

Friday May 1, 1998

ND Veterans Coordinating Council

The meeting was called to order by President Joe Smith, Roll Call of members be taken,
American Legion:

Joe Bosch representing Jim Clifford
Dave Schmidt present
Joe Smith present

AmVets:

Elwood Wendt present
Rudy Jenson present
Joe Novak present

Disabled American Veterans

George Trent present
Robert Evans present
Rick Ryan present

Veterans of Foreign Wars:

Dale Ronning representing Ted Will
Ray Stalmachuk present
Chuck Barstad representing Ted Krogen

Vietnam Veterans of America:

Bob Hanson representing Willie Warner
Mark Swartz present
John Mullen present

Joe Smith noted that this special meeting was limited to discussion on the Veterans Cemetery License Plate issue only.

President Smith asked for the reading of the March 13, 1998 meeting. The minutes were read and corrections in regard to veterans' cemetery license plate were noted. Bob Hanson also asked that his closing remarks be added to the minutes.

Joe Novak was concerned as to the communication on the meeting notice. Evans responded that with the timing of the meeting and other commitments in his office a fax was sent to all the Adjutants asking them to contact their respective members. It was noted that the fax was very vague in this regard. Evans apologized for the screw up.

President Smith noted that two issues before the council this evening are the motions that passed at the council meeting of July 18, 1997, in regard to the use of veteran's organization logos on the veteran's cemetery license plate, which passed. The second is the motion that was passed at the December 5, 1997 regarding use of the military emblems on the veterans cemetery license plate. Those are the two conflicting issues. The one that passed at the December 5, 1997 meeting was a motion by Rick Ryan that "the legislative committee be instructed to continue working on the veterans cemetery license plate issue with the Department of Transportation using Armed Forces emblems with the caveat to discuss using the veterans organization logos in the future" 2nd by Ray Stelmachuk. The motion passed unanimously.

At the CVSO training conference held in Bismarck a week ago Keith Kiser gave a presentation on the license plate, and the statement he made was that the Department of Transportation was looking for a consensus of the veterans organizations as to what should appear on the license plate. Kiser said that until the matter was resolved the license plate would be put on hold. (Joe was paraphrasing).

Joe Novak asked for permission to read the motions of the July 18, 1997 meeting to offer a clarification of the issue at hand. He stated definitions of the wording of the December 5, 1997 motion that passed.

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Rick responded stated that he felt he understood his intent on the motion. He was asked what his intent was on the future? Rick responded by saying we would get a license plate issued and then we would go back and get the veterans organizations, that was my intent.

Ray Stelmachuk and Dave Schmidt offered comments on their understanding if the motion. Dave also stated that when a body makes a motion and then at a following meeting makes another motion, the last motion is the ruling motion. Bob Hanson wanted to clarify the total motion being discussed. He also wanted everyone to keep in mind the reason for this whole program is to raise funds for the cemetery. DOT is the controlling entity in this whole program.

Evans commented on the CVSO training conference remarks made by Keith Kiser. Novak then offered remarks on meetings with DOT and Roughrider Industries.

Joe Smith read letter from VFW Department Commander Ted Will, not giving the council permission to use the VFW emblem dated April 29, 1998. Stelmachuk restated the feeling of members based on discussion held at the fall district meetings. Bob Hanson asked if everyone has seen a copy of the bill, and asked all to look at the overall intent of the bill. He also explained the application in regard to applying for the plate. Gerald Balzer stated that Kiser said we could even put the logo of our particular unit on it if we wanted to. He also stated that he has three discussions with the prime sponsor of the bill, Al Soukup, the latest was last evening. Soukup said, "my major purpose in introducing the bill was to fund the cemetery." He stated, "I understand that over 50% of the individuals eligible for internment in the cemetery have never served in the military branch of service. Therefore in order to maximize the number of individuals paying the extra fees into the cemetery fund I favor using the emblem of your choice."

John Mullen spoke, "Al Soukup sent out a letter specifically to Jim Coats, which in itself stated that there was never any doubt in my mind that there was never going to anything more that the branch of service logo. If we don't get this resolved then lets cancel the whole issue. I feel the vanity plate is complete and different issue and should be addressed at some different time. I am a VFW and Legion member and feel this will cloud the whole issue. As the bill's sponsors we should have something to say about how this should be handled.

Dave Schmidt offered some comments. Dale Ronning also his remarks on this issue. Dale Ronning, VFW offered a motion that this council would go on record recommending to the DOT the use of the branches of service (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps) and not the veterans' organization emblems. 2nd by Ray Stelmachuk, VFW. Discussion followed. Caucus was called for. The vote was called:

Am. Leg.	yes
AmVets	no
DAV	yes
VFW	yes
VVA	no

Motion failed.

