

Meetings Procedure, Organization and Public Participation

Except as otherwise provided under the Ohio Revised Code, Title 59 Chapter 5901, all legislation and other powers of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission (VSC) are vested in the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas (FCCCP).

During Franklin County Veterans Service Commission meetings, decisions are made that formally set Franklin County Veterans programs, adopt policies and authorize expenditures of county general funds.

Every public body, by rule, shall establish a reasonable method whereby any person may determine the time and place of all regularly scheduled meetings and the time, place, and purpose of all special meetings.

This document discusses the conduct of meetings, preparations of meetings, rules of procedure, encouragement of citizen participation, and agency transparency.

POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The Commission has the power to enact resolutions and other measures to carry out Commission functions in accordance with ORC Section 5901.03.

Specific Commission functions include:

- A) Employing such staff as are necessary to carry out the commission's duties and fixing their compensation;
- B) Establishing policies and procedures for the administration of the commission and the veterans service office;
- C) Establishing policies and procedures for the administration of assistance as provided under this chapter;
- D) Causing the budgets of the veterans service commission and veterans service office to be presented to the board of county commissioners for approval;
- E) Establishing programs of outreach and coordination with other agencies to enhance available services to veterans within the county;
- F) Promoting, monitoring, and providing funding for ongoing education and training for veterans service commissioners and staff;
- G) Making reports to the organizations represented on the commission, as provided in Section 5901.02 of the Revised Code, and to others, upon request;

- H) Establishing regularly scheduled transportation for veterans to and from veterans administration medical centers whose districts the county is within, through contractual agreements or through other arrangements determined by the commission to be most cost-effective;
- I) Participating in appropriate memorial and commemorative activities to help promote patriotism and veterans services;
- J) Taking any other actions required by this chapter.

MEETINGS

Regular, Special, Work Session, Committee and Emergency Meetings of the Commission are open to the public and to representatives of the media. Executive Sessions of the Commission are not open to the public or the media and only those individuals expressly requested or ordered to be present may attend Executive Session.

- A. Regular Meetings: Regular Meetings will be held on Wednesday of each week unless the day falls on a County holiday. If such a conflict occurs, the meeting schedule will be adjusted to address the holiday. Meetings will begin at 8:00 A.M. and will be held in the Memorial Hall Building, 1st Floor, VSC Hearing Room.
- B. Special Meetings: Special Meetings may be called for any purpose by the Executive Director or any Commission member with at least a twenty-four (24) hours' notice to the Executive Director and each Commission member. The member calling the meeting will, through the Administration Manager, notify the media and other individuals that have requested notification of the time, place and purpose of any special meeting, except in the event of an emergency requiring immediate official action.
- C. Emergency Meetings: In the event of an emergency, the member calling the meeting, through the Administration Manager, shall notify the news media that have requested notification immediately of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
- D. Work Sessions: Work Session are working committee meetings of the Commission and are not utilized for legislative action or other formal actions appropriate to regular or special meetings. The member calling the meeting will, through the Administration Manager, notify the media and other individuals that have requested notification of the time, place and purpose of any special meeting. All Work Sessions shall comply with the requirements of Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 under Ohio's Open Meetings Act. It shall also be the responsibility of the Commission Secretary to ensure and/or prepare written minutes of all such meetings and to maintain a copy of all meeting notices, information, and minutes in the Commission's official records.

- E. Between Regularly Scheduled Meetings: Commission members are to be informed of incidents involving the VSC that, in the judgement of the Executive Director, Board of County Commissioners, Court of Common Pleas or the Prosecuting Attorney; may require immediate consideration by the Commission. A Special or Emergency meeting may be the means required for conveying information regarding these incidents.
- F. Public Notification of Meetings: Public notice of all Regular or Special, Work Sessions, and other meetings of the Commission shall be at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of such meetings or sessions. The public notice will include the date, time, place, and purpose for the meeting or session. This public notice will be done in the following manner:
1. Posting of the public notice at the Memorial Hall Building.
 2. Posting of the public notice on the VSC official website.
 3. Distribution of the public notice by email via the internet through an electronic distribution list maintained by the Administration Manager that includes media outlets and individual members of the public who have requested notification in advance.

