

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

COMFORT SUITES, BISMARCK ND

March 24, 2006

1:00 pm

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

Roll Call:

Present:

Daryl Beard	Dave Hilleren	Dean Overby
Carl Bloomquist	Rudy Jenson	Lyle Schuchard
Wally Buckingham	Orletta Kilen	Gary Skarphol
Larry Dakken	Jerry Meske	Dave Vandergon
John Hanson		

Absent:

Arnold Maier	Rick Ryan
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***Motion by Gary Skarphol to accept minutes from January 2006 meeting, second by Dean Overby. Motion passed unanimously.***

Speakers:

Tim Nolz, Job Service North Dakota [HANDOUT]

- ▶ Funding cuts at Job Service resulted in 20 positions eliminated and 14 retirements, 4 of those retirements are from the DVOP and LVER positions. Funding for veterans programs were not reduced, so positions will be filled.

Jim Hirsch, Director, Workforce Development Division, ND Dept of Commerce

- ▶ Worker shortages and underfilling of positions are some of the issues being addressed by the ND Workforce Development Council.
- ▶ The Council is looking at ways to help transition veterans to better paying jobs or gaining the skills necessary to get gainful employment.
- ▶ Lyle Schuchard currently serves on the Council.

Kelly Schmidt, State Treasurer [REPORT]

- ▶ Update on status of Veterans' Postwar Trust Fund. Working with Edward Jones Investments to get the best returns on funds.

***Motion by Daryl Beard to take \$50,000 from the BND Money Market account and invest it, second by Gary Skarphol. Motion passed unanimously.***

Douglas Kenyon, VA Center Director  
Unable to attend

MG Michael Haugen, Adjutant General, ND Nat'l Guard  
Unable to attend

**Report from the Veterans' Home Governing Board** – Chairman Norris Braaten

- ▶ Neal Asper resigned as Administrator of the Veterans' Home. General Darrol Schroeder is acting Administrator at this time.
- ▶ Candidates narrowed down to top six. Four have nursing home certificates, one will have no problem getting the certificate on an emergency basis, and one candidate withdrew. Interviews will be held on Monday.
- ▶ Budget slightly impacted by Mr. Asper's leaving. One area experiencing problems is the Pharmacy.
- ▶ Board training on the budget has started and, in July, training on "duties" of a board member will begin.

**Administrator's Report**

Home is well run with a dedicated staff. Taking care of some of the problems before the new Administrator starts. Brief discussion on future plans for the Home such as building improvements and how to expand nursing home opportunities for veterans, i.e. contracting with other nursing homes, opening a second Home.

Ron Otto, Morton County VSO, talked about changes in the co-managed care from the Fargo Veterans Administration. Veterans will need to take more responsibility in their care from VA doctors.

John Jacobson spoke on a "Veterans Hall of Fame". Veterans are recognized on their accomplishments. There is a Hall of Fame in Ohio. Information given to Committee for further consideration.

Carl Bloomquist distributed information on the Dakota Bull Session XVII Military Reunion on May 12-14, 2006 in Devils Lake, ND.

Committee recessed for subcommittee meetings.

March 25, 2006

Committee reconvened.

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

Roll Call

Present:

Daryl Beard	Dave Hilleren	Dean Overby
Carl Bloomquist	Rudy Jenson	Lyle Schuchard
Wally Buckingham	Orletta Kilen	Gary Skarphol
Larry Dakken	Jerry Meske	Dave Vandergon
John Hanson		

Absent:

Arnold Maier	Rick Ryan
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**Department of Veterans Affairs Report** – Bob Hanson, Commissioner

- ▶ Interim Legislative Committee Hearing (Strategic/Operational Plan) – hearing went well, very few questions
- ▶ Staff position open – Job Service utilized for hiring process
- ▶ CVSO Spring Conference, April 17-19, 2006, Comfort Inn, Bismarck
- ▶ Veterans Preference – discussion with Human Resources
- ▶ Statistics on Grant and Loan Programs for 2005
- ▶ Statistics on VA Expenditures in North Dakota by county
- ▶ Veterans Day at Medora, July 9, 2006
- ▶ All Veterans Memorial Funding – refurbishing needed on memorial, veterans organizations may be asked for monies
- ▶ Co-managed care at VA facilities causing problems among veteran population

**Dept of Veterans Affairs Subcommittee Report** – Gary Skarphol, Chairman

- ▶ Multiply Loan Policy – consensus of committee is to stay with policy stating veteran can have only one loan at a time
- ▶ Retroactive Grants

***Motion by Carl Bloomquist to make increases to grant amounts (dental and hearing) retroactive to January 1, 2006, second by Jerry Meske. Motion passed unanimously.***

- ▶ Cash Assets Verification Form – informational purpose

Legislative Items forwarded to Legislative Committee and Coordinating Council:

- ▶ Funeral Picketing
- ▶ Property Tax Exemption
- ▶ Loans in Collection – Public Information
- ▶ Veterans Preference – unsure of National Guard proposal at this time
- ▶ Veterans Hall of Fame
- ▶ Bonus Extension

► Education Assistance

***Motion by Dave Vandergon to adopt Subcommittee and Department of Veterans' Affairs Reports, second by Dave Hilleren. Motion passed unanimously.***

Jerry Meske discussed the hiring process of the Administrator at Veterans Home. The state's veterans preference law is in effect for this position.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

Appeals Committee – no appeals at this time

Budget Committee – went over Governor's budget guidelines. The optional package will contain funding for the committee's travel and increased funding for Department travel.

Legislative – discussed items forwarded by the department of veterans affairs subcommittee

Postwar Trust Fund – committee recommends approval on the Veterans Home activities request with the provision that the monies be released on an as needed basis.

***Motion by Gary Skarphol to obligate \$10,000 to the Veterans Home Activities Fund under the conditions set by the PWTF committee, second by Daryl Beard. Motion passed unanimously.***

***Motion by Wally Buckingham to adopt committee reports, second by Jerry Meske. Motion passed unanimously.***

Next meeting:

July 21 & 22, 2006 starting at 1:00 on Friday in Fargo and 9:00 am on Saturday at the Veterans' Home, Lisbon.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Ryan  
Secretary