

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

MINUTES

July 29 & 30, 2005

1:00pm
COMFORT SUITES,
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

Meeting called to order by Chairman Rudy Jenson. Pledge of Allegiance, followed by moment of silence for POW/MIAs and troops serving overseas.

Roll call.

PRESENT:

Daryl Beard	Dave Hilleren	Jerry Meske	Gary Skarphol
Wally Buckingham	Rudy Jenson	Dean Overby	
Larry Dakken	Orletta Kilen	Rick Ryan	
John Hanson	Arnold Maier	Lyle Schuchard	

ABSENT:

Carl Bloomquist	Dave Vandergon
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Introduction of the President and Secretary of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council, Carol Sigl and Bob Evans respectively. Members of the NDVCC joined the committee for this portion of the meeting.

Guest Speakers:

Adjutant General Michael Haugen, ND National Guard:

A \$3.11 million grant for Veterans Cemetery will take effect as soon as the VA Secretary signs the paperwork. The grant will be used to expand the chapel, provide restrooms accessible from outside which will be open 24/7, an extension to office area and an expanded maintenance area. More units are being mobilized for duty to Iraq and Bosnia. Pennsylvania, Illinois and Delaware going to federal court regarding BRAC recommendations pertaining to National Guard units.

Doug Kenyon, VA Center Director:
VA Budget passed with extra dollars for network. Money will be used to upgrade equipment along with maintenance and repairs. Dental requests from returning veterans has been considerable; much more than expected. Dickinson CBOC is tentatively scheduled for FY2006 which would use physicians from the Bismarck clinic. Discussion on the taking away of fee basis cards.

Maren Daley, Executive Director Job Service North Dakota:
Caseloads going up due to returning guard and reservists. Statistical data given on veterans helped with Postwar Trust Fund dollars. Job Service received a BRAC grant to help with personnel issues regarding BRAC realignment of bases.

Larry Wegleitner, Veterans History Project Coordinator. [HANDOUT]
Explanation of request for Postwar Trust Fund dollars.

Recessed meeting to allow NDVCC to return to their meeting room.

Introduction of committee members.

Chairman Jenson reported that Daryl Beard resigned as Chairman of the Governing Board.

Recommendation from Chairman Jenson and Secretary Ryan to appoint Norris Braaten as Chairman of the Governing Board to take effect August 1, 2005. Passed unanimously. [APPOINTMENT #1]

Recommendation from Chairman Jenson and Secretary Ryan to appoint Jerry Meske to serve a three year term on the Governing Board. Passed, one abstain-Meske.
[APPOINTMENT #2]

Recommendation to reappoint Darrol Schroeder to a three year term to the Governing Board. Passed unanimously. [APPOINTMENT #3]

Chairman Jenson made appointments to the various subcommittees:

Department of Veterans Affairs: Rick Ryan (DAV), Lyle Schuchard (AMVETS), Gary Skarphol (AL), Dave Hilleren (VVA), John Hanson (VFW), Carl Bloomquist (VFW).

Budget: Dean Overby, Rick Ryan, Lyle Schuchard, Gary Skarphol, Dave Vandergon, John Hanson.

Postwar Trust Fund: Carl Bloomquist, Orletta Kilen, Wally Buckingham, Dave Hilleren, Daryl Beard.

Appeals: Jerry Meske, Wally Buckingham, Dave Vandergon, Arnold Maier, Dean Overby. Dean Overby named chairman.

Legislative: Rick Ryan, Arnold Maier, Larry Dakken, Gary Skarphol, Lyle Schuchard.

Subcommittees met and reported:

Department of Veterans Affairs - Gary Skarphol, Chairman

Budget - Lyle Schuchard, Chairman

Postwar Trust Fund - Wally Buckingham, Chairman

Legislative - Rick Ryan, Chairman

Veterans Home Governing Board Report – Daryl Beard, Chairman

Motion by Ryan to reduce the maximum allowed rate by \$20 at the Veterans Home due to changes in federal law relating to VA per diem, second by Skarphol. Passed unanimously. [MOTION #1].

▶ Administrator’s performance evaluation to be approved at the next Governing Board meeting.

▶ Discussion on status of performance audit recommendations.

ND Veterans Home Report - Neal Asper, Administrator

▶ On August 8, implementation of a “Drug Free Workplace” takes place at the Home. This affects only safety sensitive positions. Workshops to be presented so employees know what to expect. 10% of personnel affected will be drug tested quarterly. Employees not in safety sensitive positions can opt in to participate.

▶ The recreation room becomes smoke-free on August 1, 2005.

▶ Will be attending the National Association of State Veterans Home in Seattle, WA in August.

Kelly Schmidt, State Treasurer:

▶ Explanation on how the funds are invested. [HANDOUTS]

▶ The committee thanked Ms. Schmidt for all her hard work at the legislature.

Motion by Maier to accept the minutes of April 22 & 23, 2005, second by Buckingham. Motion passed unanimously.

Recessed meeting

Reconvene meeting July 30, 2005

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jenson. Pledge of Allegiance followed by moment of silence for POW/MIAs and troops serving overseas.

Roll call.

PRESENT:

Daryl Beard	Dave Hilleren	Jerry Meske	Gary Skarphol
Wally Buckingham	Rudy Jenson	Dean Overby	
Larry Dakken	Orletta Kilen	Rick Ryan	
John Hanson	Arnold Maier	Lyle Schuchard	

ABSENT:

Carl Bloomquist Dave Vandergon

Department of Veterans Affairs Report – Bob Hanson, Commissioner

Working to ensure veterans preference is applied for returning Guard and reservists who receive a campaign service medal.

- ▶ New loan and grant applications along with statistical information by counties provided.
- ▶ New department pamphlet distributed.
- ▶ Contract with Special Assistant Attorney General to collect loans still in progress.
- ▶ All positions have been reclassified and pay adjustments were given to some staff.

Chairman Jenson discussed the policy regarding committee members and spouses being ineligible for veterans' aid loans. Committee asked to think about the policy and discuss at next meeting.

Postwar Trust Fund Requests:

Request from Veterans History Project withdrawn. Money obtained from Veterans Coordinating Council.

Request from Job Service North Dakota.

Motion by Skarphol to table request, second by Buckingham. Motion passed.

Jerry Meske to draft letter to Job Service addressing parameters of their usage of PWTF monies. Letter to be reviewed by committee at the next meeting.

Request from Department for possible veterans preference case.

Motion by Skarphol to obligate \$10,000 for veterans' preference, second by Meske. Motion passed unanimously.

Request from Department for funding to pay Administrative Committee expenses.
Motion by Skarphol to obligate \$20,000 for funding for ACOVA, second by Overby. Motion failed; yeas – 4, nays – 9 (Beard, Dakken, Jenson, Kilen, Maier, Overby, Ryan, Schuchard, Skarphol). [MOTION #1]

Motion by Skarphol to have committee's expenses paid from Governing Board funds, second by Overby. Motion failed; yeas – 1, nays– 12 (Beard, Buckingham, Dakken, Hanson, Hilleren, Kilen, Maier, Meske, Overby, Ryan, Schuchard, Skarphol) [MOTION #2]

Motion by Skarphol to pay the Governing Board members expenses from the Governing Board fund, second by Ryan. Motion passed; yeas – 8, nays – 5 (Beard, Buckingham, Dakken, Hilleren, Meske). [MOTION #3]

Motion by Overby to obligate funding for the actual cost of the meeting, second by Skarphol. Motion passed; yeas – 8, nays - 5 (Beard, Dakken, Jenson, Maier, Ryan). [MOTION #4]

Chairman Jenson appointed Rick Ryan to do investigating on how other committees are reimbursed and to talk with OMB personnel on this issue. Governor's office will also be consulted.

Meeting recessed for DVA subcommittee to meet.

Jerry Meske spoke on the StandDown scheduled for September 23rd at the Buckstop Junction, Bismarck. Thanked committee for the use of Postwar Trust Funds. Workforce Investment Act provides for priority of service for veterans in all the programs. Recommends the committee request the Governor appoint a veterans representative to serve on the 27 member Workforce Investment Board.

Motion by Dakken to send Governor a letter asking that the Commissioner or a member of ACOVA be appointed to the Workforce Investment Board, second by Kilen. Motion passed unanimously.

Department of Veterans Affairs Subcommittee Report – Gary Skaphol, Chairman

► “Hire a Vet”

Motion by Ryan a letter to the Governor requesting a proclamation be issued designating September as “Hire a Vet” Month be prepared for Chairman Jenson's signature, second by Schuchard. Motion passed unanimously.

▶ VA's 75th Celebration

Motion by Ryan that the Commissioner be tasked with writing a letter, for Chairman Jenson's signature, to request the Governor issue a Proclamation recognizing the VA's 75 years of service to the nation, Maier second. Motion passed unanimously.

▶ Transportation Van request from FargoVA

Motion by Ryan that the Lidgerwood van be used by the FargoVA, second by Kilen. Motion passed unanimously.

▶ Evaluation process for Commissioner. Yearly evaluations to start with September as the anniversary date.

▶ Recommend all committees keep minutes of their meetings to comply with audit recommendation.

Motion by Skarphol to approve report, second by Ryan. Motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting scheduled

Motion by Maier for next meeting to be scheduled for September 30 & October 1, 2005, second by Kilen. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee will meet at the Fargo VA on Friday, September 30 at 1:00 for a tour and hold part of their meeting at the facility. They will travel to Lisbon in the afternoon and finish the meeting at the Veterans Home on Saturday morning.

Motion by Ryan to adjourn, second by Schuchard. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by

Rick Ryan
Secretary