

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
Job Service North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota
January 12, 1983

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

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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

AMERICAN LEGION

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

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Jim Groven, Dept. Cmdr.
Marvin Konrad, Rep. Dept. Adj.
Greg Seurer, Org. Rep.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Lloyd Zander, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs
Charles Code, Commandant, Soldiers' Home
W. M. Williamson, State Director, Veterans Employment
Elmer Ekern, Dept. Adj., AmVets
Floyd Henderson, Veterans of World War I

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Joe Novak, Chairman, Legislative Committee, American Legion
Iver Iverson, Legislative Committee, VFW
Alvin Peterson, AmVets
Harry Moore, American Legion
All members of Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs

The Council discussed H.B. 1117. This is a proposal to delete the payment of fees for dependents of veterans who were killed in action, are 100% disabled, or were former Prisoners of War. Fred Saefke, an attorney-at-law, addressed the Council. He explained action that has been taken regarding payment of tuition and fees of dependents of certain veterans. It was noted that there are presently 57 dependents receiving credit for tuition and fees at state supported schools of higher education. There are presently three students enrolled in the aviation program. The fee payments were very high for the three students in aviation (approximately \$6,000 each), while the average fee payment for each of the other 54 students was approximately \$130. As a result, a bill has been introduced to delete the payment of fees for these dependents. Discussion followed Mr. Saefke's presentation, and it was suggested that perhaps we could put a cap on the fees, including aviation, rather than cutting them out entirely.

Shirley Peterson, Executive Director of Job Service North Dakota welcomed the group to Bismarck and to the meeting in the Job Service building. She noted she looked forward to visiting with them later, and would be with them at the legislative dinner this evening.

Membership figures for 1982 were compiled. The total membership of the veterans organizations represented in the Council stands at 50,792. Their auxiliary membership is 29,120, for a total of 79,912.

S.B. 2014 is the budget for the Soldiers' Home. The first hearing has been held. The Office of Management and Budget cut \$55,500 from the budget, mainly in the areas of heat and food. We asked for restoration of this money. Even with restoration of this cut, the Soldiers' Home budget is still 11% below the appropriation for the last biennium.

S.B. 2074 is a bill to improve the benefit on fees and tuition for dependents of certain veterans. We will not appear on this bill, but will watch to see what happens with it. It is a major revision of law regarding higher education.

S.B. 2075 would have changed the observance of Memorial Day back to May 30. This bill was already killed in the Senate with a vote of 22-31. It will probably be submitted again during the next session.

S.B. 2121 is a bill to change the membership of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. World War I has asked to be relieved of membership, so the committee will be changed to have four members from each of the three veterans organizations, for a total of twelve members. This bill has already passed the Senate 49 - 0.

H.B. 1014 is the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The first hearing has been held. We do not feel the appropriation will be touched, and do not foresee any problems with this legislation.

It was, however, noted that OMB has over-estimated the interest on the Post War Veterans Trust Fund. This was to be appropriated for the budgets of the Soldiers' Home and the Department of Veterans Affairs. OMB is reworking their figures and will make changes on the appropriations, so that they do not use any of the trust fund for these appropriations.

H.B. 1105 is a bill to increase the income exemption from \$5,000 to \$9,000 for military retirees. We did not support this bill, as we had no direction from the Council. It does not stand a very good chance of passage since money is so scarce.

H.B. 1111 - This bill would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to utilize interest from the Veterans Aid loans to collect delinquent loans. The hearing will be held January 13 at 9:00 AM.

H.B. 1113 seeks to correct inequity in membership at the Soldiers Home. It would allow admittance of spouses of female veterans.

H.B. 1163 would change the definition of a veteran to include all ex-servicemen, but it denies benefits to peace-time veterans. Following discussion, Bill Stepp moved the Veterans Coordinating Council continue to oppose H.B. 1163. Motion seconded by Ken McGaughey and carried unanimously. Greg Seurer moved the Council go on record in favor of a study before the next legislative session of including peace-time ex-servicemen as veterans, and the possible cost if they were eligible for various benefits. Motion seconded by Milt Kane and carried.

H.B. 1259 provides that the license plates issued to Prisoners of War be issued to their spouses after the death of the POW. In discussion it was felt that this license plate is a badge and recognition for type of service, not a relief of payment, and should be restricted only to the POW. Jim Groven moved that the license plate be retired at the time of the prisoner-of-war's death, and presented to the family as a memorial, and that we oppose H.B. 1259. Motion seconded by Bill Stepp and carried.

Dr. Tom Johnson, Dean of the Medical School at Grand Forks, addressed the Council. In previous action the Council voted to support the School of Medicine. He noted that there is a move in the Veterans Administration national office to take the funds from several medical schools and reallocate it to the larger schools. He asked the Council for a letter in support of continued funding at the present level for the Veterans Administration hospital in Fargo in their affiliation with the UND School of Medicine. Jim Groven moved we send a letter in support of continuation of current levels of funding for the School of Medicine. Motion seconded by Marvin Konrad and carried.

Bill Stepp moved that the fees to be waived for aviation courses shall not exceed the

fees of the highest cost curriculum in other departments or schools at such university. Motion seconded by Ken McGaughey and carried.

Attorney General Wefald addressed the Council. He noted that he feels the law defining a veteran should be changed. He feels it should include everyone who served honorably in the Armed Forces and that they should be given benefits. He noted that servicemen today are serving in positions of danger and in training for combat. He feels service to our country is important and that we must encourage people to serve our country. He urged the Council to support recognition of the ex-servicemen as veterans. He noted he hopes that as a minimum the Council will support a resolution calling for an interim study on changing the law and provision of benefits. He was informed that the Council has taken action in favor of such a resolution.

General Murry reported on the current status of National Guard legislation in North Dakota. When questioned about continuation of the tuition waiver program, he noted that the fund will be depleted. With the present amount included in their budget for this program, they will have to cut out about 25% of the program. They will be approximately \$165,000 short of being able to continue the program at the current level of 720 students. Marvin Konrad moved we support an effort to secure an additional amount to continue the tuition waiver program for the next biennium at the current level. Motion seconded by Gerald Taylor and carried.

Ken McGaughey presented the Treasurer's Report:

Balance on hand, last Council meeting		
Passbook savings, Fargo National Bank & Trust	\$ 852.41	
Checking account, Fargo National Bank & Trust	<u>869.40</u>	\$1,721.81
Receipts:		
Interest on savings		<u>11.28</u>
		\$1,733.09
Disbursements:		
CTM Cafe, coffee	10.00	
Marlys Schuler, secretarial assistance	70.00	
Postmaster, Bismarck	40.00	
Secretary of State, lobby fees	20.00	
N.D. Motor Carriers, booklets	31.25	
Service Charge, bank	<u>2.00</u>	<u>173.25</u>
		\$1,559.84
Balance, checking account, Jan. 12, 1983	\$ 696.15	
Balance, Savings account, Jan. 12, 1983	<u>863.69</u>	<u>\$1,559.84</u>

Vern Useldinger moved the Treasurer's Report be approved and that the Council reimburse Marlys Schuler in the amount of \$5.78 for name tags for the legislative dinner. Motion seconded by Marvin Konrad and carried.

A proposed constitutional change, increasing the dues of the member organizations of the Council was distributed. Gerald Taylor moved the constitutional amendment be approved. Motion seconded by Greg Seurer and carried unanimously.

Bill Stepp moved the minutes be approved as distributed. Motion seconded by Vern Useldinger and carried.

The meeting was adjourned.