

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Comfort Inn, Bismarck ND

January 21, 2016

10:00 AM

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:

Jim Verwey
Emery C. Fisher
Dave Hilleren
Jim Haukedahl
Richard Belling
Dean Overby

Roy Fillion
Marlin Schneider
Trish Hodny
Bill Peschel
Carroll Quam

Ken Hasby
Myron Langehaug
Hal Weninger

Absent:

Marlys Morgenstern (excused)

Chairman Overby Introduced Calie Lindseth, ND DVA Women's Veteran Coordinator.

LaVonne Liversage, Director Fargo VA

- ▶ National VA Update-Secretary McDonald's focus is for customer service, which is a different vision for the VA. One of those visions is dividing the VA's in districts. ND, and 11 other states will be a part of the Midwest districts. A Veteran experience officer has been hired and his deputy (Chicago and Minneapolis) have been hired.
- ▶ Leaders Developing Leaders is a new program that you may hear about. This follows the customer service focus. Secretary McDonald has spent much time with leadership to improve staff involvement in all levels of the organization.
- ▶ VSN Level-there has been a hiring freeze for quite some time, and had to have special approval to hire new employees, thus making them short staffed. This freeze has been lifted.
- ▶ Choice-it's not going well. We know that, the VA knows that. Hoeven's office just had a veteran's round table about Choice to voice concerns of veterans.

- ▶ Office of IG visit happens next week, and the facility is preparing for that. We do not anticipate any issues, but you may see more suits in the facility in the coming days.
- ▶ My VA Communities is another initiative that you may have heard of. Every state and medical center must engage in community projects. We do a lot of that in the community, and Lonnie hears from us quite a bit. The piece that we have picked up with ND Cares. I am now an Executive member; that is my role in the My VA Communities program.
- ▶ The VA has partnered with HUD to partner with homeless veterans, but we now have an opportunity to partner with our local reservations. We have funding for case managers for each reservation and will have 20 vouchers for each reservation.
- ▶ Construction is never ending for our facility. We are working on private living, community living centers. We are temporarily relocating our care units and expanding our ER and ICU. We just awarded a contract to improve the entry way into the facility. We will have a time that parking will be limited, but hope to relocate employee parking and hope to not have a major effect for veteran parking. We have several CBOCs up for renewal, our goal is to get the one off the Minot base.
- ▶ One program that I wanted to brief on is the Secretary Cross program. For veterans who have first party debt, it is possible that benefits will be reduced for the cost of that debt. Any federal benefit could be reduced such as tax refund, retiree pay, or wage garnishment. If you have veterans that have a debt, please have them call the VA before there are issues.
- ▶ Veteran forum, quarterly event, next one is in Grand Forks. We rotate the location to try to reach as many veterans as we can.
- ▶ Physician recruitment. We have added many new medical professionals to our staff. Minot is difficult to staff.
- ▶ Choice Program-All the way back to Aug 2014, when Congress quickly passed a bill that said the VA had to implement Choice in 90 days. The VA signed a contract with two third party administrators, TriWest and HealthNet. Our provider is HealthNet and the contract has been expanded to Nov 2016, however, the regional offices must look at this harder. I am confident that we can manage our own program, but it is one for all. I cannot speak on other centers, as some have had issues. The law has had many changes and it's hard to keep up. Cheryl Anderson is our contact and is running a great shop. The most recent changes is the unusual or burden such as physical therapy, trigger point injections, some of those that are a frequent care outpatient will be now be under Choice.
- ▶ The 60 day window has been expanded for a year, for example a pregnant veteran does not have to request every 60 days to have her treatment renewed. The CBOCs without a full time doctor is huge. Soon, many of these facilities will have a full time doctor. Even those veterans who live within 40 miles of these facilities can qualify for Choice.
- ▶ Please know that we are hearing these issues. HealthNet has hired another 500 people for a call center in Tampa to help improve the program. We recognize that there is still room for improvement.

Jim Haukedahl-When will the new exam rooms be open? LaVonne Liversage -Should be by the fall 2016.

Ken Hasby-Question regarding the Healing gardens? LaVonne Liversage-. This summer we will see huge improvements.

Ron Otto (Guest)-Choice questions-no specialties program, how can we be eligible for Choice? This would take a legislative act, this isn't a VA decision. Are the Fee basis programs still alive? Yes, we still have non VA programs, but they are really limiting our spending. The VA is dedicated to using choice and is limiting funding.

Lonnie-Had a visit with Diana Hall with the Veteran Justice Program. She is doing a great job and we are close to having a veteran court in ND. We appreciate their work.

Cheri Giessen Job Service ND Director-

► Update on budget-Additionally, we have Marlys on our staff and she does a great job with the budget and applying for awards.

► We have all heard about the 4.1% cut. We have three major buckets, the WIA funding, UE funding, and smaller veteran services. In that process, we have had some cuts to our budget. We tried to do this through attrition, but it wasn't enough. We did have some leave under voluntary separation and those who found employment elsewhere. That helped, but wasn't quite enough. We had to do a reduction staff, and had 12 temporary staff members that come on knowing that they are temporary. Most of these staff members worked with unemployment insurance, which has been centralized and online. This didn't affect our smaller offices.

► Now, we are at 85% percent that are online, but many want that personal contact at local offices. We had 16 offices and we had to reduce local offices, closing 7 (New town, Valley City, Rolla, Grafton, Oaks, Beulah, Harvey). Many of these offices were part time staff, but some were full time like Valley City. We are keeping our leases and buildings and we will be going to these facilities to do some outreach and provide services. For example, Watford has been booming but doesn't have a facility, so the library has taken some of it on. We are doing more outreach and working with libraries. It's not something that we wanted to do, but was necessary.

► Veteran Services- we never have had a veteran rep in the areas that we closed. They were already doing outreach through regional offices, and will continue to do so.

Ken Hasby- Bakken University helping displaced oil workers. Is that through Job Service? Cheri Giessen- No, that is through the University System and they are offering scholarships and services for those wanting to go back and get an education.

► Marlys has put in two proposals-secure funding into FY 16 and FY 17 \$100,000.

North Dakota National Guard Adjutant General (TAG) Alan Dohrmann

- ▶ We have a lot going on right now, the least of which –new carpet and asbestos- so we have been spread out among the building. Served on the Veteran Home Board and didn't make many meetings, except when the media was there. I stepped down due to scheduling conflicts.
- ▶ Guard-nothing has really changed on the deployment front. We have some Security police from the Air, and they will be coming home soon. Unarmed flyers are still flying from Fargo and supporting around the world. We are setting up the new Intel guys, exciting new missions. F16's are becoming rarer, we are looking at what is next beyond current missions.
- ▶ Army-continue to push for readiness. We have some opportunities to deploy some folks in the future. Currently we have 5 deployed in Bosnia. General GiGi Wilz is doing a great job over there. They have asked her to extend for a year and she is going to stay another year. Harley Schwind will probably be coming home.
- ▶ We have to take care of our people and we need help with readiness in this area-recruiting and retaining our young folks in our national guard. He told a personal story about his history. It is important that we keep our connections with our communities. Please help us engage in our communities and share what we have to offer.
- ▶ Everyone in this room has the same concern to ensure that we are taking care of our service members. We just went through an industry standard accreditation agency and meet the standard. We have some good folks working some great programs. We are from the community and we need to stay in touch with our communities. We provide services too.

Team Red White and Blue- Bob Fode and Thea Ward-

- ▶ Bob just stepped down and Thea just stepped up as team captain. RWB purpose is to take care of veterans, and families, and connect them to their communities through physical and community activities. Every time we go through war, we downsize, our veterans are very young and they have families. We are trying to get our families and young veterans involved in our communities. We want to take care of them. In the state of ND, we have two chapters in Minot with Austin (Air Force vet) who has 300 people signed up. We have Bismarck in 2014, and two field teams in Grand Forks and Fargo. We have about 1000 members.
- ▶ Thea-This minute and a half video shares what this organization is about. RWB started because too many other organizations were too exclusive or thought of veterans as victims. We have 90,003 members national wide. 183 chapters nationally, and 1400 volunteer leaders. As a non-profit, RWB only has 17 paid staff members. About 90% of the funding goes directly back into programs and organizations. The 4 areas focused on is community programs; social and physical activity, and other physical events through other organizations. Interaction sizes differ. Veteran Ambassador Program, helping integrate veterans back into the community. National and regional camps. Leadership focus development and implementation of courses for involvement.

