

**Veterans Service Commission
Of Hamilton County
Board Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2024**

Meeting called to order at 10:00 May 8, 2024

Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Jean Wilson.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Wilson, Present
Commissioner Rowland, Present
Commissioner Staniford, Present
Commissioner Watson, Present
Commissioner Rowland, Present

Recognitions of staff and special guests:

Commissioner Wilson welcomed those attending the VSC Board Meeting

Guests in attendance:

Eric Munas – Hamilton County Prosecutors Office
Adam Howard
Craig McKee, Channel 9 WCPO
WT Tan, Channel 9 WCPO

Commission rules and guidelines:

Motion made by Commissioner Staniford to accept and approve the rules and guidelines that were obtained from Hamilton County Prosecutors Office. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion: Hearing none:

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – Yes
Mr. Staniford – Yes
Mr. Watson – Yes
Mrs. Wilson – Yes

Unanimous vote: Commission rules and guidelines are now in place.

Approval of the agenda for May 8, 2024

Motion to approve the agenda made by Commissioner Rowland, seconded by Commissioner Staniford.

Discussion: Hearing none:

Mr. Staniford, Yes

Mr. Rowland, Yes

Mr. Watson, Yes

A unanimous vote: Board agenda approved for the May 8, 2024, Commission Meeting.

Approval of the April 25, 2024, minutes as published.

Motion to approve the April 25, 2024 minutes as published was made by Commissioner Rowland, Seconded by Staniford

Discussion:

Commissioner Watson: The original draft of the minutes did not have the 2025 budget on there. It has been added and incorrectly states the addition of a date where Commissioner Staniford presented a draft of the 2025 budget that he would be presenting and discussing with the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday April 30, 2024. Commissioner Watson had several questions about the budget and asked for some breakdowns and explanations. There was never any mention that Commissioner Staniford was going to be addressing the County Board of Commissioners at last week's meeting. That was not part of our discussion. Commissioner Staniford stated I think it was, Commissioner Watson stated no it wasn't because I had questions about the breakdown of the budget. I had some questions about staffing and on advertising. And I was told that that information would be provided at our next meeting. And we have not voted on a budget. And I would not have if this information wasn't presented at the meeting and had been presented. I would have objected because we had not approved the budget. So why would we discuss the budget with the commissioners" That's not discussed at the meeting panel.

Is there any further discussion? Hearing none, we will have a roll call vote on the previous minutes:

Mr. Rowland – Yes

Mr. Staniford – Yes

Mr. Watson – No

Mrs. Wilson – Yes

Mr. Headen - Abstain

Majority rules, motion to approve April 25, 2024, minutes as presented.

Executive Session:

Motion to enter executive session made by Commissioner Staniford per OAC 121-22 Veterans Service Commission subsection is April 25, 2024, through May 7, 2024, for review of cases for emergency financial assistance per ordinance 5901.01 to 5901.15.

Open meeting reconvenes:

Financial Assistance Case Review

Motion to approve the decisions made on the financial assistance application was made by Commissioner Staniford, seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion: Hearing none:

Roll call vote.

Mr. Rowland – Yes

Mr. Staniford – Yes

Mr. Watson – Yes

Mrs. Wilson – Yes

Mr. Headen - Yes

A unanimous vote motion carries Applications for Financial Assistance approved.

Policy & Procedure Manual Revision Chapter 1-4

Motion made by Commissioner Staniford to approve the revised policy & procedure manual chapters 1 through 4, Seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion:

Commissioner Staniford, I believe Pam had given us all a folder to review at our leisure between the last meeting to kind of make notes and make changes if needed. I submitted mine to Pam yesterday with a spelling issue. There was really nothing of substance in mind. Did all of you have anything for exhibit?

Commissioner Headen, I'm fine with these chapters. Commissioner Watson "I'm not quite sure which manual you are talking about? Commissioner Wilson stated each Commissioner was given a blue folder at the last meeting with a yellow/green highlighter. It was for the policy and procedure, that is the manual we are talking about. The only section we were supposed to be looking at. Commissioner Rowland stated that Commissioner Watson is out of order, and he is now interrupting when she is talking. Commissioner Rowland stated, "in the twelve years I've been on this board we had discussions with the 5 members all of us was onboard!"

Commissioner Wilson asked us to get back on track.

Commissioner Watson "What are you saying? Like was that the only portion of the policy and procedures so far: "Yes" commissioner Wilson replied or was that the entire manual, Commissioner Watson asked. Commissioner Wilson, no, it is Chapters 1(One) through 4 (four).

Commissioner Staniford, okay, one through four chapters and as we proceed, we'll get the additional chapters done. We've been down service officers, and others thins Pam has had we needed her to work on. So, hopefully by our next meeting more chapters will be ready for review.

