

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL MINUTES
MARCH 8 & 9, 1996

March 8, 1996, at 1:00 pm

Meeting called to order by Kasy Schmaltz

Opening prayer

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of silence for POW/MIAs

Roll call taken of organizations

Introduction of council members, administrative committee members, and presenters

Initiated petition of PWTF: Bob Evans

At present, 50 names are on the sponsoring committee. There will be a proposed news release to be sent out to inform the associated press that the petition is being finalized and getting ready to be presented.

The proposed news release was read. Changes were suggested and made in reference to the wording and assigning names to certain quotes contained in the news release.

Suzanne Kime made a motion to accept the news release as re-written. Second by Joe Litzinger. Discussion held. Motion passed.

Discussion was held on the position of chairperson for the committee. Dave Schmidt made a motion that the council president and vice president serve as co-chairperson on the sponsoring committee. Second by Earl Redlin. Discussion held. Motion passed with one no vote.

Discussion was held on issue of and assignment of names to quotations in the upcoming press release. Harold Trimmer made a motion that quotes in the news release be made by co-chairpersons Kasy Schmaltz and Earl Redlin. Second by Otto Evenson. Motion passed.

Discussion was held on when the petition should be presented to the Secretary of State and who will be presenting it. It was decided to table the issue and a decision for a date will be made at Saturday's meeting.

There will be fact sheet on the PWTF, one that gives a complete history and one that gives what the trust fund has been used for and what is being proposed to use if for, that will be going out. Fact sheets were handed out. A reminder that the circulator carrying this sheet will need to be witnessing all signatures, one at a time. Approximately 25-30 thousand signatures are needed to get this on the ballot. A letter will be given regarding the regulations to the certain circulators.

A reminder was given in relation to the areas of publicity, printing of the petition, and the costs of the petition, for everyone to keep in mind.

VETS: Rick Ryan

Comments made that VETS is currently operating under a series of temporary funding measures, under the Work Continuing Resolution which will end on March 16, 1996. Operating without a budget has created quite a stir. LVER/DVOP program is currently being funded at 90% of what was received last year. Two local veteran's

employment representatives have been cut. The DAV outreach program is currently funded at 2.62 positions. A grant modification has been made to fully fund three positions. If the continuing resolution is not changed, we will be forced to cut back to 2 positions.

Work Force Development Council: Fraine Zeitler

Introduction was given of Mr. Zeitler by Rick Ryan.

In 1992, statistics were implying that the young people coming into the work force were not able to apply their mathematics skills learned in high school, were not good team members, and were having trouble communicating with other people. The work ethic was not quite what was wanted. Congress suggested to consolidate all the federal dollars that are tied up in employment training and put the dollars at the lower level. Legislation was introduced in 1994 with two bills put in. In 1995, 95-01 was signed which established the work force development council. Duties of the council include: (1) advise the government and the public as to what to do in ND to make better use of the work force; (2) oversee a strategic plan. The key linkage that was being looked at is the link between Welfare reform and the work force development. It is now being delinked. The work force development will probably become law around June or July. Welfare reform, nationally, will be shoved aside until after the election.

One of the good things that has come out of all the legislation is that both houses agreed that a single integrated plan is the best thing. The state that is unable to get a single integrated plan will be penalized 20% of their federal allocations. Encouragement given to talk with congressional leaders in regards to work force.

Questions were asked and discussed. Council is made up of: (1) 50% from business/industry; (2) 15% from organized labor; (3) 15% from education; (4) remainder from community organizations.

Fargo VAM/ROC: George Byrne, Assoc. Center Dir.

Mr. Byrne standing in for Doug Kenyon. Accreditation was extended for three years. A focus survey will be conducted in July or August directed to performance improvement planning. A plan had been in place for only about 12 days at the time of accreditation so no results were available. A new surgeon, Kay Abdula, was employed this past week. Talks are continuing on providing service to the Grand Forks AFB when their hospital closes. This will be approximately in one year. Central office has sent out eligibility verification reports. It has been about three years since this has been done. There is an increase in the lodging accommodations for overnight stays being implemented.

Center has been contacted by Sen. Dorgan in relation to the Telemedicine program in conjunction with MedCenter One in Bismarck. It's being looked at where MC1 can pick up funding for the program and the Fargo VA medical center would be a testing site. The most immediate thing going on is the plan to establish a satellite-type operation in Grafton. Discussions are being held on how and when this could be done. Mr. Kenyon is very pleased with how it is going. VA has agreed to set aside \$396,000 in funding to run this

program for one year. The proposal has been drawn up.

Discussion was held on what happened to the project with the Bismarck OP clinic. It was stated at the time Fargo sent a submission to Washington for a number of OP satellite programs and one of them was Grafton. That particular one has been picked out and the congressional delegation went to the Secretary of VA with.