The public may also obtain notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of all Regular or Special Meetings, Work Sessions, or other meetings of the Commission by contacting the VSC.

Any person may obtain advance notification of all Commission meetings by email via the internet through electronic distribution list maintained by the Administrative Supervisor at no charge. This request should be made in writing to the VSC. Any such request shall be effective indefinitely from the date of filing with the Assistant Director, Administration or until the Assistant Director, Administration receives written notice from an individual canceling or modifying such request. Notification of any special meeting shall be sent to those who have requested such notification. A reasonable attempt at notification shall constitute notification in compliance with these rules of the Commission.

- G. Executive Session Meetings: Meetings in Executive Session shall be closed, private, and confidential; and shall be held in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 121.11, the Ohio Sunshine Law. These meetings are to be noted on the agenda of regular meetings. Any individual Commission member may motion that the Commission recess to Executive Session when circumstances are such that satisfactory answers or useful discussion may be provided only in Executive Session. A motion, to include the general purpose of the Executive Session as specified in Ohio Revised Code 121.22 and passed by a majority or unanimous vote, is required for the Commission to recess to Executive Session.

All other Commission meetings must also comply with the requirements of Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 as describe above.

Minutes of the Executive Session discussions shall not be kept. Neither shall any participant record the proceedings of any Executive Session by any electrical or mechanical device.

The minutes of the Regular Meetings or Special Meetings, as well as Work Session or other meetings, should reflect the general subject matter of discussion held in Executive Session authorized under Division G of the Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code. In addition, the minutes should reflect the vote on the motion to go into Executive Session. Discussion in Executive Session is confidential. No participant shall compromise the confidentiality of an Executive Session.

- H. Recesses and Adjournments: Regular Meetings, Work Sessions, or other Meetings may be adjourned or recessed to another time, date, or place. Short recesses (5-15 minutes) may be designated by the President during regular or special meetings without a vote of the Commission. Other recesses require a majority vote of the Commission.

ORGANIZATION:

The Commission shall select one of its members as President, one as Vice-President, and one as Secretary who shall be elected during the first regular meeting in January of each year and shall be by majority vote.

1. President: The President of the Commission presides at all meetings of the Commission and is responsible for ensuring that meetings are orderly, conducted in conformity with meeting procedures, and is responsible for ensuring that Commission members and citizens have ample opportunity to express their views. The President may sign on behalf of the VSC any documents or instruments which the Commission has authorized to be executed, except where required by law to be otherwise signed or executed. Other duties may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
2. Vice President: The Vice President of the Commission performs such duties as may be assigned by the Commission or the President of the Commission. In the absence of the President of the Commission or when, for any reason, the President of the Commission is unable or refuses to perform his or her duties, the Vice President will perform those duties, subject to the same restrictions, of the President.
3. Secretary: The Secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes of all meetings of the Commission ensuring that such minutes are filed in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22. The Secretary may perform other duties as assigned by the Commission or the President of the Commission and may delegate any of his or her secretarial duties to the Leader Team.

In any case where both the President and the Vice President are absent or unable to perform their duties, the remaining Commission members may delegate such duties.

- A. Quorum and Majority Votes: Three (3) members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for all Commission meetings. Majorities are based on the total number of Commission members present. In determining a simple, a two-thirds (2/3) or a three-fifths (3/5), majority vote of the Commission.
- B. Attendance, absences, and removals: Commission members must attend at least three-fifths (62) of regular and special meetings during any two-year period or forfeit their position. All absences from meetings will be communicated through the Executive Director. For official record purposes, a motion of the Commission to excuse a member's absence must be passed by a simple majority vote.

A Commission member may be expelled from a Commission meeting for disorderly conduct or violation of the rules of the Commission by a majority of vote. Expulsions are considered unexcused absences.

A judge of the court of common pleas may remove, for cause, any member of the commission appointed under Section 5901.02 of the Revised Code and shall fill vacancies occurring among memberships appointed under that Section for the unexpired terms in the manner provided for the original appointments.

AGENDA:

The business of the VSC is conducted by and between the members of the Commission and by those members of the staff, elected officials, consultants, experts and/or members of the public requested to be present and participate. While the public is invited to attend all meetings of the Commission (except Executive Sessions) the public's participation therein is limited to that of observers unless a member (or members) of the public has requested to address the Commission on a particular issue (or issues) or unless the member (or members) of the public completes a public participation form and submits same to the Administration Manager prior to the time the agenda item (or items) is addressed by the Commission. A sample of the participation form is attached hereto as Attachment "A."

