



American Legion
MEL BAHER
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans
FRANK POCCI
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

Ph: 216.698.2600 • Fax: 216.698.2650
Email: vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115



MINUTES

DATE: February 4, 2015 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Daniel T. Weist, President
Mel Baher, Vice President
Frank Pocci, Secretary
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Clayton Uzell
Jon Reiss, Executive Director
Lorri Slivka, Executive Secretary

EXCUSED: Brian Gutkoski, Asst. County Prosecutor

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 Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts 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

Asst. County Prosecutor, Brian Gutkoski, arrived at 9:40 a.m.

Mel Baher – American Legion

- Wednesday, January 7th – the American Legion 13th District Council meeting was scheduled to be held at American Legion Post 309 in Maple Hts., Ohio. The meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum. I reserved giving my financial report until the executive board meeting on January 26, 2015.
- Thursday, January 8th – the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. I did not attend due to a prior commitment.
- Saturday, January 17th through 18th – I attended the American Legion Department of Ohio Mid-winter conference at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Worthington, Ohio.
- Thursday, January 22nd – I attended the American Legion Post 91 executive committee meeting at 7:00 p.m., where I serve as an elected board member.

- Monday, January 26th – I attended the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting at American Legion Post 309 in Maple Hts., Ohio. I presented the December 2014 financial report as District Finance Officer.

Upcoming Events:

- Wednesday, February 4th – the American Legion 13th District Council meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at Fairview Park Post 738. I will be presenting the executive board approved financial report for December 2014 as District Finance Officer.
- Monday, February 9th – I have been advised the interviews for the American Legion seat on the CCVSC Board will be conducted. I have not received any communication as to a time slot, as of this writing. I also understand the appointment should be made by the judges by Wednesday, February 18, 2015.
- Thursday, February 12th – the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, February 23rd – the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting is scheduled at 7:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 738 in Fairview Park, Ohio. I will be presenting January 2015 financial reports as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, February 26th – the American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

Bob Potts – VVA

- January 6th – I attended the VVA Chapter 249 board meeting; plans for the Vietnam TET Commemoration were discussed.
- January 6th – I attended the VVA Chapter 249 membership meeting.
- January 7th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- January 14th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals meeting.
- January 21st – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- January 22nd – I, along with Commissioner Pocci, visited the hospitality room for the District 7 VFW Mid-winter Conference in Independence, Ohio. While there, I spoke with two Vietnam veterans from Marietta, Ohio regarding VA benefits and offered counseling.
- January 27th – I attended the VVA Chapter 249 membership meeting where preparations were made for the End of the Vietnam War Commemoration on April 30, 2015.
- January 28th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- January 30th – I talked with a veteran regarding his VA claim and referred him to a CCVSC service officer.
- February 3rd – I attended the VVA Chapter board meeting where final preparations were made for the Vietnam TET dinner on February 15th at the Moosehead Hoof & Ladder in Olmsted Falls, Ohio.
- February 3rd – I attended the VVA Chapter 249 membership meeting.

Clayton Uzell – VFW

- January 3rd through 4th – I attended the VFW Voice of Democracy Banquet for District 5 at Marietta Post 5108 on Saturday evening and the District 5 conference on Sunday morning.
- January 7th – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- January 10th – I attended the VFW Voice of Democracy Banquet at District 11 Columbus Post 9857.
- January 12th – I attended the Lake County Past President’s Dinner in Mentor, Ohio.
- January 14th – I attended the CCVSC Level III appeals hearings.
- January 21st – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- January 22nd through 25th – I attended the VFW State Conference held at the Holiday Inn Independence. I attended all of the business sessions. I presented awards to our State Police and

Firefighter of the Year during the joint forum. I attended the Voice of Democracy Awards Banquet on Saturday evening where seven \$2,000, one \$2,500, one \$3,000, one \$4,000, one \$5,000 and one \$8,000 scholarships were given to the top twelve winners of the essay contest. The theme was “Why Veterans are Important to Our Nation’s History and Future.”

- I attended the Level III appeals hearings.

