



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**CHRISTOPHER GRAU**  
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](mailto:vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us)  
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

DATE/TIME: May 1, 2019 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Clay Uzell, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
Christopher Grau, Secretary  
Frank Pocci, Commissioner  
Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Brian Gutkoski, Asst. County Prosecutor

EXCUSED: None

VISITORS: William Blackie, Attorney

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Clay Uzell 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, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:**

#### Christopher Grau – DAV

- April 3rd – I attended the CCVSC public meeting.
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – I provided a referral to Clermont County VSC Director Franklin Morrow for Alexander Shure, USA. As a result, he was able to receive all of his missing pay.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Appeals meeting.
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – I recused myself from the JVC Lakewood/Rocky River meeting due to an ongoing personnel matter at the VSC.
- April 17<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC public meeting held at VFW Post 1056 in Euclid.
- April 18<sup>th</sup> – I attended DAV Chapter 108 monthly meeting.
- April 26<sup>th</sup> – I participated in a Memorial Day Ceremony planning meeting.

### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- I completed the financial report for Post 80 for March of 2019.
- The Honor Guard continues to serve funeral honor duties at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery.
- The AMVETS Post 80 will hold their annual dinner to honor the Honor Guard on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- I advised on the eligibility for the honor flight now being available to Vietnam Vets.
- I advised anyone who is, or knows a Vietnam vet, that the vet could be eligible for blue water contaminant exposure and to be sure to file a claim in case Blue Water is approved by the VA.

#### *Other Activities:*

- During April I attended all of the scheduled meetings at the CCVSC.
- I participated in the CCVSC outreach meeting during April.
- I attended the Italian American War Veterans meeting and gave my report. The next meeting will be held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- I attended the state department meeting for the Italian American War Vets in Lorain, Ohio where participation in the National convention to be held in Syracuse, New York was discussed. A state convention will be held at Post 1 in Lorain on June 9<sup>th</sup>.
- I presented two families of deceased veterans with flag cases. The families were very appreciative and I was invited to a widow's home to view how she had displayed the case with the flag on top of a cabinet.
- I helped a veteran get into the VA hospital as he was running out of insurance; he is now being treated at Wade Park. I also told him that, if necessary on a long term basis, he may be interested in the Veterans home in Sandusky.
- I advised another veteran who is an AMVETS member on how to go to the VA and apply to get enrolled in the VA system that may be beneficial to him in the future.

### Bob Potts – VVA

- April 3<sup>rd</sup> – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – I stopped by the CBOC to visit with our VSO's, but both doors were closed. In front of Bill's office was a vet wanting to talk to Bill. I asked if I could help and we sat down to discuss her problem and discussed other benefits she may qualify for with the VA and the CCVSC.
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – I attended the VVA Chapter 249 membership meeting.
- April 6<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion Post 572 spaghetti dinner and fundraiser.
- April 9<sup>th</sup> – I attended a Meet and Greet with the new Director of the Ohio Department of Veteran Services Deborah Ashenhurst.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> - I attended the CCVSC appeals meeting.
- April 17<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC outreach open public meeting at VFW Post 1056 in Euclid.
- April 18<sup>th</sup> – While on a visit to the new Menards Home Center several people approached me to thank me for my service and, also, two veterans stopped by talk with me about VA benefits.
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> – I attended an event with a speaker from the VVA Speakers Bureau at Normandy High School.
- April 24<sup>th</sup> - I attended the CCVSC appeals meeting.
- April 30<sup>th</sup> – the end of the Vietnam War.
- May 9<sup>th</sup> – The VVA Speakers Bureau will be speaking at North Royalton High School.
- May 16<sup>th</sup> – The VVA Speakers Bureau will be speaking at Rocky River High School.

### Mel Baher – American Legion

- I attended all scheduled meetings of the CCVSC during the month of April 2019. Following is a report of my activities outside of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for the month of April 2019.

