



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

JON REISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FERONNE WILLIAMS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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MINUTES

DATE/TIME: September 18, 2024 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mel Baher, President
James Riley, Vice President
Frank Pocchi, Secretary – arrived at 9:15 a.m.
Lenon Wright, Commissioner
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Jon Reiss, Executive Director
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director
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. Vice President 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 Lenon Wright. Discussion: None.

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

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The headquarter building is not completely vacated. The plan is to be out next week. Once the building is empty and Public Works has all documents from the contractor, work will begin.

Plans for VetConnect 2024 are going well. Over 20 pallets of items for the winter clothing duffel bags have been delivered. The event will run from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is over 800 people already registered for the event.

Attorney C. Morice presented the suggested fee schedule for legal services offered to veterans. The fee schedule will be presented to the law firm pending approval from the board.

A motion was made by Bob Potts to approve the presented fee schedule for veteran's legal services. The fee schedule will be presented to the law firm for final agreement. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: none.

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

Executive Director Jon Reiss met with members of the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial. Several options were presented for the VSC to assist them. Members of the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial will present the options to their board for approval.

Mr. Reiss is still waiting for an answer regarding the CCVSC's ability to trade in vehicles when purchasing a new vehicle.

After minor miscommunication with the software designer, steps are being taken to prioritize modification requests and to determine the cost of the changes.

Director Reiss is working with Purple Heart Homes and the City of Cleveland to develop plans for a Veterans Village.

NEW BUSINESS:

A private community reached out requesting assistance in building a veterans' memorial. The Veterans Service Commission is not able to assist with projects for private communities but will consider help with memorials in public locations.

The holiday luncheon will be at the main office on December 13th. Staff will be asked for menu suggestions.

A new program to offer scholarships to veteran students in/from Cuyahoga County was presented to the board. The scholarships will be for up to \$5,000 and payment will be made directly to the college, university, or trade school.

The board was briefed on the importance of social sensitivity in today's society, especially for those who work with the public.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve Resolution 2024-28 to utilize funds necessary for staff training and development – Social Sensitivity. Expenses not to exceed \$16,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Jon Reiss requested board permission to turn the commissioner's office into an outreach bullpen. The VSC is short offices as the number of team members increase. A bullpen-type setting will make it easier for the team to work together on future outreach events. The board approved this request.

Deputy Director Williams wished the Air Force a Happy Birthday. He also presented an issue with a veteran and discussed a temporary sanction on the veteran.

Commissioner Baher announced that the American Legion National Commander will be in town for a 3-day event. American Legion members will have a POW/MIA Service, a steak dinner, and attend a regatta.

Commissioner Riley will be in Tiffin, Ohio for a performance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

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

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:27 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:26 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed employment and compensation of a public employee and a pending court action.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to increase the salary of Carrie Reese, Quality Assurance Coordinator, to the appropriate grade and step, effective immediately. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Jim Riley to adjourn the meeting at 12:26 p.m. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, 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)

Geniece Garner (216)-698-4955

Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)

Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)

Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)