



EDWARD T. SCHAFFER, GOVERNOR
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

CHAIRMAN
JOHN J. MULLEN
McVILLE, NORTH DAKOTA

SECRETARY
PAUL S. AABERG
WILLISTON, NORTH DAKOTA

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21 & 22, 1997, MEETING OF THE
NORTH DAKOTA ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**LOCATION--COMFORT INN, BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
CONVENED AT 1:00 P.M.**

Chairman John Mullen opened meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silent prayer for POW/MIA.

Roll call, following members present:

John Mullen
James Johnson
Kent Anderson
James Carlascio
Rheinhold Weber
Joseph O'Brien
Dean Bayer
Larry Dakken
Kenneth Evenson
Paul Aaberg

Others in Attendance:
Commissioner Ray Harkema
Commandant Ken Anderson
Gene Kouba, Bismarck Branch DVA
Darrel Burkland, US DVA

Rick Ryan
Gerald Balzer
Arnold Meir
Jose Smith
Bob Hanson
Joe Novak

ABSENT: Kenneth Vatne
Donald Weible
Richard S. Olek
Thomas Rainsberry

Moved by Ken Evenson that the minutes of the November meeting be approved with the following corrections:

"Mr. James Fleming representing the Attorney Generals Office was introduced.

**SUBCOMMITTEE FOR
VETERANS AFFAIRS**
JOSEPH J. O'BRIEN, SUB CHR
LARRY DAKKEN, VICE-SUB CHR
PAUL S. AABERG
GARY WEBER
KENT ANDERSON
DONALD WEIBLE

**RAY HARKEMA
COMMISSIONER
VETERANS AFFAIRS
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**KEN ANDERSON
COMMANDANT
VETERANS' HOME
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**SUBCOMMITTEE FOR
VETERANS' HOME**
KENNETH EVENSON, SUB CHR
THOMAS RAINSBERRY, VICE-SUB CHR
JAMES A. CARLASCIO
KENNETH A. VATNE
DEAN BAYER
GARY HOFFMAN
JAMES JOHNSON

**M/G KEITH D. BJERKE
ADJUTANT GENERAL**

**EX OFFICIO
DOUGLAS M. KENYON
VA CENTER DIRECTOR**

**JENNIFER GLADDEN
ND JOB SERVICE**

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"General Ron Gagness, representing Maj. General Bjerke, Adjutant General. Gen. Gagness gave a report on Veterans Cemetery. He also submitted a budget request for the 97-99 Biennium in the amount of \$150,000.00 to man the cemetery at present level. Additional funding needed for additional manning for 97-99 would be \$200,000.00"

Motion seconded by James Carlascio. Motion carried.

Arnold Meir, member of the Veterans Cemetery advisory committee was introduced. He gave a report on the license plate bill and on the funds in the cemetery fund. The major source of the funds were from private donations with the AMVETS and the VFW the largest donors of the veterans organizations. Discussion on makeup of advisory committee, there is a representative from each veterans organization and one from each veterans auxiliary. This committee was formed at the request of General Bjerke to the Coordinating Council, that there might be better communication between the National Guard and the Coordinating Council.

Discussion on the committee from Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs and their duties. This committee was to work with the Adjutant General on funding for the Veterans Cemetery that would come out of the Veterans Post War Trust Fund interest earnings. The original members of this committee were: Commissioner Ray Harkema, Thomas Rainsberry and Gary Hoffman. Chairman John Mullen appointed Dean Bayer to replace Gary Hoffman who had resigned from the Administrative Committee in November 1996.

Chairman John Mullen read a letter that had been prepared to be sent to: Department of Commerce, NTIA-TIAP Grant Program, Washington, D.C. This letter would commit \$50,000.00 toward a grant for a tele-communication system between the VA Hospital at Fargo and Clinic in Grafton. After discussion Jim Johnson moved that the letter not be signed or sent. Second by Kent Anderson. Motion carried.

Darrel Burkland reported on the outreach program provided by the VA at Fargo. Food, clothing, assistance for shelter and in getting treatment at the VA Hospital or at outpatient clinics for about 800 homeless veterans. Programs also assists in rehabilitation, job re-entry and basic living skills. Possible assistance for this program could come from Post War Trust Fund interest earnings.

General Ron Gagness reported on Veterans Cemetery. He presented an accounting of the funds received and disbursed for the maintenance of the Veterans Cemetery since 1990. Also amount of money in the restricted and unrestricted account. Only interest earned on the restricted account could be used for cemetery maintenance. General Gagness also commented on the license plate bill and how the revenue would be divided; \$5.00 going to a Veterans Cemetery Trust Fund and \$5.00 going to a maintenance fund. Interest earned from Trust Fund would go the maintenance fund.

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Chairman Mullen asked for discussion on the Post War Trust Fund. Ken Evenson moved that Chairman Mullen visit with the State Treasurer and the State Investment Office about investment of Trust Funds that are maturing to get the best rates possible. Second by James Carlascio. Motion carried.

James Carlascio moved that pending requests for funds from the interest on Post War Trust fund be tabled until the Legislative session has adjourned. Second by Joe O'Brien. Motion carried.

Gene Kouba reported on bills concerning veterans in the Legislature. When bills were amended, to get the amendment written to the satisfaction of veterans.

Commissioner Harkema reported on his budget bill. Stated that he was still hopeful of getting some items put back in his budget.

Commandant Anderson reported on his budget bill and stated he was quite happy with his budget. He was surprised when asked by a member of the committee if he was sure he could get by on his budget.

Moved by Carlascio that a report be made to the Governor, what Post War Trust Funds earnings are used for and how much is spent. This to be done annually. Second by O'Brien. Motion carried.

Chairman Mullen reported that he and Ken Evenson had been contacted on the possibility of building or starting an assisted care home for veterans. Discussion followed that, after the defeat of the proposed nursing home to be built in Stanley was defeated in the Legislature and then voted down by the voters, we better leave this alone.

Joe Smith reported on license plate bill. The wording as to where money would be deposited.

Meeting recessed at 5:00 P.M. so sub committee's could meet. Full committee to meet jointly with the Coordinating Council at 8:00 A.M. Saturday morning.

Meeting reconvened at 9:50 A.M. Saturday morning. Donald Weible present.

Chairman Mullen explained budget process for salary for Commissioner and Commandant.

Sub committee Chairman Ken Evenson reported for the Veterans Home committee. He reported they recommend that Ken Anderson be reappointed Commandant of the Veterans Home for two years effective July 1, 1997. Jim Johnson moved to accept report. Second by Don Weible. Motion carried.

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Sub committee Chairman Joe O'Brien reported for the Veterans Affairs committee. He reported that they recommend that Ray Harkema be reappointed Commissioner of Veterans Affairs effective July 1, 1997. Moved by Ken Evenson to accept report. Second by Dean Bayer. Motion Carried.

Moved by Evenson that Commandant Anderson's salary be \$48,000 and that Commissioner Harkema's salary be \$47,000.00. These to be effective July 1, 1997, and will include the 3 per cent state raise. Second O'Brien. Motion carried.

Moved by Dean Bayer that Administrative Committee would financially support the Veterans Cemetery for maintenance up to \$150,660.00 for the 97-99 Biennium. Final amount determined by the success of the license plate bill. Second by Ken Evenson. Motion carried.

Ken Evenson on behalf of the administrative Committee expressed their thanks to John Mullen for his dedication, commitment and service to veterans as Chairman of the Administrative Committee.

Following adjournment members to meet with Coordinating Council. Chairman and sub committee chairmen to give their reports to the Council.

No further business, meeting adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Submitted by
Paul S. Aaberg, Secretary

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March 31, 1997