

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

MINUTES

April 22 & 23, 2005

1:00pm

KELLY INN

FARGO, 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:

Members **PRESENT:**

Daryl Beard

Rudy Jenson

Gary Skarphol

Carl Bloomquist

Orletta Kilen

Paul Smathers

Wally Buckingham

Dean Overby

Dave Vandergon

Larry Dakken

Rick Ryan

Bob Volk

Dave Hilleren

Lyle Schuchard

Members **ABSENT:**

none

Motion by Smathers to accept the minutes of the March 3 & 4, 2005 meeting, second by Dakken. Motion passed.

Guest Speakers:

Wanda Hodnefield, VA Facility Planner - Update of various activities at the VA. Volunteer Week – 500 volunteers donated 31,000 hours over the fiscal year. Dr. William Becker will be coming on board as the new Chief of Staff. Business plans have been submitted for part-time CBOCs in Williston and Dickinson; Central Office and Congress have not approved them yet.

Tim Nolz, Job Service North Dakota [HANDOUT] – The majority of administrative costs charged for receiving the PWTF grant (\$40,000) has been eliminated, the

cost will now be \$650.00. Job Service will provide quarterly reports on how the funds are spent. Homeless Adults and their Children in Fargo, ND and Moorhead, MN Survey distributed.

Jerry Meske, DOL Veterans Employment & Training Service [HANDOUT]—
Thanked the committee for their work during the legislative session. Update on the StandDown scheduled for September 23, 2005. Update on Veterans Benefits Seminars scheduled for April 30 (Dickinson), May 14 (Valley City), and July 23 (Bismarck), 2005.

Committee recess.

Tour of ND Department of Veterans Affairs office.

Reconvene meeting.

Commissioner's six month probationary period discussed.

Information distributed on 12th Annual Veterans Day in Medora on July 10, 2005.

Information distributed on Vietnam Week, April 30 – May 8th at the Air Museum, Fargo ND.

Evaluation Committee – Rick Ryan, Chair

Motion by Smathers to remove Mr. Hanson from probationary status, make him permanent and the evaluation committee be allowed to finish the evaluation, take it back to Bismarck for completion and give Mr. Hanson the appropriate raise, second by Vandergon. Motion passed unanimously. [MOTION #1]

Appeals Committee – Rick Ryan, Chair

Motion by Skarphol that the Department develop a formal policy for a reconsideration process to take place before an appeal is heard by the Appeals Committee, second by Smathers. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ryan that timely payment be changed to include a ten day grace period from the payment date with a \$15 fee charged for any late payment, second by Skarphol. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Smathers that the full amount including late fees be paid on or before the loan due date for an interest refund to be given, second by Kilen. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Smathers that the Commissioner receive the legislatively appropriated raises given for the 2005-2007 biennium, second by Bloomquist. Motion passed unanimously. [MOTION #2]

Motion by Buckingham to return any unspent funds given by the Emergency Commission for a strategic plan, second by Volk. Motion passed – 10 yeas, 4 nays – Jenson, Ryan, Smathers, Volk. [MOTION #3]

Motion by Smathers to give Commissioner authorization to attend the NASDVA conference August 20-27, 2005 in Seattle, WA, second by Schuchard. Motion passed unanimously. [MOTION #4]

Legislative Update [HANDOUT] – Commissioner Hanson.

Performance Audit Report [HANDOUT] – Chairman Jenson
Recommendation 2-1 of the Department’s audit is closed with no action taken by the State Attorney General’s Office and the Cass County State’s Attorney’s Office.

Chairman Jenson sent a letter to all organizations asking for input on the size of the Administrative Committee. The Chairman read a letter from the AMVETS State Adjutant about the history of the administrative committee and the reason for the number of members serving on it.

Recess meeting for subcommittees to meet.

Reconvene meeting April 23, 2005

Meeting called to order at 9:00am by Chairman Rudy Jenson. Pledge of Allegiance, followed by moment of silence for POW/MIAs and troops serving overseas.

