

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS  
COMFORT INN, BISMARCK ND

January 13 & 14 2015  
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 overseas.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

Richard Belling	Myron Langehaug	Carroll Quam
Ken Hasby	Marlys Morgenstern	Marlin Schneider
Jim Haukedahl	Robert Olzweski	Jim Verwey
Dave Hilleren	Ron Otto	
Trish Hodny	Dean Overby	

Absent:

Hal Weninger

- **Veterans Home Governing Board:** Gary Skarpol-Governing board chairman. Introduced him-self and reviewed the membership of the governing board. Spoke of Norris Bratten.
- Spoke about the Veterans Home: staff and quality of the home. Discussed the home administrator's residency and the need to have a new residence home built for the administrator on campus.

NDVCC and ACOVA joint meeting. Lonnie Wangen and Gary Maddock reviewed the bills. Passed around the NDVCC/ACOVA brochure and the bills insert.

1:45 PM Chairman Overby called for a 10 minute break and for subcommittees to meet after the break.

Subcommittee's held meetings.

January 14, 2015 Wednesday

Committee reconvened at 9:00AM

Meeting called to order by Chairman Dean Overby. Pledge of Allegiance said and a Moment of Silence observed for POW/MIAs and all service people.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

Richard Belling	Myron Langehaug	Carroll Quam
Ken Hasby	Marlys Morgenstern	Marlin Schneider
Jim Haukedahl	Robert Olzweski	Jim Verwey
Dave Hilleren	Ron Otto	Steve Volk
Trish Hodny	Dean Overby	

Absent:

Hal Weninger - excused

**VA Health Care Services Director: Lavonne Liversage**

- Staffing money used to ramp up care providers \$50,000,000,000 for veterans outside 40 miles of a VA facility to use Health net and their veteran's health card. Veterans should be receiving their cards now. Third party administrator in ND does not have that strong of a network in ND as of yet.
- Secretary McDonald working on his plan to improve service to Veterans at the VA.
- Major objectives in VISN 23: is to treat Hep. C., missed opportunities (no show rates).
- Having town hall meetings every quarter. Next one in Detroit Lakes Feb 26, 2015. Evening meetings have had more attendance. Minot is planned for a town hall also.
- Budget: at the highest point we have 982 now and hiring another 22.
- Military Sexual trauma group sessions for males is starting.
- Tele-chaplain services are starting.
- Social work-now have Hud-Vash workers in Dickinson and Williston. New shelters in Williston "Project eat" is one of them also Guardian Foundation-both strictly for males.
- Veterans Medical Foster home: in its infancy stage, where veterans can continue to live in foster family homes.
- Home-based primary care brochures handed out.

- Construction- a lot of work. Labs, rooms for care. Bids for our emergency room entry. ICU will be renovated also.
- CBOCS: have 10 now. Just opened in Devils Lake last year. Now have another manager. Leases up in Dickinson, Bismarck, Minot and Williston.
- Minot Security-Airforce Base: issues with veterans having to stop at visitors center. Looking at having a one year visitors card to help with the timeliness.
- El Paso Texas shooting of VA employee at the CBOC on base.

Ken Hasby asked about the healing garden.

-Starting phase one this summer.

Trish Hodney had question about Obamacare subsidized program and the VA- are there issue or complaints that you may have received?

-Have not had any complaints to my office. They can opt out of VA care.

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

- Spoke about budget that will be presented to appropriations tomorrow and passed around photo of bridge concept.
- 3 grants applied for to help pay for the bridge with DOT, Outdoor heritage fund and state general funds.
- Workshop is funded in governor's budget using the Melvin Norgard fund and special funds we have.
- Administrator's house: Governing board is asking for the house to be funded and built. 4,000 square foot handicapped accessible home is planned. To be built on campus. Building a home in Lisbon is not fiscally sound investment and homes are not available for purchase.

#### **ND National Guard: General Dohrmann**

- 40 troops returned from Afghanistan. Security police from Minot AFB relieved. And Kosovo troops returned. 38 soldiers deployed to the SW border-aviation patrol.
- Legislation:
- HB 1104 updates civil relief act to match federal. Updates the retirement ages allowing some to serve past 60 years of age. Continues adjustment compensation (War Bonus).
- HB 1105 Criminal history background checks on anyone dealing with victims of MST, Children etc.
- HB 1106 Veterans Court bill. Designed to ensure that prior to sentencing the judge will inquire into whether the person served in the military. Consider treatment rather than incarceration. Partnership with NDDVA and ND Human Services. Initiative by chief of supreme court may also be introduced-similar to drug court.
  
- Additional Full time equivalent for Military Service centers

- Traumatic Brain injury bills: we are keeping an eye on those also. Some initiatives we did not put in that will affect veterans. Exempt retiree pay from state tax, vehicle license plate fees.
- HB 1208 Honorary veteran status for person served 6 years in the National Guard. No benefits provided just the status.
- Veterans Cemetery: Last year there was a bill to provide caskets. Looking at waiving the fee for burial of spouses, state would pay this portion. About \$160,000 fiscal note.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Postwar Trust Fund Subcommittee:** Myron Langehaug reported.

- Discussed ways to raise funds. No requests for funds to review.

Motion to accept report by Carroll Quam Second by Ken Hasby  
Motion passed.

**Legislative Subcommittee:** Dave Hilleren reported.

- Discussed the “Un-remarried surviving spouse” bill and reviewed the bills being submitted by National Guard.
- Discussed questions for state treasurer.

Motion to accept report made by Ken Hasby motion second by Ron Otto  
Motion passed.

**Department of Veterans Affairs & Budget Subcommittee:** Trish Hodny reported.

- Discussion of last meeting on NDCC and ACOVA bylaws and constitution and the commissioners completing packet of all laws and policies.
- Discussed Strategic plan will review and update next meeting.
- Discussed the Vetra Spec alleged breach of information. There is no evidence that anyone has accessed anything without authority. This is in the hands of the Attorney General’s office and Commissioner.

- Update on situation with Burleigh County- Burleigh County Commissioners consider the case closed and the issue is off their table unless more information is brought forward to warrant opening the case.
- Stacy Jo Default requested commissioner's job description and Trish provided her with the language of the North Dakota Century Code and North Dakota

Jim Haukedahl motioned to accept the report second by Robert Olzweski.  
Motion Passed

**Appeals Subcommittee:** Myron Langehaug reported.

- No appeals held.

Motion to accept report made by Jim Haukedahl Second by Dave Hilleren.  
Motion passed.

**Commissioner Wangen** discussed the Legislative reception the night before. Went good got some feedback from Senator Dever.

**Marlys Morgenstern:** discussed possible changes.

- Use old business and new business minutes. Roberts rules of order. More information coming in to get more issues from veterans concerns.
- Wanted update from Agent Orange bill. Commissioner's gave update on status of town hall meetings.

Next meeting scheduled for 2PM March 12 and 13, 2015 at the Comfort Inn, Bismarck.

***Motion to adjourn by Carroll Quam, second by Richard Belling***  
***Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted

Jim Verwey  
Secretary