



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

## 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

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** January 3, 2024 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

**EXCUSED:** Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

**VISITORS:** None.

**PURPOSE:** GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci 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 Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- December 3, 2023 - attended 13<sup>th</sup> District Winter Conference at Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 10:00 a.m.  
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- December 14, 2023 - attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- December 19, 2023 – attended District Executive Board Christmas Party held at Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 6:00 p.m.
- December 28, 2023 – attended the Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer

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

### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended the AMVETS Post 80 meeting and dinner.
- Attended the Italian American War Veterans meeting.
- Attended Catholic War Veterans meeting.
- Referred 3 veterans to the Veterans Service Commission.

### James Riley – VFW

- December 2<sup>nd</sup> - drove van in Light up Lakewood parade.
- December 3<sup>rd</sup> – played guitar with Guitars 4 Vets at Sandusky Veterans Home (OVH) for Christmas party.
- December 11<sup>th</sup> – Guitars 4 Vets lesson and Christmas party.
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – rifle salute with Joint Veterans Honor Guard at military funeral in Brooklyn Hts.
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – presided over JVCOCC meeting and annual election for new officers.
- December 14<sup>th</sup> – attended the Catholic War Veterans meeting.
- December 15<sup>th</sup> – Rittman rifle salute for 5 military funerals.
- December 22<sup>nd</sup> – helped family of Navy veteran in meeting with real estate agent as his house was sold.

### Bob Potts – VVA

- Attended all CCVSC meetings.
- Notified all VVA members that the President of the Chapter passed away.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Executive Director Reiss briefed the Board on the headquarters building updates. The final design will be reviewed later today and is expected to go out for bid on Thursday. There is no update regarding an RTA bus op.

The VSC's current building's boiler will be demolished this week. It will take 3-4 weeks for the replacement boiler to be ready for use. Due to the holidays, there is no update on the garage door or alarm system.

The mobile vehicle is stationed at the Parma CBOC Monday through Thursday to assist in filing VA claims for veterans.

The Executive Director reached out to several Veterans Service Commissions to inquire about their medical transportation program. One VSC employs a private service and provides rides to any appointment a veteran has, not just medical appointments. Another county provides veterans with rides anywhere in a county vehicle. A third uses Americab. Further research will be done to determine if the CCVSC will continue issuing bus tickets for veterans' medical appointments or go another route.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve Resolution 2024-04 requesting authority for the Executive Director to reimburse the staff for the purchase of meals for meetings and items used for team building and staff incentive, not to exceed \$10,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve Resolution 2024-13 providing for the renewal of services with FeedbackNow that will provide real-time customer feedback in an effort to improve customer satisfaction, not exceed \$5,500. The resolution will be needed if the contract cannot be cancelled.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Resolution discussed.

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

The Board expressed concern for the safety of the VSC staff and clients. J. Reiss will research options for active shooter training.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Election of Officers on the CCVSC Board

A motion was made by Mel Baher to elect the following officers on the CCVSC Board for Year 2024, using the guideline established in January 2007. There were no other nominations. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

<b>President</b>	<b>Mel Baher (American Legion)</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>James Riley (VFW)</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Frank Pocci (AMVETS)</b>

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

Deputy Director Williams again presented the need for team building and diversity training. Mr. Williams will reach out to Jane Elliot to see if arrangements can be made. The VSC will work on securing space and offering to include other Veterans Service Commissions and community partners in the training.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Potts mentioned that VVA Chapter President passed away.

Jim Riley will be attending the VFW conference in Columbus next week.

Commissioner Pocci continues to encourage veterans to visit the VSC for benefits information.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:48 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:16 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed employment of a public employee and commission operations. The Executive and Deputy Directors were advised on how to proceed.

With no further business, a motion was made by Frank Pocci to adjourn the meeting at 12:17 p.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

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



Mel Baher, President



Frank Pocci, 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)