

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
Camp Grafton, Devils Lake, North Dakota
July 18 & 19, 1984

The meeting was called to order by President Milt Kane. The Council met jointly with the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs. Following introductions, Col. Ray Bohn, Deputy Adjutant General, presented a film on the history of the National Guard.

Bill Williamson presented a clarification of the intent of the Veterans Coordinating Council in their action taken to move the Department of Veterans Affairs to Bismarck.

The Administrative Committee then held a separate meeting. Those in attendance at the Coordinating Council meeting were:

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Elwyn Rhodes, Dept. Cmdr.
Robert Hannah, Dept. Adj.
Greg Seurer, Org. Rep.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Art Streed, Dept. Cmdr.
Ken McGaughey, Dept. Adj.
Chuck Barstad, Rep. Org. Rep.

AMVETS

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

AMERICAN LEGION

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

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Harold Schuh, County Veterans Service Officers
John Meyer, County Veterans Service Officers
Jim Zeigler, Vietnam Veterans of America
Jim Swenson, Vietnam Veterans of America
W. M. Williamson, State Director, Veterans Employment & Training Service

OTHERS

Mike Vandrovec, DAV
Harry Moore, American Legion
Dave Vandergon, Job Service Devils Lake
Iver Iverson, VFW

Vern Useldinger noted he feels the presentation just given by Bill Williamson reflected accurately on the discussion and action of the Veterans Coordinating Council on moving the Department of Veterans Affairs to Bismarck. This motion was unanimously passed.

Vern Useldinger moved the minutes be approved as distributed. Motion seconded by Ken McGaughey and carried.

Ken McGaughey presented the Treasurer's Report.

Balance on hand - last Council meeting		\$ 1,355.88
Passbook Savings - 1st National Bank & Trust	\$ 909.93	
Checking Account - 1st National Bank & Trust	445.95	

Receipts:

Interest on savings		23.91
		<u>\$ 1,379.79</u>

Discussion followed on veterans preference in employment. A suggested change to the law was received and considered by the Council. It was recommended that the Council do not try to change the law. It was felt that more people should become involved and knowledgeable regarding the law. People that should be available to serve on a board representing the veteran are the veteran organization service officers, County Veterans Service Officers, and local Veterans Employment Representatives from the Job Service. It was suggested that the County Veterans Service Officers place this subject on their annual training conference, and have the law explained so they will be more qualified to serve on these boards.

It was suggested that the Department of Veterans Affairs prepare a hand-out on the veterans preference law, as well as a form letter for appealing veterans preference. These could be used by local VETS, and County Veterans Service Officers in promotion of the program.

It was brought to the attention of the Council that there is no longer a surplus in the Vietnam Bonus Fund. This has been transferred to the Veterans Post War Trust Fund. The interest from this fund is to be used for veterans service and benefit.

Veterans organizations were reminded that they must chose people to serve on the legislative committee. The AMVETS noted the person representing them will be Gayle Severson of Bismarck. Harold Schuh will represent the County Veterans Service Officers Association.

Milt Kane reported that the results of the study committee on including peacetime servicemen as veterans for benefit and service were presented to the Legislative Interim Committee on June 26. He suggested specific changes in law to include these peacetime veterans, as agreed upon by the Veterans Coordinating Council. Bills will be prepared by Legislative Research to make these changes.

In discussion, it was noted that a bill will be prepared to move the Department of Veterans Affairs to Bismarck.

It was also reported that Job Service North Dakota will prepare the bill for a military retiree to draw Unemployment Compensation without having the retirement deducted from his unemployment. However, we will have to submit the bill and support it. Job Service will not testify on this bill.

The law on the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs must also be changed to remove World War I membership and include AMVETS membership.

A bill will also be prepared to change the date of Memorial Day.

It was suggested that during the legislative session, each veterans organization should ask their representative to communicate to their Department what they would like to have done, and the need for support from the grass-roots for a particular item at a particular time.

Vern Useldinger moved the Veterans Coordinating Council instruct the legislative committee to contact OMB and ask that they not take any money from the interest of the Post War Trust Fund, but let it accumulate, and oppose any depletion of this trust fund. Motion seconded by Art Streed and carried. It was also noted that they should inform leadership of both parties of their intent not to deplete this fund.

There will also be needed legislation on changes affecting the Veterans' Home. These will be prepared by Jim Welder.

Howard Erickson moved we seek legislation on all of the aforementioned items, with the exception of military credit for retirement for all state employees. Motion seconded

meeting. Motion seconded by Milt Kane and carried.

It was noted that it has been suggested to the Council that the Legislative Supper be held later, closer to the cross-over date of the bills.

Following discussion, Milt Kane moved we delay the legislative supper and that the legislative committee make a recommendation regarding timing. Motion seconded by Howard Erickson and carried.

Elmer Ekern moved the next meeting of the Veterans Coordinating Council be held November 1 & 2 in Jamestown. Motion seconded by Dennis Thomson and carried.

Jack Hilleboe, Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs, called on Curt Twete, Vice Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, to report on their meeting.

Mr. Twete noted that Pete Helm had been elected Chairman of the subcommittee. Their subcommittee moved that the Department of Veterans Affairs Subcommittee instruct the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to staff an office in Bismarck, by October 1, on a part-time basis, as determined by demand and legislative basis. The subcommittee also voted to delete from the Department of Veterans Affairs budget the portion pertaining to the funding of the office in Bismarck. It was felt that any bill to move the office to Bismarck would have a fiscal note attached.

Bernard Wagner, Chairman of the Veterans Home Subcommittee, reported to the Council. He noted the present membership at the Home is down, but it always is at this time of the year. They expect it to increase again during the winter.

Gordon LaMont was elected Vice Chairman of their subcommittee.

Chairman Wagner noted that the auditors are presently working at the Home. When Mr. Code retires this month, the audit will be complete before management of the Home is turned over to Jim Welder, the new Commandant.

The addiction counselor at the Home made a presentation to the subcommittee regarding the problem they have at the Home.

It has been suggested that bus trips be provided to the western part of the state, with members being able to secure a three day pass to be able to go back home to visit. They would then be able to take the bus back to the Home.

Vern Useldinger asked for a clarification of the motion by the Veterans Affairs subcommittee. Mr. Twete noted that they intend to man an office on a part-time basis as dictated by workload. The Administrative Committee feels it is premature to staff an office in Bismarck until the legislation to move the Department of Veterans Affairs to Bismarck is passed.

Jim Welder noted that he sent copies of all proposed legislative changes regarding the Veterans Home to the Attorney General to ascertain that all were correct and not in conflict with other laws. He has not yet had a response.

Reports were distributed on an inspection of the John Moses Hospital. The total project estimate to make the entire building usable for a nursing home is \$17,973,912. Jim Welder noted that basically the VA estimates show it would be cheaper to build a new nursing home than to renovate the present structure. The figures are based on a 132 bed facility.

Mr. Burton Sorenson presented the estimates from the VA. There are several options.