

MINUTES

JULY 18, 2003

**NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME
LISBON, NORTH DAKOTA**

Meeting called to order by Gerald P. Balzer. Mr. Balzer reported that Brad Maasjo accepted the Governor's appointment to be Chairman of the committee. Mr. Maasjo gave welcoming remarks and turned the meeting over to Mr. Balzer to run. Pledge of Allegiance said, followed by a moment of silence for the POW/MIAs and the men and women serving overseas. Committee members introduced themselves to the new members and the audience.

Roll call:

Members **PRESENT:**

Gerald Balzer	Daryl Beard	Gene Bernhardt
Carl Bloomquist	John Coyne	Larry Dakken
Rudy Jenson	Ted Krogen	Brad Maasjo
Gary Skarphol	Paul Smathers	Ken Vatne
Robert Volk		

Members **ABSENT:**

Orletta Kilen	Rick Ryan
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Others in Attendance

Ray Harkema, Commissioner, Veterans Affairs	Eric Monson, NOVUS
Neal Asper, Administrator, Veterans Home	Curt Eide, Eide Bailey
Members of the Veterans Coordinating Council	Joe Novak, Governing Board
Phil Miller, Veterans Cemetery	

Minutes of April 11 & 12, 2003 meeting.

Motion by Smathers to accept the minutes as written, second by Jenson. Motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speakers:

Larry Robinson, N.D. State Senator; Director of Advancement, Valley City State University
Gave update on V-12 Project on campus of V.C.S.U. A dedication was held on June 28th for V-12 Anchor, existing funds were used to construct a base and pedestal for anchor. Project is short about \$3,500 to purchase a bronze plaque to list names of V-12 Alumni. V-12 committee requesting an additional contribution from the Post War Trust Fund interest earnings.

Korrine Lang, Job Service North Dakota

Reported on Job Service programs concerning veterans. Job Service is requesting an extension of the Post War Trust Fund Program.

Motion by Smathers to approve extension of Post War Trust Fund Program funds indefinitely, second by Jenson. Motion carried unanimously.

BG Michael Haugen, National Guard

Spoke on activities of N.D. National Guard and gave an update on the Veterans Cemetery.
[HANDOUT PROVIDED]

Doug Kenyon, Fargo VA Medical and Regional Office Center

Will be receiving \$2.9 million more in the budget due to additional workload of the V.A.

Neal Asper and Kristin Lunneborg of the Veterans Home were introduced. Ms. Lunneborg was recently hired as the Financial Manager.

Veterans Home Governing Board Report by Brad Maasjo, Chair

The Emergency Commission granted an exemption to the moratorium on the number of skilled beds allowed by the state. This action was sought due to the number of unfilled basic care beds versus the waiting list for skilled care. Presently, the basic care beds are being filled. The Governing Board will temporarily delay any decision to convert basic care beds to skilled care beds.

A grant from the Dakota Medical Foundation was not approved but was returned with recommendations on how to re-apply.

Because of VA policy regarding the per diem payments the Home receives, residents are no longer eligible for prescriptions or primary care appointments at the Fargo VA. This action will be phased in for skilled care in October and basic care in 2005. Discussions are taking place on working out a shared purchase agreement on prescriptions between the Fargo VA and the Home.

Substance Abuse counseling services are being contracted through Share House in Fargo. The arrangement seems to be working very well.

The Governing Board would like input on developing a plan for member terms from the Committee. The board members all agreed to serve for the coming year. Rotation for member terms should be in place for next spring.

Letter from State Auditor's Office regarding upcoming Performance Audit on Department of Veterans Affairs.

Presentation by Tom Willard on "Veterans History Project". [VIDEO SHOWN]

Mr. Willard is traveling the state to promote this project which video records veterans talking about their wartime experiences.

Legislative update provided to members indicating bills passed or failed by the Legislative Assembly. Discussion on how the new Governing Board will impact on the structure of the Administrative Committee.

Department of Veterans Affairs Report given by Commissioner Harkema

Loan Program [REPORT PROVIDED]

VAM& ROC [INFORMATION PAPER]

Service Officers Conference – September 22-23-24, 2003, Comfort Suites, Fargo

Grant Program [REPORT PROVIDED]

Transportation Program

VA is no longer accepting donation of 15 passenger vans due to safety concerns.

Sealed bids received from three vendors for one 15 passenger van. Bids opened: Buy-Rite Auto Sales (\$4,550), Christy's Auto Sales (\$4,000) and Dakota Rollers Auto (\$4,700).

Motion by Smathers to accept highest bid of \$4,700 from Dakota Rollers Auto, second by Bernhardt. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner requested authorization to attend National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 13-18, 2003.

Motion by Smathers to approve Commissioner's travel to N.A.S.D.V.A. convention, second by Dakken. Motion passed unanimously.

Audit Report completed by State Auditor's office for a two-year period ended June 30, 2002. Recommendations reviewed with committee and compliance changes being implemented. [REPORT PROVIDED].

Motion by Bloomquist to accept audit report, second by Smathers. Motion passed unanimously.

Department Strategic Plan discussed . This is a draft document that provides a good basis to start the process. Members are asked to read through the plan and send their comments to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will forward any comments received to Eric Monson, NOVUS, for compiling.

Post War Trust Fund financial reports and requests reviewed by Committee.

Motion by Vatne to obligate \$2,000 to the V-12 Project, second by Jenson. Motion failed; 2 yeas, 11 nays – Balzer, Beard, Bernhardt, Bloomquist, Coyne, Dakken, Krogen, Maasjo, Skarphol, Smathers, Volk [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 1].

Motion by Beard to obligate \$50,000 to the grant program, second by Skarphol. Motion passed; 11 yeas, 2 nays – Dakken, Smathers [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 2].

Motion by Dakken to obligate \$4,000 to the transportation program for lodging, second by Beard. Motion passed unanimously. [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 3].

Motion by Smathers to obligate funds (\$33,750) for the two FTE positions for one year , to revisit this request at a later time, second by Skarphol. Motion passed unanimously [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 4].

Motion by Bernhardt to obligate funds (\$8,680) for rent/audit, grant program software, toll-free # and website, second by Smathers. Motion passed; 11 yeas, 2 nays – Balzer, Jenson [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 5].

Motion by Smathers to obligate \$3,000 for committee travel, second by Dakken. Friendly amendment accepted by Smathers and Dakken to raise amount to \$9,000. Motion passed; 10 yeas, 3 nays – Balzer, Dakken, Jenson [SEE VOTING RECORD, MOTION 6].

Meeting schedule as follows:

October 24 & 25, 2003	Bismarck
January 16 & 17, 2004	Bismarck
April 16 & 17, 2004	Lisbon

The Governing Board's next meeting is September 5, 2003 at the Veterans Home.

Brad Maasjo discussed letter sent by the Commissioner to the Cass County Commission regarding Jim Brent, Cass County Veterans Service Officer. Smathers requested Maasjo send letter to committee members for their information.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by

Rudy Jenson
Secretary