► Locally-as a chapter captain, trying to integrate younger generation veterans with other veterans-WWII, Vietnam, etc. Older veterans can offer so much guidance and help with reintegration.

Hal Weninger- membership question-who do you make contact with and help with reintegration? Thea Ward-Most contact is made through veteran events that allow us to get our names out there and make sure people know about us. Membership is through RWB.org, no membership cost, free t-shirt for veterans, get welcome letter and calendar of events. Social media oriented.

Bismarck RWB website-Facebook. If you have served, all military members or veterans are welcome. Does not follow stringent federal veteran rules.

► Marlin Schneider-How are you funded? Thea Ward- federally funded, very low budget, volunteer based and fundraising. Nationally, they support local orgs. Will buy shoes for veterans who want to run and will pay marathon entrance fees.

General Dohrmann-Army Reserves has an agreement with them and the National Guard will like to team up.

Mark Johnson-Veterans Home

► Last legislative session, we had some appropriations for a work shop and an art studio, as well as funding for equipment outside, sprinkler system, and new roof for the house. One of the biggest projects has been the electronic health records, which has been very time consuming. The old building has been demolished and you cannot even tell the building was there. The campus really looks nice and the Guard did some landscaping and did a great job. We planted 2 or 3 tree groves and they are starting to come in.

► We are looking down the road to hire NDSU students to do a master plan of our campus. Funding for art studio, RFQ needs to be out and we will have those by next fall hopefully. About 1500 sq. ft. and will be a great addition for our residents.

► A couple years ago we got funding for the Honor Flight out of Bismarck and they donated \$26,000 for a memorial garden, and that will need to be part of the master plan. We would also like to have a picnic shelter off the garden. We want to have local community and veteran organizations utilize the campus.

► Another piece we would like to include in the master plan is a walking path and would like to see funding through legislation. We would like to find a house for the administrator.

► Ken Hasby-Memorial fund?-Oil revenue must be pretty low now? In the beginning, we were seeing \$26,000 every month. We are now seeing \$600 every month, if that. The prices do make a difference.

Veteran Commissioner's Report

- ▶ 2016 is going to be a great year for veterans. Many of the projects we have been working on for years will be coming to fruition. Such as mental health, transportation, barriers to education, veterans court, mobile app, post war trust fund.
- ▶ Staff-Women Veteran Coordinator hired, interns hired in Bismarck and Fargo, Still looking for a PR intern. Work study students, one hired at Fargo main office. Work studies are great labor for anything we need, including research.
- ▶ Training-conducted state fall VSO training-binder has improved with contact information, 46 counties and 2 tribes attended and it was a great conference. Tom and Lonnie attended Native American Summit and Senator Hoeven' Roundtable event.
- ▶ Outreach-ND Cares meetings, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation Summit with Senator Heitkamp, Entrepreneur program with UND-this is like a boot camp for veterans who want to start a new business. UND wants to take the whole program and adopt it there. I think this is a great thing.
- ▶ Higher education- NDDVA and NDUS-get into the university system and assist veterans with barriers to education and help them be successful. Help train the teachers, instructors, and others with how to assist these students. With the new chancellor, we now have the MOA signed and in place. We have set up the advisory board that will advise myself and the chancellor on what is needed.
- ▶ MCMC-university accept credits from military service. We are going to adopt MN's and get this going this year.
- ▶ D2D-first claim Dec 3, 2015. The VA announced that they were going paperless. In 2010, we adopted a program that helped us go paperless (Vetraspec). Vetraspec is one of four software companies that were selected by the VA for claims submission.
- ▶ Appeals-4 applied for veteran preference, no loans and grants appeals
- ▶ 98 current loans
- ▶ \$248,784.40 in grants 2013-2015
- ▶ A the last meeting, ACOVA directed that we get CD's for the Fund 410 clearing account. There are now six CD's each for \$30,000, maturing on a rotating basis. The last being drawn March 2017.
- ▶ Transportation-Funding for the Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG) second year has come through. ND is pretty well covered. We were awarded \$1.2 million for transportation. I had to go to the emergency commission to get the funding approved for this year. Each county's transportation services are available on the ND DVA website, which is clickable and searchable. HRTG pays for rides in each of North Dakota's 36 Highly Rural Counties. Independent contractors/providers bill NDDVA for transportation provided. The remaining 17 counties that are not covered by the HRTG have access to the DAV vans which the NDDVA's purchases and the Federal VA operates. The VA is excellent about coordinating med appointments with the van routes.

