

**Veterans Service Commission
Of Hamilton County
August 8, 2024**

Meeting called to order at 10:10 am August 8, 2024, by Commission President Jean Wilson

Pledge of Allegiance led by President Jean Wilson.

Attendance Roll Call taken:

Commissioners: Mr. Headen - excused, Mr. Rowland - present, Mr. Staniford - excused, Mr. Watson - present, and Mrs. Wilson present

Executive Director, Orlando Sonza, Administrative Assistant, Pam Minser

Dave Stevenson, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office

Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Minutes:

Motion made to approve the minute as published was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Presentations and Announcements:

Commissioner Rowland presented a Veterans Memorial signed that was framed and he donated to the Commission

Open Forum:

Nothing for Open Forum this date August 8, 2024.

Old business:

a. Transportation:

Mr. Sonza – Transportation is officially up and going. Mr. Sonza shared a summary of the transportation options available. Another option will be available once the VSC has acquired vans. Bids for vans will begin. President Wilson question on where the van(s) would be parked if acquired this year. Commissioner Sonza stated that is something that will need to be investigated. Once a van has been ordered.

b. Dental Services

Mr. Sonza is working on adding this to the financial assistance policy & procedures manual. Stating there must be a financial assistance application done and the applicant must meet the financial need qualification. A cap of \$600.00 for bi-annual cleanings, x-ray, and exam is implemented for this service. It will be a direct pay to the vendor. A copy of \$2,500.00 for emergency dental services. No cosmetic procedures, dentures, implants, etc.

Motion to adopt Dental Services was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson

Discussion: Hearing none

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

c. Eyecare Services

Mr. Sonza introduced Eyecare Services to the board. Eye exam and glasses not to exceed \$1,000.00, no special add-ons example: no line bi-focal or polarized lenses etc. Stating there must be a financial assistance application done and the applicant must meet the financial need qualifications.

Motion to adopt Eyeglass services was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson

Discussion:

President Wilson stated the Veteran needs to enroll at the VA medical first and see what they may be eligible for first before we consider assistance with paying for glasses.

Motion amended to adopt Eyeglasses services with the stipulation the Veteran must enroll at the VA medical center first to see if they are eligible there prior to applying at the VSC made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

d. Challenge Coin

Draft of artwork for consideration was presented to the board for approval. The board requested a physical sample of the coin before considering approval.

New Business

a. Policies & Procedures Manual

Policies & Procedures Manual copies were given to the Commissioner's in attendance today. Commissioner's will review the manual and present questions, concerns, and/or amendments to the manual by the next meeting board meeting.

b. Direct Vendor Payment System

The Direct Vendor payment system is up and moving. Direct payments will now be made to the landlord/mortgage company, duke (electric & gas), water company or any other necessary vendor for utilities.

Applicants will only receive a check for food, hygiene, clothing, ID's, and possibly a couple of other items that will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

c. Email Newsletter

Emailing Newsletter cost range is \$1470.00 to \$1795.00 a year. Newsletter will be set up by the webmaster.

Motion to approve no more than \$2000.00 for the set up and emailing of the Newsletter was made by Mr. Watson, and duly seconded by Mr. Rowland. Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

d. Remaining FY24 Advertising Budget

VSC will consider doing advertising with iHeart throughout the Cincinnati Bengals football season if the contract can be amended to no more than \$8000.00. Executive Director will handle the negotiations with WLW.

Motion to approve the \$8000.00 cap for IHeart was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Discussion:

Commissioner Wilson had a question about possibly working with some of the other counties with the advertising. Doing a joint advertising to free up funds for the purchase of vans, stating vans are top priority to her. Director Sonza stated this is something he will look into. Most have already committed their advertising budget for 2024 but, 2025 maybe a possibility to work together on Advertising.

Commission Watson discussed getting monies from the state budget to do advertising for the districts. This will benefit the state as well. Motion to approve the \$8000.00 cap for IHeart was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

President Wilson, I would like to put on record that now that we have an Executive Director, I feel he should be the one reaching out and finding the advertising opportunities. If a member of the board has a thought about advertising this should be given to the Director for him to negotiate the contract and be able to handle all the legal side of things prior to bringing to the board.

Mr. Watson. Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

e. Sponsorship Opportunities

Easterseals

Sponsorship opportunity with Easterseals for the annual Honor Ride. Honor ride is to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans. It's a noncompetitive family friendly bicycle ride. This will be held the morning of August 24, 2024, at Miami Whitewater park. Director Sonza asks the board to consider a \$5000.00 sponsorship for the Easterseals.

Motion made to approve a \$5000.00 sponsorship to Easterseals was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Watson. Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Sycamore Township Veterans Memorial

Sponsorship opportunity for the Sycamore Township Veterans Memorial a letter of request of \$10,000.00 to assist with the development of the Veterans Memorial was presented to the board for consideration.

Motion made to approve a \$10,000.00 sponsorship to Sycamore Township for the Veterans Memorial was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Watson. Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Executive Session:

President Wilson asks for a motion to go into Executive Session

“Review emergency financial assistance applications for the period of July 1, 2024, through July 30, 2024, pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22 (J) and 5901.09”

And

To Consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual (G)(1) of section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Motion on Record to Move into Executive Session was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Meeting closed to public for Executive Session

Meeting Opens from Executive Session

Motion to approve the monthly financial reports for July 2024 which include the assisted, expired, and non-eligible cases was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Motion on Record to relieve Mr. Dunlap from his duties here at the Veterans Service Commission effectively immediately. He is a probationary period employee the board feels that his judgement, fitness and quality of work does not merit continued employment at the VSC.

Motion to terminate Mr. Dunlap's employment immediately was made by Mr. Watson, duly seconded by Mr. Rowland.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion carries

Commissioner's Reports

Mr. Watson had the opportunity to visit American Legion 554 on River Rd. Shared that it was a really nice post, friendly people, and is run very well.

Next meeting:

August 21, 2024, at 11:00am

Location:

American Legion Post #69 Halker Flege

9000 Reading Rd

Cincinnati, Ohio 45215

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rowland, duly seconded by Mr. Watson

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned