



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

Ph: 216.698.2600 • Fax: 216.698.2650
Email: vsccmail@cuyahogacounty.us
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: December 6, 2023 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
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 Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- November 1, 2023 - attended 13th District council meeting held at Post 469 in Cleveland, Ohio at 7:30 p.m. - provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- November 9, 2023 - attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. - presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- November 14, 2023 – attended Cuyahoga County Council hearing at 5:00 p.m. with Executive Director to explain our 2024 budget request.
- November 17, 2023 – Departed for Dublin, Ohio to attend Commissioner training on Saturday. November 18th. Returned home late that same day.
- November 21, 2023 – attended Cuyahoga County Council hearing at 5:00 p.m. with CCVSC personnel for update vote on our 2023 budget.

- November 22, 2023 – attended Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- November 27, 2023 – attended 13th District Executive Board meeting held at Post 469 in Cleveland, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.
- provided financial reports, as District Finance Officer

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended the AMVETS Post 80 meeting and gave financial report.
- Attended the Italian American War Veterans meeting and yearly holiday luncheon.
- Gave two flags to veterans.
- Brought two bags of flags no longer serviceable to the American Legion for proper disposal.
- Working on claims for two veterans.
- Sponsored and participated in Veterans Day event at Whitney Elementary School.
- Attended Catholic War Veterans meeting.
- Gave a flag case to the family of a deceased member of AMVETS Post 80

James Riley – VFW

- November 8 – gave speech at Union Club with Jon Reiss at Sons of American Revolution dinner.
- November 9 – read a military book to a 2nd grade class at Bay Village Elementary for Veterans week.
- November 10 – M.C. for Veterans Day services at Cleveland City Hall.
- November 11 – rifle salute and presented two military plaques at Lakewood Park for Veterans Day services.
- November 13 – Ritman rifle salute for 7 military funerals.
- November 14 – Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting and nominations for next year.
- November 21 – attended the monthly VFW meeting at Post 2533.
- November 26 – participated in Salute to Service with Cleveland Cavaliers at Rocket Mortgage Arena.
- November 28 – attended Cuyahoga County Council meeting and gave a 3 minute presentation regarding funding for the new VSC building.

Bob Potts – VVA

- Prepared mailing for the VVA Chapter including the newsletter.
- Submitted finance and election reports to the state and national VVA.

OLD BUSINESS

Executive Director Reiss briefed the Board on the headquarters building updates. Mr. Reiss reviewed the VSC AV requirements for the new building. Cost estimates were reviewed. Alternative bids for the second floor would save \$700,000 but would result in considerable repairs in the future. Public Works was unable to locate a warranty for the boiler, but Public Works covers all major equipment repairs in County owned buildings. There is no update regarding an RTA bus stop.

The VSC's current building is waiting for delivery of the new garage door. Once it is delivered, an installation date will be set. The new fire system has been installed and awaiting inspection. The new cleaning staff has started. The boiler continues to be a problem. The office does not currently have heat.

House Bill 69 has gained some traction. Many veterans are against the bill requiring commissioner seats to be filled with post 911 veterans. There is, however, support for post 911 veterans becoming more involved. Once this occurs, the commissioner seats will naturally be filled with post 911 veterans.

NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Director Williams expressed the need for additional staff. The VSC will begin a search for candidates for open positions. The driver position was discussed. The board is requesting more information, including research on VSC liability. The board also requested a suggested plan for staffing levels when we are in the new building in 2025.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-01 annually adjusting employee mileage and per diem travel reimbursement rates in accordance with standard federal rates, for year 2024.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-02 requesting authority for five Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commissioners, Deputy Director and Executive Director to attend various conferences and training to maintain accreditation with the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioners (OSAVSC) in 2024, 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 Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-03 requesting authority for twenty-two Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Officers and Commissioners to attend various conferences and training to maintain accreditation with the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (OSACVSO) in 2024, not to exceed \$93,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

Resolution 2024-04 providing for reimbursement for meals and team building items for staff meetings postponed for further review and discussion.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-5 requesting authority for the Executive and Deputy Directors to attend conferences and training seminars as necessary to enhance services for veterans, not to exceed \$30,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-06 providing for the purchase of an advertising agreement with the DD214 Chronicle for one year, not to exceed \$8,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-07 requesting authority for the Executive Director to reimburse the staff for memberships at gyms/fitness centers, not to exceed \$65 per month, per employee, or \$25,000 for agency total.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-08 providing for annual maintenance of CCVSC all center/call management communication software from Five9, expenses not to exceed \$50,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-09 requesting authority for the Executive Director to utilize funds as necessary to prepare for an emergency, expenses not to exceed \$15,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-10 providing for the purchase of up to 5,000 military service branch pins for the clients in recognition of their service. The pins will be purchased from Novak Supply, LLC, not to exceed \$7,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-11 providing for a contract with Clemans, Nelson and Associates, an HR consulting firm, not to exceed \$50,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: Discussion held.

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2024-12 providing for the purchase of lodging kits to assist homeless veterans transitioning to permanent residency by supplying household items for client relief, not to exceed \$40,000.

Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

Resolution 2024-13 providing for the renewal of services with FeedBackNow, used to provide real time feedback in an effort to improve customer satisfaction postponed for further review and discussion.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

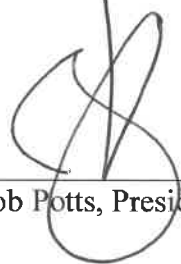
Commissioner Pocci requested updated benefits guides from the VA. Deputy Director Williams will follow up with the Service Department.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None.

With no further business, a motion was made by Frank Pocci to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. 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)