► The counties get the van and can have up to \$50,000 reimbursed each year. It is up to them how they work their schedule. The vans can be used for any medical appointment in ND, MT, SD, MN and other states if approved by commissioner.

Ken Hasby-the Stanley van is running pretty full! Make sure your people are calling in early. Vans can also go to service organizations.

► Our website tells the pickup points and times. There shouldn't be a veteran in this state who can't get to the VA.

Jim Verwey-out of state travel? The VA does take people to the cities for specialty treatment and have volunteer drivers.

Ken Hasby-Tribe eligibility? They have to have an extra resolution to work in conjunction with the NDDVA. Two Tribal VSO's have applied.

► Website activity-We have had over 12,000 views and 72% are new users. Facebook-761 total likes-3,376 total reach with 250 actively engaged.

► Veterans Court-almost there! All ND jails, detention centers have intake forms that include questions on military service. After these important questions, all military service members are reported to the VA Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) coordinator. The VJO can then decide if the veteran qualifies for veterans court services and if a veterans court is necessary. All ND judges have had an additional section on Veterans court added to their Judges bench-book, but this needs to have an addition to contact the VJO and what can be done. Lawyers and law enforcement officers can receive CEU's for this training on veteran issues and VJO's. Free training. We will have a link on our website for every county and their district courts. There is 1 veteran in the State of ND at this time who qualifies for and is in this program. We don't need an actual, physical court in North Dakota at this time. We only have one person in need of it right now, but with this program, we can track that and if we ever do need to set up a court, we can then address it. This paper court is for highly rural areas that don't have a big city like Minneapolis. This is the best way to serve our veterans and I think we will have all pieces of this completed this year.

► We have worked with some high profile cases in the past, this is a great opportunity to offer this.

Jim Verwey, from a VSO standpoint, this works and it has worked in Barnes County.

► Concludes report

Chairman Overby-Recognition of VVA patch presented to the NDDVA and Recognition of Lonnie for being commissioned by Governor of Kentucky as a Kentucky Colonel.

Recess for Committee Meetings

January 22, 2016
Meeting reconvened
ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

Jim Verwey
Emery C. Fisher
Dave Hilleren
Jim Haukedahl
Richard Belling

Dean Overby
Roy Fillion
Marlin Schneider
Trish Hodny
Bill Peschel

Carroll Quam
Ken Hasby
Myron Langehaug
Hal Weninger

Absent:

Marlys Morgenstern (excused)

Motion to approve October 1, 2015 ACOVA minutes by Richard Belling, second by Trish Hodny. Motion passed.

Chairman Overby: As MG Dohrmann stated yesterday, he is stepping down from the board of the Veterans Home. We need to fill his position. Jim Verwey and I would like to recommend someone for the board. We want a well-rounded board. We have Kathy Keel, a nurse, who is also retired from the Guard.

Motion-Richard Belling moves to approve appointment of Kathy Keel to the board, second by Dave Hilleren. Motion approved.

Committee Reports:

Postwar Trust Fund committee: Marlys Morgenstern, excused. Discussed the strategic plan, mission statement-reviewed no action. Reviewed the CD's covered by the commissioner's report, and looked at the interest rates. One request for PWTF funding: sweat lodge on VA property for safety training of the person who conducts the sweat lodge ceremony. This person needs to arrive a day before the ceremony to attend the VA training. Funds would be used to reimburse the hotel, travel, per diem expenses of the person conducting the ceremony and would provide an "honorarium" or token gift to the person conducting the ceremony. Sweat lodge events would be held up to 4 times a year. The request is for an annual amount of roughly \$1,800, but that is a ball park figure. Dave Hilleren motioned and Emery Fisher 2nd to bring it to the full ACOVA for consideration. Sub-committee motion approved.

Carroll Quam made a motion to approve up to \$1,872 per year for the sweat lodge events on VA property as requested, second by Dave Hilleren. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for approval of minutes by Carroll Quam, Emery Fisher second. Motion passed.

Appeals Sub-committee: Committee recommends changes to the appeals procedure for hardship grant program and Veterans aid loan program to add option to send notice of appeal hearing electronically by email with “read receipt”. We recommend approval of that and to put it into the minutes.

Committee reviewed three verbiage options and the recommended change is for an option of email ‘read receipt’ or certified mail with return receipt. In summary: appeal hearing notice’s will be sent either through email with read receipt or certified mail with return receipt.

Motion to make a change to the grant and loan denial appeals hearing notice procedure made by Carroll Quam, second by Dave Hilleren-

Discussion on motion:

Discussion on whether to use 30 days from the notice “send” date or “receive” date. Chairman Overby-raises concerns because of the issue of being out of town, or someone who might not get the letter right away. CVSO’s are included on grant denials and approvals. Trish Hodny agrees with Chairman Overby’s concerns regarding the 30 days date, and when it should start. There is no extension for appeals within the policy. Friendly amendment to add to form as follows...

Line 2: The appeal must be in writing and received by the Commissioner within thirty (30) calendar days of the mailing date on the notice of denial. Any appeal of the denial shall contain a statement of the grounds for appeal.

Insert after line 2 and renumber accordingly...

Line 3: Commissioner has the ability to reconsider application before sending to the appeals committee. (Policy numbers: 270 and 470).

Line 4: Any appeal received and not reconsidered by the Commissioner shall be reviewed and forwarded to the Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs and the assigned appeals committee members. All documents submitted with the appellant’s application shall also be forwarded.

Line 5: The Chairman will appoint a panel of at least three members from the Administrative Committee and the appellant will be given at least twenty (20) days notice, unless waived, as to the time, date, and place of the appeal hearing. Hearings will be held telephonically unless otherwise noted. This notice will be sent by certified mail return receipt requested- or electronic notice with proof of “read receipt”.

Motion on floor is to make the change to appeal hearing notice procedure including friendly amendments by Carroll Quam, second by Dave Hilleren. Motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Subcommittee: Trish Hodny-all members present. Minutes of last meeting approved. Discussion on legislative bills on website. We added 1 more item to agenda, update to Tobacco Coalition bill, and 2015 Legislative Assembly. Waiting on meeting minutes from Coordinating Council and their bills that dealt with the smoking resolution. Tabled item #4. Requested report from Robert Green. Reviewed readiness issues for next meeting.

Motion by James Verwey to approve minutes, Ken Hasby second. Motion Passed.

Department of Veterans Affairs & Budget Subcommittee: Jim Haukedahl reported-all members present-minutes of last meeting approved-discussed PWTF on how funds are used for grant programs, policy #413, and to approve cost of money for those who apply for grants-increase by \$100 each year for amount of income they can have for grants. They understand that this could cause a short fund, as more people would be eligible, but we hope that legislation will look at this and see that there is a need for these programs.

We also discussed the Commissioner's department credit card-we are charged with reviewing these expenses. We reviewed the two charges on the card: cost for meals in Camp Grafton for ACOVA meeting in July and a bus ticket for a veteran (grant)-we approved.