- Wednesday, April 3rd – I attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Council meeting held at American Legion Post 572, in Parma, Ohio. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. I presented the executive board approved financial reports for February 2019, as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, April 11th – I attended the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. and I presented the current membership report, as Post 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander.
- Monday, April 22nd – I attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Executive board meeting, held at American Legion Post 572, in Parma, Ohio. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. I presented the March 2019 finance report for executive board approval, as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, April 25th – I attended the American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting at 7:00 p.m. I presented an updated membership report, as Post 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander. Post 91 has achieved its 2019 membership quota and all-time high for its 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year.

#### Clay Uzell – VFW

- April 3rd – I attended the CCVSC Open Public meeting.
- April 9<sup>th</sup> – ODVS Director Debra Ashenurst visited the CCVSC and had an informative discussion with Commissioners and Executive Director. She was then given a tour of the facility.
- April 10th - I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.
- April 12<sup>th</sup> – I stopped for a visit with CCVSC employees after an appointment at the Parma CBOC.
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – I attended the VFW District 7 testimonial for Commander Robertson and President Householder held at Solon VFW Post 1853 and enjoyed a great steak cookout.
- April 15th – I attended the VFW Post 7536 meeting. Election of officers was held. All chairs were filled and I will be Post Commander again.
- April 17th - I attended the CCVSC open public outreach meeting held at Euclid VFW Post 1056. The meeting was well attended and veteran ID cards were issued.
- April 22<sup>nd</sup> – I attended funeral services for VFW Auxiliary member Eileen Geordt at DiCicco Funeral Home. Both Auxiliary and Post members participated.
- April 24th - I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.
- April 27<sup>th</sup> – I attended the Pennsylvania State Auxiliary President Charlotte Swogger-Lopes Testimonial Banquet. The event was held at the Quality Inn, Pittsburg, North New Kensington, Pa. It was a great time.
- I referred one client to the CCVSC for hearing aids and made four hospital visits.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

The Executive Director provided board members with the 2020 Budget for their review.

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Mel Baher to adopt the CCVSC 2020 Budget with recommended corrections.

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

The new schedule is making it possible to serve veterans who are unable to visit the CCVSC during the old business hours. The Executive Director will continue to provide statistics to compare the number of clients seen with the new schedule available in relation to the number of clients for the same time period on the old schedule. The Board will make a decision about whether or not to adopt the new schedule permanently in the coming months.

Overtime opportunities will be available to all employees, including the Outreach Coordinator, at the Executive Director's discretion. Statistics will be provided to the Board in the future.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Frank Pocci to retain Bill Blackie as legal counsel to advise on collective bargaining matters.

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

The main office building is up for sale. The Executive Director met with a potential buyer to discuss proposed changes should the sale go through.

County spending limits have changed. The spending limit requiring a resolution has been raised from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and the spending limit requiring an RFP has been raised from \$24, 999 to \$49,999.

The opportunity for overtime may be utilized to cover the satellite offices for call-offs and scheduled time off.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Frank Pocci would like new magnetic name tags for outreach events.

Chris Grau inquired about the VSC participating in the Rocky River Memorial Day parade. The Executive Director will contact the Outreach Coordinator. 3,700 flags will be placed on graves at the Rocky River Cemetery.

Clay Uzell will be participating in Memorial Day services at Lakeview Cemetery. Wreaths will be laid by Commissioner Uzell, and fellow post members, for the different wars in which they served.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Chris Grau to go in to Executive Session to discuss employment, discipline and/or dismissal of a public employee and collective bargaining matters.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:44 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:22 a.m. In Executive Session personnel and bargaining unit matters were discussed.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to adjourn the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

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

  
Clay Uzell, President

  
Chris Grau, Secretary

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Requests for Financial Assistance/  
Filing claims with the Dept. of  
Veterans' Affairs/Memorial Affairs:

Charlene Amos, Service Officer Mgr. (216-698-3831)  
Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)  
Open  
Terry Walker, Social Worker/Case Mgmt. (216-698-2379)  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)

Finance Dept.:  
Social Work Dept.:  
Executive Director:  
Commissioners: