

CONFERENCE CALL
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
Sunday, October 16, 1994 - 7:00 P.M.

(VETERANS HOME SITE - WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA)

Conference Operator: I would like to do roll call for John Mullen at this time:

Ken Anderson?

Yes.

Al Huber?

Yes.

Suzanne Kime?

Yes.

Kent Anderson?

Yes.

Ken Evenson?

Yes.

Tom Rainsberry?

Yes.

Mike Vandrovec?

Yes.

Don Weible?

Yes.

Dean Bayer?

Yes.

James Johnson?

Yes.

Joe O'Brien?

Yes.

Ray Harkema?

Yes.

James Groven?

Yes.

Paul Aaberg?

Yes.

(Gary Hoffman - Late entry)

If you should accidentally disconnect, our number is 800-448-9410.

Thank you, Mr. Mullen.

John Mullen: For those of you who did not hear, Joe Novak is right now on a plane flying back to North Dakota so he won't be part of this meeting. I talked to him about 6:30 and I've got some information from him that he would like included in the meeting.

I will call the meeting to order, and first of all, I would just kind of like to run down some of the things that we've got and the purpose of this meeting, and have some discussion on some of these various issues that we have to deal with. First of all, the thing we've got is we have a bill that is going to be proposed before the legislature that passed the interim committee, allowing both the use of the Developmental Center at Grafton and construction or the

authority to obtain an existing facility out in western North Dakota for veterans' basic care unit. Both for basic care. It's contingent on a number of things, of course. Hasn't passed through the legislature. We'll have to line up the 65 percent construction money from the V.A. We have been, as most of you know who have worked with the bill, we can borrow from the Postwar Trust Fund principle at a rate that has not yet been set up to certain limits and like that.

I think our most immediate task that is facing us tonight is to work on how we find this site for construction or existing structure for the western basic care home. We have to accomplish this job, have good estimates for costs, by the time this bill goes before the legislature. In talking to Joe Novak tonight, he suggests that we better have that done by about the 20th of December. And when Ken and I were talking to legislators, they suggested a later date; they said the first of January. But Joe said, well now you better go to Legislative Council and like that prior to the time that the bill is to be presented. He thought that the 20th of December would be a more realistic time to have it done. We have to find a way to get the word out to the largest number of western towns that we can, of course, so that we can be fair. We also need to decide what we want from those towns in the way of proposals. Do we all want to review written information and eliminate certain towns, or allow representatives to make presentations for each town, visit each town? Do all 15 others participate as much as we can, or do we appoint a committee? Or how we do some of the technical parts of this? I've got some suggestions.

I think I would like to start with how we get the word out; and I've got a little information on that. Some already know. Of course, the media has announced getting the bill through the interim committee and so a lot of people have already been calling me. I think, to get it out officially, we need to first of all, we need to hit some newspapers, cause that's kind-of a legal way of doing it. In talking to Joe Novak, he says that there is a North Dakota County Newspaper Association...

Suzanne Kime: Yes, out of Bismarck.

Joe Novak: Right. And we can get every county, we can get an advertisement that will hit every county and that will cost us about one hundred dollars. He also suggested then Williston, Minot, Dickinson, Bismarck papers as well. And I'm going to kind-of go on with what I know here and anyone who wants to jump in and argue or modify this a little bit, be glad to hear from them.

I talked to KFYZ in Bismarck, and I also talked to Mick Kjar who is also part of the Dakota News Network. Mick Kjar was ready to

interview me right away and I said no, I think I better wait until I talk to my committee before I allow you to do that. But they could interview me over the phone tomorrow morning and I just would call them up and they would let me know about it. KFYZ would like to include this in like a noon day show, and what I have in mind for that is that I would kind-of like to get Jim Ziegler involved.

Suzanne Kime: I agree on that.

John Mullen: He's been, for those that have been on the committee for a while, they know that Jim's really worked on this hard up to this time, and, of course, not being a member of the committee we can, of course, choose to exclude him. But I think that it would be a real good idea to include him and I know that he's worked hard on this and he'd make a good spokesman as well. And there is a chance that he now has the opportunity to lobby, which we're not suppose to do. In talking to Joe, he reminded me that there is one other big station out in the west, and that is KXMB. And he suggested that I might want to contact them and see if they want to do the same type of thing. I had talked to some people about sending out letters to Chambers of Commerce and to mayors and city auditors, which I thought was a pretty keen idea, but Joe Novak pointed out to me that if we do that and we miss someone, then legally we may set ourselves up for some trouble.

Suzanne Kime: You wouldn't miss the Chambers because you could get definitely every Chamber there is from one of our central Chambers in either Grand Forks, or Fargo, or Bismarck.

(Not Identified): What happens if you get a case where you could get a smaller town with no Chamber, then they would have a possible gripe.

Suzanne Kime: Then the City Council....

John Mullen: But that's Joe's argument too is that... I'm certainly, I think, we need to get it in the paper and I'm sure the word is going to spread.

(Not Identified): I think everybody for Economic Development, they'll get the word..

(Not Identified): I agree. I think putting it in the paper rather than individual solicitations is a better way because you're not running the risk of missing someone.

(Not Identified): If this covers all the county papers it becomes their responsibility to watch for the legal advertisements then.

Suzanne Kime: Yes. You just want to be sure now, John, whoever does all this, whether it's the committee or what, the committee peoples names, addresses, and phone numbers are clear so that the people do have contact. Unless you're to be the central contact or unless Jim Ziegler is.

John Mullen: That's what I want to talk about too. I take it from this bit of discussion that we've had that everyone is comfortable with leaving the letters part out. Anyone want to speak in favor of sending letters out?

Suzanne Kime: No, I don't. Not necessarily.

John Mullen: Okay, you've got that, Ken? We won't institute that thing.

Ken Anderson: Okay.

John Mullen: Hopefully, you haven't done it already.

Ken Anderson: I talked to Sandra on Friday, but we didn't do anything till after we met.

John Mullen: That's good. Okay, and then, of course, I would like to see articles in as many of the veterans' newsletters as possible. But that's not really an official notification, that's more to let them know what's going on, the veterans population out there. Anyone feel uncomfortable with the noon shows or the radio interview or any of that?

Kenneth Evenson: No, I think that's one route we should go.

John Mullen: Okay.

Kenneth Evenson: And I do strongly feel that we should have Jim involved in this because he was really pushing on this when he was on the team.

Suzanne Kime: Well, as I said before, I agree with that, Ken, very strongly, because he has a wealth of information on it already and he's been working very hard for several years on it with us.

Kenneth Evenson: Yes. And he's from the western part of the state so that helps too.

Joe O'Brien: I agree wholeheartedly. But when he testifies for committees he comes off very good also. So we should have him involved with these things. And news releases will cover a lot of people.

Suzanne Kime: That's true.

Dean Bayer: I've got a question to ask. You want to go to the news, but we haven't established what the criteria is for where you want the home and what they have to have yet.

John Mullen: Another thing we need to discuss here. Written into the bill is a list of criteria. And that's on the last page of the bill. Now I haven't gotten the final copy of that. I understand there will be one change in criteria. Isn't that right, Ken Anderson?

Ken Anderson: Yes.

John Mullen: That Shelly Warner recommended, and in fact we thought was a good change. Have you got that Ken?

Ken Anderson: It was on number four I believe. I was out of the room when she did that. But I believe it was on number four - availability of an existing facility meeting veterans' administration standards. I believe was the one. You want me to read them, John?

John Mullen: That might be a good idea.

Ken Anderson: Okay. We went through these back in November last year, but some of you weren't on the committee then.

- Availability of adequate physician and medical services;
- Distance from a regional veterans administration medical facility;
- Distance from a hospital other than a regional veterans' administration medical facility;
- Availability of existing facility meeting veterans' administration standards; (And I think where it was meeting veterans' administration standards or the ability to bring it up to standards - I think it was the one - number four.)
- Location in an area where there are veterans needing the service;
- Availability of public transportation;
- Availability of recreational and cultural activities;
- Availability of adequate fire protection;
- Site compliance with existing zoning regulations;
- Lack of noise, chemical, and other hazardous conditions; and
- Community site incentives available.

There are 11 of them and they are not in any particular order of importance.

Suzanne Kime: But they are all requirements, correct?

Ken Anderson: Yes. They are all things that we are going to have to look at as part of this scenario, yes.

John Mullen: The word "requirement" I think may be too strong. They are all "criteria".

Ken Anderson: Yes. "Criteria".

John Mullen: We had some discussion when we were in that committee that went on between Senator Sand and Representative Coates on this issue. Sand saying, well your criteria eliminates everything but the four largest cities in the western part of the state. Jim Coates, on the other hand, saying, well your criteria is so loose that any town in the western part of the state could get in on this thing. And being questioned by them, I said that I felt that we were trying to make the criteria indeed as subjective as possible. That we were not trying to make it hard and fast or eliminate anyone based on it. But that these were important considerations to us.

(Not Identified): I think that every member, and especially in the western part of the state, have this criteria available to us then.

Ken Anderson: They should have been sent out on that one mailing where this bill draft was sent.

(Not Identified): It's in there?

Ken Anderson: It should be the last page, page No. 5. But we can talk to Ray and we can get it out some more if we need it.

Suzanne Kime: Now in regards to that criteria too. Is that something that's going to be written up and then mailed when people do contact whomever we're going to have them contact?

Ken Anderson: I believe that's the way we should do it. It's up to the committee.

Suzanne Kime: Well, I mean I think that they need to know that we have certain criteria that we expect them to meet before we can seriously consider them. The only way they're going to know if they have it is if we give it to them.

Ken Anderson: Right. That's exactly right.

(Not Identified): Is the Administrative Committee the ones who are going to make the decision where it's going to be?

Ken Anderson: Yes.

John Mullen: Yes. Again, something that Joe said, which I thought was a pretty good... We need to state what our minimum criteria are. We need to also state that withstanding all criteria, the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs has the authority to make the final judgment, and will attempt to make a decision on what's best for veterans. And he feels that that should be included in the letter that we send out.

Suzanne Kime: Oh, I do too.

John Mullen: I do too.