Motion to approve the Policy and Procedure revised Chapters 1 through 4 was made by Commissioner Staniford, seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Rowland – Yes

Mr. Staniford – Yes

Mr. Watson – No

Mr. Headen – Yes

Mrs. Wilson – Yes

Majority rules – Chapters 1 through 4 of the policy & procedures manual for the Veterans Service Commission of Hamilton County will be published as presented.

Executive Director Interviews

Two interviews have been conducted to date and three more will be contacted between May 13, and May 15, 2024, with the hope of bringing the interviewees that we've selected to the board on the 22nd of May to interview in front of the full board.

Commissioner Headen stated he would like copies of the resumes; stated he really can't vote on something he has not seen. Commissioner Staniford stated that makes perfect sense and I apologize for not thinking about that ahead of time and that he will have it before the next meeting.

Okay VSO employment Commissioner Wilson and Commissioner Staniford have reviewed resumes for VSO positions and have conducted two interviews so far and have other schedules. Commissioner Staniford stated two candidates have been selected, since we are short staffed, they are a good fit and fit the mold we are looking for as a VSO and will grow with the future of this office.

We are looking for a motion to approve the employment of Amber Ndubuisi and David Dunlap at the recommendation of Commissioner Wilson and Commissioner Staniford as well as the well as the starting pay. They are both currently DVOP's at Ohio Means Jobs, in speaking with fellow co-workers and supervisors they are both highly dedicated and passionate about their jobs working with veterans to assist them in finding employment. Commissioner Headen requested copies of their resumes; copies will be provided to Commissioner Headen.

Motion made to approve the hiring of Amber Ndubuisi and David Dunlap as Veterans Service Officers was made by Commissioner Staniford, seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion

Hearing none, Pam roll call vote please

Commissioner Headen – abstain.
Commissioner Rowland – Yes.
Commissioner Staniford – Yes
Commissioner Watson – No
Commissioner Wilson – Yes

Motion carried, majority of the Vote for the hiring of two new service officers.

Old Business

2025 budget:

Commissioner Watson stated that he requested that this item be added to the agenda because the budget was not concluded at the last meeting, and he had several questions which were not answered. He was informed that information was supposed to be forthcoming to this meeting. Commissioner Watson “Do we have answers to the questions that I brought up”?

Commissioner Staniford, “Madam President, I have elected not to enter into a discussion on that at this time”. The entire commission was aware of when we would be discussing the budget proposal, and any commissioner was allowed to attend or add input. The numbers that are on the proposal were taken from averages of the top 10 counties in the State of Ohio., as well as to address our growing needs as a county. Soon that point, I don’t really at this time we can discuss it. I think believe it is set for the next meet. We will be going over the 2025 budget for approval. We can hash it out then, but I don’t think it’s appropriate for this meeting to have to hash it out at this time.

Commissioner Wilson are you finished speaking Commissioner Staniford, yes Madam President, I’m finished.

Commissioner Watson, one of the issues that I brought up at the last meeting was the headcount for staffing. This was not explained. We don’t know how many people we’re going to be adding to our staff. We don’t know what the salary amounts are. And the state requires us to do an itemized budget. I asked for this information, and it wasn’t available. The other thing I added was we made a drastic increase in our advertising budget. The advertising budget request is now close to half a million dollars. Commissioner Watson, states that he asked for a breakdown as to what those expenses were. And was told by Commissioner Staniford who presented the report, and we did not have a lot of time to review the report. I didn’t see that report until that meeting started. But I was told by the Commissioner Staniford who presented that report that he would have an update at the next meeting. This is the next meeting. And I’m a little bit disturbed that we approved minutes indicating that the Commissioner who made the report, presented this to the County Commissioners with permission of the board. And why would he not present an itemized budget as required by ORC. The board had not approved the budget and

we shouldn't be sharing it with anybody since it hasn't been approved. So, I don't have any answers as to what the staffing requirement is. We're required to know that and before we approve it, and I don't have any answers as to why budget went from \$3,000 to \$425,000 without a breakdown as to what those expenses were and if I remember correctly at the meeting, this budget was presented, it was a summary of what the county's Commission's statewide were doing and it was an average of those 85 commissioners now it's 10. So, the numbers aren't accurate. All we had was a one-page summary. There is no supporting documentation. This is no analysis. There is no justification for anything that we're increasing. And there has been no discussion about it. None whatsoever. We just had the presentation and took a leap. I think that this is an important matter, especially since we're increasing our budget by above 10%. This board needs to have a plan that improves going forward with the county commissioners because once we go over the 10% my understanding is they have the option to add six up to six commissioners to our board and I was fortunate enough to review the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners staff meeting where the commissioner who made that report had a PowerPoint presentation. He and his wife were there, and I felt like there were going to be negotiations with the county regarding the limit the number of Commissioners or no commissioners added that's an appropriate discussion for the board. Not an individual to take to the Board of Commissioners. We hadn't even discussed that as an issue item as to where we stood on that. I certainly had no input for that. And I do have some input for that. I think that those issues need to be addressed before we present a formal budget to this board. And the decisions need to be on board.

