

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
 VFW Clubrooms, Fargo, North Dakota
 October 26 & 27, 1982

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Aaberg. Those in attendance at the meeting were:

AMERICAN LEGION

Milton Kane, Dept. Cmdr.
 Vern Useldinger, Dept. Adj.
 Gerald Taylor, Org. Rep.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Lee Lamb, Rep. Dept. Cmdr.
 Robert Hannah, Dept. Adj.
 Greg Seurer, Org. Rep.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Paul Aaberg, Dept. Cmdr.
 Ken McGaughey, Dept. Adj.
 William Stepp, Org. Rep.

VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I

Floyd Henderson

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Charles MacLaughlin, American Legion Service Officer
 Lloyd Zander, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs
 W. M. Williamson, State Director, Veterans Employment
 Charles Code, Commandant, Soldiers' Home
 Bernard Turany, Catholic War Veterans
 Bill Hill, Dept. Cmdr., AmVets
 Elmer Ekern, Dept. Adj., AmVets
 Cliff Johnson, Catholic War Veterans

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Joe Novak, Chairman, Legislative Committee
 Harry Moore, American Legion
 Ralph Hamre, County Veterans Service Officers Assoc.
 John Meyer, County Veterans Service Officers Assoc.

Bill Stepp moved the minutes be approved as distributed. Motion seconded by Milton Kane and carried.

Ken McGaughey presented the Treasurer's Report:

Balance on hand - Last Council meeting		
Passbook Savings, Fargo National Bank & Trust		\$ 841.28
Checking Account, Fargo National Bank & Trust		465.98
Total		<u>\$1307.26</u>

Receipts:

Interest on Savings	\$ 11.13	
American Legion, DAV, & VFW Dues	<u>750.00</u>	761.13
		<u>\$2068.39</u>

Disbursements:

Postmaster, Bismarck	20.00	
Bill Williamson, Legislative Exp.	100.00	
Commercial Printing, Bismarck	72.20	
Bill Williamson, VES Hospitality	80.00	
Marlys Schuler, Secretarial Exp.	<u>74.38</u>	346.58

Balance, Checking Account, 10/26/82	869.40	
Balance, Savings Account, 10/26/82	<u>852.41</u>	\$1721.81

Robert Hannah moved we approve the treasurer's report. Motion seconded by Bill Stepp and carried.

Charles Code presented the budget for the Soldiers' Home. He noted the membership today stands at 132 members, which includes seven women. There are about 15 uncommitted beds. The daily per diem cost during the past year was \$21.23. He noted that their construction program is at a stand-still at the present time. He is going to put some pressure on the general contractor to finish the job. They are waiting for the stairways, landings, and painting to be completed. They have had a problem with Dutch Elm disease, and have removed several trees.

Mr. Code noted that the Veterans Administration completed their annual inspection of the Home in August. There were eight members on the inspection team, and he indicated he was very pleased with their report. Their recommendations have been included in the budget for the coming year.

They have included an amount in the budget to be taken from the membership contribution fund which will be used to repaint and repair all interior walls and doors in the original building. They would also like to refinish the woodwork. Mr. Code noted that this budget has been approved by the Soldiers' Home subcommittee and the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. It has been submitted to the State Capitol. He stated that they would like to add an additional \$8,600 as a cushion on heating for the second year of the biennium.

Milton Kane reported that the County Veterans Service Officers again brought up the proposed change in eligibility for the Soldiers' Home. They chose not to pass a resolution. He introduced John Meyer, who spoke to the Council.

He noted that the County Veterans Service Officers would like to see the eligibility dates for the Soldiers' Home changed. They asked that someone attend the meeting of the Veterans Coordinating Council to present this matter verbally for their consideration. They are not asking that war-time veterans be relegated to the background to make room for the people who fall in the peacetime category. He noted that the peacetime veterans are eligible for VA hospitalization and domiciliary care. The Service Officers are suggesting that a priority be established for war-time veterans, with the other beds being available to those who served during peacetime.

Joe Novak reported that Minot has taken a negative attitude toward the Air Base building a hospital on the Base. Once this decision is locked in, so that we are not involved in a dispute in Minot, he suggested that we contact them on use of the old hospital building. For the present, we should wait and see what happens.

