



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

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JON REISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FERONNE WILLIAMS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: April 3, 2024 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mel Baher, President
James Riley, Vice President
Frank Pocci, Secretary
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Jon Reiss, Executive Director
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

EXCUSED: Feronne Williams, Deputy Director

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley 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, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- March 3, 2024 - attended the American Legion 13th District Spring Conference held at American Legion Post 421 in Fairview Park, Ohio. The conference began at 10:00 a.m. I presented District financial reports for December 2023 and January 2024. Also, the Four Chaplain's ceremony was conducted by John Murphy, District Chaplain.
- March 14, 2024 – attended the Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- March 17, 2024 – volunteered for the annual Post 91 St. Patrick's Day celebration. Good food and good times were had by all.
- March 22, 2024 – drove to Dublin, Ohio to attend the OSAVSC Spring meeting, but had to leave early due to a family emergency.
- March 25, 2024 – attended the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting held at American Legion Post 421 in Fairview Park, Ohio. Presented the February 2024 District finance report, as District Finance Officer.

- March 28, 2024 – attended the American Legion 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 OSAVSC Spring meeting in Dublin, Ohio
- referred one veteran, and will be referring another, for assistance at the VSC
- participated in Guitars for Vets

James Riley – VFW

- March 4th - Guitars 4 Vets individual lessons
- March 11th – Guitars 4 Vets gave individual guitar lessons and 1 monthly group lesson
- March 12th – Western Reserve National Cemetery – provided rifle salute for military funerals
- March 12th – presided over Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- March 13th – brought surviving spouse to main office to learn of her benefits
- March 14th – brought disabled vet to main office to submit claim
- March 18th - Guitars 4 Vets individual lessons
- March 19th – VFW Post 2533 monthly meeting
- March 22-24 – attended Commissioner’s training in Dublin, Ohio
- March 25th – Guitars 4 Vets 1 individual lesson
- March 29th – met with JVCOC members to finalize planning for April 13th luncheon
- March 29th – attended Vietnam Veteran ceremony

Bob Potts – VVA

- attended the OSAVSC Spring meeting in Dublin, Ohio

OLD BUSINESS

There are no updates on the Veterans Service Commission’s current space. The construction package for the new headquarters was reviewed by City Planning and sent to Public Works to initiate the bid package. The project is expected to go out for bid the third week in April and all bids will be due the third week of May. County Council is expected to have the first reading on June 18, 2024.

Quotes are still being requested for active shooter training. The Deputy Director was made aware of another option for Unconscious Bias: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training. The VSC will be reaching out to the company for quotes.

VA healthcare qualifications for veterans who were in Vietnam or exposed to burn pits have been put in place. Veterans who meet the guidelines will be placed in category 6, which has no income threshold.

The county fleet is available to all county agencies on a first-come, first-served basis. C. Kehoe continues to request quotes for new vehicle options.

The VSC will no longer consider Rocket Mortgage Field House for the annual VetConnect event. The inability to lock in a date and the cost were prohibitive. J. Reiss will confirm with the Food Bank their willingness to hold the event at their facility. Food trucks or catering will also be researched.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to accept the 2025 Budget with changes/corrections. Motion seconded by Jim Piley. Discussion: None.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

A new program for a one-time death benefit for deceased veterans was discussed. More research is needed. The program will be discussed further when more information is available.

Resolution 2024-16 for Five9 technical support was set aside for further discussion.

policy for a surviving spouse who was married to the veteran for less than a year was discussed. It was decided that a policy is not necessary. An application will be taken at level I but must be adjudicated at level II or III.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

The Veteran of the Year ceremony and luncheon is scheduled for April 13th. The VSC purchased a table. The Commissioners and Executive Director will attend.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

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

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:41 a.m.)


The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:31 a.m. In Executive Session the Board considered employment and compensation of a public employee.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:32 a.m. Motion seconded by Jim Riley.

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)