

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS  
COMFORT INN, BISMARCK ND

February 19, 2010  
9:00am

Meeting called to order by Chairman Schuchard. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence for POW/MIAs and those serving overseas.

Roll Call:

Present:

John Adolf	Ken Hasby	Dean Overby
Mike Fisher	Dave Hilleren	Wayne Paulson
Jeff Hall	Orletta Kilen	Carroll Quam
John Hanson	Mark Landis	Lyle Schuchard
	Ron Otto	Dave Vandergon

Absent:

Lee Finstad

Guests:

ND Veterans Coordinating Council  
Jim Hilzendeger, President, ND Veterans Service Officer Association  
Wyman Roeder  
Norris Braaten, Chairman, ND Veterans Home Governing Board  
Jerry Meske, ND Veterans Home Governing Board  
Joe Schmalz

***Motion by Ken Hasby to accept the November 20 & 21, 2010 meeting minutes, second by Mike Fisher. Motion passed.***

**Speakers:**

Carlee McLeod, Deputy Treasurer, State Treasurer's Office

- ▶ Switching two funds in November resulted in a hit of \$10,000 but the new fund is making progress so we should be on track with projected income by the end of February
- ▶ After sitting in the PWTF subcommittee meeting, she will visit with State Treasurer on whether additional funds will be available this biennium
- ▶ Working with NDSU on a study where does the fund needs to be to meet future needs.

Questioned on the status of the Reserve Account, Carlee referred this question to Mike Mullen, Attorney General's Office.

Mike Fisher requested that, under the heading descriptions on the report, a name rather than a number be substituted. Carlee stated that change will be made.

Carlee questioned on the sources NDSU is using for its study. If anyone has suggestions to email her with the names and/or entities and she will forward those to NDSU. NDSU wants to make sure they are including all sources that they can.

Mike Mullen, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office  
Mr. Mullen has been looking into the Postwar Trust Fund to get answers for ACOVA. He has contacted OMB for information on the transfer of monies and expenditures regarding Fund 410. By compiling expenditures from FY 2001 thru December 31, 2009, a total of \$1,219,953.06 has been dispensed. He is unable to get an accurate amount of income for that same period. Mr. Mullen will be meeting with a private CPA who conducted a fiscal analysis of the fund but not an actual audit. There were not enough documents to fully account for the income earned. Mr. Mullen referenced an Attorney General's Opinion from 1997 regarding the principal of the Postwar Trust Fund. When income is earned from the fund, Mr. Mullen believes it is then available to the ACOVA for disbursement. Income is earned from dividends from stock or interest from CD's, it is not subjected to the ups and downs of the principal balance.

Mr. Mullen is hoping to have an informal resolution in about 30 days. A formal Attorney General's Opinion takes much longer.

Colonel Dale Adams, Director, Joint Staff, ND National Guard (Powerpoint)

- ▶ Spoke on the vision and mission of the Guard
- ▶ 75% in Army NG and 25% in Air NG; approximately 20% female and 80% male
- ▶ Gave financial information on the economic impact the Guard contributes to ND
- ▶ Reported on the current ND flood threat indicators: rate of melt, extra precipitation received during the melt; liquid water equivalent in the snowpack at time of melt; soil moisture conditions; available surface storage in dams-ponds-or wetlands; and ice jams and the probability of the need for the Guard to assist with flood operations through out the state.

Marlys Morgenstern, Veterans Program Administrator, Job Service North Dakota

- ▶ Veterans Job Fair was a success – over 50 vendors supported the event to compete for the 350 plus potential clients that attended.
- ▶ Veterans' Stand Down Events held in Grand Forks, Fargo and Bismarck.
- ▶ ND Job Service will be assisting Montana Veterans Service Program by promoting their Veterans Stand Down Event to be held in Glendive MT in September.
- ▶ 44 veterans were involved in the Bobcat layoffs. These veterans may be eligible for services provided by the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Workers Funds.

Marlys was asked to send information about Stand Downs and other events to the ACOVA and Veterans Coordinating Council, she agreed this would be another way to disseminate the information.

#### Wayne Paulson, ND Veterans Home Foundation

The Foundation is a 501(c)3 and was founded in 1987 by the ACOVA and other interested persons. It is to be used to enhance the living conditions of veterans at the Veterans Home in ways the State of ND would not or could not use with tax dollars. Fundraising has not been conducted on a continuous basis. Mike Dobmeier is currently managing the account which currently has assets of close to \$140,000 (principal and interest). According to the By-Laws, only the interest can be spent. Mr. Dobmeier wishes to step down from the Foundation. Letters were sent to the Commanders of the veterans organizations asking for nominations for board members. The American Legion, AMVETS, and VVA still have not submitted names. Packets were handed out to those organizations to help them educate their members as to the Foundation and its purpose.

#### Mark Johnson, Administrator, ND Veterans Home

Overview on the construction status of the Home. (power point presentation)

Due to the new structure of the Veterans Home (neighborhood concept), discussions are underway as to how staffing and job titles will need to change. Rain in October and November caused water issues in some of the areas. These problems have been corrected but there are discussions with the contractors as to additional dollars to cover the repairs.

Mark asked for input from the committee on the admission's priority list. There are issues with long term basic care residents who need additional medical care on the skilled side. Inside of being moved to the skilled side, they are placed out in the community because of the priority listing for those on a waiting list for the skilled unit. There are only three states that use a priority list for admittance.