There has been a request for expansion of funds related to patient privacy and ac project. If approved, at this time there is no knowledge of what level this will be funded at. Waiting for final budget on March 15, 1996.

Ken Anderson of the Vets Home asked if telemedicine would be able to be used at the Vets home for psyche patients? Stated he feels it would be real beneficial to the home. It was answered that psych is strictly not telemedicine and was discussed. Stated the request would be brought back to discuss.

Further discussion was held.

ND Job Service: Gary Hoffman

New executive director is Jennifer Gladden. North Dakota and South Dakota is ranked at 36% at referring veterans for jobs and the national average is 17%. The state is doing real good. Since 1994, 2 DVOPs and 3 LVERs due to budget cuts. Hopefully, last resolution will reflect 95% plus inflation of costs. 1814 veterans have been placed in jobs. 90% of disabled veterans have been placed on job referrals and 99% of disabled vets have received some type of service from job service. Mandan's job service office has been closed. Looking forward to the state training program that will educate through training and classroom time to veterans following recent discharge from the military service. 100,000 dollar grant has been issued to job service to steady and prepare a "one-stop" shop.

Rick Ryan presented the final draft of the news release. Further discussion was held regarding the news release. Discussion was also held in regards to the western veterans home.

Rick Ryan made some further comments in reference to the makeup of the council. He stated, in a letter to the council, that he felt that one organizational representative should be chosen to serve for an unlimited time. Reasons include: (1) provide a historical perspective to deliberations of the council; (2) provide a strong background knowledge for the council's legislative committee; (3) provide background information, suggestive courses of action, and possibly be tasked with the responsibility of obtaining information concerning subjects to be discussed and acted upon at council meetings. The problem lies in that there is no organizational meeting in between legislative sessions. Suggested that the council come up with a job description for the possible third organizational representative member. Elmer Ekern suggested that each organizational members be made up of commander, adjutant, and elected individual. Further discussion was held regarding this matter.

Dismissal of administrative committee.

Minutes of previous meeting presented. Dave Schmidt made a motion to accept minutes as written. Second by Glenn Maurer. Motion passed.

Glenn Maurer made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Second by Suzanne Kime. Motion passed.

Resolutions: Elmer Ekern

Amendment of Art4 Sec2, dealing with the term of office being two years, was presented. This two year term would allow the organizational member to be in office one year during the off-legislative year and through the legislative year.

Amendment of Art3, which would read that each voting organization would pay a fee of an additional \$500 in addition to the \$300, was presented.

The council tabled the discussion and voting concerning the amendments until Saturday morning.

Discussion held on what the council needs in regards to legislative liaison or executive director. Suggestions were given to find a person locally. Suggestion was given to keep in mind who the council wants to hire. The choices include the legislative liaison, who will work towards all of the legislative goals, and the executive director, who will carry the direction of the council as well as legislative goals. Was suggested to contact C. Emerson Murray to see if he has any interest in doing the job.

Meeting will re-convene at 8am Saturday.

Saturday 8:15 am

Resolutions:

Amended resolutions reread to the council. Harold Trimmer made a motion to accept the amendment of Art4 Sec2 as read. Glenn Maurer seconded the motion. Motion passed. Glenn Maurer made a motion to accept the amendment of Art3 as read. Harold Trimmer seconded the motion. Motion passed. Discussion was held on these two amendments. Elmer Ekern made a motion to make a change in the wording of the amendment to Art3. Sec2 will read the council may set special assessments of the voting member organizations for such purposes as deemed necessary, such amounts to be decided by a vote of the council at the regular meeting prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Dave Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion passed.

News release of the petition was presented yesterday afternoon. It was decided to wait to set a date of presenting the petition to Secretary of State tabled till 10 am.

CVSO Report: Tom Sorensen

Commented on that CVSOs wish to have voting member on the council. Wish is based on the fact that the CVSO have a direct service to vets in the state and work first hand with these people. Discussion

was held on this issue. Bob Evans stated he would reply back to the CVSOs on the issue and urge the association to be more involved in issues and voice this back to the council. Another suggestion was made to send a copy of the council minutes to all VSOs. It was stated that it was presented to the governor to allow a CVSO to serve on the NDVCC and he ruled it as a conflict of interest.

New Business

Response to Rep. Wardner

Letter from Rep. Wardner, which concerned vets preference, was reread to the council. Discussion held on how to answer his letter. Bob Evans read a tentative response letter to Rep. Wardner to the council. Discussion held. It was decided to send the letter read to the council.

Vets License Plate: Elmer Ekern

Questioned if the bill could be resubmitted for just veterans. Discussion was held. Rick Ryan made a suggestion to approach Gen. Burke to combine with the National Guards and go under them with the license plate. Each party would pay and one half of this fee would go towards the vets cemetery. Other suggestions included contacting the cemetery advisory committee concerning the issue. DOT is revising the vanity plate law and they feel that every group should pay the fee. Further discussion was held.