Joe O'Brien: There should be a package. I think many insisted on having the architectural cost performed by the community that desires to have the building or site.

John Mullen: Now my understanding of that is that our architect is going to make that estimate. Isn't that the way you understood that, Ken?

Ken Anderson: Well, the previous one we used before in this building, cause he has some... You know, he has probably more knowledge on V.A. regulations. But that would not make a commitment to him as the architect. We probably would have to pay him a consulting

John Mullen: But I think it would be not very kind of us to require each town to invest that kind of money. Some of these are very small towns, of course.

(Not Identified): Exactly, and besides that, they may not know exactly what is necessary and what is just trivial.

John Mullen: And they don't have the V.A. requirements, all of them, in front of them. I sat down to lunch with some people from New England and they said, well how about sending us that. And I said, I'm sure that that book is about four inches thick and I couldn't read it either. So I kind-of said I think that we need to have an architect decide that.

Ken Anderson: John, probably one of the major things in here is going to be fire protection. It will be a very, very big consideration cause we've been under fire by the V.A. for ours. Do we need a motion on this so we can move it along, John.

Suzanne Kime: I was going to ask.

John Mullen: On what?

Ken Anderson: Well, just to have you do the release as you see necessary, or....

John Mullen: I certainly would be comfortable with that, yes.

Ken Anderson: I cannot make that motion though.

Ken Evenson: I'll make the motion that John lets the release go on this.

Suzanne Kime: And I'll second it.

John Mullen: Okay, discussion on that motion?

(Not Identified): Question.

John Mullen: Well, before that, I want to make a little statement. I mean to include Jim Ziegler in on this too. Does everyone understand that?

Suzanne Kime: Does that need to be worded in our motion?

(Not Identified): Yes.

Suzanne Kime: Ken, do you want to reword it then?

John Mullen: Yes, just kind-of give me some loose authority on it.

Ken Anderson: I think the way we said it was fine enough cause John will make the decision on how he wants to do it then.

John Mullen: Okay, I'll call the question. Those in favor of the motion signify by saying "aye".

Response: Aye.

John Mullen: Opposed? Okay, hearing no opposed we don't have to call a roll or anything.

Ken Anderson: Okay. John, another business on here then if we want a selection committee. I do have a suggestion. Because my travel monies and stuff are starting to diminish rapidly, it would be nice if we could try to get those people the closest ones to Lisbon if it would be possible. But I surely wouldn't make it a requirement. But I think, you know, this is really costing us a lot of bucks. Unless somebody wants to be on it from a further distance.

Suzanne Kime: Well, now we're going to need to include people from the western part of the state, and they're not real close to Lisbon.

John Mullen: Right. But I've got a suggestion for that as it came out of Joe again. I may be quoting Joe a lot during this cause I thought he had a lot of worthy proposals. He's been through this before, as you may remember. And back in the time when they were looking at motels in Dickinson, and some things like that, and remembered some of those kind-of contentious things, that he suggested that an analysis of the... When we get the kind of proposals that we want, that the analysis of those proposals be made by someone not involved with the Administrative Committee. For instance, the V.A., engineers, architects, medical people, that type of thing. Then that they present to us. Say, the three top qualified towns that have submitted proposals, that we take simply one weekend and that we review those proposals, travel if we feel that we need to, you know based on the names of the towns, and we choose only from that number. That will allow the towns that want to make proposals, to submit them later than they otherwise would. We could say that then that all of the proposals would be submitted by December 15th and that final decision would be made by December 20th. It would give us the one weekend to travel if we needed to to three towns and make a decision. And it then would give a better opportunity for the entire Administrative Committee to be involved with one day of travel in effect. Except for maybe me traveling to Bismarck to get on T.V. or something like that, if Jim doesn't do both shows.

Jim Johnson: I have a request about that. If you would give them until December 15th in order to make a proposal, that's not to give the engineers, or whoever is looking at, much time to make recommendations between then and....

Suzanne Kime: And then it will be a bad time...

Jim Johnson: I think that December 15th is way too late.

John Mullen: Originally I thought so too.

Jim Johnson: I think you have to go earlier than that.

Suzanne Kime: John, were you going to make a release?

John Mullen: I'm going to go on the radio tomorrow, KFYZ. While Jim Ziegler will be in Bismarck on Monday and Friday. He certainly will not get on tomorrow's noon show, but he might get on Friday's noon show if we can set that up.

(Not Identified): Does that mean he's going to cover those same 11 points we just talked about.

John Mullen: I think we need to have him do that, yes.

Ken Anderson: John, I think they should have to write for that information to us. I don't think you want to put that all out on the air.

John Mullen: Okay.

Ken Anderson: And another thing you guys have to look at too is liability insurance. I carry liability insurance on the board, but if there was ever a liability question, if somebody outside of this group here made that decision, we have no way to protect them if there was a law suit.

John Mullen: Okay, now an architect would be covered under his own, would he not?

Ken Anderson: Well, if he's hired as a consultant. But if he's a volunteer at that point and time, he probably wouldn't want ... his own liability probably wouldn't do the trick. I'm just saying I think that's a point that you guys, as a board, to me, this is one of your responsibilities, and I feel that you guys are as qualified as anybody to probably make the decision with some limited input.