Motion by Jim Haukedahl to increase grant limit by \$100 in each category, second by Richard Belling.

Discussion on the motion

Right now, income is capped by number of persons in the house hold. I.e., one person \$1200, 2 \$1400, 3 \$1600, 5 \$2700. We propose to raise this limit by \$100. This is the hardship assistance program-Policy Number #413. This is to follow with the VA pension increase, federal poverty line, ND fuel assistance program, and Medicare documents. We are not changing the amount of money available, but rather changing the limits for income.

Commissioner-we had 4 denials in the last biennium which would have been approved if income limit was \$100 higher.

Chairman-I don't think this will make a big change, but is necessary. Is the change enough? Do you have any ideas of what more could have been missed? Who was missed by \$101? We want to make sure that our veterans are taken care of. Commissioner provided information regarding denial, including deductions for medical expenses. Most are missing by quite a bit, but some are close, so \$100 more would be a start and wouldn't make a dramatic difference.

Trish Hodny -we haven't raised the limit, we are due for an increase with the Federal Poverty level. Each dependent is a \$200 increase.

Motion passes.

Jim Haukedahl moved to approve report, second by Hal Weninger. Motion passed.

Guests from the ND Veterans Coordinating Council (NDVCC)-Bud Goldsmith-American Legion, Dave Johnson-American Legion, Jim Markey-VFW, and Bill Tuff- VFW.

Report on NDVCC-Bud Goldsmith-wasn't a lot-Keith Peterson is going to have a PTSD/Suicide event at AmVets in the fall moved from Spring.

Round Table:

Jim Haukedahl-construction at VA-Front lobby, will be very confusing and parking will be lost. White building as you come in will be torn down-new CLC should be done around next year or so.

Ken Hasby-2017 legislative session is in about a year and is going to come quick-we have to work close with NDVCC with the bills they will be presenting. Chairman-we will start having them included and they will be included with the Legislative Committee. NDVCC agrees to this agreement.

Roy Fillion-enjoyed being a part of this organization (ACOVA) and activities of the committee. Thank you.

Trish Hodny-great that we are going to work together with the NDVCC. Off of that, with all the news with the VA it's been very negative. I am constantly defending the VA as they have been my primary. Trying to show the VA in a positive light, is there anything we can do? The more that we can champion the Fargo VA, maybe we can help champion the VA across the country. The VA is changing. Maybe we can do a better job shining the star. Letter to the editors.

Dave Johnson-Happy that we are invited to attend your meetings. Really happy to work with the Commissioner, happy to support him.

Bud Goldsmith- happy to be here

Megan Carranza-Happy to be here

Jim Markey-We need to take issues head on and it's great to see what is getting done.

Bill Tuff-This is the first time that I have met with this group and am happy to work with you guys. We will need to work together to get through the session.

Commissioner-I don't report what I am going to do, but what I have actually done. Things are going well and we are doing some Town Halls on the campuses across the state to better learn of their needs. The veteran's education advisory committee reports will be coming to you soon.

Calie Lindseth- thanking everyone to be here

Jim Verwey-let Lonnie know about the great opportunity for speakers. Its great to learn more. Thanking Megan for coming. Hodny-happy that the General came and he seems very willing to want to work with us. That is great and have a good feeling that this biennium that will be more one voice than we have been before. As for speakers -let's try to get more. We need to have one at least every time. The General is a soldier's person. He is going to be great. Chairman- He will be missed on the governing board.

Marlin Schneider-great speakers, good week. Commended the Commissioner on his KY Colonel commission and as well as his work on the veterans from each county. I have been working on Hettinger County and am appreciative on the state assistance.

Hal Weninger-Learning session, Team RWB is great to hear about and enjoyed the presentation and adding something that we are already doing and it's great. Continuing to serve. I appreciate the commissioner's attention to detail.

Emery fisher-educational experience.

Richard Belling-ND Home is having its second golf tournament (I have the flyer) need hole sponsors and golfers with steak dinner afterwards. All money goes to Home. Last year we raised \$3000. Welcome Calie-make sure it is on the Facebook page and website.

