



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

1849 Prospect Avenue • Suite 150 • Cleveland, OH 44115

MINUTES

DATE/TIME: July 9, 2025 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: James Riley, President
Frank Pocchi, 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, Pocchi, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- June 1st – attended the American Legion 13th District Summer convention held at American Legion Post 610 located in Brook Park, Ohio. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. I was re-elected as the American Legion 13th District Finance Officer for a term of two (2) years. Also, I was elected as Delegate to the American Legion National Convention to be held August 22-28, 2025, in Tampa Florida. Finally, I presented financial reports for April 2025 to the convention body.
- June 12, 2025 – attended American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. I presented financial reports for May 2025, as Post Finance Officer.
- June 14th – participated in the annual American Legion Post 91 Flag Day ceremony.
- June 24th – attended the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting held at American Legion Post 610, located in Brook Park, Ohio. I presented May 2025 financial reports as District Finance Officer.

- June 26th – attended American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m. I presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended AMVETS meeting and gave financial report
- Participated in TopGolf outreach event
- Gave two flags to veterans and disposed of old flags
- Procured tickets for five veterans for D-Day event
- Attended Joint Veterans' Council meeting
- Participated in Guitars 4 Vets jam session

Bob Potts – VVA

- None.

James Riley – VFW

- June 5-8th – attended annual state VFW convention in Sandusky, Ohio
- June 9th – Guitars 4 Vets monthly jam (and lessons each Monday)
- June 10th – attended monthly Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- June 12th – monthly rifle detail at Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman
- June 13th – presented and attended Joint Veterans Council Annual Naturalization and Army Birthday ceremony along with the VSC Outreach team

Bi-monthly – wrote military related article and updated calendar on center pages for DD214 Chronicle paper

Lenon Wright - DAV

- Met with the Veteran Supervisor of the Men's Homeless Shelter to distribute tickets to veterans in the shelter
- Met with the Director of the YMCA to distribute bus tickets to the homeless women at the various locations in Cleveland
- Met with the supervisor at the DAV office to distribute bus tickets to any veteran in need of transportation
- Met with the drug and alcohol counselor for the VA to distribute bus tickets
- Met with Annette Rucker to pass out bus tickets. Ms. Rucker owns a group home for veterans

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. Work at the new headquarters building continues to progress and is projected to be on schedule. Tile work, millwork, electrical and roof repairs are all progressing as planned. There was a problem with the air conditioning once it was filled and turned on. There were multiple holes in the coils and the coils needed replacement. Work on the elevator is expected to begin in August.

The lease for the storage facility is with the Law Department. Self-insurance on the storage unit is no longer an issue. Awaiting a response from M. Dever.

Once plans are finalized with the Sheriff's Department for the new headquarters, Mr. Reiss will have a conversation with Protective Services.

The mobile vehicle was being utilized as an additional office at the Parma CBOC. The activity report has been put on hold until 2026 when activity is expected to increase.

Director Reiss presented a list of possible projects that the budget carryover may be used for. Prior to researching the projects, the Assistant County Prosecutor was asked to investigate the legality of the budget carryover.

A contract has been signed with Ace Taxi. This is a pilot program for veterans and will not replace the CCVSC bus ticket program. The CCVSC will be invoiced for taxi use. Data will be gathered to determine the need and positive benefit as time goes on.

NEW BUSINESS:

The TopGolf outreach event did reach some new veterans, but it was not as successful as hoped. Future events will be held at the new headquarters building.

Jon Reiss updated the 2026 budget to include the county's new format. Object codes were added, and the updated budget was submitted to the county.

The VSC will not be advertising during 'Veterans Voices' on Fox8 at this time. A significant amount of money has already been devoted to advertising. The option will be reconsidered when the new headquarters building is occupied with a more targeted campaign.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Riley will be part of the 4th of July parade.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to consider client cases and appeals and employment of a public employee. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:05 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:12 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed client cases and appeals and employment of a public employee.

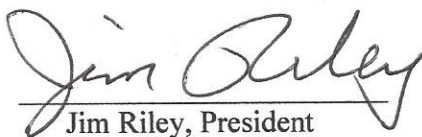
A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve a temporary change in months of assistance. Financial assistance temporary aid will now be extended to 12 months, and with a medical letter, aid can be extended to 15 months. Motion seconded by Bob Potts.

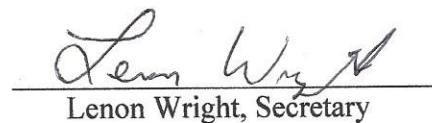
AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

The votes for further assistance, recorded by the Secretary, of the client appeal that was discussed in Executive Session, are attached. The Executive Director and Deputy Director were instructed on how to proceed.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:17 a.m. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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


Jim Riley, President


Lenon Wright, Secretary

Gp.t

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)