



GEORGE A. SINNER, GOVERNOR  
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

# Administrative Committee On Veterans Affairs

CHAIRMAN  
BERNARD A. WAGNER  
SANBORN, NORTH DAKOTA

MINUTES OF THE NORTH DAKOTA ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE  
ON VETERANS AFFAIRS  
FEBRUARY 29, 1992 - 8:30 AM

SECRETARY  
PAUL S. AABERG  
ALAMO, NORTH DAKOTA

The minutes that were mailed out were accepted. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by William Haug; motion carried.

ROLL CALL:	William Haug	Present
	Paul Aaberg	Absent
	Adrian Crowfeather	Present
	Victor Hass	Present
	Robert Bohn	Present
	Suzanne Kime	Present
	Chuck Godke	Present
	Michael Dobmeier	Present
	John Mullen	Present
	Michael Vandrovec	Present
	James Riden	Present
	James Ziegler	Present
	Arthur Streed	Absent
	Frank Gathman	Present
	Milton Kane	Present
	Bernard Wagner	Present
	Ken Anderson	Present

Minutes of Department of Veterans Affairs Meeting  
February 28, 1992

A letter of commendation will be sent to the staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs commending them for their effectiveness and efficiency in their recent move.

The Department has participated in two veterans preference hearings since the end of the year. In those cases, no decision have yet been made by the hearing officers. There are several other potential hearings that have been negated by scrutiny of application documents. We are being fairly effective even though we are new at participating in these hearings. What we are doing now is encouraging working toward the coordinating efforts with Job Service to verify authenticity of these claims to try to prevent duplication. ~~We did approve a motion to change the motion of July 14 which limits to \$500 per claim for legal expenses, and increase that to \$1,000 per claim. The reason for that is that our experience with the first two claims is that we are running about 6 hours of legal time per claim. The attorneys will not put in 6 hours for \$500. Our original expectation for \$500 per claim is unrealistic.~~

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WILLIAM HAUG, CHR  
PAUL S. AABERG, VICE-CHR  
ADRIAN CROWFEATHER  
RICHARD SOLBERG  
VICTOR HASS  
ROBERT BOHN  
SUZANNE KIME

MILTON W. KANE  
COMMISSIONER  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

FRANK GATHMAN  
COMMANDANT  
VETERANS' HOME  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR  
VETERANS' HOME  
CHARLES GODKE, CHR  
MICHAEL DOBMEIER, VICE-CHR  
DAVID LIUSKA  
MICHAEL VANDROVEC  
JAMES RIDEN  
JAMES ZIEGLER  
ARTHUR STREED

N/G A. P. MACDONALD  
ADJUTANT GENERAL

DONALD H. COLSTON  
VA CENTER DIRECTOR

EX OFFICIO

RICHARD RAYL  
DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONS

MICHAEL DEISZ  
ND JOB SERVICE

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We asked for some reports regarding activity to the Commissioner's office. For example, the loan program from January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1991, had \$151,973 worth of loans approved, and \$1,000-2,000 in fees. It earned \$11,541 in interest on the cash on the money that was loaned out. The income from that interest paid for all of the other expenses in regards to the loan program. It earned \$23,000 in interest on the loans themselves. Re-collected was \$148,600 of principal. We did turn in \$20,000 worth of loans for collection which was from 19 loans. Ironically, we also keep track of the pieces of mail. Nearly 3,000 pieces came into the department, specifically with regard to loans, and 6,495 went out. They received 129 applications for loans and approved 103 of them. Presently, monitor 190 active loans. We asked for a report of claims in January, 118 claims were filed. During the calendar year of 1991, 1,330 claims were filed. Great care is exercised in the care of these claims because denials can end up in court, we would like to avoid this. The claims include those for pensions, burials, health care and education. We then discussed an addition of a position to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The title of that would be of Conservatorship. The position would be to manage the assets of veterans that were incapable of managing their own assets. Health departments and law firms are not willing to take conservatorships unless there is a significant amount of assets available. In many cases, among veterans the assets are not that great. We have invited the commissioner to do some research towards the addition of that position which would also include the coordination of transportation needs for these veterans. Primarily to make access to the Veterans Home and the VA Hospital. Particularly, for those Veterans in the western part of the state. We know there are veterans service organizations involved in trying to do this and so the coordinating effort would be between the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans service organizations. We do not know exactly what the cost will be; but we have authorized the Commissioner to research the capability of that combined position. The last item we addressed was that of the salary of the Commissioner. Milt has made it know that he will be retiring prior to or early into the next biennium so the salary issue will have to be addressed in effecting his replacement. Since we have combined some of the positions within the Department of Veterans Affairs, we know Milt and some of the other employees have been subsidizing the department with their own time; but, they did not get raises to take on the additional responsibilities. When it comes time to recruit someone else to take those responsibilities, we are going to have to be competitive with the private industry. With that in mind, the committee approved a motion increasing the salary of the Commissioner to the minimum of \$44,000 a year. We think we may have to go above that to hire the individual that we are going to need; but at least this is a reasonably attractive starting place. A motion for the approval of the report was made by William Haug; seconded by James Ziegler.