Roll Call:

Members **PRESENT:**

Daryl Beard	Rudy Jenson	Gary Skarphol
Carl Bloomquist	Orletta Kilen	Paul Smathers
Wally Buckingham	Dean Overby	Dave Vandergon
Larry Dakken	Rick Ryan	Bob Volk
Dave Hilleren	Lyle Schuchard	

Members **ABSENT:**

none

Subcommittee Reports:

Postwar Trust Fund Committee – Paul Smathers

Committee recommends approval of Department's request.

Motion by Smathers to increase the amount obligated for the vans by \$3,000, second by Ryan. Motion passed unanimously. [MOTION #1]

Motion by Smathers that we give the Department permission to reallocate the remaining funds to the Hardship Grant Program and Transportation Program through the end of the 2003-2005 biennium, second by Skarphol. Motion failed unanimously. [MOTION #2]

Motion by Smathers to obligate \$7,000 for the Grant Program, second by Kilen. Motion passed yeas – 13, nays – 1 Dakken. [MOTION #3]

Motion by Skarphol to obligate \$175,000 for the Grant Program for the 2005-2007 biennium, second by Smathers. Motion passed 13 yeas, 1 nay - Dakken [MOTION #4]

Motion by Smathers to obligate \$500 for the Appeals Committee, \$2,500 for Audit Expense, and \$28,500 for the Transportation Program for the 2005-2007 biennium, second by Overby. Motion passed unanimously. [MOTION #5]

Appeals Committee – Rick Ryan, Chair

Motion by Skarphol to approve a Veterans Aid Loan Policy that committee members and Department employees, including spouses and dependents, are ineligible for a Veterans Aid Loan, second by Bloomquist. Motion passed 9 – yeas, 5 nays – Beard, Dakken, Jenson, Smathers, Volk. [MOTION #6]

Motion by Skarphol for the grant program to use gross income regarding land value and income limitations and the commissioner may deny grants based on applicant's use of prior grants, second by Buckingham. Motion passed on voice vote.

Motion by Smathers that a Veterans Aid Loan may not be used to consolidate bills, second by Skarphol. Motion passed on voice vote.

Motion by Smathers that a "special" grant be defined as a medical or life-threatening need, second by Overby. Motion passed on voice vote.

Motion by Skarphol that the Commissioner have the authority to use gross income for determining eligibility for a Veterans Aid Loan, second by Smathers. Motion passed on voice vote.

Governing Board – Daryl Beard, Chairman

Veterans Home Report – Neal Asper, Administrator

Thanked the committee for the \$10,000 given for activities and social services. Random drug testing will be administered on safety sensitive employees – maintenance, nursing, and dietician. Flu vaccine will be ordered in May; there will be discussion on whether staff should be charged for the shot. A landscape class from NDSU will be assessing the Veterans Home grounds and propose a long-range plan for the Home to follow. Information given on a change in Medicaid reimbursement and how it affects the Veterans Home. This should result in an increase in federal dollars. Low wages will need to be addressed in the upcoming biennium.

Department of Veterans Affairs – Bob Hanson, Commissioner

“Welcome Letter” Department sends to returning service members distributed to members. PIQ’s for the Department have been submitted to Human Resources, three have been returned with upgrades in their classifications. The Spring CVSO Conference was held April 18-20, 2005 in Bismarck. It was well attended by the service officers with many positive comments. Cooperative Agreement for Sponsored Funding form discussed.

Motion by Smathers that the form “Cooperative Agreement for Sponsored Funding” be immediately instituted with the following name change, “Agreement for Sponsored Funds”, second by Ryan. Friendly amendment to change title of form, “Agreement for Sponsored Funds for Nonentities of the Administrative Committee”. Amended motion passed on voice vote.

Discussion on defining “justifiable cause” with regards to the veterans preference law.

Motion by Ryan the next meeting to be July 29 & 30, 2005 in Bismarck, second by Skarphol. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Motion to adjourn, seconded, passed.

Submitted by

Rick Ryan
Secretary