



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

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

DATE/TIME: March 20, 2024 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mel Baher, President  
James Riley, Vice President  
Frank Pocchi, Secretary  
Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

EXCUSED: Jon Reiss, Executive Director

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Mel Baher with the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Frank Pocchi called roll.

A motion was made by Bob Potts 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, Pocchi, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The VSC received a copy of the signed lease agreement which extends the lease through June 30, 2025. The drawings for the new headquarters were once again returned to the design team for modification. Once changes have been made the project will go out for bid. There will be no update on an RTA bust stop outside the new headquarters until the VSC takes occupancy.

The VSC will have the opportunity to have a third office at the Parma CBOC once the office is vacated. The option to occupy the office part time, on Thursday and Friday, is not feasible.

Draft copies of the 2025 budget were distributed. The Board had questions regarding the number of employees and positions. All items will be discussed at the next meeting.

Commissioner Pocchi inquired about the PACT Act and what effect it will have on veterans. Deputy Director Feronne Williams provided Mr. Pocchi with more information in a written document.

New programming for transportation of veterans has been discussed. The Board made the decision to wait on the new programming until the VSC is in the new headquarters building.

The VSC has only received one quote for active shooter training. C. Kehoe will continue to reach out to possible trainers. Mr. Williams has been in contact with Jane Elliot for team building and diversity training. He will also explore the counties new training program.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A program for surviving spouses was presented to the Board. The Board suggested modifications and changes and the final version will be presented at the next meeting.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Baher brought up creating a policy for veterans who are married less than a year. The financial assistance team will continue to check with the veteran prior to assisting the child of a veteran.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to go into Executive Session to consider employment of a public employee and a client case and appeal. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:47 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:06 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed employment of a public employee. Compensation of a public employee has been postponed until the next meeting. The Deputy Director was advised on how to proceed.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to authorize the Deputy Director to bring on Andrea Low in the position of Financial Service Officer, with a probationary period of six (6) months, effective March 20, 2024, with a start date of March 25, 2024. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to authorize the Deputy Director to bring on Bernard Torian in the position of Financial Service Officer, with a probationary period of six (6) months, effective March 20, 2024, with a start date of May 6, 2024. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

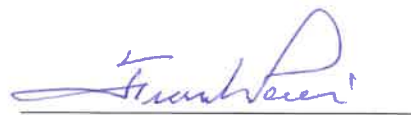
AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Thompson. Abstain: None. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:09 p.m. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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)