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There was some discussion regarding the salary. An amendment to the report: We will put off the discussion on salary until our annual meeting because then we will have input from the state. A motion was made; seconded by Chuck Godke. There was discussion regarding this. The vote on the amendment 6 no votes; 4 yes votes; motion was defeated. The motion to approve the report carried.

The North Dakota Veterans Home Sub-Committee met at the North Dakota Veterans Home on February 28, 1992. We had a domiciliary residency of 111 out of 112 bed; with 4 on a the waiting list. On the skilled care side, all 38 beds are full as of February 14, 1992; they have 10 people on the waiting list. Our purpose in meeting there yesterday was to primarily receive the Veterans Administration engineers on-site report of his findings of the new addition. Everything was done properly as far as he was concerned. There were a few minor things, painting, cleaning that need to be completed. The checklist is rather small, he gave us an A+ on our addition. The architect was present and completely agreed with the findings. Presently, they have 89 personnel on staff. We complemented the city of Lisbon with 7 new families. There is a definite economic impact on the city of Lisbon.

We implemented some policy changes. We implemented a Complaint/Grievance process that all residents present and new residents will receive. Primarily, this gives them a procedure to file a complaint or a grievance. If they have a complaint or grievance, they can pick up a form, fill it out, and turn it in to the Nurses Station, Administrative Office, or Social Work Services. The residents are also informed to speak to Social Services about their complaint or grievance. If within 2 days they do not receive a response from the Social Worker, they can discuss the problem with the Commandant. If the resident is not satisfied with the response from the Commandant within 3 working days, the resident can contact a member of the sub-committee or North Dakota Ombudsman. This was discussed with the residents in a meeting of residents. A second was made by William Haug.

The current leave policy at the Home is fairly liberal. With the filled situation that we have, we cannot allow residents to go on leaves for 60, 90, and 120 days and keep their bed for them. We asked to implement on April 1, 1992, a new leave policy at the North Dakota Veterans Home as follows: Each resident will be granted 15 days of leave at no cost per calendar year; after the first 15 days, leave will be granted at the VA per diem charge, plus the daily charge. The resident will be able to take an unlimited amount of leave, as long as per diem and daily charges are paid in advance. This will not change the resident policy on passes, they will still have their weekend (96 hour) passes. We still have the hospital leave policy, 60 days or as required by the doctor. The leave policy was seconded by Suzanne Kime; carried.

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We had an opinion by the Attorney General; in summation the interest from the Post War Trust Fund cannot be expended except through legislative action. We have a proposed amendment to 37-15-21. Presently it states that the Commandant may accept gifts, donation, or bequests. The Commandant, on behalf of the Veterans Home, is hereby authorized to accept or receive any donations, gifts or bequests offered or tendered to, or for the benefit of the Veterans Home. All such money received or accepted must be used for the specific purposes for which they were given or donated. This authority shall apply to the retroactive to any or all of his donations, gifts, or bequests tendered offered made.

The proposed changes will include authorization to accept and expend funds from any source, such as and including, federal or private sources, interest earnings from the Veterans Postwar Trust Fund, donations, gifts, or bequests offered or tendered to, or for the benefit of the Veterans Home. The funds may be deposited and withdrawn from the Custodial Funds at the North Dakota Veterans Home. A motion was made by Chuck Godke to amend 37-15-21 as required through the proper legislative process; seconded by William Haug; motion carried.

We had two small unclaimed estates (\$50 and \$232) from two veterans that died with no way to expend it. This information must be submitted to the Sub-committee and Administrative Committee.

