

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
Veterans of Foreign Wars Clubrooms, Jamestown, North Dakota
December 10, 1984

The meeting was called to order by President Greg Seurer. Those in attendance were:

AMERICAN LEGION

Howard V. Erickson, Dept. Cmdr.
Vern Useldinger, Dept. Adj.
Milt Kane, Council Rep.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Ken McGaughey, Dept. Adj.
Bill Stepp, Council Rep.
Harold Carnahan, Council Rep.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Elwyn Rhodes, Dept. Cmdr.
Robert Hannah, Dept. Adj.

AMVETS

Dennis Thomson, Dept. Cmdr.
Elmer Ekern, Dept. Adj.
Bill Hill, Council Rep.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Julius Wedman, President, County Veterans Service Officers Ass'n.
Joe Appert, President, Vietnam Veterans of America
Jim Swenson, Vice President, Vietnam Veterans of America
Ron Zeller, Chairman, VVA Legislative Committee
W.M. Williamson, State Director, Veterans Employment & Training
Lloyd Zander, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs
Keith Kiser, Administrative Officer, Veterans Affairs
James Welder, Commandant, Veterans Home
Floyd Henderson, Veterans of World War I, Inc.
LeRoy Lamb, Acting Executive Director
Chuck Barstad, VFW Service Officer
Gayle Syverson, Chairman, Legislative Committee

OTHERS

Bernie Wagner, Chairman, Subcommittee on Veterans Home
Curt Twete, Chairman, Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs
Ted Will, member, Legislative Committee
Frank Gathman, VA Center Director
Dr. David Engstrom, VA Hospital
Bill Disher
Cathy Halgunseth, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, acting secretary

President Seurer asked those in attendance to identify themselves and their connection with the Coordinating Council.

Howard Erickson moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting. Al Rhodes seconded and the motion passed.

Ken McGaughey presented the treasurer's report:

<u>Balance on hand - Last Council Meeting</u>		
Passbook Savings - First National Bank & Trust, Fargo	\$ 946.16	
Checking Account - First National Bank & Trust, Fargo	<u>1046.95</u>	\$1993.11

Receipts

None

Disbursements

Commercial Printing	\$ 68.00	\$ 68.00
		<u>\$1925.11</u>
Balance, Checking Account, December 10, 1984	\$ 978.95	
Balance, Savings Account, December 10, 1984	<u>946.16</u>	\$1925.11

Vern Useldinger moved the report be accepted. Seconded by Howard Erickson and carried.

The appointment of Bill Stepp as VFW representative was an interim one. Ted Will of Bismarck will now be taking over that position.

Gayle Syverson reviewed the proposed legislation for the upcoming session. He had met with Bruce Askland of the Legislative Council and Bob Udland of the Attorney General's office to discuss wording of a bill in regards to definition of a veteran. He reported that everything was in order and the changes of line 1, page 8 and lines 15 and 16 on page 9 have been included in the finalized version of the bill. No amendments are needed to the bill at this time. Since the bill relating to the change of Memorial Day had already been accepted, no discussion took place. The relocation of the Commissioner's office was discussed next. Gayle proposed additional wording to line 13 - "The Commissioner shall provide a claims division be located in the same city as the principle office of the Veterans' Administration." It was decided to add the word "to" before "be located". Milt Kane moved to approve the additional wording and Dennis Thomson seconded. It carried. Gayle read a letter he received from Jack Hilleboe in which Jack was questioning if the Department of Veterans Affairs had the authority to introduce the bill regarding the move of the Commissioner's office. Gayle wondered that if the Department could not sponsor that bill, if the agency could sponsor any bill. Discussion followed on who should introduce the bill. Since Friday, December 14, is the last day for introducing bills before the Legislature a decision had to be made who should do it. The alternative to the department was individual Legislators. Bill Williamson suggested they keep it nonpartisan. President Seurer wondered if the Council couldn't direct or request Lloyd to introduce the bill. A motion was made by Dennis Thomson to request the Commissioner to introduce the bill on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs as an agency bill. Bill Hill seconded and the motion passed. Lloyd stated he will submit the bill subject to possible overruling by the Administrative Committee. The Committee members will be contacted to see if they have any objections to Lloyd presenting it. A comment was made that the fiscal note does not have to be attached to the bill outlining the cost of the move. Lloyd explained that the Legislative Council will request the fiscal note when the bill comes before them. The last bill Gayle spoke on was relating to the admittance of the VVA to the Administrative Committee. Joe Appert was called upon to give a few words on the subject. He stated that the VVA has achieved 686 members so far and by December 31 will have the necessary 750 members to be eligible for voting membership on the Committee. It was recommended that verification of membership from the individual chapters would be needed. This information is to be sent to President Seurer and to Gayle Syverson so he may go ahead with work on the bill. Dennis Thomson moved that if the VVA made their deadline of December 31, 1984 with 750 members that the law be rewritten to include them on the Administrative Committee. Elmer Ekern seconded and it carried. Bill Williamson did raise objections to the need of verification, but was overruled.

Discussion then turned to the make-up of the Administrative Committee. It was thought that 15 members would be to many to be truly effective. Perhaps 10 members would be better. Howard Erickson moved to change the number of committee members to two representatives from each veterans organizations to take effect

only if the VVA is admitted. It was seconded by Al Rhodes and carried.

