



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: October 1, 2025 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: James Riley, President
Lenon Wright, Secretary
Mel Baher, Commissioner
Bob Potts, Commissioner
Jon Reiss, Executive Director
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

XCUSED: Frank Pocchi, Vice President

VISITORS: Ashlee Reale – Community Impact Manager
Drew Smith – Outreach Supervisor

PURPOSE: GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

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

The Board welcomed Ashlee Reale and Drew Smith and thanked them for the tremendous job they and their team had done for VetConnect. The event was a huge success with over 2,000 veterans and friends attending.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Mel Baher – American Legion

- September 7th – attended the American Legion 13th District Fall Conference held at Post 703 at 10:00 a.m. Provided the July 2025 financial reports as District Finance Officer.
- September 11th – attended the Patriot Day ceremony on the Berea Triangle at 9:00 a.m. Sounded TAPS at the conclusion of the ceremony.
- September 11th – attended American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. Presented August 2025 financial reports as Post Finance Officer.
- September 19th – attended the annual POW/MIA ceremony held at American Legion Post 91 at 6:00 p.m. on the Post Pavilion.
- September 25th – attended the American Legion Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m. Presented updated August 2025 financial reports as Post Finance Officer.

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

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Excused

Bob Potts – VVA

- Attended VetConnect and spent time speaking with veterans at the event

James Riley – VFW

- September 4th – Performed monthly rifle salute detail at Western Reserve National Cemetery
- September 11th – attended Catholic War Vets monthly meeting
- September 16th – attended monthly VFW #2533 meeting, prepared minutes
- September 18th – met electrician at VFW #2533 installing new flood light on flag
- September 18th – Distributed RTA bus passes to veteran and others at the Benjamin Rose Center, 16600 Lakeshore Blvd., East Cleveland Ohio
- September 22 – met with Jon Reiss to sign paperwork for office and obtain new E-tablet
- September 23-26th – met with several beneficiaries to obtain signatures on legal paperwork for deceased veteran
- September 26th – received 2026 dates for Joint Veterans Honor Guard at Western Reserve National Cemetery and distributed to team
- September 26th – received request from Bishop Cosgrove Center, E. 18th and Superior for RTA bus passes and relayed info to VSC Executive Secretary (need to be picked up at Parma and delivered)

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

Lenon Wright – DAV

- Supported the DAV in recruiting and fundraising at the Octoberfest in Berea, Ohio
- Supported the DAV in recruiting members and fundraising at the outdoor RV Festival at the IX Center
- Met with the warden at the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to distribute bus tickets to the facility
- Distributed bus tickets to Frontline Services for those who are in need
- Distributed bus tickets to the Women's Shelter for those who are in need
- Attended the DAV Chapter 116 monthly meeting as the Treasure and Adjutant of the Chapter

OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. The contractors continue to work to get the temporary occupancy permit. The punch list for the second floor has been completed. The parking lot demo will begin on Monday, and the full fire system and elevator repairs are complete. Inspections on the elevator will begin soon.

The storage unit at Tyler Village did not work out. It will take at least 5 to 6 weeks to get into another unit.

VetConnect was a huge success. With well over 2,000 guests in attendance, including veterans from several other counties, the outreach team and staff did a great job.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve modified resolution 2025-19 providing for the purchase of items needed for VetConnect; food, rental equipment, promotional items, etc. for the annual VetConnect Veteran engagement event providing support services to the veterans of Cuyahoga County, not to exceed 300,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: The board discussed outstanding invoices to determine the amount.

YES: Baher, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. ABSTAIN: Riley

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Commissioner Wright suggested staff members who go above and beyond be brought before the board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

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

AYES: Baher, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:06 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:17 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed pending legal action, and employment of a public employee.

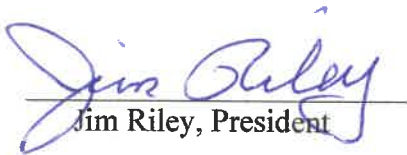
A motion was made by Mel Baher to remove Suzanne Slimak from probation. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None.

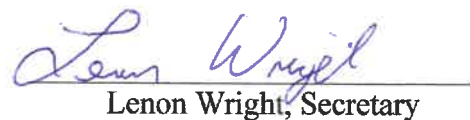
AYES: Baher, Potts, Riley, Wright. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Counsel was asked to check with the Sherri's Department about anonymous complaints and was directed on how to proceed.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 a.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

AYES: Baher, 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)