



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCHI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**VACANT**  
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
**JAMES RILEY**  
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America  
**BOB POTTS**  
COMMISSIONER

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY 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:** February 1, 2023 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Bob Potts, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
James Riley, Secretary  
Frank Pocci, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Matthew Convery, Assistant County Prosecutor

**EXCUSED:** None.

**VISITORS:** None.

**PURPOSE:** GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Bob Potts, President.

A motion was made by Mel Baher 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). Motion seconded by James Riley. Discussion: None.

**AYES:** Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. **NAYS:** None. Motion carried.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Executive Director Reiss stated that a notice to proceed has been given to the engineering company for the new VSC headquarters. An RFP will be submitted in eight to ten weeks followed by the six-month bidding process.

The Board reviewed the presented updates to the position descriptions. Additional changes were suggested and the position descriptions, with changes, will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to place the position of Mentor Coordinator in pay scale grade three (3). Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

**AYES:** Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. **NAYS:** None. Motion carried

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Executive and Deputy Director expressed concern regarding the first-time aid policy. Challenges of the current policy include the clients being unprepared when they return for assistance and contention when asked for additional documentation. After discussion it was decided a change will be made to the policy. The first time aid policy will only apply one time for each client.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to update the first-time aid policy limiting eligibility to the first time the client receives assistance. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

The number of positive google reviews continue to increase. The VSC overall rating has risen to over four (4) stars.

The Board discussed the client who openly recorded an interaction with the Financial Service Officer. According to M. Convery, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, per the law in Ohio, only one party must be aware that an interaction is being recorded. The Board agreed to the purchase of secondary recording devices for the staff to also record interactions that are being recorded by the client.

J. Reiss displayed a flag case that he purchased. The Board agreed that it is a viable option. Two other flag cases are on order. The Board will make a final decision once all three cases are compared.

The VSC program poverty guidelines were discussed. The current guidelines will be kept as is.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Baher announced that Post 91 will be hosting the Berea Elks on March 5, 2023. The Elks received a \$3,000 grant and will use the grant to help veterans. The Elks will be providing fitness trackers, glucose monitors, and suicide prevention information at the event.

The county is putting together a plan to help de-escalate during active shooter situations. More details to follow.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to go into Executive Session to consider the discipline of a public employee, to consider a complaint of a public employee, and client cases and appeals. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:53 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:04 p.m. In Executive Session the Board considered the discipline of a public employee, considered a complaint of a public employee, and discussed client cases and appeals.

The votes for further assistance, recorded by the Secretary, of the client appeal that was discussed in Executive Session, is attached. The Executive Director and Deputy Director were instructed on how to proceed.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Potts, President

  
James Riley, Secretary

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Filing claims with the Dept. of  
Veterans' Affairs/Memorial Affairs:  
Financial Assistance Manager:  
Finance/Operations Manager:  
Executive Director:  
Deputy Director:  
Commissioners:

Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)  
Jeanne Bell (216)-698-2635  
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)