

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL
Minutes of the Reorganizational Meeting
July 23, 1990

The 1990-91 reorganizational meeting of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council was held at 9:30 am, Monday, July 23, 1990, at the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon, North Dakota.

The meeting was called to order by President Orlando "Duke" Ellingson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence given for our POW/MIAs. Motion was made to accept the minutes of the previous meeting as printed, seconded, passed.

The Treasurer's report was given by Ray Stelmachuk. Opening balance \$1,620.73, disbursements \$46.20, closing balance \$1,574.53. Motion to accept by Redlin, second by Halvorson, carried. No bills were presented.

The representatives from each organization introduced themselves. They were:

American Legion - Vern Useldinger, Adjutant, Earl Redlin, Org. Rep. and Curtis Twete, Commander.

Veterans of Foreign Wars - Ray Stelmachuk, Adjutant/QM.

Disabled American Veterans - Julius Wedman, Commander, Robert Hannah, Adjutant, Lloyd Halvorson, Past Department Commander.

AMVETS - Kenneth Evenson, Commander, Elmer Ekern, Adjutant and Vigo Pedersen, Past Department Commander.

Vietnam Veterans of America - Not represented.

Auxiliary Presidents - VFW, Mavis Kukes and DAV, Sophie Beutler. Letter from Dotty Evenson, AMVETS.

Honorary members present were Milt Kane, Leo Swenson, James Welder, Greg Seurer, Dave Schmidt, Bernie Wagner, Donald Colston.

Other guests were Suzanne Kime, Paul Aaberg, Dennis Berg, Ron Otto.

Reports

Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs

Bernie Wagner introduced Ken Anderson, Veterans Home assistant.

Paul Aaberg gave the report for the Department of Veterans Affairs subcommittee. William Haug was named chairman of the subcommittee and Aaberg the vice chairman. They approved a budget that was \$700 under the 89-90 biennium budget. They were requesting \$15,000 from the Post War Trust Fund to complete the study on veterans' needs in North Dakota.

Chairman Wagner listed the new members on the ACOVA.

Chuck Godke gave the report for the Veterans Home subcommittee. The cost per resident per day is \$30.37. \$10,000 has been repaid on the embezzlement with \$4339 remain and it is hoped that the bonding company will cover it. Jim Savageau is leaving as addiction counselor and Lou Weber from the State Penitentiary will replace him. The Governor's "No Smoking" policy is being implemented. Progress is continuing on the construction of the nursing addition, to be known as the Special Care Unit. A change in state law that exempts 100% service connected residents compensation as income will be requested so that they will pay more

for their stay. Jim Welder gave an overview of costs and fees. Most of the tape was inaudible. An inaudible motion was made, seconded and passed, most likely to accept the reports.

Bernard Beach and Harold Carnahan from the VFW arrived at 10:00 am.

Veterans Administration

Donald Colston reported that he feels the attempt to move the claims division to St. Paul is dead but that there is a possibility that the Regional Office could be moved from its present location to make room for the Federal court. He has requested that the RO be collocated at the Medical Center. His plan is to do the design work in FY91 and the construction in FY92 at the cost of \$2 million.

Employment Security

Leo Swenson reported that \$55,000 has been allocated for training a maximum of 16 Vietnam, disabled or minority veterans.

Veterans Organizations Resolutions

The American Legion submitted a resolution RESOLVED, That we petition the North Dakota Legislative Assembly to adopt a resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution, for ratification by the states, specifying that Congress and the States shall have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the Flag of the United States.

Commander Twete articulated on the proposed resolution. Motion by Twete to accept the resolution, second by Hannah, carried.

This ended side one of the tape that was almost impossible to understand and sounded like a riot in a chicken coop.

AMVETS presented a resolution RESOLVED, that Article VII, Quorum Provision, of the Council by-laws be rewritten to ease the quorum requirements and that a second section be added to deal with habitual absenteeism, the whole Article to read: (see by-laws change).