Suzanne Kime: Well, if I may, I even agree there with Ken. Because I really feel it is our responsibility. I don't know who of all of us feel the same way, but I certainly do. There are a lot of things that we'll have to be calling Ken on to verify with him, perhaps some things we've seen or need to know. But he has it all right down there if we've not already received it in any of our other packets.

Ray Harkema: The Committee has the overall responsibility. I don't agree with Joe's idea, narrowing it down to three. If the Committee is going to have the final authority, let the Committee make the selection.

Ken Anderson: I agree with that.

Ray Harkema: About that liability.

(Not Identified): Except we can handle it as a Committee, I believe.

John Mullen: I'm not trying to argue either side of the issue. I can certainly see Joe's point on this thing. But I am certainly trying to give everyone a chance to discuss this. Cause I see the other side of this as well.

Suzanne Kime: The only thing that I was thinking along maybe Joe's same line of thought was if we involve the V.A. itself. Then, of

course, since they, you know, do have a strong view of everything that we need too. But I don't know how we can really do that cause it's our responsibility.

John Mullen: My question on that would be, if we have a town that comes before us with a proposal to give us some land, it's going to be the same as the next town that would offer to give us some land. There shouldn't be any difference in the cost that I can see, unless someone can tell me what that would be. I am assuming that we're going to be within the reach of the sewer lines and things like that. In most cases those towns are going to offer to do the hookups and all of that for nothing as typical kinds of incentives that the town would offer.

(Not Identified): I tell you, I disagree with that. I don't think they're going to be exactly... not exactly, but I think they're going to be all over the place with those kind of offers. Because the ones I've been associated with, we get offers from every town trying to get any kind of business. You may have one located in an area of town that would be a whole lot more desirable than the next, and one may offer to put the street improvements in for you and the next one won't. And like you say, one will have sewer and water, most will have sewer and water there, but I myself think we're going to get a variety of offers.

John Mullen: Okay.

(Not Identified): I think that's something that the committees going to have to look at in what offers that these towns can give us, you know, for the cost price.

John Mullen: Yup.

Joe O'Brien: I think the committee is going to flip out many of these and bring it down to the ones that come close to the requirements, and then get a little expertise in there to sort out whose going to be left.

John Mullen: Is anybody else having trouble with people being cut off in mid-sentence?

Ken Anderson: Does somebody have a cordless telephone they're on?

(Not Identified): Two on cordless.

Ken Anderson: Okay, the cordless telephones are what's giving us the problem. We're getting airwaves from them. Okay, John ...

(Not Identified): I just want to comment on that too. You know, if we're talking to these towns that are going to come in with all of these proposals, there are so many towns anymore that are set with this Economic Development. And like we commented earlier, the word is going to be out. They're all looking for something to bring into their town and I think we're going to get a lot of offers on a lot of things, like the plots of land, the different offers that have been in there.

(Not Identified): I was at a VFW meeting today and they're already talking about it already.

(Not Identified): The Economic Development people, they're all out there working trying to pull business in their little cities.

Ken Anderson: Sure they are. John, do you need to get a motion to form a committee, a small committee, to sort through the first thing and then have a meeting with the whole committee to take out and look at it?

John Mullen: Let's discuss that issue. Knowing that if a committee is appointed, that some people are not going to be on it. First, how do you feel about that, sitting out there? You know, is everyone comfortable with that idea? And then second, should we geographically, do we then make that across the board, or do we try to include only or exclude regional things, or something like that. Does anyone have some thoughts on that?.

Suzanne Kime: I think we need a steering committee who will gather information from our whole committee and feed back and forth until everything is lined up. I don't know.

Tom Rainsberry: Hopefully, you might want to take some consideration if anybody is available to do what the steering committee might. For example, myself, I might not be able to travel out west where somebody in central North Dakota can.

Suzanne Kime: Did I lose everybody?

John Mullen: No, we're still on. I think people are thinking here right now.

Ken Anderson: I think we've got thinkers.

John Mullen: Okay, do I hear a motion so that we can get this issue going?

(Not Identified): What size of a committee would you be looking at?

Ken Anderson: I don't think you'd need about four people.

Suzanne Kime: I would suggest four to five people for a steering committee so that...

Ken Evenson: Let me ask Ken in Lisbon. On your budget set-up for the steering committee, is there something in there that won't run you short on the budget? Cause it's going to cost a little bit too, you know.

Ken Anderson: Well, that's why we should try to limit it three to four people, I think.

(Not Identified): I think the more people we get involved the longer it's going to take. So I think about four people would be enough on that committee, and then they can bring it back to the full committee.

Suzanne Kime: We need to set some deadlines on it now.

John Mullen: Yes, we certainly do. Lets

Paul Aaberg: Before we form a committee, what is the possibility of delaying that final decision till the last week in December or first week in January. I think we're getting pretty close. I have already got airline tickets to visit my son.

