

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
COMFORT INN, BISMARCK ND**

November 14, 2024
1:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 1:00pm by Chairman Murray Strom. Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence observed for POW/MIAs and serving veterans.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Steven Anderson | Trish Hodny (TEAMS) | Tom Ryan (TEAMS) |
| Brian Bartlett | Lamar Kruckenberg | Cynthia Schlosser |
| Joe Best | Gary Maddock | Murray Strom |
| Jim Hapala | Vernon Laning | Jacob Volk |
| Dave Hilleren | | |

Absent:

Jim Verwey – Excused Hal Weninger - Unexcused

Guests:

Mark Openshaw, Attorney, Attorney General's Office
Dani Hopkins, Governor's Office

Chairman Strom asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion to approve Agenda by Vernon Laning, 2nd by Jack Volk. Motion carried unanimously.

Training on Open Records, Open Meetings, HIPAA, and Roberts Rules (Handout)

– Mark Openshaw, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office.

Mr. Openshaw is the Department's attorney. He graduated from UND Law School in May 2024 and passed the bar in June 2024.

There is a template available to use when responding to an open records request.

Recessed for subcommittee meetings.

Chairman Strom reconvened the full committee at 4:00pm

Shirley Olgeirson, ND National Guard Historian

Spoke on her work in helping to put in place an All-Military Museum. It will be located on the State Grounds in Bismarck. (slide presentation) The cost of the Museum is estimated to be \$78million. There is already \$20 million set aside. Hopefully, the State will do a 1:1 match of general funds. Fundraising has already started with the help of outside organizations.

Video presentation on serving in the military and the importance of having an All-Military Museum.

December 3, 2024, there is an Open House Legislative Event that ACOVA members are invited to attend.

ND Cares: Michelle Gauvin-Panos, Director

Spoke on the Governor's Challenge activities and events. She asked members how they got their information if they use social media or tv or radio.

ND Assoc. of County & Tribal Veterans Service Officers; Chris Deery, President, Cass County VSO

There was an article in The Fargo Forum regarding grants available for small businesses. The Association really wants to get the word out to veterans to work with accredited people to file claims instead of the "sharks" that bill veterans for giving them assistance. He talked about helping incarcerated veterans by going to the jails and prison, hoping to give those veterans a second chance. The Fall CVSO and Tribal Conference was held Oct 23-25 in Mandan.

ND Veterans Home Governing Board, Vernon Laning, Chair

Deferred to Veterans Home Administrator for a report.

ND Veterans Home: Dane Grebel, Administrator

On Veterans Day, KFGO broadcasted from the Veterans Home and interviewed three veterans who spoke on their military experience. The Administrator gave a 20-minute interview also. The Veterans Home is understaffed by four RNs and five CNAs, some are working double shifts to cover the shortage. The 2025-2027 budget was submitted, and Mr. Grebel will be testifying at the Legislature. He worked with Attorney General's Office, and it was determined there are no current or pending litigation going on with the Veterans Home, Governing Board, or ACOVA.

ND DVA Report – Commissioner Lonnie Wangen [POWER POINT PRESENTATION]
Update on office activities.

Dani Hopkins, Governor’s Office

Spoke on the Committee on Military Friendliness in North Dakota and other activities associated with the Governor’s Office.

Chairman Strom clarified that if someone is not on the agenda, he does not have to let them speak.

His question for the Roundtable: What your favorite place is in the U.S. / outside the U.S.

Committee recessed.

November 15, 2024

Committee reconvened at: 9:00am

Meeting called to order at 9:00am by Chairman Murray Strom. Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence observed for POW/MIAs, and those serving overseas.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Steven Anderson | Trish Hodny (TEAMS) | Tom Ryan (TEAMS) |
| Brian Bartlett | Lamar Kruckenberg | Cynthia Schlosser |
| Joe Best | Gary Maddock | Murray Strom |
| Jim Hapala | Vernon Laning | Jacob Volk |
| Dave Hilleren | | |

Absent:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Jim Verwey – Excused | Hal Weninger - Unexcused |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

Guests:

***Motion by Vernon Laning to accept September 2024 minutes, second by Joe Best.
Motion passed unanimously.***

Discussion on next meeting:
***Consensus of committee that the next ACOVA meeting to be held February 13 & 14,
2025, Comfort Inn, Bismarck ND.***

Chairman Strom opened the floor for discussion on appointment to the ND Veterans Home Governing Board. Two names have been put forward: David Schall and Dave Peterson. There was discussion on each nominee.

Motion by Cindy Schlosser to name Dave Schall to the North Dakota Veterans Home Governing Board, second by Jack Volk. Motion carried unanimously.

Veterans Affairs Subcommittee – report by Joe Best, Secretary
Vern Laning, Chairman.

