



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: June 5, 2024 9:30 a.m.

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

EXCUSED: Frank Pocci, Secretary

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Mel Baher with the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Jim Riley 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 Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- May 5, 2024 - attended the American Legion 13th District Council meeting held at Post 610
- elected Finance Officer and Delegate to National Convention.
- May 9, 2024 – attended the Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- elected Post Finance Officer and Delegate to State Convention
- May 23, 2024 – attended the American Legion Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- May 25, 2024 – decorated graves at Woodvale Cemetery
- May 27, 2024 – participated in Memorial Day parade and services at McKelvey Park
- May 29, 2024 – attended American Legion 13th District executive board meeting held at Post 610.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- attended the AMVETS meeting and gave financial report
- attended the Italian American War Veterans meeting and sent out information regarding the national convention and the next state meeting
- attended the Memorial Day ceremony with American Legion Post 91 members at Adam Street and Woodvale cemeteries
- Attended the Memorial Day ceremony at Parma Memorial Park
- Attended the flag raising ceremony at American Legion Post 572
- Presented a flag to a veteran in need of a new one
- Assisted a veteran with a possible increase on his VA claim due to agent orange exposure

James Riley – VFW

- May 1st – represented the VFW and Sons of American Revolution at John Marshall High School Air Force JROTC graduation/awards ceremony
- May 6th, 13th, 20th – Guitars for Vets lessons
- May 10th – Western Reserve Cemetery – provided rifle salute for military funerals
- May 14th - presided over Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- May 18th – presented colors, sang the National Anthem, donated guitars at Rid-All Farm Veteran Resource Fair, all as part of Joint Veterans Honor Guard and Guitars for Veterans
- May 25th – placed 238 flags at veterans' graves at Alger Cemetery with 12 other volunteers
- May 27th – Conducted Memorial Day ceremony at VFW Post 2533

Bob Potts – VVA

- VVA Chapter will combine with Chapter 15
- Referred a veteran for VA benefits

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building updates. The elevator in the VSC's current space is working. It will continue to be monitored. The new headquarters building bids are in. All bids are below the expected cost. M. Rymer will be speaking to county administration about going with most or all of the alternative items.

Active shooter training has been scheduled for August 9th. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training has been rescheduled for June 14th.

Plans have begun for VetConnect 2024. The team will begin by solidifying the venue, parking, shuttle buses, and ordering products.

The 2025 Budget has been submitted. Modifications may be necessary after property valuations are completed mid-year.

Memorial Day flag distribution lists have been updated with current contact information. There are enough flags in storage to cover next year's distribution, so flags will be distributed and then replaced for next year.

C. Morice will continue to review providing legal assistance to veterans wishing to have wills and/or POA paperwork completed. No litigation assistance will be available through the VSC, it will just be basic estate planning.

After discussion regarding background checks for potential employees, checks will continue to be completed through the County. The VSC will not secure additional services.

Executive Director Reiss will schedule a meeting with the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial to discuss an MOU to combine websites so the VSC can absorb the cost of updating their website regularly.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve the updated Time and Attendance Policy. A copy will be distributed to all staff and added to the shared drive. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

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

J. Reiss and F. Williams will review all current software and programs to identify new software options that can encompass both financial assistance and VA service claims. Once a software program has been identified, it will be discussed with the board.

The Executive Director presented an MOU with AFSCME to incorporate the federal pay scale. Wages and placement on the scale were discussed in executive session.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve the MOU with AFSCME and to adopt the federal pay scale. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

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

The Executive Director is working with M. Chambers to develop an early retirement plan (ERIP) for the VSC. Once the plan is developed and approved it will be sent to OPERS for implementation.

A current organizational chart was presented and discussed. The agency is currently at 29 fulltime employees with a cap at 36 employees.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve Resolution 2024-23 providing for the purchase of marketing/advertising for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for year 2024, individual amounts for vendors are listed on a spreadsheet. Expenses not to exceed \$162,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve Resolution 2024-22 providing for the purchase of up to 7,000 vital document folios, for the clients of the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission. The Folios will be purchased from Savor, Expenses not to exceed \$145,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

Furniture for the new headquarters will be purchased from a vendor on state contract. Research is currently being done to determine the desired furniture.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Riley reminded everyone that there would be no meeting on July 3rd.

Dennis Spahn, a visitor at the meeting, presented a software program that he developed to assist in filing VA claims. The program offers significant value and will reduce errors and make the filing process faster. J. Reiss and F. Williams will discuss the program and reach out to Mr. Spahn.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Jim Riley 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, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:48 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:50 a.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 Jim Riley to re-establish the Social Work Coordinator Position. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to promote Ashlee Reale to Social Work Coordinator. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

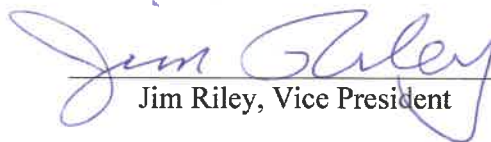
AYES: Baher, Potts, Riley. Abstain: None. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 a.m. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

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



Mel Baher, President



Jim Riley, Vice President

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)