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NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
American Legion, Fargo, North Dakota
January 31, 1983

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Paul Aaberg. Those in attendance were:

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

James Groven, Department Commander
Robert Hannah, Department Adjutant
Greg Seurer, Org. Rep.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Paul Aaberg, Dept. Cmdr.
Ken McGaughey, Dept. Adj.
Bill Stepp, Org. Rep.

AMERICAN LEGION

Milton Kane, Dept. Cmdr.
Vern Useldinger, Dept. Adj.
Gerald Taylor, Org. Rep.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Chuck Barstad, VFW Service Officer
Floyd Henderson, World War I
Bill Hill, Dept. Cmdr. AMVETS
Elmer Ekern, Dept. Adj., AMVETS
Elwood Wendt, AMVETS
Bernard Turany, Catholic War Veterans
Charles MacLaughlin, American Legion Service Officer
W. M. Williamson, State Director, Veterans Employment
Charles Code, Commandant, North Dakota Soldiers Home
Lloyd Zander, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs
Jack Hilleboe, Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs

OTHER IN ATTENDANCE

Iver Iverson, Legislative Committee, VFW
Joe Novak, Legislative Committee, American Legion
Harry Moore, American Legion
Louis Hanson, DAV
Jim Welder, Soldiers' Home
Lee Lamb, Department of Veterans Affairs
Bernard Wagner, Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs
Steve Armstrong, Vietnam Veterans of America
Jim Zeigler, Vietnam Veterans of America
John Cameron, Vietnam Veterans of America
Allan Matties, Vietnam Veterans of America
Bob Hanson, Vietnam Veterans of America
Greg Bowser, Vietnam Veterans of America

Ken McGaughey moved that this meeting be strictly for the purpose of discussing legislative matters. Motion seconded by Robert Hannah and carried.

S.B. 2014 - This is the budget for the Soldiers' Home. It was noted that the Soldiers' Home budget was cut about 18%. We asked that money be restored for food, heating, a fire alarm system, and maintenance of service contracts. We asked for an additional \$55,507. If we get this money restored, the budget will still be 11% below that of the last biennium. The first hearing has been held, but the bill has not yet been reported out of committee.

S.B. 2121 - This bill would change the organizations represented on the Administrative Committee, removing World War I. The first hearing has been held and it passed the Senate on January 7.

S.B. 2075 - This bill sought to place Memorial Day back to May 30. We appeared in support of this bill. The committee voted "do not pass," and the bill was killed.

S.C.R. 4009 - was submitted asking Congress to change the date of Memorial Day. This was passed in the Senate.

In discussion of the effort to return Memorial Day to its original date, Bill Stepp moved we seek resolutions from the veterans organizations at the next Department Conventions, and that we bring the issue back at the next legislative session. Motion seconded by Milt Kane and carried.

H.B. 1259 is a bill to provide the widow of the POW, upon his death, with his license plate, for her use until she dies or remarries. The Council opposed this bill and it was killed in the House.

S.B. 2414, sponsored by Senator Nething, provides that upon the death of the POW, the license number will be retired, and the license plate and a plaque will be presented to the family of the POW.

H.B. 1111 is a bill to use the interest collected on Veteran Aid Loans in an effort to collect delinquent loans. Discussion followed on whether this interest could be used to collect other delinquent loans, other than those under the new loan program. This bill passed the House and the hearing in the Senate is scheduled for February 4.

H.B. 1113 - We sought to include the spouses of female veterans for admittance to the Soldiers' Home. An amendment was sought to the bill. The County Veterans Service Officers, represented by John Meyer, asked that the bill be amended to open up membership to peacetime servicemen. The committee did not amend the bill and it passed the House. It will be heard in the Senate next week.

H.B. 1338 - This bill does the same thing John Meyer tried to get in an amendment to H.B. 1113. It was noted that a letter was sent by Ralph Hamre and John Meyer to Stan Wright and Ruth Meiers, Chairmen of the Social Welfare and Veterans Affairs Committees in the Senate and the House. It stated that their position was supported by the Director of the Veterans Administration, the Commandant of the Soldiers' Home, and three of the four veterans organizations.

It was noted that the legislative committee has contacted the majority and minority leaders of both the House and the Senate. They have agreed to sponsor a concurrent resolution to study the advisability and need for recognizing peacetime servicemen as veterans, and for providing them the same benefit that veterans receive, along with projected costs for this action. The resolution has not yet been introduced, but it is being prepared by the legislative council. They feel the study will be completed by January, 1984. Following that, we can take their findings to our Department conventions.

The opinion was expressed by several that the resolution for study is the proper way to proceed and that we should continue to oppose H.B. 1338.

Mr. Williamson noted that he had invited John Meyer and Ralph Hamre to this meeting, or if they could not attend, they were invited to send a representative. As Executive Director, Mr. Williamson was directed to send a notice of future Veterans Coordinating Council meetings to the leadership of the County Veterans Service Officers.

Bill Stepp moved we continue opposition to H.B. 1338 and continue to support the study resolution. Motion seconded by Ken McGaughey and carried.

W. M. Williamson presented bills in the amount of \$132.80 for expenses involved with the legislative session, and per diem to attend this meeting. Marlys Schuler

presented a bill for \$130 for per diem and travel to attend this meeting. Bernard Turany moved the Council pay these bills, as well as the bill for coffee at this meeting. Motion seconded by Gerald Taylor and carried.

H.B. 1014 is the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. It has not been reported out of committee as yet. We did have a very good hearing.

H.B. 1117 provides that fee charges not be provided to dependents of POW/MIAs. We appeared in opposition to the bill. We hope that the bill will be amended in our favor.

H.B. 1105 is a bill which asked to have more of military retiree pay exempted from income tax. It was killed.

H.B. 1286 asks for credit for service time in teachers' retirement.

H.B. 1163 was introduced by the Attorney General to change the law to identify everyone who served as a veteran. This bill was killed in the House.

H.B. 1538 is a bill to change the membership of the Administrative Committee to include three representatives from the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Jim Zeigler, a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, spoke to the Council. "We are a VA recognized organization and currently our charter is in Congress. Most of us belong to other organizations. We feel we have separate needs. That's what brought us together. We are here to petition the Veterans Coordinating Council for a seat on the Council and to ask for support for H.B. 1538, which would give us three seats on the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs."

Discussion followed on the position the Council would take on this bill. For lack of a motion, it was determined the Council would take no stand. The Legislative Committee was instructed to take no action regarding this bill.

Bill Stepp moved the Council change the by-laws to include the Vietnam Veterans of America as counsel and resource on the Council. Motion seconded by Vern Useldinger and carried.

It was suggested the next meeting of the Council be held in Valley City on March 28, 1983, starting at 8:00 a.m.

Lloyd Zander noted that the delinquent loan experience has been 7.2%. Of a total loaned of \$2,033,000, there is \$146,193.48 found to be delinquent.

The meeting was adjourned.