



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: December 11, 2024 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mel Baher, President
James Riley, Vice President
Frank Pocci, Secretary
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Lenon Wright, 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. 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.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- November 6th – attended American Legion 13th District Council meeting held at American Legion Post 572 in Parma, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.
- provided financial reports as District Finance Officer
- November 11th – attended Veterans Day activities at American Legion Post 91. Luncheon served by the Auxiliary Unit 91 and dinner was served by the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 91.
- November 12th – traveled to Delaware, Ohio to attend meeting for the American Legion Department of Ohio Internal Affairs Division.
- November 14th – attended American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
- presented financial reports as post Finance Officer.

- November 21st – attended American Legion 13th District executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
 - presented updated financial reports as District Finance Officer
- November 22nd – departed for Dublin, Ohio to attend OSAVSC Commissioner training on Saturday, November 23rd. Returned home Saturday evening.
- November 25th - attended 13th District executive board meeting held at Post 572 in Parma, Ohio at 7:30 p.m.
 - provided financial reports, and 2024-2025 Budget for approval, as District Finance Office

Contacted Mary with DD214 requests. Also assisted homeless veteran with transportation to VOA center on E. 152nd St.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended Commissioner training in Dublin, Ohio
- Participated in Guitar for Vets event at VFW Post at 150th
- Attended American War Vets meeting
- Referred two veterans to the VSC
- Gave two flags that needed replacement to veterans
- Presented AMVETS report
- Attended the VSC and ITAM holiday parties

James Riley – VFW

- November 1st – conducted rifle salutes at Western Reserve Cemetery with Joint Veterans Honor Guard
- November 10th – Guitars for Vets annual spaghetti dinner / fundraiser
- November 11th – Veterans Day ceremony / parade at Cleveland City Hall
- November 12th – attended monthly Joint Veterans Council meeting
- November 14th – attended monthly Catholic War Vets meeting
- November 18th – attended monthly VFW #2533 meeting
- November 22-24th – attended OSAVSC Commissioner training in Dublin, Ohio
- November 25th – referred a surviving spouse to the VSC
- November 26th – referred a Summit County veteran (currently at the VA hospital) to the VSC

Lenon Wright - DAV

- November 1st – met with supervisor of the men's homeless shelter and donated bus tickets worth \$100
- November 3rd – attended the DAV Fall Conference
- November 17th - attended the funeral of a Vietnam era veteran and performed the final farewell for the veteran
- November 18th – met with Huntington Bank to change the banking for DAV Chapter 116
- November 20th – attended the DAV Chapter meeting – officially serving as Treasurer and Adjutant for the chapter
- November 21-24th – attended New Commissioner training and OSAVSC Commissioner training in Dublin, Ohio
- November 24th – assisted the family of a veteran in conducting house sale on behalf of the veteran

Bob Potts – VVA

- Attended CCVSC meetings and completed online training for Commissioners

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to go out of the regular order of business to meet with guest Christopher Harrison at 9:41 a.m. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None.

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

Mr. Harrison addressed the board regarding a situation the last time he sought assistance at the main office. Mr. Harrison explained the situation and asked that he be allowed to return to the office and that the sanction be removed.

A motion was made by Frank Pocci to return to the regular order of business at 9:47 a.m. Motion seconded by Jim Riley. Discussion: None.

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

STATE OF COMMISSION FINANCE REPORT

Jon Reiss presented the State of Commission Finance Report for 3rd quarter of 2024.

A motion was made by Bob Potts to accept the State of Commission Finance report with changes. 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. The new building renovation progress continues. The framing on the second floor is almost finished, the duct work on the second floor is finished, and first floor trenches and drainpipes are being worked on. A walk through with the board will be scheduled for mid-January.

The Meet and Greet event is Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at the DoubleTree in Independence. Leadership from all veteran organizations are encouraged to attend to come up with ideas to increase veteran communication and involvement in the community. Future events will focus on topics provided with organized discussions.