CAPITAL BUDGET PROJECTS:

To meet with the compliance of the State Health Department we need additional toilet facilities. Our estimated cost to meet this compliance as a capital project in our budget this year is \$9,000. Chuck Godke made a motion to approve; seconded by Michael Dobmeier; motion carried.

A 20 bed nursing addition in 1993-1995, we are proposing, is based on the availability of federal matching funds, that we pursue a 20 bed nursing addition for the 1993-1995 biennium, getting the 35% matching funds out of the state legislature and 65% federal matching funds from the VA. It is all based on availability of funding. Chuck Godke made the motion; Michael Dobmeier seconded; discussion was held regarding location specifically the western part of the state and the capital budget; motion carried. A motion was made to table the motion; seconded; a roll call vote was taken a vote of 5 no and 4 yes; amendment was killed. The motion on the floor carried.

The Commandant was asked to pursue looking into the western part of the state.

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Replacing windows in the 1950 building. This was proposed in the last biennium and was denied. We went to the committee that funds special cost saving projects such as heat loss. Their analysis was that it would 12 years to pay for the windows. The estimated cost is \$189,761. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Michael Dobmeier; motion carried.

Installing a new 21,000 gallon fuel tank. With the addition, the consumption has gone up considerably. Presently, there is 16,000 gallons of reserve which is about a 2 week operating capacity. To take advantage of fuel costs when the cost is low. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by James Ziegler; motion carried.

The smoke stack on the old boiler needs to be demolished for safety reasons. The estimated cost is \$8,246. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by John Mullen; motion carried. Frank Gathman will talk to the Adjutant General about using the National Guard for demolition.

A new Commandant's residence is requested since the present building was built in 1907. We are proposing a new 4 bedroom rambler type home with a 2 stall attached garage. The old facility is in need of many repairs. This needs to be brought up so that everyone knows that something needs to be done. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Michael Dobmeier; discussion was held regarding the old residence; motion carried with one opposition.

EXTRAORDINARY REPAIRS - (1993-1995):

The parking lots and roadways need to be seal coated. If it is not seal coated, the roads will start breaking down. The estimated cost of this project is \$33,178. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by James Ziegler; motion carried.

The Home has an underground gas tank that needs to be removed. The estimated cost would be \$5,000. When the tank is removed, the soil will need to be tested. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by John Mullen; motion carried.

The laundry facility is 12 years old, none of the equipment has been replaced in that time period. The estimated cost of this project is \$158,572 to replace washers and dryers. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Suzanne Kime; discussion; motion carried.

Repair the Commandant's residence. The gutters and soffits need to be replaced. The present sidewalk is in need of repair. Install windows in the front porch. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded

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by William Haug; discussion regarding emergency funding for repairs; motion carried.

Paint the exterior and interior of the 1950 building. The interior of the building has not been painted 7-8 years. The estimated cost is \$25,000. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Suzanne Kime; motion carried.

Replace ceiling tiles in the 1950 building. This is estimated at \$98,104. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Michael Dobmeier; motion carried.

The irrigation system needs to be extended after the completion of the 1990 addition and the expansion of roadways and parking lots. This will require some additional pumping capacity to keep the lawn watered properly. This is estimated at \$64,025. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by James Ziegler; motion carried.

CAPITAL BUDGET (1995-1997)

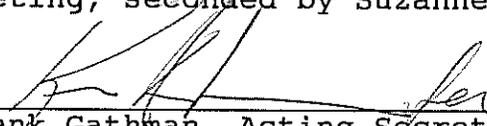
A 54 nursing bed facility addition for the 1995-1997 biennium as a second floor to all existing skilled nursing beds. A motion was made by Chuck Godke; seconded by Michael Dobmeier; discussion was held regarding building in another part of the state. The motion was amended as such: Approximately, a 54 bed nursing facility addition for the state of North Dakota in the 1995-1997 biennium. This will be pursued so that if we find a facility we can go to that area. The seconded was also amended by Michael Dobmeier. The cost for both approaches will be looked at: adding to the existing building or building a new facility in the western part of the stated. Motion carried.

A motion was made by William Haug to accept the Sub-committee report; seconded by James Riden; motion carried.

There was no old or new business.

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chairman, a reorganization meeting in July from the whole committee. That will be with the Coordinating Council.

A motion was made by Michael Dobmeier at 12:00 noon to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Suzanne Kime; motion carried.

  
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Frank Gathman, Acting Secretary  
for Paul Aaberg