



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCHI**  
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

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### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** October 7, 2020 9:30 a.m.

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

**EXCUSED:** None.

**VISITORS:** None.

**PURPOSE:** GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Mel Baher followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell 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:**

#### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

##### AMVETS Post 80 Events

- The Post cancelled the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

##### Other Activities

- During September I attended the scheduled meetings at the CCVSC.
- I delivered a flag case to the widow of a deceased veteran.
- I distributed grocery bags as advertisement for the CCVSC.
- I have advised our secretary of the need to contact the daughter of a 91-year-old veteran who needs help in trying to get some VA assistance, possibly a pension.
- The Italian American War Veterans held and Executive meeting. There will be no fees for membership for 2021 and the Christmas party was cancelled. I will complete the tax reports this month.

- The Catholic War Veterans Post I represent continues to cancel meetings and will likely not resume until we are safe from COVID 19.

#### Clay Uzell – VFW

- September 2<sup>nd</sup> - I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.

Note: The VFW Post 7536 meeting was cancelled due to the Community Center closure to outside organizations. The post will be looking for a new place to meet in October.

- I assisted a post member who is in need of home repairs and electric chair stair lift installation. A representative from the organization went to his home, accessed the veterans needs, and will apply for a grant.
- I provided a veteran with contact information to obtain a copy of his DD-214.

#### Bob Potts – VVA

- September 2<sup>nd</sup> - I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.

Note: I worked with two Vietnam Marine veterans regarding VA Medical. One had questions regarding his medications and the other was given a referral to help with a veteran's claim.

- I helped a veteran who reached out on Nextdoor. The veteran was searching for members of his unit and requesting help obtaining his military ribbons and badges.
- VVA Chapter 249 is scheduling its first meeting since March. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 1400.

#### Christopher Grau – DAV

- September 2<sup>nd</sup> - I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.
- September 11<sup>th</sup> – I attended the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony at the City of Rocky River Memorial Hall.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> – I attended the CCVSC open public meeting.
- September 17<sup>th</sup> – I attended DAV Chapter 108 Executive meeting and general chapter meeting.
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeals meeting.

Note: DAV Chapter 108 – The next scheduled meeting is 9/17/2020.

- JVC of Lakewood/Rocky River – scheduled meetings will resume in January 2021.

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- I attended all the scheduled meetings of the CCVSC during the month of September 2020. Following is a report of my activities outside of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for the month of September 2020.
- Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> – I conducted the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting as Post Commander. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with minutes of previous meetings approved, a finance report was presented to the body, a membership report was given, and an activities report was presented.
- Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Council meeting at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held at American Legion Post 703 in Parma, Ohio. I presented the July 2020 executive board approved Finance report, as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup> – As Post Commander, I conducted the Post 91 Executive Board meeting. After all updated reports were given, a discussion was held concerning planned events for October.

Due to COVID-19 several planned events are being cancelled for October. The board approved planning of a reverse raffle for November 14, 2020.

- Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> – I attended the Ride with Valor event at 11:00 a.m. This event was to provide a homeless female veteran, and her two daughters, with a donated and completely remodeled home. The home is located on Loretta Ave., on the west side of Cleveland. Work on the donated home was provided with all volunteer workers and donations from the American Legion Department of Ohio Charities, Home Depot, several VFW and American Legion posts. The event had over 100 attendees and was posted on Facebook.
- Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup> – I attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Executive board meeting at 7:30 p.m., held at American Legion Post 703, in Parma, Ohio. I presented the August 2020 finance report for executive board approval, as District Finance Officer.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Discovery meetings are in progress for a new client management system. VetPro, Salesforce and eVet all have something to offer. Research continues.

The new vehicle will be available mid-December. All vehicles will be wrapped.

Jan-Pro will be brought in to clean and sanitize the office. This is a work in progress.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell to adopt all remaining policies that were discussed and updated.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell to adopt all remaining position descriptions that were discussed and updated.

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

An employee overpayment was discussed. The CCVSC will no longer actively collect on the overpayment of Darlene Smith.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Chris Grau to update the procurement manual dollar amount to \$5,000, per the new county policy.

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

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Gym membership and the purchase of personal equipment with wellness dollars was discussed due to gym closings as a result of COVID-19. The discussion was tabled until the October 21, 2020 meeting.

The Executive Director will discuss possible office space in exchange for services with the USO and Aprisen. USO may provide refreshments for the lobby and Aprisen may provide classes for the veterans in exchange for the space.

A motion was made by Clay Uzell and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2020-14 for the purchase of training solutions through Skillsoft. Expenses not to exceed \$4,000/year.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Chris Grau to approve Resolution 2020-15 for the purchase of military service branch pins. The pins will be purchased from Novak Supply and will not exceed \$7,000.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2020-16 to reimburse staff for gym memberships or gym equipment, not to exceed \$65/month, per employee, and an agency total of \$25,000.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Chris Grau to approve Resolution 2020-17 for the purchase of a maintenance agreement with Enterprise Partners for the eVetAssist software program for the 2021 fiscal year. Expenses not to exceed \$7,000.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Clay Uzell to approve Resolution 2020-18 annually adjusting employee mileage and per diem rates for the year 2021.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2020-19 authorizing the Executive Director to utilize funds as necessary to prepare for an emergency in the year 2021, expenses not to exceed \$15,000.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Chris Grau to approve Resolution 2020-20 for the purchase of food/clothing cards from Walmart for clients of the Veterans Service Commission. Expenses not to exceed \$750,000.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell to approve Resolution 2020-21 for the purchase of protective acrylic barriers for reception workspace, security desks, and outreach team from HP Manufacturing during COVID19. Expenses not to exceed \$4,999.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Bob Potts to approve Resolution 2020-22 for the purchase of lodging kits to assist homeless veterans transitioning to permanent residency, expenses not to exceed \$40,000.

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

Resolution 2020-23 for the purchase of pint glasses for marketing has been cancelled.

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2020-24 for the installation of three electronic thermo and mask verification scanners from Identiphoto, for the purpose of healthy admittance of clients and staff. Expenses not to exceed \$4,999.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell to approve Resolution 2020-25 for the purchase of initial furniture goods for homeless veterans transitioning to permanent residency, expenses not to exceed \$45,000.

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

#### **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Jon Reiss informed the Board that bins containing outreach materials have been assembled for each of them. If more items are needed requests are welcomed.

The Executive Director reminded the Board that he will be out of the office sporadically over the next few months due to the birth of his child.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Frank Pocci and seconded by Clay Uzell to go into Executive Session to discuss certain personnel matters to include employment and discipline.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:06 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:02 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed a personnel matters, including employment and discipline.

With no further business, a motion was made by Clay Uzell and seconded by Chris Grau to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

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



Mel Baher, President



Frank Pocci, 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)  
Larry Amato, Financial Operations Mgr. (216-698-2391)  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)

Finance Dept.:  
Executive Director:  
Deputy Director:  
Commissioners: