new technology and process solutions has paid off at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It reduced its inventory of backlogged claims from a high of 611,000 claims in March of 2013 to fewer than 200,000 this week, while at the same time improving decision quality.

“Make no mistake, we’re not slowing down short of the finish line,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey. “Our goal is to eliminate the claims backlog by the end of 2015 – meaning all Veterans will receive timely and accurate decisions on their disability claims.”

Hickey credited a combination of factors for the 67-percent drop in backlog: first, the extra hours of work put in by dedicated benefits claims processors across the nation, who have worked evenings, Saturdays and Sundays to drive the backlog down; as well as procedural efficiencies backed by powerful automation tools and paperless claims processing. In addition, she cited the transformation of Veterans Benefits Administration’s training and quality assurance programs resulting in steady increases in the accuracy of decisions.

Dan Weist – DAV

- I attended both open public board meetings and both Level III appeal hearings during the month of March.
- March 7th – I attended the OSAVSC Second District meeting for training at the VFW Post in Perrysville, Ohio at 10:00 a.m.
- I attended the OSAVSC Spring Conference and Executive Committee session in Dublin, Ohio from March 27-28th.
- I attended the North Olmsted VFW meeting on March 18th. Nominations were held and I was elected Quartermaster.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Executive Director provided board members with a working copy of the proposed 2016 Budget along with a report on the loss of population in Cuyahoga County. Discussion took place and recommendations were made. The revised budget will be discussed at a Special Meeting of the Board on Wednesday, April 8, 2015 immediately following the Level III appeals hearings.

A proposed revision to the Guideline for Medical Transportation was tabled and will be addressed at the next board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

CCVSC Board members earned the required training credits for ODVS certification for Year 2014.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

The End of the Vietnam War Ceremony will take place on April 30, 2015 at Mall A at 5:30 p.m.

At OSAVSC Training in Dublin, Ohio, Commissioners learned that veterans in the Northeast Ohio area will not qualify to use a non-VA medical care center under pro care guidelines, because they live within 40 driving miles of a VA facility. The Veterans Choice Card Program is a temporary program that is used for qualifying medical care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs. Please call 1-866-606-8198 for information, to make an appointment, and to ensure that treatment has been authorized.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:


There were no items for Executive Session.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Clay Uzell to adjourn the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

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



Daniel T. Weist, President



Frank Pocci, Secretary

CONTACT INFORMATION

Requests for Financial Assistance:	Steve Fernandez, Finance Operations Manager (216-698-2391)
Filing claims with the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs:	Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Manager (216-698-2639)
Memorial Affairs:	Laurene Rutkowski, Manager (216-698-2655)
Social Work Dept.:	Terry Walker, Manager, Social Worker/Case Management (216-698-2379)
Executive Director:	Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)
Commissioners:	Lorri Slivka, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2646)