- A. Preparation: The Commission Secretary, unless otherwise designated, will be responsible for preparing the agendas for all meetings in consultation with the Executive Director and the President. The agenda will be finalized on the Thursday immediately preceding each meeting; however, proposed agenda items must be submitted to the Administration Manager on the Thursday immediately preceding each meeting by close of business.
- B. Pre-Meeting Information: Three (3) business days prior to scheduled Commission Meetings, Commission members may be furnished with a meeting packet with information pertinent to the meeting agenda items. This meeting packet may include background information on the agenda items and/or copies of proposed policies and procedures, historical information, resolutions, and any additional

relevant information on the agenda items. Furnished information packets will comply with the requirements of Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 and Ohio Sunshine Laws.

C. Format:

Regular Meetings will follow this format unless changed by any three (3) Commission members:

1. Call the Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Reading/Approval of Minutes
5. Financial Assistance
6. Guests/Special Presentation/Announcements*
7. Materials Given to Members
8. Pending Business
9. New Business
10. Good of the Order
11. Future Agenda Item for Consideration
12. Adjournment

Work Session will normally follow this format:

1. Call the Meeting to Order/Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes, if any
3. Pending Business
4. Work Session Topics of Discussion
5. Adjournment

*Usually reserved to accommodate Commission training, community partners, non-profit or citizen groups whose purpose is to make a short, formal presentation. Guests wishing to speak to the Commission must complete a participation request form.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The President will recognize persons requesting to be heard. If the topic to be discussed is not on the agenda, the request will be at the discretion of the President. Citizens granted time to speak may do so following recognition by the President and must abide by the following procedures:

1. Each member of the public who appears before the Commission shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes to make his/her remarks.
2. Maximum discussion on any agenda item, regardless of the number of members of the public wishing to address the Commission on such agenda item (or items), shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes. In the event that more than six (6) members

of the public wish to address a particular agenda item (or items), then time allocated to members of the public recognized to speak shall be divided equally between those members of the public wishing to speak for the agenda item (or items) and those members of the public wishing to speak against the agenda item (or items). Additionally, non-agenda items shall be limited to fifteen (15) minutes.

3. In matters of exceptional interest, the Commission may, by the majority vote of the members of the Commission in attendance at the meeting, either shorten or lengthen the time allocated for all members of the public and/or the amount of time allocated for all agenda items and/or a specific agenda item.
4. It is the intention of the Commission to provide an open access to the citizens of Franklin County to address the Commission and express themselves on issues of Franklin County Veterans.
5. Members of the public in attendance at any Regular, Special and/or Emergency Meeting of the Commission shall conduct themselves with proper respect and decorum in speaking to and/or addressing the Commission; in participating in public discussions before the Commission; and in all actions in the presence of the Commission. Those members of the public who do not conduct themselves in an orderly and appropriate manner will be ordered to leave the meeting.

It is not the intention of the Commission to provide a public forum for the demeaning of any individual or group. Neither is it the intention of the Commission to allow a member (or members) of the public to insult the honesty and/or integrity of the Commission, as a body, or any member or members of the Commission, individually or collectively. Accordingly, profane, insulting or threatening language directed toward the Commission and/or any person in the Commission presence and/or racial, ethnic, or gender slurs or epithets will not be tolerated. These Rules do not prohibit public criticism of the Commission, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program, or service. Violation of these rules may result in the following sanctions:

1. Cancellation of a speaker's remaining time;
 2. Removal from the meeting;
 3. Such other civil and/or criminal sanctions as may be authorized under the Constitution, Statutes and Codes of the State of Ohio.
6. The President is responsible for conducting all meetings, and members of the public who have properly completed a public participation form and submitted same to the Administrative Supervisor must wait to be recognized before they will be allowed to address the Commission.