Dave Hilleren-Lonnie has done an excellent job coordinating and bring information forward. The outreach has been great and the tribes have gotten more involved and that is great. They are more interested in doing more things and I hope to see us continue to reach out to more rural areas and what they are doing. We can be a medium for spreading this information.

Carroll Quam-Fantastic working with the committees, Fisher kept us in line. I have received an email about the newsletter. Need more formats.

Myron Langehaug-thank you for the committee for raising the income guidelines, it is important for our local group in Bottineau. It's great to see change and I can take it back to home and get our veterans taken care of. I really appreciate our commissioner for the hard work that he does.

Bill Peschel-in the 20 years that I have been working with this organization, the current commissioner has done a heck of a job.

Chairman-I know you (Dave) work with the Tribe a lot, shouldn't we try to get someone from the Tribes here. They have needs and it would be great to have them in here to learn of their issues. If we heard some of their needs, would that help? Would it help if they knew what we are doing? Dave-we should make that effort. Lonnie-I can work with Dave and get an invite to him. Hasby-try to invite different representatives from different times. Chairmen-we are worried about them too, worried about all of their veterans. We don't want to leave them out.

Chairman-I want to thank everyone on the committees. 3 committees is better than 5. Lonnie is working on getting agendas out early. I don't want people to feel that they can't talk, we want conversation.

Trish Hodny-letting for open conversations with formal motions. Bending Robert's rules, conversation is great.

Chairman-we need to have conversation about procedures and have good conversation so we are making changes that aren't going to make it harder for veterans. It's great to be broke because you gave all your money away to help someone. How many people have been to the Veteran's Home? Would you want to have a meeting down there? We need to do it before the legislative session. We will have our next meeting in Bismarck, then down there. Booking hotels has to start early, so right after next meeting.

Trish Hodny-Commissioner-VSO system questions-are all counties on board? Personnel status? In the last 2 years, we have trained over 20, which is over half. Tom has done a great job training. It has changed from the past, and we contact the counties that they have to come up to do the training, not much of a choice. They go back to the county. They may not have the answers, but they have the binder and know who to contact to get the veteran taken care of and find the answers. We have them set up for the VA

TRIP training, It isn't required, but we don't tell them that. We just do it and they complete the training. It has gotten better. Turnover has been over half, and we can look at that. The attendance of the state wide training is over 90% and is awesome. Camaraderie has gone through the roof and they socialize. There are a few hold outs, but there is a social and they all take. No more clicks. They have grown together more each time.

Hodny-NSO's-how are they working with the VSO's? Is it getting better?

Commissioner: They are getting so much better! They now work together. Chairman-invite the NSO's and VSO's so we can meet them. Possibly a Fargo meeting.

Hodny: maybe a tour of their facility?

Chairman: that is something to consider to do. I really want to get to Lisbon again, but that would be great to do. Megan, we would love to have you there.

Next meeting discussion: will need to check with the facility-April 14th 15 or 21 or 22nd of April. Many conflicts, district meetings and such. Tentatively set for 21-22 here (Bismarck Comfort Inn). Coordinating Council, if you could sit through our meetings and meet with Legislative Committee.

Meeting is set for the 21st and 22nd here. At that meeting, we will have 1 or 2 people whose terms are due on the governing board. We will have 1 for sure that will be getting off, maybe 2. I have another that I'm worried that will resign (Vet's Home) everyone think of someone who would be good. We want a well-rounded board. I have Keith Hovland, who has a finance degree. Steve Frojen is a CVSO retired and he is taking the veteran issues. We could use Law, mechanical, management, etc. We want someone from the Guard. Keep it in mind with someone that you know that would be a good fit, I want people who will help and talk. We need good conversations and to get work done. Give Jim and me a call with a short biography so we can talk to them.

Thank you all for being here and for your time.

Myron Langehaug-Annie's House in Minot-ice fishing, other services for veterans with disabilities.

Jim Haukedahl motion to adjourn, Ken Hasby second. Motion passes.

Respectfully submitted

Jim Verwey

Secretary