



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:** November 20, 2024 9:36 a.m.

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

**EXCUSED:** 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. Board 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, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. Demolition of the headquarter building, including the restrooms, is almost complete. Framing on the second floor has begun.

Staff DEI training was very successful. The staff was very responsive, and the impact of the training is noticeable. Future training topics will be presented to the board for 2025.

The fee schedule for wills and POA's for veterans has been approved. The information will be presented to staff so they can inform the clients.

There is no update on the finalization of the MOU with the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial or on progress with the Veterans' Village.

There is no update on the Honor Guard initiative.

The lease for the storage facility that has been identified for all overflow items and VSC vehicles is with the county for negotiation and approval. Once it is approved, all items will be moved to the new facility.

A company from Michigan has been identified to wrap the new vehicles and is scheduled to come to the VSC. It will take up to a week to get all vehicles wrapped.

The initiative to increase veterans' involvement in area posts and with community partners is scheduled for Saturday, December 14, 2024. The 'Meet and Greet' flyer has been distributed to all posts and area community partners. The leadership members have been invited to attend the meet and greet at the DoubleTree Independence from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The meet and greet will provide the opportunity to network with other community partners and facilitate future collaboration. Additionally, this event will provide each partner the chance to identify challenges for upcoming meeting agenda.

A recruiting trip is tentatively scheduled to visit Wright Patterson Airforce Base and Fort Campbell in Kentucky to meet with soldiers who will be separated in the next month or so. The hope is to provide information to the soldiers regarding what assistance a Veterans Service Commission can provide for them and to recruit individuals for several open positions at the CCVSC.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Executive Director Jon Reiss initiated a conversation about hiring Veteran Community Liaisons. This position would help expand the capabilities of the outreach team by dropping off materials at various locations and being an advocate for the Veterans Service Commission. This position would likely be a 1099 position with a stipend and referral bonuses.

A motion was made by Bob Potts to approve Resolution 2024-44 providing for the purchase of a maintenance agreement with Enterprise Resource Partners for the eVetAssist veteran software program for the 2025 fiscal year for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for the 2025 fiscal year. Expenses not to exceed \$7,130. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

#### **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

The VSC has two employees who recently purchased homes. The staff was called in to present a housewarming gift to each of them, purchased with funds from the snack bar. While in the boardroom, the staff introduced themselves to new Commissioner Lenon Wright.

Commissioner Pocci stated that he has spoken to a developer who built housing for veterans. Unfortunately, there was not enough demand and the homes were opened up to low income non-veterans.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:57 a.m.)

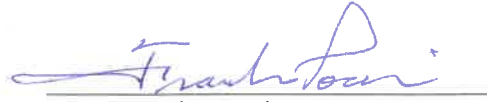
The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:00 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed a pending court action which has been settled and compensation of a public employee.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:01 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:

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