Commissioner Thomas O’Neal called the Clark County Veterans Service Commission (VSC) meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on 17 August 2023. Commissioners present: Thomas O’Neal, William E. McGee, and James R. Ryan. Executive Director Cathy Wood and Acting Director Crystal Baker were also present. James G. “Grant” Wells was absent and excused.

The *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited.

Reading and Approval of Minutes: James R. Ryan moved to dispense with the reading of the Minutes of 10 August 2023 and approve them as written. The motion was seconded by William E. McGee and carried by a unanimous vote.

**Acting Director Updates:** Crystal Baker provided a copy to each board member of the items purchased for the raffle prize. Each individual who arrives in a car for the Cruise-In will receive a raffle ticket that will be drawn and announced at the Cruise-In. There will be a separate raffle prize given to individuals who come to the Cruise-In to look at the cars. Thomas O’Neal stated he has a Red legs shirt that he could donate.

Crystal Baker advised the board members what was discussed at the Executive Director’s Cross-Talk last week.

The Preble County Executive Director met with Premier Wireless who collaborates with T-Mobile to offer a phone for $25.00 a year. This phone is built to provide veterans with the resources they need such as Food & Housing, Health, Veterans Affairs, Crisis Hotlines, and many other resources. It also includes unlimited internet, text messaging, and calls. Thomas O’Neal stated it may be worth calling the company and having them come pitch it to the board members.

Karla Garrett Harshaw, an individual on the fundraising cabinet and planning committee for the Medal of Honor Memorial, spoke to the group asking for donations. The Medal of Honor Memorial will name nearly 40 area recipients of the Medal of Honor, three of those recipients being born in Clark County. The monument will be the centerpiece of a City of Dayton park at the foot of the Third Street Bridge. James R. Ryan asked if the office was authorized to donate. Cathy Wood stated she would look up the Attorney General Opinion to get clarification.

The Directors also discussed Senate Bill 134 for modification of Homestead Exemption. This bill would give retired veterans a reduction not to exceed $150,000.00. As well as, service connected veterans age fifty-nine or above an exemption. These exemptions are reimbursed to the County by the State.

Crystal Baker advised the board that other counties have a no show policy for their financial assistance program. For example, if a veteran makes three appointments and no shows to all, that veteran is not able to apply for three months. The board would like the office to keep track and see how many times this happens. We will re-visit in the future to see if the office should adopt this policy.

Advertising was discussed.Crystal Baker advised the board members she met with Kolton Rice, who owns OpenEye Studios to get a quote for video production, editing, testimonials, social media, seven months of streaming advertising, on-site photography, and website management. The quote is for October through April of 2024. James R. Ryan moved to enter into contract with Openeye Studios in the amount of $40,000.00. The motion was seconded by William E. McGee and carried by a unanimous vote.

William E. McGee moved to acknowledge payment of the following invoices:

**Indigent Burial ~**  Jones-Kenney-Zechman Funeral Home $1,000.00 for indigent burial of Gerald Childs.

**Other Expenses ~** Clark State Foundation $1,000.00 for light pole banner renewal for 2023/2024, MacRay $988.00 for Silent Watch shirts, Mansfield Oil Company $843.56 for vehicle fuel.

The motion was seconded by James R. Ryan and carried by a unanimous vote.

**Public Comments:** None.

William E. McGee moved to enter executive session for the purpose of reviewing financial assistance and discussing employee compensation. James R. Ryan seconded the motion. James R. Ryan called the roll: William E. McGee, yes; James G. “Grant” Wells, absent; James R. Ryan, yes; Tom O’Neal, yes; motion carried. The board entered Executive Session at 9:00 a.m. The board reviewed financial assistance applications and discussed employee compensation. The board returned to open session at 9:50 a.m.

William E. McGee moved to increase Crystal Baker’s salary to $40.75 an hour effective 1 October 2023. They will re-visit her salary 4 April 2024. The motion was seconded by James R. Ryan and carried by a unanimous vote.

James R. Ryan moved to approve financial assistance for the following applicants: William E. McGee seconded the motion.

**Edward Cooper,** 1016 Heard Street, Springfield, OH 45506, laborer, was approved for a $300.00 Kroger card for food, $773.72 to Ohio Edison for electric, $352.00 to Columbia Gas for heat, and $136.41 to City of Springfield for water and sewer. Vote: Yes, 3 No, 0.

**Dale Koogler,** 7249 New Horizon Avenue, Enon, OH 45323, truck driver, was approved for a $3,040.96 cash grant to the veteran for mortgage, $980.91 to Ohio Edison for electric, $228.00 to Columbia Gas for heat, $114.75 to Rumpke for trash, $86.57 to Clark County Utilities Department for sewer, and $2,131.00 to Erie Insurance for car insurance.

Vote: Yes, 3 No, 0.

**Amanda Morgan,** 725 Villa Road, Unit 110, Springfield, OH 45503, insurance representative, was approved for a $300.00 Kroger card for food, $238.92 to Ohio Edison for electric, and $69.98 to Spectrum for internet. Vote: Yes, 3 No, 0.

There being no further business to come before the board, William E. McGee moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by James R. Ryan and carried by a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Thomas O’Neal, President

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