Commissioner Wilson to Commissioner Watson you need to wrap it up your 5 minutes are up.

Commissioner Wilson, anyone else on this discussion.

Commissioner Staniford, Madam President, I would you like to share a transcription of the last meeting, at the one hour twenty-six mark I stated "I have this budget that I'm working on with Pam. We have a proposed budget that we will be taking to the County Commissioners to have them look at it and get an agreement in place that will allow us to submit a 2025 budget without enacting any additional seats on this board". So, at our next meeting, the 2025 budget will be presented to the full board and that will be at our next meeting on May 22, 2024.

New Business:

Commissioner Staniford presented the Urban One advertising proposal that you have in your packet. It is a standard advertising for a month with Urban One radio station. We want to diversify our advertising throughout the community. Hamilton County is a very diverse community, and they deserve to be able to be heard our message should be heard on all stations available. So, this is similar to what we have with 700 WLW and iHeart radio. This will allow us to advertise on Urban One with Lincoln Wear who's a veteran, so I think it's important that we support a veteran and

his programming and as well as get our message out. And it's a modest investment of \$8,500. Question Lincoln Wear endorsement? What was the endorsement for? No, he's not an endorsement. He is a veteran in this community, and we should be advertising with Urban One local business, supporting local businesses through advertising is how these businesses survive. Commissioner Watson: He will mention the Lincoln Wear endorsement is him talking about us on his show constantly and this is the Veterans Service Commission. Commissioner Staniford we can work out the details on how we want it to be done. It will be him talking live about us. It's not just a commercial run it's him. Like the one we did with iHeart radio that has been very well received.

Motion to move forward with the Urban one advertising, seconded by Commissioner Headen, discussion:

Commissioner Headen, I understand he has a pretty big radio audience to, so I think it's a good investment.

Commissioner Watson, I'm not sure how this money is and I'm not sure what this represents, it says weekly total.

\$1,650.00 some set for 75 weeks is cluster streaming ads is that what that means? 75 times a week, (25 times a week per station) at \$150.00 a week.

Commissioner Watson, wat does that mean?

Madam President, it's 75 edges in a cluster streaming ad a week for \$400 a week. This is a month the advertising for a radio. A monthly investment is what this is and we can see where it sits after the first month and then reassess. Same thing we do with iHeart we will watch the numbers.

Commissioner Watson, so it's \$1,500 a month, is that correct? Commissioner Staniford, as I stated, to talk, covers four (4) weeks.

Commissioner Wilson, do we have the monies in the 2024 budget to do this advertising? Commissioner Watson stated he doesn't see where this money is in the current budget. The Administrative Assistant explained that the monies will be moved from a different line item and used as advertising. Which line item was unclear during the meeting. \$94,000.00 was moved from line item #848 relief and is set to be used for advertising and if needed the Hamilton County Budget analyst left over funds form 2023 in the amount of 70,000.00 can be requested because of incorrect information I had received on carrying this money over into the 2024. So, if we need it there should not be any problems getting it. Commissioner Watson wanted to know how much has been spending in advertising thus far in 2024. Pam stated \$50,000.00 at the GABP, \$1,000.00 Local 12 Retirement/Health Expo, \$2,995.00 opening day.

Commissioner Wilson, do I have a motion to approve the Urban One radio advertising for \$8,500.00.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Wilson – yes
Commissioner Rowland – yes
Commissioner Staniford – yes
Commissioner Watson -No
Commissioner Headen – yes

Majority carries HCVSC will advertise with Urban One Radio.

The last item on the agenda is partnering with the VA to share clients who maybe needing of VA services. Commissioner Staniford stated that he is currently in discussion. It is a large gathering of the local VSC's in Bulter, Clermont, and Warran County's wo work with the VA. I've been talking with Todd Sledge of the VAMC about sharing our veterans that we have who we identify that may not have a 10% rating, to get them enrolled in the VAMC so they can get the care they need. Sometime in the beginning of June.

The VAMC is keen about partnering with us at the Veterans Appreciation Day event on July 20,2024 at the Great American Ball Park.

Commissioner Wilson: Open Forum

Does anyone have anything they would like to discuss or bring to the table?

Hearing none may I have a motion to adjourn and a second please.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Staniford, seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Headen – yes
Commissioner Staniford – yes
Commissioner Rowland – yes
Commissioner Watson – yes
Commissioner Wilson – yes

Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Reminder the next meeting will be Wednesday May 22, 2024, at 10am.

Commissioner Wilson, President _____

Commissioner Headen, Vice President _____

Commissioner Staniford, Secretary _____

Commissioner Rowland, member _____

Commissioner Watson _____