John Mullen: As I said, when Ken and I were out in Bismarck, and we asked when do we have to have this thing wrapped up, the legislators that we were talking to were talking about early to mid-January. However, they may not have had the idea that we would need to run this back through our Legislative Council prior to that time. And that's what Joe Novak brought into this. Cause he felt that we should have the thing wrapped up by December 20th to allow the Legislative Council to review it and turn it into a bill.

(Not Identified): You're talking about our council, the Coordinating Council, or the Legislative Council?

John Mullen: I'm not that familiar with what we have to do to get a bill through.

Ken Anderson: John, it has to go through Legislative Council. My suggestion on here is to try to aim for the first week in December on a decision. Then it goes through Legislative Council. Then the thing is then the town out west has time to gather in the horses and run with it. If we wait until the end of December, we're not giving them a good time for getting ... I don't think we don't want to be caught pushing too much time. I think right now we've got six weeks

before the first week in December and I think we can run with this and hit the ground and go with it.

Suzanne Kime: John, when is our full next committee meeting?

John Mullen: November 4th and 5th.

Suzanne Kime: Fourth and fifth?

John Mullen: Yes. With the Coordinating Council. Do you know where that's going to be, anyone?

Ray Harkema: That's going to be at the American Legion at one o'clock on Friday. But the rooms have been booked at the Comfort Inn. So the meeting is at the Legion in Bismarck.

John Mullen: So now everyone who is on the phone is forewarned about where and when the next meeting is.

Suzanne Kime: Okay the rooms are at the Comfort and we're going to meet at the Legion.

Ken Evenson: I think I'll have to agree with Ken on getting this thing going by the first of December. So I don't know how do you want to word it and that, but I would like to make the motion that we proceed on this.

Suzanne Kime: Okay, that we proceed appointing a committee through John Mullen. He will be the one that will choose a committee or what?

Ken Anderson: Why don't you have volunteers right now?

Joe O'Brien: Ken, before we go for a committee, why don't you move that these proposals be in by the 25th of November...

Ken Anderson: Good idea.

Joe O'Brien: So that we would have time to sort it over. Because with six weeks, and these towns all have some inkling of it now, they should be able to put their proposals together and get them to us by the 25th of November, so that we would have some time to deal with these things.

Suzanne Kime: You say the 25th?

Joe O'Brien: Of November. Have all proposals required in by the 25th of November.

(Not Identified): Why don't you make that into a motion, Joe, being you said it?

Joe O'Brien: I'll put it in a form of a motion.

Ken Evenson: Okay, I'll second it.

John Mullen: Okay, we'll take that as a motion first then. Any discussion on that motion to require that proposals be submitted by the 25th of November. Okay, hearing none, I'll call...

Interjection by Conference Operator: Excuse me, Mr. Hoffman has joined.

John Mullen: Hi, Gary. Okay, Gary, we are now voting on a motion made by Joe O'Brien to require the towns that are going to submit proposals to do so by the 25th of November. Those in favor of that motion signify by saying "aye".

Response: "Aye".

John Mullen: Opposed? Okay, hearing no opposition, we won't call a roll. Okay, now, going on to the next issue. Ken, I think you were on the verge of making a motion. So I'll go back to you if you want to make a motion concerning that committee formation.

Ken Evenson: Okay, I'll make a motion that there be a committee of four people to go through the applications or whatever for the new veterans home in the western part of the state.

Suzanne Kime: I would like to second that, John.

John Mullen: Okay, now makeup of the committee. Do we have any suggestions under discussion?

Tom Rainsberry: Is everything going to be sent to Lisbon to overview and everything?

John Mullen: I'd certainly feel most comfortable with that.

Tom Rainsberry: If that's the case, I'm not too far from Lisbon, I'll volunteer for helping.

Ken Evenson: So will I.

Joe O'Brien: I could go to Lisbon fairly easy.

(Not Identified): Then we should get somebody from the west. How about Joe Novak?

(Not Identified): I think we should probably go even farther west if we can. Could get somebody else.

Suzanne Kime: How about Don Weible?

(Not Identified): He's at Wilton.

Ken Anderson: That's good.

Suzanne Kime: I think that would be a splendid little town you could work out of. That's pretty far west.

Don Weible: I've got a guy pushing me from Wilton already.

John Mullen: Yes, John Hruby. Yes?

Don Weible: John Hruby, yes.

John Mullen: We heard about his proposal when we were at the Legislative trip then.

Paul Aaberg: I would serve but I'm a long ways from Lisbon.

(Not Identified): Gary Hoffman would work pretty good.

(Not Identified): We've got Dean Bayer at Tuttle.

John Mullen: Where are you at, Gary?

Gary Hoffman: Bismarck.

(Not Identified): At this time I can see if it makes any difference the subcommittees or the Veterans Home too. Those guys have been dealing with a little more than the guys on Veterans Affairs, I guess.

John Mullen: Okay. Well, we've got more than enough volunteers here. I certainly think that it's a good idea to have the Chairman of the Veterans Home Subcommittee be on this, or certainly Ken Evenson I think should be on it. Now the idea here is to have a total of four members on this committee, or four members and the chairman to break a tie.

(Not Identified): We've got Joe O'Brien there, he's the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. We'd have both chairmans.

John Mullen: That's correct. I think Joe O'Brien should be appointed to that as well. And that's two from the east, and if I'm on it, I'm also from the east then.

