

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMFORT INN, BISMARCK ND

January 9, 2014
1:00PM

Meeting called to order by Chairman Dean Overby. Pledge of Allegiance said and a Moment of Silence observed for POW/MIAs and those serving oversea

Present:

John Adolf	Dave Hilleren	Dean Overby
Richard Belling	Trish Hodny	Marlin Schneider
Ken Hasby	Robert Olzweski	Jim Verwey
Jim Haukedahl	Ron Otto	Steve Volk

Absent:

Jeff Hall	Carroll Quam	Hal Weninger
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Approval of minutes from last meeting tabled until tomorrow morning.

Guest speaker, Jim Brubaker, Regional VBA Director presented on new VBA issues.

- Fargo Regional Office is above average for completing claims
- Goal is to keep Fargo above average and to contribute to the national mission
- 90 percent of work is now electronic in Fargo
- To get the backload down, work will continue to flow to the most productive resources
- All Veterans will receive better service

Questions were asked regarding the process of claims for “local veterans”.

Mr. Brubaker assured that these claims are being worked since the bucket of 2 year old claims from other areas sent to Fargo RO are now complete.

- Required forms for claims will be coming in the near future so there will be a uniform submission to scan forms.
- Goal is to have no claims over 125 days old and complete accuracy

LTC Davina French, ND National Guard

- 80 soldiers currently deployed
- Dickinson unit is alerted
- Response platforms in place in 6 places throughout state/prepping for possible floods
- Visited the Veterans Home on December 18th
- Children of the fallen were sent to Snowball express in Texas (6 from ND)
- Recruiting efforts are revolving to looking more with IT knowledge
- Good stories: Soldier saved a heart attack victim at a game in Devils Lake; Group saved an accident victim in DC

Messages from General Sprynczynatyk:

With Legislation coming we would like to invite you to coffee to discuss issues and to make a plan to go with the same information, message and movement.

Would like to form a Legislative caucus.

SAMSHA effort: In May of last year a statewide effort to form a statewide effort to focus on Veterans, service members, families and survivors. A team of 11 went to Baltimore for training. Currently working on a logo of ND Cares.

Mark Johnson, Administrator, ND Veterans Home

- Gazebo is moved and being used.
- National Guard landscaped and now planting has been done and looking nice. Pond is in but needs a fountain—AM Legion Auxiliary is using this as their project for the year
- Litigation in place by family of landowners of the Norgaard trust. Money is coming in slow-do not know why.
- Floor is poured and plans to build a new shop
- Implementing Electronic Health Records – large project
- Now settled 3 of 4 law suits with new building
- Still looking at the Memorial Garden once old building is gone
- Would like a bridge over the Sheyenne River
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Full on skilled care , basic care is down 16 beds

Commissioner's Report [POWERPOINT PRESENTATION]

- Position posted for Loan and Grant program
- All staff attended website training
- Website is up and running

- Dan Thorstad has completed several trainings to be accredited and to use a state car
- Mike had 2 presentations
- Brenda had several presentations
- Lonnie had several presentations
- Korea Reborn books to counties for distribution
- Interviews with new CVSO's –Trail and Ramsey County
- Tom worked on training with Dan and Mike, VSO in Grand Forks, and Trail Counties. Brenda has worked with Spirit Lake Service Officer and continues to support CVSO's on her travels.
- No Veterans Preference appeals
- Two Grant appeals
- PWTF 410 - Total funds available \$2990,697.43.
- Total grants approved this biennium: \$64,976.64
- Amounts paid out \$41,090.76
- Balance in 410 account is \$248,053.17
- Legislation – Worked with Cramer on HR3493 / Heitkamp on HR 1742 / Working on SB1602
- Website reviewed

Gary from NDVCC spoke about their goals. Round table discussion on legislative issues.

- \$2Million for PWTF
- NSO funding
- V.E.T. funding

Bob Olzweski asked what has been disbursed out of the Agent Orange funds. Commissioner replied there are billboards in the State with the Department's phone number. There have been numerous calls resulting from the billboards. The next plan is to hold town hall meetings throughout the State to discuss Vietnam Veterans' issues.

Trish Hodny asked if any more information has been given on the PWTF clearing account. Commissioner replied that there is very little information on the account and he is still working on it.

Committee recessed so subcommittees could hold their meetings.

9:00 .m.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

John Adolf	Dave Hilleren	Dean Overby
Richard Belling	Trish Hodny	Marlin Schneider
Ken Hasby	Robert Olzweski	Jim Verwey
Jim Haukedahl	Ron Otto	Steve Volk

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Ron Otto moved to approve minutes, second by Richard Belling. Motion passed.

Report by Kenneth Hasby:

PWT funding no issues-no review of strategic plan All appears to be correct.

Motion made to approve subcommittee minutes by Richard Bellings and seconded by Trish Hodny. Motion passed

PWTF/Appeals

Dave Hilleran read minutes

Reviewed commissioner's report and voted to accept. Will use the guidance of Attorney General's office. Strategic plan continues to be updated.

Appeals: Reviewed handbook and it needs to be updated. Strategic plan needs to be updated. No hearings.

Motion by Dave to approve and seconded by John Adolf

Trish asked question about a phone conference meeting that needs to be added to the minutes.

Dave amended motion and second made by John Adolf.

Legislation:

Ron read minutes: no quorum .

Ron read minutes for the Public Relations Committee:

Discussed Fargo Forum articles in regards to Veteran Forum, want to support getting information for articles. Press release after each meeting to show who members are and

information about each presentation. ACOVA members should attend each service organizations meetings.

Motion by Ron Otto seconded by Jim Verwey.

Trish gave “kudos” to NDDVA for website.

Dean recommends that ACOVA works with legislative council and National Guard for upcoming legislation.

Jim thanked Trish and Dave for new American Legion post at UND.

Round table discussion was held with each voicing concerns or ideals.
Next meeting will be 19 and 20 June at 2 pm.