



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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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** November 1, 2023 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Bob Potts, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
James Riley, Secretary  
Frank Pocci, Commissioner  
AJ Thompson, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Craig Morice, 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 Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

### COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- October 4, 2023 - attended 13<sup>th</sup> District council meeting held at Post 343 in Euclid, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.  
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- October 12, 2023 - attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7 p.m.  
- presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- October 26, 2023 – attended Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- October 30, 2023 – attended 13<sup>th</sup> District Executive Board meeting held at Post 343 in Euclid, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.  
- provided financial reports, and 2023-2024 Budget for approval as District Finance Officer

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

#### AJ Thompson – DAV

- Repaired and donated 2 mobility scooters to 2 handicapped veterans
- Donated a special prosthetic adaptive arm-pedal 3-wheel bicycle to a veteran unable to stand up or use his legs
- Joined with Ride with Valor to acquire and install a 30-foot wheelchair ramp for a handicapped veteran and his wheelchair bound mother-in-law
- Participated and led a telephone conference with Congresswoman Shontel Brown
- Attended the DAV 6<sup>th</sup> District meeting
- Visited homebound and hospitalized veterans
- Mailed out get-well cards and cards of encouragement to sick and injured veterans and the veteran's caretakers
- Conducted monthly Greater Cleveland Area Community DAV and DAVA Chapter meeting
- Conducted weekly PTSD and MST Support Group meetings
- Participated in Cuyahoga Conty Joint Veterans Council monthly meeting
- Completed community Toys for Tots application

#### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended the AMVETS Post 80 meeting and gave financial report. I authorized a death benefit payment for one of the members who passed away. The commander will deliver the check.
- Attended the Italian American War Veterans meeting where post finances and charitable contributions were discussed. We also welcomed two new members.
- Referred one veteran to apply for a service-connected condition and submitted four requests for DD-214
- Delivered a flag to a veteran who needed one.
- Will be visiting the spouse of a veteran who is 90% service connected and has been in the VA hospital for 6 of the last 7 months, so he can file for unemployment.
- Attended Commander of Catholic War Veterans quarterly meeting

#### James Riley – VFW

- October 5 - attended Strongsville VFW District 7 trustee auditor's meeting
- October 6 – participated in rifle salute for 9 military funerals at Rittman
- October 9 – conducted monthly lessons for Guitars for Vets
- October 10 – attended Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- October 12 – attended Catholic War Veterans meeting
- October 17 – gave flag folding class to 12 students at Our Lady of Angels School, Cleveland
- October 17 – helped family of Navy Veteran clean out house to prepare for sale
- October 17 – attended monthly VFW meeting at Post 2533
- October 26 – attended meeting at Burke Lakefront with Mayor Bibb's staff for Veterans Day
- October 29 – attended VFW District meeting at Parma Post 1974

#### Bob Potts – VVA

- Prepared mailing for monthly meeting
- Attended all CCVSC meetings
- Prepared financial report and election report for the VVA national organization

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Executive Director Reiss briefed the Board on the headquarters building updates. The design team is proceeding with modified designs to cut the total cost of the new building. Alternate bids will be submitted for individual upgrades in order to get the plans out for public bid. There is no update regarding the boiler warranty or an RTA bus stop.

A request to extend the lease for the VSC's current location until May or June, 2025 will be submitted. The VSC is waiting for county approval to make it official. The new garage door has been ordered and the replacement of the fire panel is pending permits. A cleaning company has been retained, commencing on November 20, 2023. Cleaning positions will be posted.

Repairs/upgrades to the mobile vehicle will be completed early next week. Once the Wi-Fi capabilities have been tested, the vehicle will be used to serve veterans at the Parma CBOC.

The Board reviewed suggestions from the staff for the holiday luncheon. The list has been narrowed down and the staff will be polled to make a final decision. The luncheon will be at the main office on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2023-10 providing for additional funding of a capital fund for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission headquarters project and authorization to reallocate \$1,000,000 from the 2023 current budget to the capital fund.

Motion seconded by AJ Thompson. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2023-11 providing for the purchase of uniform shirts/coats as the new uniform shirts/coat for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission; no competitive bids will be solicited because the purchase is under the state term schedule; Novak's from state contract. The shirts/coats will be purchased from Advance Door Company, not to exceed \$11,000. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2023-08 providing for the purchase and installation of a new garage door and opener with 50 transmitters for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission's Main Office garage door to ensure safety for the VSC and its employees. Competitive bids were solicited, but no other quotes were received. The door and opener will be purchased from Advance Door Company, not to exceed \$11,000. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

The Executive Director presented the Executive Teams plan for special programming. Specific demographics have been recognized as underserved, including seniors, widows and disabled veterans and their spouses. Fixed income veterans are finding it difficult to make ends meet with rising costs. This program may include expenses for up to three months per year and lawn care and snow removal for veterans who would not previously have qualified. Other suggested programs would assist with training in the trades to enable the veteran to support him/herself. More details will follow as the program is developed.

## **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Pocci will be speaking at an event at Whitney Scholl for Veterans Day. Over 500, including the students, will be attending.

Commissioner Riley will be the guest speaker at the Union Club on November 8<sup>th</sup> for Veterans Day.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to consider compensation of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:19 a.m.)


The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:45 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed compensation of a public employee. The Executive and Deputy Directors were advised on how to proceed.

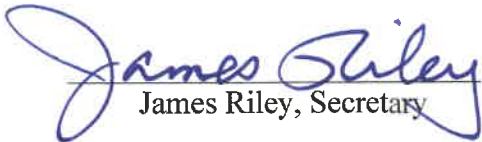
A motion was made by Mel Baher to set a dual role premium based on the length of time of the dual role is worked, as outlined. Motion seconded by AJ Thompson. Discussion: The length of time the employee is in the dual role per pay period will determine the amount of compensation.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 11:46 a.m. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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

  
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Bob Potts, President

  
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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)