



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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1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

DATE/TIME:                      January 15, 2025                      9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:**

James Riley, President  
Frank Pocci, Vice President  
Lenon Wright, Secretary  
Bob Potts, Commissioner  
Mel Baher, 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 Jim Riley with the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Lenon Wright called roll.

A motion was made by Mel Baher 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, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- December 1<sup>st</sup> – attended American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Council meeting held at American Legion Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.
  - provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – attended American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
  - presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer.
- December 17<sup>th</sup> – attended the District executive board Christmas party held at Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 6:00 p.m.

- December 26<sup>th</sup> – attended American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
  - presented updated financial reports as District Finance Officer
- Volunteered at Post 91 with planned activities and work parties, as needed.

#### Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended the Meet and Greet event for community partners
- Presided over the Christmas meeting of the Italian American War Veterans which was attended by 56 individuals and guests
- AMVETS did not meet due to several officers' illnesses and will not meet again until February
- Attended the funeral of an Air Force veteran and presented his son with a flag case
- Will attend a state department meeting in Lorain for the Italian American War Veterans on January 26<sup>th</sup>
- Advised a connected veteran on how to go about not having to pay for Medicare Part B if all his health needs are through the VA

#### James Riley – VFW

- November 1<sup>st</sup> – Guitars for Vets played Christmas Carols at Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky
- December 7<sup>th</sup> – Drove VSC van with military unit to Light up Lakewood parade
- December 8<sup>th</sup> – assisted at VFW 2533 annual Christmas party
- December 9<sup>th</sup> – conducted rifle salutes at Western Reserve National Cemetery with Joint Veterans Honor Guard
- December 9<sup>th</sup> – assisted at Guitar for Vets Christmas party
- December 10<sup>th</sup> – Joint Veterans Council meeting and Christmas party – elections for next year
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – Catholic War Veterans meeting
- December 13<sup>th</sup> assisted at Sons of American Revolution meeting
- December 14<sup>th</sup> – attended VSC Meet and Greet in Independence
- December 17<sup>th</sup> – attended VFW #2533 meeting
- December 18<sup>th</sup> – delivered VSC flag case to Vietnam Veteran spouse at funeral – referred surviving spouse to VSC
- December 19<sup>th</sup> – Guitar for Vets Christmas carols at Weade Park VA spinal cord unit and later at outpatient Psych unit
- December 31<sup>st</sup> – Guitar for Vets at American Legion Post #211, Avon Lake, for New Year's Eve

#### Lenon Wright - DAV

- December 1<sup>st</sup> – visited with the veterans at the Men's Homeless Shelter – donated bus tickets on behalf of the DAV
- December 2<sup>nd</sup> – donated men's winter coats to the homeless veterans at the Men's Homeless Shelter
- Attended the funeral of a Vietnam Era veteran in Summit County. Performed the DAV ritual for funerals for the family
- Attended the DAV holiday party at Olive Garden
- Attended the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission holiday party at Jack's Casino

#### Bob Potts – VVA

- Attended CCVSC Christmas party
- Attended a VVA board meeting to discuss donations to liquidate the chapter

#### **LD BUSINESS**

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The new building renovation continues. Mr. Reiss is in contact with the electric company to determine options for purchasing the substation lot next to the new headquarters, for future expansion.

The contract for the storage unit has been pushed to the legal department. Waiting on approval before moving forward.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Lenon Wright to approve Resolution 2025-08 providing for the purchase of marketing/advertising for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for year 2025, not to exceed \$187,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

Director Jon Reiss presented the board with the option to use the Sheriff's Department for security at the new building. The cost increase would be significant, but the benefits will also increase. The discussion was pushed to be included in budget conversations.

Service Department leadership presented the board with staffing issues at the satellite offices. After discussion, the board agreed that the satellite offices will be open two days a week until further notice. On opposite days, the staff will report to the main office.

Discussion regarding the new position of Transition Coordinator and Digital Marketing Coordinator will take place at a future meeting in order to focus on current position openings.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go out of the regular order of business and into Executive Session to consider certain personnel matters, employment of a public employee and compensation of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:51 a.m.)

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:34 p.m. In Executive Session the Board considered client cases and appeals and compensation of a public employee. The Director was instructed on how to proceed.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

None.

In executive session the Board discussed a personnel matter and compensation of a public employee. The Director and Deputy Director were directed on how to proceed.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to create the position of Outreach – Volunteer Coordinator with a probationary period of 180 days. The Director and Deputy Director will move forward as directed. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts to bring on Yolonda Green-Fogle in the Veteran Case Manager position at the appropriate grade and step, with a probationary period of 180 days. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts to bring on Scott Campbell in the Veteran Service Officer position at the appropriate grade and step, with a probationary period of one (1) year. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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


A motion was made by Bob Potts to bring on Karenia in the Veteran Case Manager position at the appropriate grade and step, with a probationary period of 180 days. Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:39 p.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

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

  
Jim Riley, President

  
Lenon Wright, 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)