



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCI**  
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

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### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** May 3, 2023 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Bob Potts, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
James Riley, Secretary  
Frank Pócci, 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 Frank Pócci. Discussion: None.

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

### COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- April 04, 2023 – attended 13<sup>th</sup> District council meeting held at Post 627
- April 13, 2023 – attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7 p.m.
- April 24, 2023 – attended 13<sup>th</sup> District executive board meeting held at Post 627
- April 27, 2023 – attended Post 91 executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.

Initiated several DD214 requests with Mary at the CCVSC office.  
Referred a veteran to Feronne Williams for assistance with ongoing claim.  
Volunteered at Post 91 with planned activities and work parties, as needed.

### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Participated in the scheduled commission meetings.
- Attended the AMVETS meeting in April and will attend the May meeting.
- Attended the state department meeting of the Italian American war veterans in April.

Gave replacement flags to 5 veterans whose flags outside their homes were tattered.

Gave a flag case to the family of a veteran who died in April.

Gave dog tags made by the CCVSC to three veterans.

Referred another veteran to a VSC service officer.

Assisting two widows in obtaining benefits.

### James Riley – VFW

- March 31<sup>st</sup> - April 2<sup>nd</sup> - Attended VSC Commissioner training in Columbus.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> - Attended ZOOM meeting with Sons of American Revolution Veterans Committee.
- April 10<sup>th</sup> - Attended Guitars 4 Veterans group guitar lesson at VFW 2533.
- April 11<sup>th</sup> – Attended Joint Veterans Council monthly meeting (as President) Jon Reiss also attended.
- April 13<sup>th</sup> - Attended Catholic War Vets monthly meeting
- April 14<sup>th</sup> - Performed rifle salutes for 15 Veteran funerals at Rittman National Cemetery
- April 15<sup>th</sup> - Performed rifle salute for 1 Veteran funeral in Euclid, OH
- April 18<sup>th</sup> - Attended Veterans of Foreign Wars monthly meeting at Post 2533

In April I attended several military organization meetings and some military funerals.

### Bob Potts – VVA

- April 11<sup>th</sup> – Daughters of the Revolution presentation for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – distributed pins to the chapter members along with a flag and a certificate to the chapter
- April 20<sup>th</sup> – Membership meeting for Chapter 249

Set up meeting for presentation at Rocky River High School – Speaker Bureau’s talk on the Vietnam experience. Prepared bios for each presenter.

Spoke to a veteran who was contemplating suicide.

Spoke with a veteran who was concerned because all of doctors have left the VA.1

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Memorial Day flags were delivered. About half have been distributed to area posts and cemeteries. The remaining flags will be distributed once arrangements are made.

There has been no update from RTA regarding expiring bus tickets or the Veteran Ride Free program.

J. Reiss updated the Board on the progress of the new headquarter building. After discussion, it was decided that it is not necessary to incur the expense of a generator. The computers will have battery back-up to prevent any issues with the computers. Placement of the American flag was discussed. Due to power lines, the flags will be on the building.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2023-03 to grant the Executive Director permission to transfer the accrued vacation time for an incoming employee from Summit County. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

The discussion regarding the option to reimburse employees for online fitness apps in lieu of gym memberships was moved to executive session.

Deputy Director Williams expressed concern about the Executive Director, Service Manager and Deputy Director being out of the office for training at the same time. A training schedule will be developed and discussed at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to go out of the regular order of business and into executive session to consider discipline of a public employee, to consider employment of a public employee, to discuss strategy in preparation for collective bargaining negotiations, and for client cases and appeals. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:30 a.m.)

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:27 p.m. In Executive Session the Board considered discipline of a public employee and employment of a public employee, discussed strategy in preparation for collective bargaining negotiations, and heard client cases and appeals.

The Board confirmed that an employee who is called up to active duty must provide military orders and an LES, as stated in the policy. The Deputy Director was advised how to proceed. Also discussed was collective bargaining strategies and client cases and appeals.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to remove Jeanne Bell from probation effective December 22, 2022. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to promote Colleen Kehoe to Financial Operations Manager, with a probationary period of 90 days and an increase in salary as advised, effective May 8, 2023. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to promote Sylvester Byers to IT Manager, with a probationary period of 180 days and an increase in salary as advised, effective May 8, 2023. Must complete continuing education as assigned by immediate supervisor. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to return to the regular order of business and discuss Good of the Order. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

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

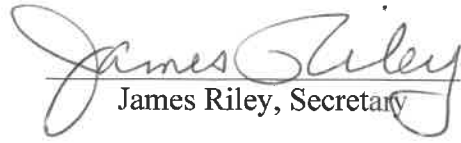
F. Williams mentioned that Congress is considering cuts to get the budget down. A Bill is before Congress to cut VA staff including raters and proposed major changes to VA comp and disability income. Any household earning over \$170,000 (household income) will no longer be eligible for compensation or disability income.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 12:47 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:  
Executive Director:  
Deputy Director:  
Commissioners:

Melinda Halliburton, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)  
Jeanne Bell (216)-698-2635  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)