Bill Williamson informed the Council of the resolutions submitted by the Public Employees to move November 11 (Veterans' Day) to the Friday after Thanksgiving so that they could have a four-day holiday. The veterans organizations really went to work writing letters. Because of these letters, they changed the resolution, and removed everything regarding Veterans' Day. Instead, they asked for an additional holiday on the Friday following Thanksgiving.

Joe Novak reported that he and Earnie Schmit had contacted the Attorney General's office to see if gaming funds might be used for the Vietnam Veterans' Reunion. The Attorney General authorized use of gaming funds for this purpose. Lee Lamb noted they received approximately \$9,000 for this effort. They have approximately \$2,200 left after all expenses have been paid.

Vern Useldinger reported for a study committee consisting of members of the Council, as well as members of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. They studied the feasibility of moving the Department of Veterans Affairs to Bismarck. In their

meeting held today, they also considered the fact that they would need someone to serve with the legislative committee after the 1983 legislative session, and a new Executive Director of the Coordinating Council after July, 1985. They submitted questions to the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, and to the Executive Director of the Council. They determined there were a number of duties handled by the Executive Director that can be handled by others. They feel, based on their discussions and evaluations, that they would like to request the legislature to grant an additional staff person to the Department of Veterans Affairs to be stationed at Bismarck. Mr. Useldinger expressed his appreciation to the committee for their service on this study committee.

The meeting recessed until 9:00 AM, October 27, 1982.

Wednesday, October 27, 1982

President Aaberg called on Keith Kaiser to explain a suggestion from the Attorney General. He recommended that we change the law regarding collection of Veterans' Aid loans. He noted that at the present time they have 234 delinquent loans for a total of \$65,986. Of these loans, 170 were under the old loan program. We already have 65 loans under the new loan program that are delinquent. Discussion followed, and the thought was expressed that perhaps we should get credit reports on all veterans applying for loans. Bill Stepp moved that we remove the stipulation that the interest collected is solely to be used for loans, and that some of this money, at the discretion of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs, be used to collect past-due loans from those veterans who are able to make restitution. Motion seconded by Bob Hannah and carried.

Bill Williamson distributed information on the cost of the legislative supper during the last session as compared to that proposed for the next session. He noted the supper will be an eleven ounce ribeye steak. It will be held at the VFW Club in Bismarck on January 12. The joint meeting of the Veterans Coordinating Council and Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs will be held at 10:00 AM on January 12, at the Job Service Building, 1000 Divide Ave., in Bismarck. We must know how many will be attending the supper no later than January 5. Each person attending from veterans organizations will be charged \$20 for attendance at this supper.

Bill Stepp moved the Council purchase 25 "Lawmakers of North Dakota" booklets for the Council. Motion seconded by Bernard Turany and carried.

Charles Godke reported that the Air Force Base has included money for a new hospital in their 1984 budget. It has not yet been approved. They have, however, run the core test on the site. He noted he does have the plans for the new hospital, but at the present time they are waiting approval of their budget. Mr. Godke noted he feels a decision should be made now on future plans for the John Moses Hospital. Discussion followed on the subject. It was felt that what is going to happen is too uncertain and there are too many unknown quantities to make a good judgment yet.

Frank Gathman, VA Center Director, introduced Dr. Tom Johnson, Dean of the School of Medicine. He distributed hand-outs providing information on the plan for the School of Medicine. The School is based at the University of North Dakota, but they have students integrated into communities throughout the state. He described the medical education process, and the years of schooling necessary, and noted that they offer six of the 23 specialties in medicine. The VA physicians receive 25% of their salaries from the School of Medicine. In 1972 the School of Medicine changed from a two year school to a four year school. He asked for support from the Veterans Coordinating Council for the continued development in programs of the School of Medicine. Harry Moore moved that the Veterans Coordinating Council go on record as

being fully supportive of the medical school in its affiliation with the Veterans Administration, in any way that we can, including support before the legislature. Motion seconded by Bob Hannah and carried.

Mr. James Floyd, Veterans Affairs Officer from the Small Business Administration, was introduced. He stated that they provide financial assistance and also have a management systems service. He works specifically with veterans. On their loans, they charge 1% in excess of what the government is paying on treasury bills. Their management systems service programs are available free, however, you do need to have a loan with the Small Business Administration to be eligible for this service.

Keith Kaiser presented the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The total budget for the coming biennium is \$319,644. This is a cut of \$35,553, and has been approved by OMB.

