



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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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** May 19, 2021 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Christopher Grau, President  
Frank Pocci, Vice President  
Bob Potts, Secretary  
Mel Baher, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Mark Musson, Assistant County Prosecutor

**EXCUSED:** Clay Uzell, Commissioner

**VISITORS:** Melisa Fisco, Clemans, Nelson & Associates, Inc.  
Mike Esposito, Clemans, Nelson & Associates, Inc.

**PURPOSE:** GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

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

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. One item was set aside for discussion in Executive Session (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes.)

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

#### **STATE OF THE COMMISSION AND FINANCE REPORT (Attached)**

A motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Pocci to accept the report of the Executive Director with the necessary corrections and/or additions.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to go out of the regular order of business to discuss an item from New Business.

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

Melisa M. Fisco and colleague Mike Esposito, from Clemans, Nelson & Associates, Inc., a management consulting firm, were present to discuss the option of their services with regards to collective bargaining, labor, and human resource matters.

A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Frank Pocci to return to the regular order of business and discuss Old Business.

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

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### Action Items:

1. Return to work – an in-depth discussion was had regarding the return to seeing clients face to face. Because staff is in need of additional training, it was recommended that the VSC start seeing clients face to face on June 14, 2021. There will continue to be drop boxes for documents should the client prefer to communicate remotely. There will be announcements made on social media, etc. to get the word out.

On July 10, 2021 the VSC will host a grand re-opening. Mailings will go out to all former/current clients and there will be a blast on social media and news sources to notify as many clients as possible that we are open and at full staff. Clients with pending claims will be contacted and scheduled to meet with a VA rater either in person or virtually.

Protocols for return to face to face were discussed. Staff/clients who have been fully vaccinated will no longer be required to wear a mask. Those who are not vaccinated will be required to continue wearing a mask. Staff dress code was also discussed. Staff will temporarily be permitted to wear jeans while required to maintain the business casual dress code. Leggings are not permitted. The dress code will be reassessed after a few weeks.

2. Board room upgrade – work in progress.
3. Re-key building – work in progress.
4. Website electronic submissions – work in progress.
5. Holiday ham/turkey coupon – no update.
6. Advertising/Marketing/Social Media – now a priority with the re-opening. J. Reiss will meet with M. Musson to discuss and draft the Request for Proposal (RFP).
7. Direct mail to veterans –the mailing will be drafted with the pending re-opening.
8. Outreach items – the outreach team is looking in catalogs to determine which items to purchase for the grand re-opening and future outreach events.
9. Boardroom chairs and wardrobes – all will arrive next week.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The Executive Director is researching the availability of COVID funds locally and federally to identify funds that may be used to help veterans. This will be especially useful if there are veterans that the VSC is unable to help due to policy restrictions.

After some discussion, it was decided that the executive team would track how many exceptions to policy have been granted over time. Should a trend become clear, the Board will revisit policies to determine if they need to be updated.

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

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**


A motion was made by Mel Baher and seconded by Bob Potts to go into Executive Session to discuss a matter to be kept confidential and the purchase or sale of property.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Poggi, Potts. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:20 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:35 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed matters to be kept confidential, the purchase or sale of property, and one item from correspondence.

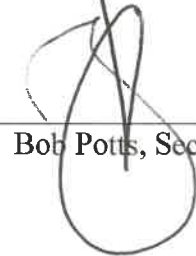
With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts and seconded by Frank Poggi to adjourn the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

AYES: Baher, Grau, Poggi, Potts. NAYS: None. Motion carried.



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Chris Grau, President



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Bob Potts, Secretary

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

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

Charlene Amos, Service Officer Mgr. (216-698-3831)  
Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)  
Terrance Ness, Financial Supervisor (216-698-2391)  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)