Ken Anderson: You'd be the fifth one then, John, for the tie-breaker.

John Mullen: I'm thinking to go then to a four member committee, plus chairman...

Suzanne Kime: Okay, but who are the other two then?

John Mullen: With a total committee of five then, if everyone's comfortable with that. If that doesn't argue with the intent of the motion too.

(Not Identified): No, I think that's fine. I think we have to have five. Like you as the chairman, in case something comes up, so we get it, in case there's a tie. So I think that's the legal way to go.

John Mullen: Okay, let's go back to the west. We had Gary Hoffman volunteer. Don, if I understood you, you were kind-of reluctant to volunteer.

Don Weible: Yes. I have a very possible conflict of interest. Sure want to be in input or anything, but I would just as soon let Gary if he's willing to.

John Mullen: Okay. And Paul you were willing to volunteer as well.

Paul Aaberg: Well, yes. It's kind-of a long ways from Lisbon, but I would serve, yes.

John Mullen: Okay. Then I will also appoint Paul Aaberg and Gary Hoffman to that committee. Okay, that takes care of that.

(Not Identified): I think that's a real good way to do it. You've got two guys from the west and two guys from the east and then yourself. We should come out with some pretty good ideas on that.

John Mullen: Yes, I hope so.

Mike Vandrovec: Are you going to allow the people on the committee to review those as soon as they come in so they won't have kind-of a log-jam a the last minute?

John Mullen: Especially if we have steering committees so that we're not getting everybody... so we're not having 15 copies of these things floating around. I think that certainly is the way we should do it.

(Not Identified): I think it would be wise, because if you wait till the very last minute where you're going to start looking at them, I think it's really going to inundate the volunteers there.

John Mullen: And not only that, but I think that the cutoff date should be in advance of the meeting date, because even I.. I certainly realize when we have even interviewed applicants for jobs, we come in there and we're faced with all of these applications that we're passing around the table and it's hard to remember who has what. So I certainly would support that. I think that's a good idea. Now, who should be getting the phone calls on the proposals? Are we going to go to Lisbon with that? I think that that was kind-of the suggestion.

Ken Anderson: I think that was actually covered in a meeting a long time ago that they wanted the stuff mailed here, John.

John Mullen: That's good. I'm certainly more comfortable with that than every time I get my hands done, somebodies calling me.

(Not Identified): I think Lisbon should be the one to get all these calls because they got the staff to do it and a lot of us guys work and that.

John Mullen: Yes.

(Not Identified): And they got the answers.

John Mullen: You feel pretty comfortable that you can put out reasonable criteria and give them the information that we think that they need, Ken?

Ken Anderson: You bet.

John Mullen: Okay. We have been asked about how many people this will employ. In talking with Ken, he said he thought it would be in the neighborhood of 22 to 25 people employed...

Ken Anderson: That's correct, John.

John Mullen: By the basic care unit out there. So if you're asked questions on that...

(Not Identified): That's just for the one out in the western?

John Mullen: Just for the one out in the western, right.

(Not Identified): It would be the same thing for the one in Grafton?

Ken Anderson: Pretty much.

(Not Identified): And it will be what, a 60-bed or what?

John Mullen: Sixty bed for both of them. It's also been pointed out, Ken, that this runs us over a numbers of basic care beds. You want to say a few words on that of reassurance.

Ken Anderson: Okay. When we had our last meeting and the center director was there from the V.A., I was talking to him. In fact, it must have been at one of conventions. It was at Legion Convention. And he and I talked about the beds and he said no problem. He said whatever you can get, and the legislature will approve, he says we'll support it and help it get through. You got some states that are over on them already; like South Dakota happens to have more dom beds than they do basic or skilled beds. So I don't think that's going to be a problem here.

John Mullen: Another issue that has come up is, should we find an existing facility, or is the V.A. going to be willing to jump in with some money. And we've heard, my discussions with Joe Smith on this, he suggested that he had, he said he had sat down with Jesse Brown and Kent Conrad and had assurances verbally that that money would probably be available. And yet, Ken, I think you heard something different. Is that right?

Ken Anderson: Well, I know Minnesota has theirs on the back burner now because of money. You see now you also have to have the state funds, and we've got that obligation once this becomes a bill. So you know, I think we've just got to keep moving forward, and we'll apply for the money as soon as we have this in the oven. And then we'll use political clout we have to do to get it. And I think we can do that.

John Mullen: A little advice to the steering committee, from you people who aren't going to be on it. You probably are going to want a certain... Do you want us to come back with one recommendation, three to kick around? What's your pleasure?

(Not Identified): Just one.

John Mullen: Okay. No arguments against that?

Dean Bayer: Why would you want just one? You're going to have the steering committee make the final decision then on one?

Suzanne Kime: Well, that's not what we just set them up for, John.

(Not Identified): I thought you were talking about three proposals and then we come back to the Administrative Committee to make the final decision.

(Not Identified): I misunderstood. I think the steering committee should come back with several recommendations and the Administrative Committee narrow it down to one.

(Not Identified): I think narrow it down to two or three and then the Committee can make the final decision.