Joe Novak AmVets offered a motion, that the president of the coordinating council be instructed to notify DOT immediately, that the coordinating council unanimously favors a Veterans Cemetery License plate with the emblem of the applicant's choice of branch of service. To include veterans organization of those with state organization approval, auxiliary of those organizations also with the state organization approval, and the US Army Reserve and a general Eagle emblem. Motion 2nd by Rudy Jenson, AmVets. Discussion followed. The vote was called:

Am. Leg.	no
AmVets	yes
DAV	no
VFW	no
VVA	yes

Motion failed.

Bob Evans DAV offered a motion to write a letter to DOT withdrawing the veterans cemetery license plate program. 2nd by George Trent DAV. The vote was called:

Am. Leg.	no
AmVets	no

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DAV yes
VFW yes
VVA no

Motion failed.

Joe Novak AmVets offered a motion for the president to write director of ND DOT that we are unable to arrive at a consensus. We would encourage DOT to make available a plate using their discretion as to logos that are to be used. 2nd by Judy Jenson AmVets. Discussion followed. The vote was called:

Am. Leg. no
AmVets yes
DAV no
VFW no
VVA no

Motion failed.

Dave Schmidt offered a clarification as to the Legions standpoint on this issue.

Rick Ryan DAV offered a motion that the president inform the DOT to issue a license plate for those armed forces and veterans organizations and auxiliary organizations for which we now have permission to use. We further recommend that those veterans' organizations and auxiliaries that wish to join in the future be allowed 2nd by Joe Novak AmVets. The vote was called:

Am. Leg. no
AmVets yes
DAV yes
VFW no
VVA yes

Motion failed.

George Trent DAV offered a motion to use the service emblems only. After the plate is in use a request by council approval be taken to legislators on use of veteran's organizations logos. 2nd by Dave Schmidt Am. Leg. The vote was called:

Am. Leg. yes
AmVets no
DAV yes
VFW yes
VVA yes

Motion failed.

Ray Stelmachuk VFW offered a motion that we use only the service emblems only for an interim period of time and then bring it back up to the council. If the vote at that time is to expand it we will. 2nd by John Mullen VVA. Discussion followed. The vote was called.

Am. Leg. yes
AmVets no
DAV yes
VFW yes
VVA yes

Motion failed.

Dave Schmidt Am. Leg. offered a motion that the NDVCC chairman call a special meeting of the voting members of the council to meet with the chairman and vice chairman of the House and Senate transportation committees and the sponsors of HB 1346 and that such meeting take place early next week. 2nd by Joe Bosch Am. Leg. Discussion followed. The vote was called.

Am. Leg. yes
AmVets no
DAV yes
VFW no
VVA no

Motion failed.

Ray Stelmachuk VFW offered a motion to use the service emblems only and allow AmVets to use their emblem.

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Motion dies for lack of a 2nd.

Motion by Rick Ryan DAV offered a motion to use the branches of the armed forces for the first issuance of the plate and work within the council to reach a decision on the veteran's organization by Memorial Day 1999. 2nd by Bob Evans DAV. The vote was called:

Am. Leg.	yes
AmVets	no
DAV	yes
VFW	yes
VVA	yes

Motion failed.

Bob Evans made a motion to adjourn. 2nd by Dale Ronning. Meeting was adjourned.

The president having received two letters requesting the convening of a special meeting called the meeting to order.

John Mullen VVA offered a motion for the council to proceed with the branches of service logos and the council will ask for a meeting with the prime sponsor or sponsors of the bill to define the original intent of the bill and that we will abide by their intent. 2nd by Rick Ryan DAV. Discussion followed. Caucus called for. The vote was called:

Am. Leg.	no
AmVets	yes
DAV	yes
VFW	yes
VVA	yes

Motion failed.

John Mullen VVA offered a motion for the council to proceed with the branch of service logos and the council will ask for a meeting with the prime sponsors of the bill to define the original intent of the bill and that we will abide by their intent. 2nd by Rick Ryan DAV. Discussion followed.

Joe Novak AmVets offered a substitute motion that the council president meet with the prime sponsor and determine legislative intent and the council will accept intent as our decision in using authorized logos. The president will report to DOT what the sponsor said. 2nd by Woody Wendt AmVets. Discussion followed. The vote for the substitute motion was called:

Am. Leg.	no
AmVets	yes
DAV	no
VFW	no
VVA	yes

substitute motion failed.

Caucus was requested. The vote for the original motion of John Mullen was called:

Am. Leg.	yes
AmVets	yes
DAV	yes
VFW	yes
VVA	yes

Motion passed.

Motion by Dave Schmidt Am. Leg. to adjourn. Bob Evans DAV 2nd the motion. Meeting was adjourned.