The first leg of the recruiting trip has been cancelled. Staff will travel to Fort Campbell on November 15th. A table will be set up to meet with veterans in the TAP program. Interviews will be held at the hotel.

There are no updates regarding Veteran's Village or the Honor Guard.

Public works is working on a storage solution for the VSC. The Executive Director will reach out in the coming weeks.

The new vehicles will be wrapped after the first of the year. A company from Michigan will come to Cleveland to do the wraps.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Lenon Wright to approve Resolution 2024-45 providing for the renewal of RTA bus ads for the Veterans Service Commission. The RTA bus ad renewal agreement is with Gateway Outdoor Advertising which is a sole source vendor contracted to advertise on RTA buses, not to exceed \$99,750. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

Director Jon Reiss met with the Cleveland Council of World Affairs. They brought delegates from the Ukraine who were interested in what the VSC does, especially what the VSC does well. Ideas were shared and contact information exchanged.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve the compensation plan presented by the Executive Director. The policy memorializes and fortifies the CCVSC Board of Commissioners' positions regarding supplemental compensation (compensation beyond hourly rate/salary) of all CCVSC employees. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Jim Riley to approve the Veteran Transition Program. The CCVSC recognizes the challenges associated with successful transition from military to civilian life. The policy is established to outline CCVSC initiatives in support of veteran employees. This policy also applies to non-veteran employees with benefits eligibility based on the dependency status. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None. AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Bob Potts to go out of the regular order of business and into Executive Session to consider client cases and appeals and compensation of a public employee. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:17 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:29 a.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:


Commissioner Potts mentioned that Bay Village High School will be honoring Vietnam Veterans at the Bay Village basketball game and January 29, 2025. Veterans will be invited out on the court during half time.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:43 a.m. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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)

CUYAHOGA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

3RD QUARTER 2024

State of the Commission and Finance Report



Submitted By:
Jon Reiss
Executive Director
December 11, 2024



Frank Pocci
Secretary
AMVETS



Bob Potts
Commissioner
VVA



Mel Baher
President
American Legion



Lenon Wright
Commissioner
DAV



James Riley
Vice President
VFW

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Executive Report

DIRECTOR'S OUTREACH

Joint Veterans Council Meetings
Fisher House Meetings
NEOCH Leaders Meetings
Homeless Outreach Coordination Meetings
Cleveland Veterans Collaborative Meetings
Annual Veterans Convening at Wright State University

Ohio Veterans Conference
Case Western Reserve Veteran Orientation
Cleveland Employment Fair
Vet Connect

OUTREACH TEAM

Summer of Love Health and Wellness Event (June 6, 2024)
VTC Graduation (July 2, 2024)
VA Caregiver Support Resource Fair (July 9, 2024)
2024 American Legion Department Convention (July 12, 2024)
Black Men's Wellness Day (June 18, 2024)
Temple Baptist Church Back to School Rally (July 28, 2024)
Cleveland Collaborative Meetings (Every Tuesday)
Salute to Service Golf Outing (August 12, 2024)
Cuyahoga County Fair (August 6 to August 11, 2024)
Veterans Picnic at Coe Lake, Berea
2024 National USSVI Navy Cod Convention (August 21, 2024)
Cleveland Airshow (August 21 – September 2)
Salute to Service Golf Outing (August 12, 2024)
Cuyahoga County Fair (August 6 to August 11, 2024)
2024 National USSVI Navy Cod Convention (August 21, 2024)
Cleveland Airshow (August 21 – September 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Healthy Veteran Community Social – December 14

NEW CLIENT REPORT

- Total New Clients for 3rd Quarter 2024: 672 (YTD: 1,836)
- Financial Assistance New Clients for 3rd Quarter 2024: 42 (Down from 63 in 2023) 38 approved, 1 partial, 3 denied.

VETCONNECT NUMBERS

- Provided nearly \$170,000 worth of winter clothing, supplies and food.
- Served 412 people overall, 322 County residents were issued items.