Milt Kane reported he had received a letter from Sven E. Nicholds, a District Commander of the American Legion. Mr. Nicholds expressed concern in how the Attorney General's office oversees the games of chance in the state. President Seurer was instructed to forward the letter to the proper committee on gaming.

Joe Appert took the floor with some facts and figures about the Vietnam Bond Sinking Fund and the Veterans Postwar Trust Fund. Accompanied by handouts, he told the group that approximately \$9,000,000 will be transferred from the Sinking Fund to the General Fund on November 1, 1986. According to the Office of Management & Budget, at this date there has been a total of \$15,779,231 taken from the fund. Joe suggested taking whatever the remaining balance is and transferring it into the Post War Trust Fund or in a fund in which there would be an investment made. "Even though it would be a long shot to get the money - nothing ventured, nothing gained " he stated. This money would be used for the Veterans Home and other needs of the North Dakota veteran. Bill Williamson brought up the fact that the Legislative Assembly transferred a General Fund appropriation of \$17 million to the Sinking Fund. At any time, the Legislature could have taken the \$17 million out to repay the General Fund, but did not because of good fiscal management. Going after the \$6 million which is left after the repayment to the General Fund is not a bad idea. Discussion was generated on the best way to deal with this issue. Milt Kane moved that the Legislative Council should meet with the Office of Management & Budget and in a Legislative Committee hearing remind them of their pledge to maintain the \$4,000,000 balance in the Post War Trust Fund. Howard Erickson seconded and it carried. Howard Erickson then moved that the Legislative Committee pursue the transfer of the remaining balance of the Vietnam Bond Sinking Fund into the Post War Trust Fund and the maintenance of the Post War Trust Fund of at least \$4 million. Al Rhodes seconded and it passed.

President Seurer asked for a report from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Lloyd stated that on August 14, he and Keith attended a budget hearing at the Capitol and it went well. The Department was recently audited by the State Auditor' office and no recommendations were made. The governor has appointed Waldemar Johnson of Fargo to fill in Pete Helms remaining term on the Administrative Committee. Certificates of appreciation were given to Ernie Schmit and Ed Hinkle for their service of the Administrative Committee.

Keith Kiser gave a report on the departments loan program.

Cash Balance July 1, 1984	\$257,990.50
Granted 60 Loans for a total of	97,800.00
Principle Collected	67,483.43
Interest Collected	9,167.91
Interest Refunded	2,698.13
Credit Bureau Fees	457.45
Overpayments	39.41
Cash Balance November 30, 1984	\$233,646.85
Accounts Receivable November 30, 1984	326,507.17
Total Cash and Accounts Receivable November 30, 1984	\$560,154.02

Lee Lamb gave an update on his activities in Bismarck. Mostly he is meeting with the legislators and learning his way around the Capitol.

Jim Welder reported on the budget cuts that were made in the Veterans Home budget. A few of them were in capitol improvements, a computer system, upgrading the

Commandant's residence and personnel requests. Money for the Veterans Home will be coming from the Post War Trust Fund and the Sinking Fund. Total cuts made were \$225,000 and Jim suggested meeting with the Legislative Committee to explain and review the budget.

Remarks were made by Bill Williamson concerning the appointments to the Administrative Committee by the new Governor. He told the members not to turn in their resignations. Curt Twete pointed out that the members are already considered resigned by January 1, 1985. Greg requested Jim Welder and Lloyd Zander contact their subcommittee members and inform them of the procedure they should use if they wish to remain on the committee.

Julius Wedman had nothing new to report to the Council on the County Veterans Service Officers Association.

Bill Williamson reported that the Emergency Job Training Act was doing very well. North Dakota was given a goal of 75 and is 153% of that goal. A grant of \$55,000 sought by the Employment Service will be used to promote veterans preference in the state. Bill stated that North Dakota is first in the nation in the placing of disabled veterans and third in the nation in placing all veterans.

Frank Gathman talked on the subject of cutback in the Veterans Administration benefits program. He mentioned that as of January 6, Christian W. Wingire will be the new Assistant Director at the Fargo VA.

A presentation given by Dr. Engstrom was on MEDIPP (Medical District Initiated Planning Process) and how it affects the community.

President Seurer questioned Lee Lamb about finding any secretarial assistance in Bismarck the Council could use. Lee said that Joe Novak could provide the service at \$8 per hour. Both Joe Novak and Gayle Syverson will be going through all the bills and will contact committee members when they see a bill pertaining to veterans coming up.

The Legislative Committee decided a reception instead of a Legislative Supper would be better. The reception would be held near the end of the session to show appreciation to the Legislators for their support. The Committee will chose the date later on.

Vern Useldinger reported he had checked the cost of Certificates of Appreciation and quoted the price of \$35.00 for 100. Dennis Thomson moved to authorize the printing of the certifiates pending the number of organizations belonging to the Administrative Committee. Bill Hill seconded and it passed.

Bob Hannah moved that the Council cover the secretary's expenses up to \$25.00 for todays recording of the minutes. Mile Kane seconded and it carried.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, March 25, 1985 at 10:00 a.m. A motion to have the meeting again in Jamestown was made by Dennis Thomson and Elmer Ekren seconded. It carried.

The meeting was adjourned by mutual consent of all present at approximately 4 p.m.