John Mullen: I would like a motion on that issue. That's been one of those issues that different members of the committee have felt different ways about it, so that we can get an actual vote on that issue.

Suzanne Kime: I will make the motion that we have the steering committee bring to us several and by that, what shall we say, three to five to review. And then from that, the entire committee will be responsible for selecting the one that can be chosen to be the site of the new basic care home in the west.

Tom Rainsberry: Second that motion.

John Mullen: Okay. Discussion on that motion?

(Not Identified): Are we going to have some kind of guidelines to apply to the criteria _____ a possibility?

Suzanne Kime: Yes. That will be in that criteria, won't it, John?

(Not Identified): What are we just going to get, a verbal recommendation? Are we going to send out a copy of all, say the three or whatever it is, to all the committee, or are we just going to give them give a verbal update to the rest of the committee?

John Mullen: I think that we should, when we get down to three, that the entire committee should be apprised of all the information that the steering committee has on those three, if that's what we decide.

Suzanne Kime: Did we decide on the three to five?

John Mullen: Three to five, right. Whatever number we come up with, we will submit to all members of the committee all that was submitted to us by the towns that have proposals to make.

(Not Identified): Yup, I think that's the way to do it. The recommendation of the steering committee, then the letters or

information goes out to the full committee with our recommendation, and then we can decide from there.

(Not Identified): Can I put one qualifier on that. Anything that's reasonable, cause you're going to get histories on some of these towns along with that too. I mean some of these packages you're going to get, I'm sure you're going to get the whole history of the town, just what we need.

John Mullen: I think that Ken needs to help these towns in terms of telling them not to send us a book. But to send us the information that we actually need.

Ken Anderson: Okay.

Suzanne Kime: He did that before, did he not? I don't remember how it was, it seems to me.

John Mullen: But on the other hand, some of these towns are geared to.. You know, it's like Mike Vandrovec said, they're geared for this Economic Development thing and they're going to send out the same packet no matter who calls them, whether it's an office plant or a Veterans Home.

(Not Identified): Lot of them have them ready to go. All they need to do is get a few changes in the software and they're all ready to go.

Paul Aaberg: Clarification - we send out three to five that we have picked and then the full committee can argue their points for their choice. We will not submit one above the other when they are sent to the full committee. Right?

Suzanne Kime: Right.

Paul Aaberg: And then we can only give that at the time of the selection? Our choice or whatever?

John Mullen: Is everyone comfortable with that? With not saying that we rate these one, two, three, four, five.

Suzanne Kime: I am.

(Not Identified): I think that's the way it's got to be. The full committee has got to do it. The steering committee can't do that. I think we just bring in the recommendations and then the full committee can go along with that.

CONFERENCE CALL - ACOVA
October 16, 1994
Page 22

Suzanne Kime: You can stress your recommendations to us and that's where maybe, then okay, this one's being stressed a little more so that must be number one here.

(Not Identified): I think we really value your input though when we get to the discussions here cause you guys will be in a lot heavier than the rest of us.

John Mullen: I too. I would say this is not going to be a telephone conference. We have to just sit down together and do that.

Suzanne Kime: That brings up another point. Now all these letters are going to have to be in by 11-25. John, when do you think we will meet or do we need to wait and see how many are coming in as to when you want to set the dates for the committee, since we will be into the holiday, and somebody said they had to go away already and stuff like that.

Ken Evenson: I don't think that we can set the date now. I really don't.

Ken Anderson: I agree with you, Ken.

(Not Identified): That can be discussed at our meeting in Bismarck too.

Suzanne Kime: Okay.

John Mullen: 11-25 happens to be a Friday after Thanksgiving. If we were to require 11-23, then the steering committee could go through this on that weekend. There's not going to be mail delivery on the 24th. So I wonder... just going back at that I wonder if that might be something we might want to...

Joe O'Brien: I make a motion amend it to be 11-23.

John Mullen: Is there a second to agree with that.

(Not Identified): Yup.

John Mullen: No disagreement out there on that issue?

Response: No.

John Mullen: Then I think we'll change it to that and allow the steering committee a little more leeway. Okay, now, getting back to the motion, is there any more discussion on the motion before? Does anybody remember what it is?

(Not Identified): The motion for the steering committee to pick three to five. Right?

Suzanne Kime: Right. Three to five proposals to submit to the full committee.

John Mullen: I'll call the question. Those in favor of the motion signify by saying "aye".

Response: "Aye".

John Mullen: Opposed? Okay, hearing no opposed, we go on. What else?

Suzanne Kime: Mr. Chairman, on the news that I heard, they indicated that we would have to do some renovating at Grafton. Now, do we have to do anything along that line as to... maybe we should direct this to Ken Anderson. Do we have to do anything along that line to come up with the money that we might need for the renovation and stuff like that? Or is that not something we have to do?

Ken Anderson: Well, Sue, I talked to the State Treasurer about it too. I think we're looking at a couple of hundred thousand dollars. I think we can get the money from Grafton if we need it. You know, the V.A. process will be kind-of slow, but already there's been amendments, or it's all ready in the bill draft for the funds for that to be available.

