



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

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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### MINUTES

DATE/TIME: November 15, 2023 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Bob Potts, President  
Mel Baher, Vice President  
James Riley, Secretary  
Frank Pocci, Commissioner – excused at 10:48 a.m.  
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 AJ Thompson. Discussion: None.

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

### STATE OF COMMISSION FINANCE REPORT

Jon Reiss presented the State of Commission Finance Report. The report was discussed, and changes/updates were suggested by the Board.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to accept the finance report with the necessary corrections and/or additions. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: No further discussion.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go out of the regular order of business to discuss a client case and appeal and to consider discipline of a public employee. Motion seconded by AJ Thompson. Discussion: None.

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

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to discuss a client case and appeal and to consider discipline of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

.YES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:04 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 10:48 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed a client case and appeal and considered discipline of a public employee. The Board has advised the Deputy Director and Executive Director on how to proceed.

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

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

Commissioner Pocci was excused from the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The Executive Director briefed the Board on building updates. The new garage door delivery is expected on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Once delivered, installation will be arranged. The fire panel has been replaced. Expected installation of the security system is November 27, 2023. Public Works is obtaining final signatures on the extended lease for the current location. The new cleaning company is expected to begin November 27, 2023.

The Director is waiting for information on the warranty on the boiler at the new headquarters building and RTA regarding a bus stop at the Chester office.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve revised Resolution 2023-10 providing for additional funding of a capital fund for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission headquarters project and authorization to reallocate \$750,000 from the 2023 current budget to the capital fund.

Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

Issue 1 passed on November 7, 2023, legalizing marijuana. The CCVSC will defer to the County Handbook for a policy regarding the usage of legal drugs during the workday.

The Deputy Director presented the initial findings of his analysis of lifetime financial assistance. After discussion, the Board agreed to a \$50,000 limit for financial assistance. If there is an application for assistance after the veteran meets that limit, the case will go to Level III for adjudication.

The VSC will not purchase new software at this time, and the contract with the Service Officer software will be cancelled. Also, the VSC will look into changing over to the counties call system to replace the current call system that is being used.

## **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Executive Director Reiss reviewed the office closures for the holidays. The November 20<sup>th</sup> appeals meeting will remain scheduled at this time.

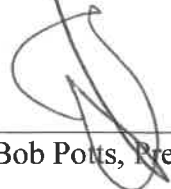
There was not enough interest among the staff to move forward with an honor guard.

Commissioner Riley mentioned the Director Reiss gave two great speeches on Veterans Day. He also mentioned that newly appointed outreach specialist, Teresa, is also doing a great job.

Deputy Director Williams informed the Board of a veteran who was in to apply for financial assistance. He was asking for very little help, but the staff noticed he was wearing torn sandals on a cold Fall Day. After further discussion with the veteran, it was noted that he had started a new job but was not allowed to work until he had proper shoes. The staff proceeded to supply the veteran with shoes, boots, a hat and gloves. This enabled the veteran to get back to work immediately and he was truly grateful.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m. Motion seconded by AJ Thompson. Discussion: None.

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



Bob Potts, President



Mel Baher, Vice President

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Filing claims with the Dept. of

Veterans' Affairs/Memorial Affairs:

Financial Assistance Manager:

Financial Operations Manager:

Executive Director:

Deputy Director:

Commissioners:

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

Jeanne Bell (216-698-2635)

Colleen Kehoe (216-698-2392)

Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)

Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)

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