Report of Administrative Committee

Veterans subcommittee report from Ken Evenson. Currently there is 99 beds filled, 6 empty, 1 committed, and 5 applications being processed in the basic unit. Skilled care are with 37 filled and 68 waiting. As of January 1 there was a fee increase for the residents and there have been no complaints. The bus times to go downtown has been increased to 15 minutes more and is going good. State inspection took place in January. Everything went quite good. There were a couple of deficiencies including the lighting in the halls and the bathrooms and the handrails of the lower floor. The home is going to do all of the handrails on the skilled and basic care units. Some other deficiencies included: door protectors, paint chips, and dented cans in the kitchen. The total spent to act on the deficiencies will be about \$14,000.00. The legislative budget committee came through the home in September. The state budget will start March 20, 1996. There will be a process of an increase in fees every 6 months to get up to level of state.

Dept. of Vets Affairs: Joe O'Brien

The feds have sent out a letter and the EVRs for the first of April will have to be corrected or else some of the people drawing dependencies will be loose their accreditation. The CVSO's conference will be in Bismarck April 22-24, 1996. The fall conference will be September 23-25, 1996. Transportation is going good, the volunteers are doing real good. Grant program doing good, a real good program for veterans. Personal training has been authorized. Loans program is going well. There is money available for emergency loans. There is a need for a new computer. The

equipment Internet charge is very costly. The OMB denied the travel expenses. New Cass County VSO will be Jim Brandt. There were 72 applications with all of them being disabled veterans. The commissioners originally wanted to do away with this position. Administrative committee chair and sub-committee chairs will be available for meetings called by the council. 150 grants approved. 22 grants disapproved. Majority of the grants went to dental. Sue Kime made a motion to accept the report as presented. Motion passed.

Arnold Maier reported to the council that he contacted Emerson Murray in regards to legislative liaison and he stated he would not do the job. Discussion held.

Dave Schmidt made a motion to do away with the legislative liaison and find an executive secretary to keep the council focused on issues between meetings - do internal affairs. Bob Evans seconded the motion. Motion passed. Discussion held. Rick Ryan commented that the legislative issues/agenda needs to be discussed now, so that these issues can be presented and discussed at the conventions. Joe Novak suggested that Bob Wefald might be a candidate to approach to do a one time appearance before the legislature. The council doesn't need to buy a lobbyist. The council members are the lobbyists. 3 or 4 people that live in Bismarck or any other individual who are willing to appear at legislation. Rick Ryan suggested that each person have the responsibility of one bill. Also stated that Bismarck is tapped out, to possibly go to surrounding areas for supporters. Further discussion was held. Dave Schmidt made a motion to amend the previous motion concerning the job position to look for an executive secretary. Bob Evans seconded. Motion passed. Stan Wright asked the council to still keep him in mind to help out with legislation.

Legislative ideas: Discussion was held on resolution forms and resubmitting a resolution to reenact license plate. Suzanne Kime made a motion to present a letter of recognition to past legislatures that have supported the veterans. Otto Evenson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Veterans Home Petition: Skip Wing

Addressed the council concerning the vets home petition. The signatures have been received. The petition will be turned in Tuesday and will be on the June ballot. The petition that will be presented was read to the council. Discussion was held. Sue Kime presented a question regarding why the council was not contacted regarding the news release concerning the vets home petition. Skip Wing presented an apology to the council stating it was an oversight on his behalf. Further discussion was held.

Dave Schmidt made a motion to submit the petition as soon as it is written. Joe Litzinger seconded the motion. Motion passed. Discussion held. Bob Evans made a motion to accept the petition as read. Dave Schmidt seconded the motion. Motion passed. Discussion

held regarding the importance of not using the word "change" when promoting the petition. It was suggested to send a letter of explanation to the League of Women Voters. A fact sheet will be sent out with the petition regarding the history of the PWTF and the proposals.

Earl Redlin presented the idea of a campaign committee as was done in 1988. The committee was sponsored by the NDVCC. Suggestions and discussion was held. He asked that 2 people from each organization be on the committee for campaigning for the measure. The committee will consist of:

- American Legion - Earl Redlin, Gene Kouba
- VFW - Arnold Maier, Stan Wright
- DAV - Hoffman, Rick Ryan
- AmVets - Joe Novak, Elmer Ekern
- VVA - Jim Johnson
- Co-Chairs campaign committee - Kasy Schmaltz, Earl Redlin

The next meeting will be May 10 and 11, 1996 in Bismarck at the Kelly Inn.

The state VVA picnic will be at Four Bears.

Dave Schmidt made a motion to close the meeting. Second by J. Litzinger. Motion passed.