Elmer Ekern explained the purpose of the resolution was to make it easier to meet quorum but also provided a way to remove organizations that habitually failed to meet quorum. Most meetings the past two years were not legal according to our by-laws. Motion by Ekern to accept the resolution, second by Vigo Pedersen. Question by Halvorson how we could vote without a quorum when VVA was not present. Leo Swenson stated that the VVA was told two years ago to verify their membership and had not done so.

Ekern and Pedersen withdrew their motion. Motion by Ekern to remove the VVA from voting membership for failure to meet membership requirements. Second and carried. Motion by Ekern to accept the AMVETS resolution, second and carried. (Much of the discussion was not recorded due to taping problems.)

Committee on Legislative Director and Job Description.

Ekern presented the job description for the position of a

legislative liaison director that his committee was proposing. Motion to accept the description, second by Redlin, carried.

Motion to accept the amendment to the by-laws to provide for a director with removal of "stipend" from the section, second and carried.

Committee on Veterans Preference

Milt Kane reported that not much was done except to discuss the veterans preference situation because there was a court case in progress and not much could be done at the present time. Bob Hannah asked about denying preference for 30% or less compensable. Kane said this was not so. Kane said the discussion was to find ways to get preference implemented instead of ignoring or finding loopholes.

Earl Redlin discussed the Post War Trust Fund and what to do to keep the Fund intact as required by law. Most of the discussion was inaudible. An inaudible motion was made, seconded and carried.

Election of Officers

Ken Evenson was nominated for president by Vigo Pedersen, elected unanimously.

Discussion was held on who to nominate for vice president since the VVA was not present and should be in cycle for it. Motion by Hannah to name someone from the VFW. Jerome Bixby nominated and elected.

Secretary/Treasurer - Elmer Ekern nominated Ray Stelmachuk who declined. Ray Stelmachuk nominated Bob Hannah who declined. Bob Hannah nominated Vern Useldinger who declined. DAV nominated Elmer Ekern who declined due to conflict of interest since he drew up the by-laws change to pay the secretary/treasurer. Ekern elected.

Unfinished Business

Motion by Ekern to remove "stipend" from Section 2 of Article VI, second and carried.

Evenson and Ekern took over their elected positions.

Lloyd Halvorson asked what was to be done about the deer hunt and asked to be removed from the committee. Ekern said he called the Guard last year to set it up but most of the work was done through the Barnes County Service Office, and he would want to be excused from the committee. Bernie Wagner said there was not much demand to hunt but that the Barnes CVSOS would handle it.

Vigo Pedersen asked if there was enough money in the bank to give a gratuity to Ray and Milt for their work the past years. No motion was made and the subject was dropped.

Motion by Vern Useldinger to approve all action taken today including what was done prior to the passing of the resolutions, second by Wedman and carried.

Ron Otto, Morton CVSOS, spoke on the veterans cemetery. He said a federal grant was available to help with construction but that the Guard did not apply for it. Grant information was sent

to them in Sept 89 and Jan 90. Milt said he talked to Washington to see if the project could be shut down and started up with matching funds. Ron said the reason for failure to apply seems to be that National Guard cannot be buried in the National portion and Gen. Macdonald does not want to do this. Ekern asked about the General's comment that the state gave the Guard authority to build the cemetery but no money was appropriated and the work done by the Guard could not be used as matching funds. Motion by Wedman that the Council send a letter to the Governor stating that we would like to see matching funds applied for and express our concern that this has not been done, second by Bernard Beach, carried.

Time and Place

The next meeting will be held Monday, November 19, 1990, in Bismarck. The secretary is to contact the Comfort Inn for rooms and a meeting room. Starting time to be at 1:00 pm.

Leo Swenson asked that all organizations appoint two members to the legislative committee. They are to send the names to the secretary.

The meeting was adjourned by President Evenson and the Council members prepared to attend the groundbreaking for the Special Care Unit.

NOTE: The quality of the tape recording of this meeting was extremely poor. We will try to rectify this before the next meeting.

Submitted by



Elmer M. Ekern
Secretary/Treasurer