

**Veterans Service Commission
Hamilton County Ohio
Board Meeting Minutes
June 26, 2024**

Meeting called to order this date Wednesday June 26, 2024, at 10:am

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Jean Wilson

Roll Call:

Mr. Headen – present, Mr. Rowland – present, Mr. Staniford – present, Mr. Watson – present, Mrs. Wilson – present, Mr. Sonza – present, Ms. Minser – present

Recognition and welcoming of our guests joining us for today's meeting:

Andrew Pappas, Tony Kohl, Raffel Prophett, Jordan Johnson and Tom Conlin

- Commissioner Wilson: thank you for joining us today.

Approval of agenda:

A motion to approve agenda as published made by Commissioner Staniford, duly seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried

June 5, 2024, meeting minutes:

A motion to approve the June 5, 2024, meeting minutes made by Commissioner Staniford, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion: Hearing none

Roll call vote to approve minutes as published:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried

Executive session:

1. **A motion** on record to move into Executive Session:

8A To review emergency financial assistance applications for the period of June 5, 2024, through June 25, 2024, as described in R.C. 121.22 (J) and 5901.09, was made by Commissioner Rowland, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried.

Reconvened:

A motion was made to approve the financial assist list by Commissioner Rowland, duly seconded by Commissioner Staniford.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried.

A motion was made to approve the not-eligible list by Commissioner Staniford, duly seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried.

Old Business:

Veterans Resource Event:

Commissioner Staniford presented the board with a list of vendors and a map layout for the Veterans Resource Event. Commissioner Wilson, Commissioner Staniford, and Commissioner Headen have all made a personal donation to the Veterans Resource Event. Commissioner Staniford stated \$500.00 was donated from a veteran's post to use to purchase giveaway items at the event. Commissioner Headen asked about who was able to attend the event and asked about how someone could sign up to be a volunteer. Commissioner Staniford spoke of how heavily the DAV is involved and the time and money they have put into this event. Ron Minter has been working very hard with the volunteers and spreading the word about the event.

Executive Director Sonza added emails, mailing and flyers have been sent to the different Veteran's organizations in Hamilton County. This is an event that has never been done in Hamilton County, that is why it's being called the Inaugural Veteran's Resource Event. Director Sonza spoke with Sgt Major Mike Boyd who is involved with "Operation Thank You" this is their 3rd year putting this on last year they had 2,000 veterans attend. Sgt. Major Boyd will be supporting the Veterans Resource Event and Director Sonza stated the Veterans Service Commission will support the "Operation Thank You" event in August at Sawyer Point.

New Business:

Paid Advertising Slots

Commissioner Staniford informed all board members and staff that some advertising interviews will be done by Commissioner Wilson on 55-WKRC and Commissioner Headen on Urban One. The main reason for these interviews is to promote the "Veterans Resource Event"

Commissioner Staniford added stated that the Hamilton County BoCC's have a policy that any incumbent running for a political office should not be involved in the running of paid advertisement through the County even though it is not a political advertisement. Commissioner Staniford made a motion for VSC of Hamilton County to adopt the same policy, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried.

Commissioner Board Meetings

Commissioner Watson feels that now that the Commission has an Executive Director who is overseeing the day-to-day operations and working diligently with the staff and keeping the commissioners informed on what is going on that he feels the board meetings could return to one day a month instead of two. Commissioner Watson made a motion to return to doing the board meetings to 2nd Wednesday of each month, duly seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion:

Comments from Veteran Tony Kohl, a member of the MOPH stating the VSC needs to move, parking ridiculous, the board should not exist if they have a director and staff along with other statements. Commissioner Staniford feels that we should remain meeting twice a month with so many items on the table that need to be done.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Headen – abstain, Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Staniford – no, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – no

Motion dies, lack of majority votes

Commissioner Watson made a motion that once a quarter that the VSC take their meetings out into the public sector by meeting at different Veterans' organization posts, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion of doing the 1st meeting of the month in the office and the second meeting of the month be held at a Veterans' Organization.

Commissioner Watson amended his motion, motion to continue with two meetings a month the first meeting being held at the VSC office on the 2nd Wednesday of the

month, and the second meeting being held at a Veterans' organization, duly seconded by Commissioner Staniford.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

Unanimous vote, motion carried.

Commissioner Calendar

Commissioner Staniford made a motion to have a shared between the Commissioner's, duly seconded by Commissioner Rowland.

Discussion:

Commissioner Watson didn't feel this was necessary and sometimes it is a last-minute personal invite to different meetings or events. Commissioner Staniford stated that he feels if you are representing or speaking on behalf of the office in any way the other Commissioners may want to attend as well.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Headen – yes, Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Staniford – yes, Mr. Watson – no,
Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Majority votes, motion carried.

Executive Director's Update: 90-Day Plan of Action, VSC office visits, meeting recording/retention, transportation services, and website updates.

***Please see attached documents**

Executive Director Sonza shared with the Board Members a thank you card that was sent to Veterans Service Officer Kevin Ott, thanking him for assisting him with his VA claim work. He also enclosed a gift card which as a government agency we can't accept. Card will be returned to the veteran to follow proper procedures.

Uber Health, if possible, Director Sonza to the board I would like to finalize and get the transportation service set up through Uber Health. This would be transportation for Veterans outside of the Metro Bus routes to get them to and from their VA medical appointments.

Motion made by Commissioner Staniford to approve the Uber Health transportation service for qualified Veterans, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

Mr. Headen – yes, Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Staniford – yes, Mr. Watson - yes,
Mrs. Wilson – yes.

Unanimous vote, motion carried

Commissioner Staniford made a motion for the Executive Director to develop a transportation plan in the next 60 days, duly seconded by Commissioner Headen.

Discussion? Hearing none

Roll call vote:

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

OPEN FORUM:

Tony Kohl addressed board meetings being held at different locations in the county

Tom Conlin addressed Appreciation Day registration

Raphael Prophet addressed sub committees for the Veterans Service Commission.

President Wilson addressed everyone the body, thanked everyone for coming to the meeting today. Everyone is always welcome to attend our meetings and tell us what they think but, that said 3 out of the 5 board members have only been on this board since the beginning of the year. Commissioner Rowland and I have been on the board the longest. Commissioner Wilson has no intention of asking for reappointment. I think new Commissioners are always good to have. I will say this though: I have dedicated my life and done more for veterans than anyone will ever know. I've sat on the board for the Joseph House and the Fisher House as well as being involved in many other veteran organizations. Our goal is to address the needs of veterans and make sure no veteran is ever left behind. After today's meeting I will be heading to Indiana to help a veteran who is in a very bad way. All of us should be treated with respect! No one should come in here screaming, yelling and telling us we are not doing our job or tell us how to do our job. Everyone on this board cares about their fellow veterans.

Thank you!

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Motion by Commissioner Headen to adjourn

Next board meeting will be held on July 3, 2024, at 10:00am

I have a motion do I have a second: motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Rowland, duly seconded

Roll call vote:

Mr. Headen – yes, Mr. Rowland – yes, Mr. Staniford – no, Mr. Watson – yes, Mrs. Wilson – yes

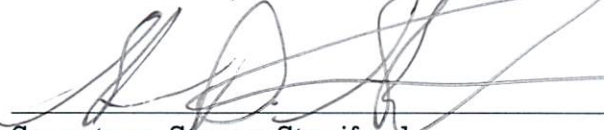
Majority vote, motion carried.

Minutes approved by:




President, Commissioner Wilson

Vice-President, Commissioner Headen



Secretary, Steven Staniford



Member, Commissioner Rowland



Member, Commissioner Watson