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- I will be attending the AMVETS Post 80 general meeting on February 10th where I will give my financial report and investments for 2015.
- The honor guard served their monthly duty at the Ohio Western Reserve Cemetery on February 3rd. We, therefore, moved our meeting to the second Tuesday.
- All membership fees have been submitted to the national organization.
- The 71st AMVETS National Convention will be held in Birmingham, Alabama from August 15-23, 2015. Birmingham is the home to the nation’s oldest Veteran’s Day celebration.

Other Activities:

- During the month of January, I attended all of the open and appeals meetings at the Veterans Service Commission.
- I referred several veterans to our service officers for claims filing.
- I attended the VFW Convention at the Holiday Inn Rockside on Thursday, January 15th along with Commissioner Pocci. We had the opportunity to visit with several veterans and with a WWII marine, and also met with Commissioner Uzell.
- I attended and conducted the meeting of the Italian American War Veterans Post 34 on January 30th (in our Commander’s absence) where I gave the monthly report. An executive meeting will be scheduled for February to discuss post activities and charitable donations for 2015.

Following are some of the recommendations from the veterans’ organizations to the VA for 2015:

- 1) Timely access to VA healthcare
 - a. Congress should invest significant new funding in VA – likely more than \$500 million in the coming fiscal year – to grow capacity with new staff and up-to-date facilities.
 - b. The VA should better monitor how patients are referred to non-VA healthcare providers, especially through the newly created Veterans Choice Card, to make sure the system is not creating more referral backlogs, veteran billing problems and access issues.
- 2) Veteran Claims and Appeals
 - a) The department must “openly and honestly” reassess whether its goal, created five years ago, that all claims would be completed within 125 days with 98 percent accuracy by the end of 2015 remains realistic and achievable.
 - b) Congress should pass legislation for an appeals pilot program that would streamline the process for vets willing to collect private evidence to justify their appeals, a change that could shave years off the process.

Dan Weist – DAV

- I attended all of the CCVSC open public and appeals meetings during the month of January.
- I transported three veterans to appointments at the Wade Park VA Medical Center.
- I will be attending funeral services for James Joyce at Chambers Funeral Home in North Olmsted on February 4th and will participate in the VFW ceremony. The inurnment will be at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Executive Director's monthly budget review will now be a part of the State of the Commission and Finance report which is presented at the open public meeting on the third Wednesday of each month.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Clay Uzell to approve Resolution 2015-13 requesting authority for five CCVSC Commissioners and Executive Director to attend various conferences sponsored by the Ohio state Association of Veterans Service Commissioners in Ohio on various dates in 2015, expenses not to exceed \$7,501.68.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to approve Resolution 2015-14 requesting authority for seven CCVSC service officers in training to attend the OSACVSO new service officer school from April 13-16, 2015 in Dublin, Ohio, expenses not to exceed \$6,728.00.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Dan Weist to approve Resolution 2015-15 requesting authority for OSACVSO membership dues for six CCVSC service officers, expenses not to exceed \$300.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2015-16 requesting authority for NACVSO membership dues for six CCVSC service officers, expenses not to exceed \$180.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2015-17 providing for the purchase of uniform shirts from Cintas for full-time employees of the CCVSC, expenses not to exceed \$4,000.

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

The Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners Spring Conference will be held from March 27-29, 2015 in Dublin, Ohio. The Commissioners and Executive Director will be attending.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

The presentation by David Romans, Ph.D., Veterans' Benefits Consultant, has been rescheduled to Wednesday, February 18, 2015.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Clay Uzell to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Uzell, Weist. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:40 a.m.)

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


AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Uzell, Weist. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:07 a.m.)

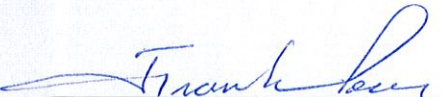
In Executive Session, the Board conferred with the Executive Director about a personnel issue and was advised on how to proceed.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

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


Daniel T. Weist, President


Frank Pocci, Secretary

CONTACT INFORMATION

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| 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) |