Client Feedback

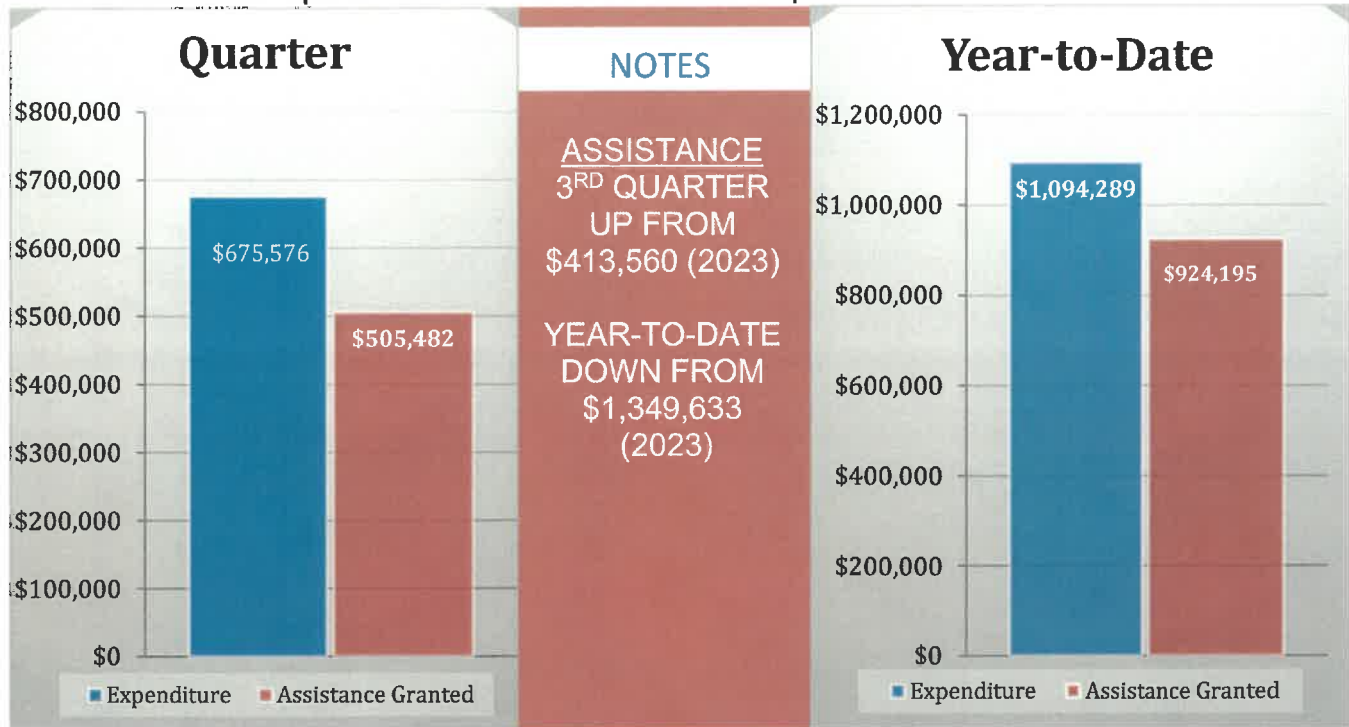
GOOGLE REVIEWS

Rating	Quarterly	YTD
	15	42
	0	2
	0	0
	1	1
	1	1
Average Ranking	4.81	4.80

- *Thank you so much to everyone here at the veteran service commission. Special thanks to Mrs. JoAnne Boulter I sincerely appreciate your attention to detail. And patience with me.*
- *We worked with John Rosine at the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission in Parma. John was very helpful in filing the needed paperwork for my mother to obtain spousal benefits. John was very knowledgeable, professional and personable. We thank him for his service to our country.*
- *I called today to see what assistance were offered to veterans without power, for loss food. They told me to come the office and they will assist me and they did. Very professional and quick.*
- *David Paroline was infomative, caring, and professional. It was a pleasure meeting him.*
- *I cannot say enough how amazing this team has been in helping me with some challenges I have faced. From the amazing admin that greeted me when I walked in (I'm sorry I am not the best at remember names or keeping pieces of paper when someone tells me names); to Rachel who continued the kindness and willingness to put in such an effort; and Trish took it to the next level as well continuing to help find answers for me and; Feron (sorry if I mis-spelled this) for your amazing help and understanding. YOU ALL ARE SUCH AN ASSET TO US VETERANS! I cannot THANK you enough!*
- *Everyone in the office was very kind, patient and thoughtful. It's not easy to ask for help, but they took away alot of stress by just treating me with respect. Thank you!*
- *Mrs. Santiago was amazing help! I would recommend any vet coming in here and requesting her. She is on the ball with everything and will fit you in as soon as possible! I can't thank the veterans service commission and Mrs. Santiago enough!*
- *I would like to thank the Cuyahoga VA Service Commission for helping me file and receive approval for my service connected claims. And I would especially like to thank Albert Mitchell and Rahmin Write for their attention to detail in helping me file for my claims. I would definitely recommend the Cuyahoga VA Service Commission to any of my fellow veterans looking to file a claim. Thank you so much for your help.*

Financial Summary

Below are selected reports from the CCVSC Finance Department.

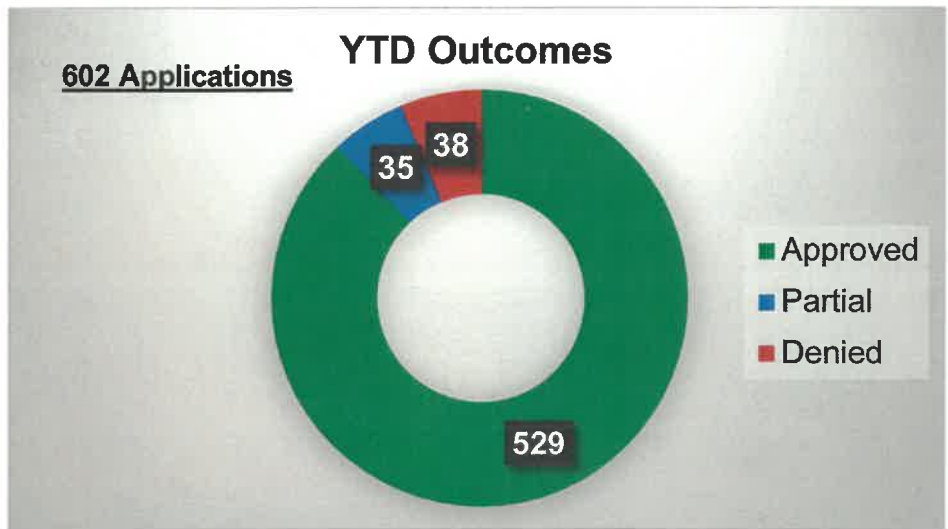
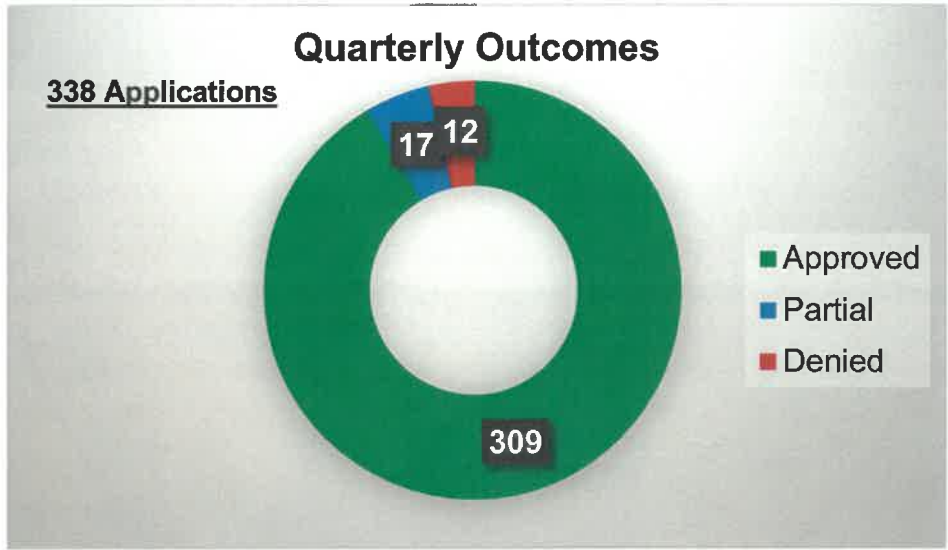


Client Assistance includes: Financial Assistance for Medical, Food, Mortgage, Rent, Utilities, Infant Layette, Personal Hygiene, Shoes, and Clothing

	Total Budget	2024 Actual	Projection	Budget Variance
Personnel Services	3,393,606	2,392,410	3,326,305	67,301
Supplies	50,000	18,686	24,915	25,085
Utilities	54,000	77,484	103,312	(49,312)
Professional Services	585,000	220,911	514,155	70,845
Controlled Services	346,000	179,873	322,405	(23,595)
Employee Services	125,000	95,856	127,808	(2,808)
Client Services	2,271,167	1,094,289	1,960,000	311,167
Other Expenditures	125,000	51,158	54,158	70,842
Operations	578,630	336,628	473,836	104,794
Other Financing Uses	0	0	0	0
Capital Outlay	1,235,000	166,380	1,234,380	620
Total	8,763,403	4,636,675	8,141,274	622,129

Financial Assistance Department,

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITY REPORT



Type	Quarterly	Year-To-Date
Housing	\$136,757.80	\$310,673.84
Utilities	\$48,484.73	\$112,216.30
Food	\$162,300.00	\$215,600.00
Clothing	\$14,100.00	\$48,500.00
Hygiene	\$5,100.00	\$12,000.00
Other	\$121,664.25	\$174,279.67

Reasons for Denial

- Created own hardship
- Income exceeds expenses
- Supplementing income
- No Itemized Need
- Failed to provide documentation

➤ Application approval rate: 96.4% (3rd Qtr.), 93.7% (YTD)

Transportation/Memorial Affairs

MEDICAL AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION

DESCRIPTION	QUARTER	YEAR-TO-DATE
Medical Bus Tickets	\$14,819.00	\$40,242.00
Other	\$0	\$0
Company Car	\$0	\$0
OVH Tours	\$0	\$0
Total	\$14,819.00	\$40,242.00
Applicants	446	1,233

MEDICAL AND DENTAL PROGRAMS

DESCRIPTION	QUARTER	YEAR-TO-DATE
Dental	\$0	\$899.25
Vision	\$0	\$0
Hearing Aids	\$0	\$10,966.00
Total	\$0	\$11,895.25

INDIGENT BURIALS

DESCRIPTION	QUARTER	YEAR-TO-DATE
Total (#)	10	32
Total (\$)	\$9,929.96	\$41,819.59

Lodging Kits issued in 3rd Quarter: 12

Lodging Kits issued Year to Date: 34

Car Down Payment Assistance YTD: 2 - \$15,000

Car Purchase YTD: 2 - \$0

Service Department

CLAIMS ACTIVITY (TO BE COMPLETED BY SERVICE DEPARTMENT MANAGER)

	Compensation	Appeal	Pension/DIC	Widow Pension	Medical	Memorial	DD214	Power of Attorney	Upgrades/ Corrections	Miscellaneous
QUARTER	107	45	5	9	44	31	106	156	0	420
YTD	1065	397	38	108	442	333	822	1512	48	3637

AWARDS (AS OF 08-20-2024)

- 2023
 - Retro Payments: \$6,565,404.77
 - Monthly Payments: \$2,573,471.54 (\$30,881,658.48 Annualized)
- 2024
 - Retro Payments: \$3,739,868.45
 - Monthly Payments: \$1,237,996.77 (\$14,855,961.24 Annualized)