Suzanne Kime: Well, that's what I thought I read. But I just wanted to be sure that we don't have to do anything, Ken.

Ken Anderson: Well, yes, we will down the road. But for right now, everything will be covered in that bill.

Mike Vandrovec: I would certainly expect Grafton to come through with some kind of help on their Development Corporation to do some assistance in the expenses there because these other towns out west are certainly going to come out with a better package. And you may create a whole new kettle of fish if we ... if Grafton gets a 60-bed addition there with little or no expense to their Economic Development or their community. Whereas we're expecting a city out in the western part of North Dakota to come through with a nice package for us.

Ken Anderson: John, when we were in session last time, didn't they kick around a number \$90,000 when they were presenting theirs that the city had to put up already?

Dean Bayer: I was state commander in '92 and '93, and we was up there, and they said, I think at that time, they had two hundred and some thousand dollars in a fund if they needed it.

Ken Anderson: I think the money is available for Grafton. Even when I talked to...

Dean Bayer: I don't know if they're going to make it available now or not. I don't know.

Ken Anderson: Well, I'm sure they will.

(Not Identified): I think we would be wise to at least let them know we're expecting it, so they come through with something.

Joe O'Brien: I think that due to the fact that it's been stated that the towns out west will come through with Economic Development money, I feel that Grafton should put up Economic money somewhere near the amount they originally proposed before also.

Suzanne Kime: To be on the fair, it was suggested that we need to have them submit to us for that proposal what they will come up with.

Ken Anderson: I don't think so, Sue. I think anything we need all we have to do is talk to Harvey about it. I think we open another can of worms if we do that because the proposals already on the legislation for Grafton. But I think as far as the money and the incentives, I think we work with Harvey on that.

(Not Identified): Well, that's fine, Ken. That's kind-of what I, you know, he's the ramrod, if you want to call him that, to get it through. And I think this conversation with him would do the trick.

Ken Anderson: Yes, I think so too.

(Not Identified): I don't think we have to worry about that. I think they'll give us the money that we need.

Suzanne Kime: Yes, but don't we definitely need to have someone look at Grafton and clarify so that if we're counteracted by what someone said, by the west having to come up with their packages, we could do it that way.

Mike Vandrovec: John, would that be something you could just give him a call on an informal basis, just run that past him?

John Mullen: Yes. Sounds like the way to do it.

(Not Identified): Then that will be taken care of.

John Mullen: Okay. What else?

Ray Harkema: This is for John and Joe O'Brien. This information that was put out tonight, I would like to put that out tomorrow to the county service officers so they don't feel they have been left out. Because certainly they're going to get inquiries about all this as the county veteran service officer.

John Mullen: Right. Wide as possible distribution, I would think.

Ray Harkema: Okay, I'll do that tomorrow.

Ray Harkema: The other thing is, I haven't tour Grafton. And some of you have, some of you haven't. I've set up a tour for myself on November 10th because I'm in the Veterans' Day program on the 11th at Bottineau. So if anyone is interested in meeting me there on the 10th, just give me a phone call.

John Mullen: I happen to be the speaker in Grafton on the 11th.

(Not Identified): Ray, may I ask what time on the...

Ray Harkema: It's wide open to me. Whatever I come up with, they said they would be available.

(Not Identified): I would be very interested too. I haven't been up there either.

Ray Harkema: Okay, I'll contact you before that then.

John Mullen: Okay, that's a Thursday. Okay, any thing else? I have one other thing I want to mention because I had a tape playing back to me on that appeal hearing, and it sounded like had I had the choice, I would have voted against the majority. That was not the case. I would have voted with the majority. So anybody who heard me say otherwise, it was my fault, I misspoke and that's that. Okay, anything else?

Ken Anderson: John, we should point out that there is a full transcript available from that conversation if anybody wants it.

John Mullen: I hope you've not spelled that the way I intended to, rather than the way I actually said it.

Suzanne Kime: Okay, Mr. Chairman, why don't you say what you mean when you say it.

John Mullen: I'll try to in the future, Sue.

Ken Anderson: It was 25 pages.

Suzanne Kime: Sorry about that. I just couldn't resist it.

(Not Identified): Would that tape be available at our meeting in November, should anybody want?

John Mullen: Yes. We can certainly direct the Commandant to bring that along should we wish that to be done.

(Not Identified): I don't know why we should. I mean the Committee voted on it, and it was a majority vote on it, so... But if he wants to bring it along in case. I don't think anybody from the Coordinating Council should listen to that because that's our decision.

(Not Identified): If there's anybody that wishes, they can listen to it.

Ken Anderson: You want the tape or... It's actually written out now. A transcripts much better. Otherwise, you'd be listening forever.

John Mullen: Why don't you bring one copy of it.

Ken Anderson: I'll bring a copy of the transcript so that everybody knows. There will be a transcript of this one too.

John Mullen: Anyone else? We're wasting Ken's money here.

(Not Identified): I make a motion that we close this conversation.

John Mullen: All right. Second?

Joe O'Brien: I'll second.

John Mullen: All those in favor say "aye".

Response: "Aye".

Conference call adjourned at 8:08 p.m., October 16, 1994.