Mr. Jim McLean, Director of the Vet Center in Fargo, was introduced. He noted the Chamber of Commerce handled all of the funds for the Vietnam Veterans Picnic. They received \$10,374.20 in donations for this project. They have a balance left of \$2,717.61. Next year the Minot Vet Center and the Mental Health in Bismarck may complete a proposal to hold such an event in Bismarck. The estimated attendance at the picnic was between 2,500 and 3,000. He presented commemorative awards to the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans for their participation in this event.

Discussion followed on the request to change eligibility at the Soldiers' Home to allow admittance of peacetime veterans. Greg Seurer moved that the Executive Director notify John Meyer that we would like a resolution submitted to the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council with a recommendation for change in eligibility for admittance to the Soldiers' Home, which will be submitted to the Department Conventions of the veterans organizations for their action. Motion seconded by Bill Stepp and carried.

Bill Stepp moved we accept the proposed constitutional change. Motion seconded by Greg Seurer and carried.

After discussion, Bill Stepp moved that the Veterans Coordinating Council seek change in law exempting military retirement as a deduction from unemployment compensation, that this action be brought to the attention of the Executive Director of the Job Service of North Dakota, and that Mr. Novak be instructed to carry this information before the Advisory Council. Motion seconded by Harry Moore and carried.

Vern Useldinger reported that the study committee recommended that, due to increased demands on the Department of Veterans Affairs, we request that a staff member be placed in Bismarck and that the Commissioner seek authorization of an additional employee to serve in this position. Mr. Useldinger moved that we approve the action of the study committee. Motion seconded by Robert Hannah and carried.

Vern Useldinger moved we instruct our legislative committee to seek appropriate adjustments for budget to implement this additional person, attempting a beginning date of July 1, 1983, or if not, July 1, 1984. Motion seconded by Robert Hannah and carried.

Bill Williamson reported that we presently have over \$5 million in the Veterans Post War Trust Fund. It was suggested that we not appropriate any moneys from this fund. In the future perhaps it will take care of veterans' programs in North Dakota.

Vern Useldinger moved that the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council monitor legislative activity very closely relating to the Veterans Post War Trust Fund, maintaining its integrity with no expenditures to be made during this biennium.

Motion seconded by Robert Hannah and carried.

Gerald Taylor moved that the Legislative Committee of the Veterans Coordinating Council pursue a pre-filed bill to implement the change in membership of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs as passed at our previous meeting. Motion seconded by Floyd Henderson and carried.

Mr. Zander noted he received a letter from Mr. Leo Brodin, Ramsey County Service Officer from Devils Lake. He had a 100% disabled veteran with a child who wanted to attend the Junior College at Devils Lake under the free tuition privilege. He has been denied for the reason that Lake Region is not a fully state supported institution under the Department of Higher Education. They do receive approximately 65% of their funding from the state. Discussion followed on other problems we have had with this particular law and whether we want to pursue a change. The subject matter died for lack of a motion.

Floyd Henderson moved that the section of law relating to admittance to the Soldiers' Home be changed to allow admittance of a spouse or widow, rather than wife or widow. Motion seconded by Bill Stepp and carried.

It was noted that the name of the Soldiers' Home can be changed by the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. Floyd Henderson moved we accept the recommendation of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs to change the name of the Soldiers' Home to the Veterans' Home. Motion seconded by Gerald Taylor and carried.

Lloyd Zander reported that they recently completed their annual County Veterans Service Officers training meeting. They had 40 service officers present from North Dakota. They have a student presently attending college who is doing a very good job in getting publicity for the Department.

He noted they are in the process of hiring a replacement for Cliff Ladwig. They had 18 applicants, and they have narrowed the list down to five. They hope to interview these five within the next couple of weeks and come up with a replacement.

Bill Hill, Department Commander of the AmVets, expressed his appreciation to the Veterans Coordinating Council. He noted it has been an education for them. They have had a Department for the past year and hope to become a viable veterans organization in the state as time goes on.

Vern Useldinger moved the Council approve payment of \$10 to the VFW Club in Fargo for coffee and that they authorize \$70 to Marlys Schuler for secretarial expenses. Motion seconded by Bernard Turany and carried.

Greg Seurer moved the meeting be adjourned. Motion seconded by Ken McGaughey and carried.