Special Rules for the Press and Media:

1. No media personnel or equipment, including lights, cameras or microphones will be located on the VSC tables nor closer than five feet (5') in front of the VSC tables.
2. Reporters and media technicians are required to structure their movements, equipment set-up and take-down and adjustments, etc. in such a manner as to not disrupt the Commission deliberations or the ability of the public to see, hear, and participate in the proceedings.
3. Interviews shall not be conducted inside the Commission hearing room during the time the meeting is in session.
4. Media interviews which are conducted outside the Commissioners Hearing Room and should be conducted in such a manner that the interview does not disturb, impede or disrupt the proceedings of any Regular, Special, Emergency and/or Executive Session Meeting of the Commission.

MINUTES:

The minutes of a regular or special meeting shall be promptly prepared, filed, and maintained and shall be open to public inspection in compliance with Ohio Sunshine Laws:

1. The minutes shall record actions taken at the meeting and shall not be a verbatim transcript of what is said at the meeting. The Commission may direct that more detailed minutes be kept for all or part of a meeting.
 2. The minutes for the meeting must be full and accurate.
 3. The minutes of the meeting must be made available, but the medium is not specified, this Commission minutes are kept in paper form.
 4. Both draft and final approved copies of minutes are public record.
 5. Audio recording of meeting are public record.
- A. Minutes for Executive Session Financial Assistance: The minutes of the meeting shall indicate the name, address, and occupation of the applicant whether the assistance was granted or denied, the amount of the assistance, if assistance is granted, and the votes for or against the granting of assistance.
- B. Minutes for Executive Session General: Minutes need only reflect the general subject matter of discussions in executive sessions authorized under division (G) or (J) of the Ohio Revised Code 121.22.

MOTIONS:

Unless there is a conflict with these Rules of the Commission or the Ohio Legislation, Roberts Rules of Order will be used as guidance during Commission Meetings. The following specific procedures will be followed during Commission meetings:

- A. Main Motions: A motion to introduce a subject (requires majority vote).

- B. Motions When Question Is Before Commission: When a question or proposition is before or under debate by the Commission or when a motion has been made, only the following motions can be accepted:
 1. To adjourn (requires majority vote).
 2. To recess (requires majority vote).
 3. To raise a question of privilege. Questions of privilege have precedence over all other questions except adjournment. Questions of privilege are those affecting the rights of the Commission collectively, its safety, dignity, comfort, and the integrity of its proceedings and those rights, reputations, and conduct of Commission members in the capacity as members of the Commission (decision of President).
 4. To call for orders of the day to require the Commission to conform to its agenda, program, or order of business, or to take up general or special order (decision of President).
 5. To lay on the table to set aside the pending question when something else of immediate urgency has arisen or when something else needs to be adopted before consideration of the pending question is resumed (requires majority vote).
 6. To call the previous question and request that discussion end and the motion being considered be voted on (requires majority vote).
 7. To limit or extend limits of debate (requires majority vote).
 8. To postpone any action to a certain time (or definitely) (requires majority vote).
 9. To commit or refer the proposal to a committee or special meeting of the Commission for further investigation or to put into better condition for consideration (requires majority vote).
 10. To amend a motion is to modify the main motion by inserting or adding; striking out; or striking out and inserting. No motions can be made to amend an amendment. A rejected amendment may not be moved again in the same form (requires majority vote).
 11. To postpone indefinitely. When motions to postpone indefinitely are passed, the principle question is declared lost. The motion rejects or “kills” the main motion for the duration of the session (requires majority vote).
 12. To postpone any action indefinitely (requires majority vote).

Note: These motions have precedence in the order given. Motions listed above in “1”, “2”, “3”, and “6” are decided without debate.

- C. Motions to Take Matter From Committee: When other matters have been referred to a committee and said committee fails within a reasonable or specified time to report or offer a valid reason for failure to report, any member of the Commission has a right to move that matter of concern, be taken from that committee, and placed before the Commission for action (requires majority vote).
- D. Motion to Reconsider: Motions to reconsider an approved item must be made before adjournment of that session of the Commission for those items that are effective immediately; motions to reconsider other items must be made prior to the close of the next regular meeting of the Commission. A motion to reconsider may only be made by a Commission member who voted with the prevailing side. A motion to reconsider, being laid on the table, may be taken up and acted up at any time when the Commission is engaged in the transaction of other business. No motion to reconsider may be made more than once on any matter and the same number of votes is required to reconsider the action of the Commission as was required to pass or adopted the matter (requires majority vote).

COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES:

The BOCC establishes the compensation for the Commission members only.

Commission members shall be reimbursed their actual expenses incurred in the performance of authorized travel on official business of the County for approved training seminars, conferences, etc. The mode of travel and types of expenses covered for Commission members must first be approved by the BOCC before such expenses are reimbursable.

TRAINING:

Commission members are required to avail themselves of educational opportunities by attendance at professional meetings and conferences that enhance a member's ability to perform Commission duties. Members will be reimbursed for these expenses.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND ETHICS:

Commission members are subject to all Ohio and local statutes and federal and state law regarding conflicts of interest, criminal misbehavior, and ethics. Members of the Commission shall abstain from voting on and the formal discussion of any motions or issue wherein the member might have a conflict of interest. Members having conflicts are expected to notify other members of the conflict as soon as such conflict becomes evident.

COMPLAINTS:

Complaints against Commission members are to be made thru the Assistant Director, Administration and are required to be in writing. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Assistant Director, Administration will distribute a copy of the complaint to all members of the Commission and Executive Director. All actions taken to investigate and resolve the complaint will be documented as a matter of record. The Assistant Director,

Administration will complete a written response as soon as possible advising the initiator, Executive Director and the Commission of the disposition of the complaint. In those cases where resolution requires longer than ten (10) business days, an interim written response and target date for completion will be provided to the initiator of the complaint and the Commission.

Oral complaints against Commission members at Commission meetings are out of order. The President will rule the complaint out of order and explain the proper procedure for filing complaints.

The above are not to be construed to deny the rights of the public to criticize, state dissatisfaction, or complain about the Commission or Commission Services, but to protect individuals from public censure without the chance to answer specific complaints.

EVALUATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

It is the responsibility of the Commission to provide a written evaluation of the performance of the Executive Director. The commission may hold a formal Executive Session discussion of such evaluations by the Commission prior to the finalization of any evaluation. The President will consolidate and present a final evaluation to the Executive Director.

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST:

From time to time, the Commission shall conduct town hall meetings and work sessions. These rules of procedure, conduct and decorum shall also apply to such town meetings and work sessions; however, the Commission may adopt such additional and supplemental rules for such meetings as may be necessary and appropriate to conduct such meetings in an orderly, efficient and proper manner.

These Rules of Procedure, Conduct and Decorum at Meetings of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Commission and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Commission.

ADOPTED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION on this the _____ day of _____, _____.

Attest:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION

Notes:

ORC 5901

ORC 121.22

ORC 3.17

<http://ethics.ohio.gov>

www.robertsrules.com

OSACVSO, OSACVSC, ODVS – CVS Office Handbook

Attachment A

ATTACHMENT A

RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The following rules apply to any individual who wishes to speak before the Franklin County Veterans Service Commissioners during General Session meetings:

1. This form must be filled out completely and submitted to the Administrative Supervisor prior to the 8:00 A.M. start of General Session. Late or incomplete forms will not be accepted.
2. Speakers will limit their remarks to three (3) minutes. A maximum of three (3) speakers will be permitted to speak in support of a resolution; a maximum of three (3) speakers will be permitted to speak opposition to resolution.
3. Speaker may only speak on General Session agenda items.
4. Speaker remarks may not contain obscenity, commercial advertising, defamation or slander, nor will speakers conduct themselves in violation of the “Disorderly Conduct” or the “Disturbing a Public Meeting” provision of the Ohio Revised Code. All comments will be directed to the Board Members. Permission to speak may be denied or terminated if remarks are disrespectful or antagonistic. General Session is not an adversarial proceeding.

The Administrative Supervisor will present speaker slips to the President of the Board in the order received.

Individuals who would like to address the commissioners regarding non-agenda items are encouraged to do so through any of the following options:

E-mail: veteransservice@franklincountyohio.gov

U.S. Mail: Franklin County
Veterans Service Commission
Attn: Administration Manager
280 E. Broad St, Rm 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Hand-deliver written comments to the address above.

PUBLIC COMMENT REQUEST FORM

Please read the “Rules for Public Comment” above, prior to completing this form.

Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: _____

Organization represented: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Concerns to be discussed (attached separate sheet if necessary) _____