



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION  
February 10, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Hays called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. at 627 Edwin C. Moses Boulevard, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Medical Plaza, Dayton, Ohio 45417.

**II. ROLL CALL**

President Hays requested Secretary Fried to take the roll call.

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Jerry Hays, President	X	
Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President	X	
William Fried, Secretary	X	
Jim Dare, Commissioner	X	
Mark Wilson, Commissioner	X	

Staff members present: Kim Frisco, Executive Director, and Dan Semsel, Deputy Director

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. PRESCHEDULED PRESENTATIONS**

- a) Appeal by Ms. Debbie Coleman. Ms. Coleman was not present so no action was taken here.
- b) Interviews for the Veterans Legal Counsel position were conducted. Candace Anderson was not available today. The Commission decided to proceed with the applicants that were present. We interviewed Christina Back, Albert Klein, and Steven Strain. After reviewing all the resume's and interview responses, the Commission felt that Steven Strain was the best candidate for the position based on his background, passion for Vets, and his experience with the Veterans Treatment Court. Our second choice was Christina Back.

**ACTION Item:** The Commission asked the Executive Director with Nathaniel Peterson's help to follow up with reference checks on the two leading candidates including checks on whether there were any legal sanctions, discipline or suspensions noted. We requested information on County pay scales for similar positions, and what they cover for the lawyers they employ including related fees (malpractice, CLE fees, etc.) Also, we would like a check on any pending cases.

- c) We agreed to hold a special meeting on Feb 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. to reconvene and review the results of the reference checks and County information before we make our final decision.
- d) During the interviews, it became apparent that there will be some logistical requirements that will be needed to support the new position. These include support for confidentiality of data and forms, on and off-site client data storage, developing of intake forms, and guidance about attending dockets. Possible use of University of Dayton Externs was discussed.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

- a) President Hays asked for a motion to approve or amend the minutes from January 13, 2021 and January 27, 2021 commission meetings. Vice President Rojas made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Secretary Fried seconded the motion. Vote for approval was as follows:

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jerry Hays, President	X		
Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President	X		
William Fried, Secretary	X		
Jim Dare, Commissioner	X		
Mark Wilson, Commissioner	X		

President Hays declared the motion approved as presented.

- b) President Hays asked for a motion to approve Soldiers and Sailors Financial Assistance. Vice President Rojas made a motion to approve Soldiers and Sailors Financial Assistance for the period of January 1-31, 2021. Secretary Fried seconded the motion. Vote for approval was as follows:

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jerry Hays, President	X		
Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President	X		
William Fried, Secretary	X		
Jim Dare, Commissioner	X		
Mark Wilson, Commissioner	X		

President Hays declared the motion approved as presented.

- c) The letter terminating Missy Zimmer’s employment was delivered last week giving her six months to find a new position. A copy of the letter was sent to the Montgomery County Auditor for review. No answer has been received as of this time.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- a) We discussed the process and progress made toward hiring a Mentor Coordinator to support the Veterans Treatment Court. The staff has been reviewing resumes and the list of qualified candidates recommended by Judge Atkins. There was some confusion about the process, especially the involvement of Judge Atkins who will help us with the final selection. This was clarified. We are looking at the first week in March to conduct interviews, dependent on Judge Atkins schedule.
- b) Now that we have a strong management team in place, we need to update and standardize our hiring policy to fold them into the selection process. Also, it was suggested we develop standard questions and scoring sheets to assist in selection.
- c) The Commission discussed progress on hiring a new Administrative Officer to replace Missy Zimmer when she leaves. Over 50 applications for the position have already been received. We discussed how long to leave the position posted. Vice President Rojas made a motion to cap recruitment for the Administrative Officer position at 100 applications or two weeks whichever occurs first. Secretary Fried seconded the motion. Vote for approval was as follows:

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jerry Hays, President	X		
Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President	X		
William Fried, Secretary	X		
Jim Dare, Commissioner	X		
Mark Wilson, Commissioner	X		

President Hays declared the motion approved as presented.

- d) We discussed Indigent Burial costs and our reimbursements. Deputy Director Semsel presented his research on local burial, cremation and funeral costs. We currently reimburse up to \$1,000 in accordance with ORC 5901.26. Our current \$2,000 threshold to qualify for this aid is a great deal below the current average cost of a basic funeral in Montgomery County. Deputy Director Semsel recommended we boost our authorization threshold to at least \$3,000-\$3,500. Vice President Rojas made a motion to increase our authorization threshold for burial, cremation and funeral costs to a maximum of \$3,500. This amount should be reviewed again in two years. Secretary Fried seconded the motion. Vote for approval was as follows:

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jerry Hays, President	X		
Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President	X		
William Fried, Secretary	X		
Jim Dare, Commissioner	X		
Mark Wilson, Commissioner	X		

President Hays declared the motion approved as presented.

**VIII. MANAGEMENT REPORTS**

Ms. Frisco reported to the Commissioners the following office happenings:

- Thanks for getting the COVID vaccination information out;
- In negotiations with the Union on salary and the new five step evaluation form. Discussing use of how to handle salary bonuses and Union approvals;
- Dealing with COVID and two staff members are still out;
- Community Care cards are in progress. Waiting for the latest updates before going to the presses; and
- Winter coat distribution to Vets was a success and coats are still available to those that walk in.

Mr. Semsel is still conducting a thorough review of commission policies. Website updated and on line.

**IX. COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

- Vice President Rojas reported the VFW District 3 meeting 2nd Sunday in March. So far, his new job will not keep him from continuing to hold his position. He also discussed the Germantown Veterans Museum and David Shortt’s availability to conduct tours.
- Secretary Fried expressed his appreciation to Missy and Kim for securing the warm weather jackets and getting out the COVID emails announcing VA Vaccinations.
- Commissioner Mark Wilson reported that he received two SPAM emails from the County and that their PHISH button does not work. He also mentioned that AMVETS has a web-based suicide prevention program.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

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Jerry Hays, President

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James Dare, Commissioner

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Federico Rojas, Jr., Vice President

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Mark Wilson, Commissioner

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William Fried, Secretary