Chairman Schuchard recognized the Coordinating Council. Harvey Peterson, Vice-President, called the Council meeting to order. Business conducted regarding

proclamations on Vietnam Veterans Day and Korean veterans. No business brought forward to the Administrative Committee. Meeting adjourned.

Chairman Schuchard asked Dean Overby to go over issues the legislative committee discussed:

- ▶ Legislation regarding time off for DOT employees for Honor Guard funeral detail. This may be changed to include all state employees.
- ▶ Fundraisers for the grant program and how to obtain a 501(c)3 designation.
- ▶ Veterans preference law regarding merit and non-merit entities.
- ▶ Veterans preference appeals. There are no monies available to pay for an appeal so the veteran has to hire an attorney on their own.

Closed joint session with the Coordinating Council.

#### Transportation Van Update – Mike Fisher

Mike met with a representative with local Ford dealer and it sounded promising. Northland Ford Dealers is a consortium of western dealerships who would donate the vehicle. Mike suggested putting the Northland Ford Dealer's name on the van and use the van primarily in western North Dakota. A letter from the VA Regional since they oversee the vans in the Transportation Program Mike would like to set-up a meeting with the Ford representative and other interested parties to help make this happen.

Strategic plan has been updated as to February 2010. Chairman Schuchard would like to meet with the Commissioner and do a thorough review of the strategic plan.

#### Lonnie Wangen, Commissioner, ND Veterans Affairs

A. Women Veteran Coordinator posting closed February 12, 2010; close to 60 applications have been received. They will be scored by Human Resources and the top 7 candidates will be interviewed. The funding for the Discharge Project temp position will run out the end of February.

B. Impact Foundation training attended by Commissioner and Cathy.

C. Courage Carries On meetings attended by Tom; Gene attended ND Dept of Human Services meeting.

D. Commissioner attended Outreach at Park River (Walsh County); presented at Government Service Committee on February 11, 2010.

E. CVSO small group training conducted by Tom in December - Barnes, Cass, Foster, Nelson Sheridan and Walsh attended; Spring training scheduled for April 19-23, 2010 at the Comfort Inn, Bismarck, accreditations will be available with the DAV, AMVETS, and VFW. Site visit at Cass County.

F. No hearings on appeals or veterans preference.

G. 7,084 discharges have been entered into the system.

H. Loan Program: 173 current loans with an outstanding balance of \$438,834.16. Grant Program: eligible awaiting approval – 61 for a total of \$35,500.

**Postwar Trust Fund:**

\$200,000 budgeted

\$74,181.31 transferred

\$125,818.69 remaining in budget

**Subcommittee Reports:**

**Budget Committee** – Ken Hasby, Chairman

Report given by Ron Otto – Chairman Hasby explained budget handout with regards to the expenditures.

**Appeals Committee** – Orletta Kilen, Chairman

No appeals and no other business. Meeting adjourned.

**Legislative Committee** – Dean Overby, Acting Chairman

Report given earlier, nothing to add.

**PWTF** – John Hanson, Chairman

Report given by Mark Landis, Secretary. Chairman Hanson presented data through December 2009. Carlee McLeod, Deputy Treasurer, State Treasurer's Office gave an updated report (January 2010) on the Fund. Mike Fisher questioned why the treasurer uses one broker and why more money isn't invested in safe accounts. Ms. McLeod will relay concerns to the Treasurer. The committee discussed the backlog of the hardship grants.

**Veterans Affairs** - Dave Hilleren, Chairman

Ron Otto gave report. Commissioner Wangen gave report (see above). Chairman Schuchard reported on getting an informal Attorney General's Opinion on Fund 410 (Reserve Fund). Dean Overby wondered what action the State Treasurer's Office will take depending on the opinion. Either side could request a formal A.G.'s. Opinion to settle the issue.

Discussion on whether the Commissioner should have sent a letter on behalf of the Professional Veterans Advocates training conference to their respective county commissioners. No action taken by committee.

***Motion by Orletta Kilen to accept all subcommittee reports, second by John Hanson. Motion passed.***

**Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Schuchard reiterated some of Mr. Mullen's statements regarding the "Reserve Fund". The parties involved should not get hung up on terminology; the question is whether the reserve fund was made up of interest monies or earned income.

The ACOVA Legislative Committee will meet with the Coordinating Council legislative committee to work on legislative issues. This was very successful two sessions ago. Ron Otto stated conventions will be coming up so any resolutions could be forwarded to the legislative committee.

Mike Fisher asked if ACOVA will be making a request from the Emergency Commission. Commissioner Wangen explained that it wouldn't be prudent to request funds until there is an aggregate amount has been donated based on a recommendation by Mike Mullen, Attorney General's Office.

***Motion by Dave Hilleren that the next meeting be held in Lisbon on May 21 & 22, 2010, second by Dean Overby. Motion passed.***

Joe Schmalz recognized. He is working on a project with cattlemen and ranchers to donate one animal (around an estimated worth of \$600) at auctions to the Department of Veterans Affairs to help with the grant program.

Commissioner Wangen spoke on discussions he has had with various committee members and the activities they have been involved in throughout their careers. He is requesting the committee members do a biography / resume that shows their varied backgrounds and experience. This could be tapped in for various projects.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Otto  
Secretary