Reviewed Fund 410 funds with no requests for policy changes. Reviewed Veterans Aid Loan program reports and investments. Reviewed ND DVA's 2023-2025 budget and 2025-2027 budget request. Waiting for Governor's budget address on December 4th to see what is being accepted for the 2025-2027 budget. Reviewed past Audits updates. No new business to report.

***Motion by Joe Best to accept minutes as presented, second by Lamar Kruckenberg.
Motion passed unanimously.***

Chairman Strom reported that Governor Burgum's name was going forward for Secretary of Interior.

Legislative Subcommittee – report by Jake Volk, Secretary
Brian Bartlett, Chairman.

Met with Legislative Council to review legislative items. All passed except for National Guard License Plates. We, ACOVA, are in agreement with the Council.

***Motion by Jack Volk to accept minutes as presented, second by LaMar Kruckenberg .
Motion passed unanimously.***

PWTF & Appeals Subcommittee

PWTF Subcommittee – report by Dave Hilleren, Secretary
Jim Verwey, Chairman

Reviewed Fund 410, status of Postwar Trust Fund, status of Patriotic License Plates, and status of Income Tax Return Check Off. Discussed increasing Veterans Gaming Tax with 50% of tax to go to PWTF, this is to be returned to Legislative Council for consideration. No requests for PWTF monies.

Appeals Subcommittee – report by Dave Hilleren
Jim Verwey, Chairman

No appeals.

Motion by Dave Hilleren to accept PWTF and Appeals minutes as presented, second by Steve Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Report: Talked about getting a Minute Man Missile for the All Military Memorial.

Roundtable Discussion:

Chairman Strom's question to the members was "What your favorite place is in the U.S. and/or outside the U.S."

Trish Hodny: Overseas is Turkey, went back last October. The first time she went was when she was in the military. In the US, anywhere she can go and relax.

Tom Ryan: In the States, the Black Hills are always a good time. In Europe, has family members in Germany and was stationed in Germany in the military. Yesterday the presentations were excellent.

Cathy: Enjoyed everywhere I've gone in the U.S. Italy is my favorite overseas.

Dan: In the States, Monterey California, he was stationed there in the military. Overseas it would be Germany.

Lonnie Wangen: anywhere in the United States. Visiting third world countries has made him very thankful for what he has.

Vernon Laning: Seeing military sites in Hawaii. Outside U.S. he went on an African safari and enjoyed seeing animals.

Steve Anderson: meeting went well, still learning things. Anywhere he can ride his motorcycle in the States is enjoyable. Would prefer to stay in D.C. for a week rather than going overseas.

Dane Grebel: Meeting was good; Mark Openshaw's presentation was very good. Never travelled outside of the US. Enjoys going to Arizona in February/March.

Lamar Kruckenberg: Learned that the National Guard doesn't get a headstone marker and that is very upsetting. If he goes to Fort Lauderdale, it means he is going on a cruise ship. Panama was interesting.

Joe Best: good meeting. Would like to get back to Australia, enjoyed Hong Kong island. Stateside, it's all good.

Cindy Schlosser: Appreciated Mark's presentation and meeting Dani Hopkins. In the US, she likes the Superstition Mountains near Phoenix. Out of country, she has been to places from being in the military. Really enjoyed Churchill Manitoba near Hudson Bay. She was able to view sea otters and Beluga whales, but mainly watched the polar bears.

Jim Hapala: Enjoying the meeting. Been in all 50 states because of his work. Put 196,000 miles on his motorcycle. Enjoys North Dakota the best.

Dave Hilleren: Meetings are getting more interesting. Likes the interaction of the new members. Places in the State, he has a home in Sturgis and enjoys the Black Hills. Likes Sedona, AZ but it's getting more commercial. Really enjoyed New Zealand, the landscape really changes throughout the country.

Gary Maddock: Mark's presentation was good, learned a lot. Saw a lot of countries overseas from being in the military. Germany was his favorite country. Would like to go to Ireland. Still has 5 states to go before saying he has been to all the states. He has the best of two worlds, ND in the summer and Havasu, AZ in the winter.

Jake Volk: lots of good presentations, very good meeting. Enjoys travelling in the U.S., lots of motorcycle riding at Bear Tooth, probably his favorite place to ride. Germany is his favorite place overseas.

Brian Bartlett: meeting with legislative council was beneficial. Would be nice if they met earlier. Like going different places, seeing different things. Hawaii was fantastic.

Experienced a lot in Kosovo, the people there don't have much but the architecture was amazing.

Commissioner Wangen spoke on the pyramid in Nekoma, ND. Used by military for three days, then shut down. Once it got up and running NARAD took over everything. One of Shark Tank people has since bought it. The Cavalier Air Station also has a pyramid. The Commissioner suggested having a ACOVA meeting at one of these sites.

Murray Strom: being in the military enabled him to travel to different places. Utah is an interesting state. Meeting was good,

A Video was played about a North Dakota veteran receiving a car from Progressive.

Motion to adjourn by Jake, second by Brian Bartlett. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Jim Verwey
Secretary