



American Legion
MEL BAHER
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans
FRANK POCCHI
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans
AJ THOMPSON
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars
JAMES RILEY
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America
BOB POTTS
COMMISSIONER

Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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JON REISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FERONNE WILLIAMS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: August 2, 2023 9:30 a.m.

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

EXCUSED: Jon Reiss, Executive Director

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 Pocci. Discussion: Items moved to Executive Session.

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

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- July 4, 2023 – volunteered with Post 91 Independence Day activities
- July 5, 2023 - attended 13th District council meeting held at Post 738
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- July 13, 2023 - attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7 p.m.
- provided financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- July 24, 2023 - attended 13th District executive board meeting held at Post 738
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- July 27, 2023 - attended Post 91 executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- Presented new year budget & financial reports to executive board

Volunteered at Post 91 with planned activities and work parties, as needed.

AJ Thompson – DAV

- preparing for the DAV picnic in September. The picnic will be held at Euclid Beach and there will be food, fishing, etc.
- training five new Veterans Service Officers for the DAV post

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- attended the Catholic War Veterans meeting. The attendees once again expressed their thanks for the VSC bags and information
- distributed bags to two attendees who were not present at the previous meeting
- spoke to a veteran about his service connected rating. Encouraged him to meet with a service officer to work towards an upgrade
- attended the AMVETS meeting – presented the finance report
- mentioned a re-enactment in Conneaut this month

James Riley – VFW

- July 9th - VFW district audit at Parma VFW Post
- July 10th - monthly Guitars 4 Vets lesson at VFW Post 2533
- July 11th – attended the Joint Veterans Council meeting at VFW Post 2533
- July 13th - attended Catholic War Vets monthly meeting
- July 13th - 16th - attended the VFW conference in Columbus
- July 17th – attended the VFW District budget meeting at the Strongsville Post
- July 18th – attended the VFW meeting at Post 2533
- July 19th - attended the Purple Heart Home fundraiser at the North Ridgeville VFW
- July 21st - participated in the rifle salute for 10 funerals at Rittman National Cemetery
- July 28th - 30th – attended the Commissioner Summer Conference and Training in Columbus
- July 31st - spoke to a Guitar 4 Vets student about veteran employment possibilities
- July 31st – attended a SAR Zoom meeting regarding marking five Revolutionary War soldier's graves in N. Royalton on September 17th

Bob Potts – VVA

- Attended the VVA meeting on the third Thursday of the month. The VVA had a good turn-out and Mr. Potts spoke to veterans about services available at the Veteran Service Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

2023 VetConnect was discussed. The Public Auditorium requires that all food be purchased through them. Boxed lunches were quoted at a cost of \$28/box, which is very high. The Commissioners suggested the event either be cancelled or relocated in order to find a more affordable option.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go out of the regular order of business to discuss compensation and employment of a public employee, client cases and appeals, and to prepare for collective bargaining strategy. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:51 a.m. In Executive Session the Board heard client cases and appeals, discussed preparations for collective bargaining, and employment and compensation of a public employee.

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 Kaley Webb from probation effective August 10, 2023. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

.YES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to remove Ashlee Reale from probation effective August 15, 2023. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to authorize the Deputy Director to bring on Anna Santiago in the position of Financial Service Officer, with a probationary period of one (1) year, effective August 2, 2023. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

The Board also discussed the collective bargaining strategy. Compensation of a public employee was tabled for future discussion.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2023-06 providing for the purchase of convenience kits for transitioning homeless veterans and/or veterans in need. The kits will be purchased from Convenience Kits International, not to exceed \$10,000. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

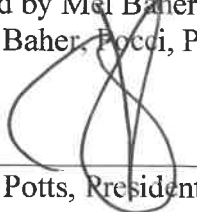
.YES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Riley reported at Commissioner training in Columbus new officers were elected. Also, it was reported that nursing homes do not have a shortage of beds, but they do have a shortage of staff. Mr. Riley gave Deputy Director Williams a suicide prevention magnet. The Commissioners requested that we order magnets and leave them in the lobby for veterans to take.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 12:26 p.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. 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:

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Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)