



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCHI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**LENON WRIGHT**  
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
**JAMES RILEY**  
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America  
**BOB POTTS**  
COMMISSIONER

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** August 7, 2024 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Mel Baher, President  
James Riley, Vice President  
Frank Pocci, Secretary  
Lenon Wright, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary

**EXCUSED:** Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

**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 Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- July 3<sup>rd</sup> - attended 13<sup>th</sup> District council meeting held at Post 738  
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- July 4<sup>th</sup> – volunteered for Post 91 Independence Day activities
- July 11<sup>th</sup> – attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7 p.m.  
- presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- July 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> – Attended Department Convention in Independence, Ohio
- July 25<sup>th</sup> – attended the American Legion Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.  
- presented new year budget and financial reports to exec-board
- July 29<sup>th</sup> – attended 13<sup>th</sup> District exec-board meeting held at Post 738

- Presented financial reports to District Finance Officer
- Volunteered at Post 91 with planned activities and work parties, as needed.

#### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Working with a veteran who needs to file a claim
- Went to AMVETS meeting, stats officers were present. Discussed how to report hours helping veterans on state website
- Gave on flag to a veteran
- Obtained AMVETS Certificate of Existence
- Attended Italian American War Vets meeting
- Continued lessons with Guitars 4 Vets

#### James Riley – VFW

- July 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> – Guitar 4 Vets
- July 8<sup>th</sup> – Guitars for Vets group jam session
- July 9<sup>th</sup> – Conducted Joint Veterans Council meeting as president. Planning for Veterans Day.
- Rittman National Cemetery – 9 military funerals
- Attended monthly VFS Post 2533 meeting as Adjutant

#### Lenon Wright - DAVwith

- July 1<sup>st</sup> - visited with the veterans at the men's homeless shelter
- June 17<sup>th</sup> – attended the DAV monthly meeting. Served as treasurer and Adjutant for chapter.
- July 31<sup>st</sup> – met with the supervisor of the Veteran's Homeless Shelter to discuss upgrade to veterans' community. DAV will donate \$1,000 for the upgrade. Met with VP Sering to discuss the Veterans Service Commission Stand Down

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. County Council approved the resolution for the new headquarters. The contract was reviewed and signed. The next step is the pre-construction meeting to present the timeline, contractors, etc.

Active shooter training has been scheduled for August 9th. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training is scheduled for September 6<sup>th</sup>.

Plans for VetConnect 2024 are going well. A new flyer is being distributed with the parking location. Protective Services has been contacted to provide security.

Will and POA discussions will be discussed at a future meeting.

There is no update on the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial website MOU.

Possible software solutions are being researched and discussed.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2024-24 providing for the purchase of 1,000 Veterans Service Commission commemorative coins for the recognition of community partners. The coins will be purchased from Catania Medallie Specialty, Inc. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to approve Resolution 2024-25 providing for the purchase one Chevrolet Tahoe. The purchase of the vehicle is for the increased demand of usage for outreach, administration, and

travel needs that arise. The vehicle will be purchased from Serpentine Chevrolet and will not exceed \$80,000. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A new program was discussed to assist veterans with housing limitations. The Board advised the Director to proceed with researching different options to provide long term housing options.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Riley announced that Guitars 4 Vets had a jam session at the Berea Pavilion on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Jim Riley to go into Executive Session to consider employment of a public employee, client cases and appeals and to discuss pending court action. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:33 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:14 a.m. In Executive Session the Board considered employment of a public employee, client cases and appeals and discussed a pending court action.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Riley, Wright. 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)