



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: January 7, 2026 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: Jim Hordonski - VFW

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Riley with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board 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.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Mel Baher – American Legion

- December 11th – attended the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. – presented financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- December 14th – attended the American Legion 13th District Winter Conference held at Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 10:00 a.m. – provided financial reports at District Finance Officer
- December 16th – attended the American Legion 13th District executive board Christmas party held at Post 91 in Berea, Ohio at 6:00 p.m.
- December 23rd – attended the Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m. - presented updated financial reports as Post Finance Officer

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Referred two veterans to the Veterans Service Commission

Bob Potts – VVA

- Referred two veterans to the Veterans Service Commission

James Riley – VFW

- December 6th – drove VSC van in Light Up Lakewood parade
- December 7th – performed with Guitars 4 Vets at Sandusky Ohio Veterans Home Christmas party
- December 9th – attended Joint Veterans Council monthly meeting
- December 11th – performed monthly rifle salute detail at Western Reserve National Cemetery – 7 funerals
- December 14th – attended and assisted at VFW #2533 annual Christmas party
- December 16th – as Adjutant – prepared minutes and attended monthly VFW #2533 meeting
- December 23rd – wrote checks as executor for deceased veteran's estate
- December 31st – performed with Guitars for Vets at New Year's Eve function at American Legion Post#211

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

Lenon Wright - DAV

- Met with the supervisor of the Transportation Department at the VA to distribute bus tickets
- Distributed bus tickets to the veterans at the Men's Homeless Shelter
- Distributed bus tickets to the female veterans at the Homeless Women's Shelter
- Attend the monthly meeting for DAV Chapter 116 – served in my role as Chapter Treasurer and Adjutant

OLD BUSINESS:

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The arm for the entrance/exit gate has not been installed yet. Full-time security does not begin at the new headquarters until January 26th. The Board has agreed that the doors should not be open to the public until security is on-site daily. The elevator is smaller than anticipated. The size will be difficult for a wheelchair to enter and exit comfortably, but requirements were grandfathered in. One option is to have guests for the board meeting to be in the training room and attend via zoom.

The lease for the storage facility is scheduled for approval by County Council. The option to move prior to approval was presented and discussed.

Veterans Village will be discussed at the next board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Election of Officers on the CCVSC Board

A motion was made by Mel Baher to elect the following officers on the CCVSC Board for Year 2027, using the guideline established in January 2007. There were no other nominations. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

President

Frank Pocci (AMVETS)

Vice President

Lenon Wright (DAV)

Secretary

Bob Potts (VVA)

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-02 annually adjusting employee mileage and per diem travel reimbursements rates in accordance with standard federal rates for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for year 2026. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-03 requesting authority for Five Commissioners and Executive Team to attend various conferences and training to maintain accreditation with the Ohio State Association of Veterans Service Commissioner (OSAVSC) in 2026, expenses not to exceed \$20,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-04 requesting authority for the Executive/Deputy Director to utilize funds as necessary for staff training and development and to reimburse staff for the purchase of meals for training, meetings and items used for team building and/or incentives, expenses not to exceed \$50,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-05 requesting authority for twenty-two Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Officers and Commissioners to attend training and maintain membership and accreditation with the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers (OSACVSO) and National Association of county Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) in 2026, expenses not to exceed \$96,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-06 requesting authority for the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and the leadership team to attend conferences and training seminars as necessary to enhance veterans services throughout Cuyahoga County for the year 2026, expenses not to exceed \$50,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-07 requesting authority for the Executive Director to reimburse staff for memberships at gym/fitness centers, expenses not to \$100 per month per employee and \$45,000 per year. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-08 for annual maintenance of CCVSC Call center/call management communication software from Five9, expenses not to exceed \$50,000., expenses not to exceed \$50,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-09 providing for the authority of the Executive Director to provide assistance to employees who experience a hardship due to a delay of processing benefits, expenses not to exceed \$10,000. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright. Discussion: None

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

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve the Holiday Schedule for the year 2026. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None

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

The staff holiday luncheon will be held at the new headquarters building on Friday, February 13th at the monthly staff meeting.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Riley mentioned that some counties are paying those that conduct an honor guard for a deceased veteran and their family. Lorain County is currently paying each honor guard member \$50 per day.

Commissioner Pocci mentioned that a change is coming in real estate taxes for Ohio residents.

Commissioner Potts mentioned that Bay Village High School reached out to him to be a speaker on Veterans Day.

The VSC dress code was discussed. After a lengthy discussion, the dress code will remain as is for the next few months. It will be revisited at that time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to consider compensation of a public employee. Motion seconded by Lenon Wright.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (11:20 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 compensation of a public employee.

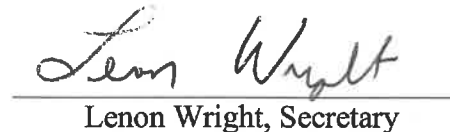
A motion was made by Lenon Wright to approve a memo regarding a non-bargaining pay change. Motion seconded by Mel Baher Discussion: None.

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

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:56 a.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. (216-698-2639)

Geniece Garner (216)-698-4955

Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)

Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)

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