



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

Ph: 216.698.2600 • Fax: 216.698.2650  
Email: [vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:vscmail@cuyahogacounty.us)  
1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

### MINUTES

DATE/TIME: May 21, 2025 9:30 a.m.

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

EXCUSED: Lenon Wright, Secretary

VISITORS: None.

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Riley with the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Pro-tem 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). Items set aside for Executive Session. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

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

### STATE OF COMMISSION FINANCE REPORT:

The report for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2025 was presented by the Executive Director, Jon Reiss.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to adopt the State of Commission Finance Report with requested updates and/or changes. Motion seconded by Frank Pocchi. Discussion: None.

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

### OLD BUSINESS:

Director Jon Reiss gave his weekly update on the new headquarters building. The contractors remain on schedule. The second-floor bathrooms now have tile. The leak from the roof has been addressed and there are no further leaks.

The lease for the storage unit is on hold. The building owners are self-insured, and the county is looking for another option. The county does require a sprinkler system be in place.

The vehicle transport policy will be created when there is more feedback from other counties.

The plan to build a veteran's village is still being researched. Commissioner Pocci brought in plans for a similar project in Texas which could be used as a model for the project.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The 2025 OPS Tracker was presented to the Board by Director Reiss. The tracker is used for incoming and outgoing expenses and payments to ensure all items are processed in a timely manner. The Board approved the tracker with minor changes.

The idea of a mental health retreat for veterans was discussed. A plan will be put together and presented to the Board at a future date.

Channel 5 inquired about veterans programming. The VSC would have spots on the news regularly and programs such as service dogs can be advertised. The cost is a bit high and the Board asked for more information in writing.

Jon Reiss will be attending the RTA Board meeting. He will request that a bus stop be placed at the new headquarters building. He will also present a plan to start a Veteran Ride Free program.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve resolution 2025-19 providing for the purchase of items needed for VetConnect. Items include venue, winter clothing items, equipment, etc for the annual VetConnect veteran engagement event providing support services for the veterans of Cuyahoga County, not to exceed \$250,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.  
AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None.

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

Commissioner Potts mentioned that there will be a Vietnam Remembrance Ceremony on June 28<sup>th</sup> at Village Greens in Olmsted Falls.

Commissioner Riley mentioned that the outreach team did a great job at the Ridall Veteran Resource Fair.

Commissioner Pocci spoke about the kiosk that was displayed at the Summit County District meeting. It was decided that the kiosk would not be an improvement for Cuyahoga County so we will not be ordering..

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to discuss pending legal action and to consider employment of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:36 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 12:44 p.m. In Executive session the Board discussed pending legal action and employment of a public employee.

The Executive Director was advised how to proceed with the building lease.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to remove Lena Thompkins from probation. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

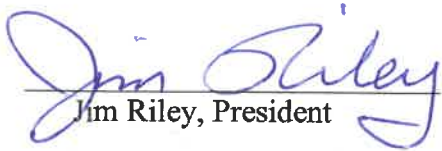
AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to promote Suzanne Slimak to Lead Office Support Specialist. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 12:46 p.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

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



Jim Riley, President



Frank Pocci, Secretary Pro-tem

#### **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)