



American Legion
MEL BAHER
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans
FRANK POCCI
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: August 6, 2025 9:30 a.m.

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

EXCUSED: Bob Potts, Commissioner
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

VISITORS: Geniece Garner, Financial Assistance Manager
Jeanne Bell, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Don Stark, DD214 Chronicle
Brian Grazianno, Channel 5

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Riley with the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Lenon Wright called roll.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- June 2nd – attended the American Legion 13th District council meeting held at American Legion Post 738 in Fairview Park, Ohio. Presented financial reports as District Finance Officer.
- July 4th – volunteered with American Legion Post 91 Independence Day activities
- July 10th – attended American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. Presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer.
- July 17th – 20th – attended the American Legion Department of Ohio Summer Convention, held at the Holiday Inn Rockside located in Independence, Ohio. I serve as the Credentials Chairman for the summer convention.
- July 24th – attended American Legion Post 91 executive board meeting held at 7:00 p.m. Presented new year budget and financial reports to the executive board.

- July 26th – attended the American Legion 13th District executive board meeting held at American Legion Post 738. Presented financial reports as District Finance Officer.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Attended AMVETS meeting and gave financial report
- Attended Italian American War Vets meeting
- Donated two flags to veterans
- Distributed bus tickets for needy individuals
- Sent AMVETS' tax information to the Department of Ohio

Bob Potts – VVA

- Excused.

James Riley – VFW

- July 4th – marched in Kamms Corner 4th of July parade – our Post was the lead military unit
- July 8th – attended monthly Joint Veterans Council of Cuyahoga County meeting
- July 10th – attended Catholic War Veterans meeting
- July 11th – 13th – attended VFW Council of Administration meeting in Newark, Ohio – gave report
- July 14th – Guitars 4 Vets monthly jam (and lessons on several Mondays)
- July 15th – attended VFW monthly meeting at Post #2533 – currently the Post Adjutant
- July 17th – monthly rifle detail at Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman – 6 funerals
- July 21st – attended FOB Lodge #25 meeting – spoke with several veteran members about benefits
- July 24th – 27th – attended VSC Commissioner training in Dublin, Ohio
- July 31st – performed rifle salute duty for deceased member of our VFW Post – obtained flag case

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

Lenon Wright - DAV

- Attended funeral of John Parker, former DAV State Commander
- Met with the VA Supervisor of Transportation to deliver bus tickets
- Attended the DAV monthly meeting. Served as the Treasurer and Adjutant for Chapter 116
- Met with the supervisor of the Men's Homeless Shelter to deliver bus tickets to veterans
- Worked the Strongsville cook-off for the DAV

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to consider a client case and appeal, compensation of a public and employment of a public employee. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci.

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

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 10:55 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed a client case and appeal, compensation of a public employee and employment of a public employee.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve the probationary termination of Rebecca Pappas. Motion seconded by Frank Pocci. Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, 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.

The Board returned to the regular order of business at 10:58 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The building looks good. The elevator sump has been worked on and a solution is in the works. There will be no illumination on the VSC logo on the outside of the building but can be added at a later date. There is a potential issue with the storm sewer drain but will not have more information until the drain is exposed.

The storage at Tyler Village has been moved to County Council for approval. It will take a few more months, but a temporary space has been secured at the county to store items for VetConnect.

Options for security were discussed. More research will be done to determine the best option; Protective Services, the Sheriff's Department or a private security firm.

Director Reiss received a request from the County to decrease the 2026 Budget. The budget will remain as it was submitted. No changes will be made at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Don Stark from the DD214 Chronicle spoke about his desire to increase readership of the DD214 newspaper he is running. He chose to work with Brian Graziano from Channel 5 to launch a digital marketing campaign. He is very happy with the campaign and has increased production to meet demand.

Brian Graziano clarified the details of the plan that was presented for a VSC advertising campaign with Channel 5. The VSC will be spotlighted on the noon news, and the digital plan will reach specific demographics targeting up to 100,000 veterans per month.

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve resolution 2025-20 providing for the advertising agreement with Channel 5 for the Salute to Veterans for Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission to support area veterans. The agreement is a monthly news segment and digital advertising campaign specifically for veterans, not to exceed \$25,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None.

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

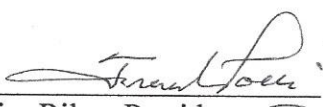
GOOD OF THE ORDER:

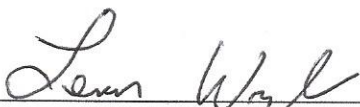
Commissioner Riley mentioned that House Bill 335 was discussed at Commissioner training. The bill proposes the elimination of inside mileage which will affect the Veterans Service Commissions and mental health resources.

The Board expressed their appreciation for the job Matthew Purves has been doing for the VSC as the Digital Marketing Coordinator. The Board is very happy with the digital marketing posts he has been putting out.

With no further business, a motion was made by Frank Pocci to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 a.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, 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)