



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
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: February 3, 2021 9:30 a.m.

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

EXCUSED: None.

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chris Grau, President.

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.) One item was set aside for Executive Session.

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

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

AMVETS Post 80 Events

- I completed the financial reports for Post 80 and sent the details via email to the commander and adjutant.
- The honor guard will continue to serve funeral honor duties at the Ohio Western Reserve Cemetery, hopefully in March.
- The Post cancelled the February meeting, and may be meeting in March.

Other Activities

- I reviewed the Medina County VSC quarterly newsletter to discuss the option of doing something similar for our Commission in promoting veteran help. The VSC would also give veterans an opportunity to sign up for a newsletter.
- I obtained my first shot for the COVID vaccine at the Wade Park VA.
- I participated in all the scheduled meetings at the CCVSC.
- I participated in the finalizing of the Union contract in January. The contract is complete and will be effective upon approval by the county.
- The Italian War Veterans hope to resume meeting by the end of April.
- The Catholic War Veterans continue to suspend meetings until further notice.

Bob Potts – VVA

- January 6th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public and Level III Appeal meeting.
- January 13th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.
- January 20th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public meeting.
- January 27th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.

Clay Uzell – VFW

- January 6th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public and Level III Appeal meeting.
- January 13th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.
- January 20th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public meeting.
- January 27th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.

Note:

The Department of Ohio VFW is still planning on holding its summer convention at Kalahari.

It will be open pending any changes made by the Governor due to COVID outbreaks.

The Supreme Court of Ohio has agreed to hear the case of the Ohio Veteran Fraternal Charitable Coalition (OVFCC) vs. the Attorney General. The machines can still operate until at least July 30, 2021.

VFW District 7 will hold its February Conference and Joint Memorial Service this Sunday, the 7th, starting at 9:00 a.m. at Parma Post 1974. I will be attending to present awards to the District Posts who participated in the Police/Fire/EMT program, for which I am the Chairman.

Mel Baher – American Legion

- I attended all the scheduled meetings of the CCVSC during the month of January 2021. Following is a report of my activities outside of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for the month of January 2021.
- Wednesday, January 6th – I attended the American Legion 13th District Council on-line virtual meeting at 7:30 p.m. I presented the executive board approved November 2020 Finance report as District Finance Officer.
- Thursday, January 14th – 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. Under Good of the Legion, planned activities for February 2021 were discussed and finalized.
- Monday, January 25th – I attended the American Legion 13th District Executive board on-line virtual meeting at 7:30 p.m. I presented the December 2020 finance report for executive board approval, as District Finance Officer.

- Thursday, January 28th – 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 February. The board approved planning of a reverse raffle for February 20, 2021, and revised Canteen operations hours, per the new governor's order. Briefly discussed were plans for the St. Patrick day menu and take-out orders.

Christopher Grau – DAV

- January 6th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public and Level III Appeals meeting.
- January 13th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.
- January 20th – I attended the CCVSC Open Public meeting.
- January 27th – I attended the CCVSC Level III Appeal meeting.

Note: I participated in the finalizing of the Union contract

There is no DAV Chapter 108 meeting in December. The next meeting is scheduled for 02/18/2021.

The Joint Veterans Council (JVC) of Lakewood & Rocky River next meeting is scheduled for 02/16/2021.

OLD BUSINESS:

Board Room upgrades were discussed. The Executive Director will obtain a quote for updating the monitor and projector, relocation of the flags and POW chair, and the purchase of a POW table. The contingency fund will be used to cover the costs.

Rekeying the office was discussed. Many keys are missing, and hundreds of unidentified keys were discovered during reorganization. Commissioner Baher suggested getting a quote for a Mul-T-Lock system. Again, the contingency fund will be used.

The Executive Director presented a plan to add electronic submission forms to the website for financial assistance and VA claims. Lucas County has the same web designer and an electronic submission feature. The Executive Director will investigate further.

A new veteran holiday program was discussed. J. Reiss will direct the Finance Supervisor to begin looking into programs that offer manufacturer coupons for the purchase of a ham or turkey for the holiday.

The Executive Director presented the idea of service days. Special programs such as winter clothing and Memorial Day flag pick-up will be scheduled for specific Saturdays and one evening. The majority of the distribution will be handled on the specified days.

Income limits will be raised to 300% of the poverty guideline for applications for dental and hearing aids.

NEW BUSINESS:

Acceptable expenditures for the financial assistance program were discussed. Guidance will be drafted.

The discussion regarding gift card sanctions was postponed until the February 17, 2021 meeting.

Using and advertising/marketing/social media firm to provide services for the CCVSC was discussed. J. Reiss will begin gathering quotes. Quotes will also be gathered for direct mailings to the veteran population of Cuyahoga County.

The Executive Director updated the Board on the VSC surplus and the possibility of using the funds for relocation.

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2021-03 for the purchase of hours (number to be determined) for customization programming for eVetAssist to upgrade systems as needed, not to exceed \$17,000.

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

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Chris Grau to go into Executive Session to discuss a certain personnel matter - employment, matters to be kept confidential, and collective bargaining.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Pocci, Potts, Uzell. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (9:51 a.m.)


The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:53 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed certain personnel matters regarding employment and discipline, a matter to be kept confidential, matters of collective bargaining, and a Level III Appeals.


President Chris Grau stated that the Board considered three (3) client appeal today.

The votes for further assistance, recorded by the Secretary, of the client appeals that were discussed in Executive Session, are attached.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Clay Uzell to adjourn the meeting at 11:59 a.m.

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



Chris Grau, President

Bob Potts, Secretary

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Charlene Amos, Service Officer Manager (216-698-3831)
Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Manager. (216-698-2639)
Terrance Ness, Financial Operations Supervisor (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: