



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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JON REISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FERONNE WILLIAMS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: March 5, 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Bob Potts to go into Executive Session to consider employment of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. **NAYS:** None. Motion carried. (9:32 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 10:32 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed employment of a public employee.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to bring on Rebecca Pappas in the role of Financial Assistance Officer at the appropriate pay rate and a probationary period of 180 days. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None. AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright NAYS: None.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to bring on Michele Bartczak in the role of Veteran Case Manager at the appropriate pay rate and a probationary period of 180 days. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None. AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright NAYS: None.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- February 4th – attended the 13th District meeting held at Post 2 on Pearl Rd. in Parma at 7:30 p.m.
 - provided December 2024 financial reports as District Finance Officer
- February 13th – attended Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
 - presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- February 20th – attended Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m.
 - presented updated December 2024 financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- February 23rd – left for Washington DC to attend the American Legion National Legislative conference held at the Washington Hilton on Monday February 24th and Tuesday February 25th, 2025
 - Major American Legion Legislative Agenda items for the 119th Congress:
 - o Suicide Prevention & Mental Health for Active Duty and all Veterans
 - o Ending Veteran Homelessness (32,882 veterans homeless – January 2024)
 - o Military Quality of Life – provide proper compensation, appropriate housing, quality healthcare, reasonably priced commissaries, and childcare services
 - o Modernizing the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
 - o Improving Access to Community Care (provide funding for local care)
 - o Improving the Quality of VA C&P exams (inadequate exams/medical opinions)
 - o Improving the Lethality of our Armed Forces (address evolving threats)
 - o VA Health Care Modernization – implement electronic health records
- February 25th – I, along with other staff, met with Congressman Mike Carey (15th Congressional District of Ohio) and Congressman Max Miller (7th Congressional District of Ohio). Also had a chat with Dave Yost (Ohio Attorney General). All were extremely interested in Veterans Affairs.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended Guitars 4 Vets lesson
- Attended the CCVSC Meet and Greet luncheon
- Attended the ITAM monthly meeting
- Handed out two flags to veterans
- Gave a flag case to a veteran's family
- Max Miller responded to helping veterans
- AMVETS meeting postponed due to illness

James Riley – VFW

- February 10th – Guitars 4 Vets lessons
- February 13th – Catholic War Veterans meeting
- February 13th – Assisted at Sons of American Revolution meeting
- February 16th – Attended VFW District 7 meeting in Strongsville

- February 18th – Attended VFW 2533 monthly meeting
- February 20th – Attended monthly rifle detail at Rittman Cemetery
- February 22nd – Attended the VSC Meet and Greet in Independence
- February 26th – Assisted family of deceased Vietnam Veteran with funeral arrangements at funeral home and Rittman

Lenon Wright - DAV

- February 3rd – met with the supervisor of the Men's Homeless Shelter and donated bus tickets worth \$100
- February 15th – attended the board holiday luncheon
- February – organized for the DAV to have an information table at the Train Show
- February 19th – attended the monthly DAV Chapter Meeting. Served as the Treasurer and Adjutant for the Chapter
- February 22-26th – traveled to Washington DC to advocate for veterans about their benefits with the state politicians

Bob Potts – VVA

- Nothing to report

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The drywall is complete upstairs, and the framing is complete downstairs. There are currently no delays.

The lease extension for the current building is with the county. No update has been provided.

The county is working out concerns with the lease for the storage facility. Items will continue to be stored at the U-Haul facility until there is a resolution. No update provided.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve the updated FMLA Policy. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

A motion was made by Bob Potts to approve resolution 2025-12 providing for annual maintenance of CCVSC call center / call management communication software from Five9, expenses not to exceed \$50,000. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

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

The Board was provided with a copy of the updated Administrative Assistant position description to review.

Deputy Director Williams requested that new employees be permitted to attend New Service Officer school. The board agreed that employees are permitted to go. Mr. Williams will work with the department managers to schedule training.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Pocci mentioned the flags on VSC shirts. It has been pointed out that the flags are facing the wrong way. It was explained that either way is correct, except in combat. Extra flag patches will be ordered if employees would like to replace the flag on their shirts.

Commissioner Wright requested an update on Veterans Village at the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to discuss certain personnel matters and pending or imminent court action. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

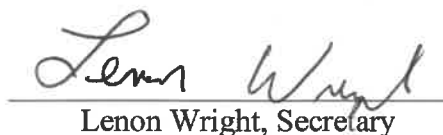
AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:31 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:11 p.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed certain personnel matters and pending or imminent court action. The Director and Deputy Director were directed on how to proceed.

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

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:

John Rosine, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-4798)

Geniece Garner (216)-698-4955

Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)

Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)

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