



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

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

### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** May 1, 2024 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Mel Baher, President  
James Riley, Vice President  
Frank Pocci, Secretary  
Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director – via Zoom  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

**EXCUSED:** None.

**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 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 Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- April 3, 2024 - attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Council meeting held at American Legion Post 627 in Newburgh Hts., Ohio. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. I presented District financial reports for February 2024, as District Finance Officer.
- April 11, 2024 – attended the Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer.
- April 25, 2024 – attended the American Legion Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer.
- April 29, 2024 – attended American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District executive board meeting held at American Legion Post 627 in Newburgh Hts., Ohio.  
- presented the March 2024 District finance report, as District Finance Officer.
- Initiated several DD214 requests with Mary at the CCVSC office.

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

### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended the Joint Veterans Council Veteran of the Year luncheon
- Presented financials at the AMVETS meeting
- Presided at the Italian American (ITAM) war vets meeting
- Attended as adjutant at the ITAM Lorain Post 1 meeting
- Referred 4 veterans to the CCVSC
- Attended lessons at Guitars for Vets
- Gave replacement flags to 2 veterans
- Delivered DD214 information to one veteran
- Rosaries for Vets

### James Riley – VFW

- April 9<sup>th</sup> – presided over Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- April 11<sup>th</sup> – conducted VFW District 7 audit at Strongsville post
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – obtained plaques and proclamations and organized a Veteran of the Year luncheon for 140 people at the Holiday Inn
- April 15<sup>th</sup> - Guitars 4 Vets individual lessons
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – Western Reserve National Cemetery – provided rifle salute for military funerals
- April 16<sup>th</sup> – VFW Post 2533 monthly meeting
- April 22<sup>nd</sup> - Guitars 4 Vets individual lessons
- April 29<sup>th</sup> - Guitars 4 Vets individual lessons
- April 30<sup>th</sup> – Attended Vietnam End of War ceremony at Bay Village Senior Center put on by VVA 14  
- read names of deceased veterans from our county

### Bob Potts – VVA

- attended the VVA membership meeting
- working with a neighbor on VA benefits

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The Director has been identifying maintenance issues in the Veterans Service Commission's current space and will reach out to the landlord. The new headquarters project has gone out for bid. Bids will be due the third week of May. There is a vendor meeting scheduled for the first week in May and County Council is expected to have the first reading on June 18, 2024.

Active shooter training will be scheduled as soon as possible. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training has been rescheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> so as not to interfere with Flag Day.

The Board approved the Transition paper written by J. Reiss and approved it for distribution.

C. Kehoe will continue to collect quotes for the purchase of a new vehicle.

The Executive Director reached out to the county for a space for VetConnect. He will request the Fulton Rd. building where VetConnect was held in 2022.

Attorney C. Morice provided a legal opinion regarding additional death benefits for veterans. It is his opinion that the VSC is not able to provide additional benefits.

Posts that have not picked up flags for Memorial Day will be contacted to determine if they are still in need.

Lorain County contracts with an attorney to provide wills and POA documents for veterans. J. Reiss will research this option along with purchasing vital document folders for each Cuyahoga County Veteran to store their documents in a safe, orderly manner.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Director Reiss presented the idea of sending all staff to national training in 2025. This would be beneficial to all staff in learning more about the service side of the operation and provide the benefit of team building. The Commissioners did not believe the benefit to staff would outweigh the fact that the office would have to be closed for a full week.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

June 14<sup>th</sup> is Flag Day. There are several events in the community to celebrate.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:38 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:10 p.m. In Executive Session the Board considered employment and compensation of a public employee and discussed a pending court action.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to authorize the Director to bring on Rachel Kenenske in the position of Financial Service Officer, with a probationary period of six (6) months, effective May 1, 2024, and a start date of May 28, 2024. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:12 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)