



North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council

P.O. Box 2047 • Williston, ND 58802-2047

JULY 24, 1999
VFW CLUB, MINOT, ND



The meeting was called to order by President John Mullen at 10:05am at the VFW Club in Minot, North Dakota. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, followed by the moment of silence for the POW/MIA's. Secretary Evans called the roll of members. A motion by Jerome Krejci to accept the minutes of the December meeting as printed, with a second by Dale Ronning, passed.

Evans gave a detailed treasurer's report, a copy is on file with the secretary. A motion by Bob Evans to accept the report, with a second by Schmidt, passed.



At the order of the President the agenda was shuffled. The first item of business was the election of a new president. Bob Hanson nominated James Fenstad for President, second by Dave Schmidt. Bob Evans called for unanimous ballot, second by Bob Hanson, passed. Election of Vice President, Jerome Krejci nominated Randy LeKander for Vice President, second by Bob Hanson. Dave Schmidt called for a unanimous ballot for Randy LeKander, second by Bob Evans, passed. Election of Secretary, Dave Schmidt nominated Robert Evans for Secretary/Treasurer, second by Dale Ronning. Dave Schmidt called for a unanimous ballot for Bob Evans, second by Bob Hanson, passed. Jim Fenstad then assumed the presidency.



Report of the Legislative Committee: Arnold Maier, "As veterans we were there for our fellow veteran in time of need. What went wrong? Today we fight like cats and dogs. Why? We have to start working together, we need to start compromising on issues. Lets mend our fences and start working together for the good of all veterans and America. The council's main function is auditing, drafting, and sponsoring legislation for veterans. The legislative committee is the workhorse of the council, and it is recommended that the members be from Bismarck for ease in being able to lobby for the Council's issues during the legislative session. Close scrutiny is needed to go over every bill being proposed as to determine the impact of service to veterans. Being an effective lobbyist he needs to be able to answer all questions posed by the legislature. I feel the legislative committee should be schooled on the issues and concerns of the council and should be present at all committee hearings, and daily lobbying at the capitol. I feel the committee was not knowledgeable on the operations and budgets of the Home and Commissioners Office. Many questions were raised on both issues. World War II Memorial, the legislature did not provide funding. I received the packet from the commissioner's office, the committee reviewed the packet. As it came to late and the committee had no authority from the council to provide action it was returned to the commissioner. We have a good organization and we need to continue working for the good of the veterans of North Dakota.



Robert Hanson presented a detailed report (copy on file with Secretary). Bob went through the hand out. The house cut both budgets, the senate was kinder and restored most the home budget. He stated that in the last few weeks of the session that the legislative committee was instructed not to talk with the legislature on the budgets. On veterans preference we offered to work with the legislature during the interim. A couple of bills were passed, one having to do with funding of private veteran's cemeteries. It is suggested that each member of the council take this report home read it and then place it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Report of Administrative Committee: Tom Moe offered his remarks, the committee met July 9,10 at Lisbon. We met with the resident council without the commandant being present. They are concerned about the free smoking status of the building. Sub-committee chairman for the home is Paul Aaberg. The Sub-committee chairman for Dept. of Veterans Affairs is Jerry Balzer. Reviewed the Trust Fund as we always do. The year ended with a plus balance. We are continuing to struggle with the priority system for dispersing funds and we will continue work on that. We went ahead with the recommendation of the Attorney General on a short-term lease with the Lisbon Park board, to establish a ballpark for the youth. The committee reviewed the evaluations of both the commissioner and the commandant. The staff at the Home is hesitant to have us there. The residents are happy to see us. The proposed dates of the committee meetings are Sept. 23,24 Fargo, Dec. 10,11 Bismarck, and Apr 21,22 Lisbon.

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Tom spoke on the World War II Memorial donation. Many states had appropriated funds for this but North Dakota did not. \$15,970 was appropriated from the Trust Fund representing the 15,970 casualties of World War II. The committee was hesitant to support it, but being the legislature did not provide funding for this, they agreed.

Tom followed this with further remarks. As the remarks were lengthy I will not write in detail. I will keep the tape for future reference. He did urge the council to set their agenda and start planning for the upcoming legislative session. He also urged the council to look into the hiring of a lobbyist, learn how to work together. Work on getting a good veteran contact in each legislative district. It was noted that the April meeting dates fall on Easter weekend. Further scheduling will take place. A special note is that the committee is subject to the states open meeting laws and a schedule of meetings is required.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OFFICE: Ray Harkama offered remarks on the operation of the office, budget and legislative session. (Full remarks are on tape and will be available). He reviewed the grant program, spending \$200,000 by June of this year. Funding is provided for the following; 1) Standdown for the Homeless Veterans Program, \$1,000. 2) World War II Memorial donation \$15,970. 3) Women's Memorial in Washington \$5,000. 4) Veterans Home activity Account \$15,000. 5) Gazebo project \$13,400. 6) ND Veterans Cemetery \$105,000. 7) Dept. of Veterans Affairs \$228,003. 8) Reinvest \$100,000 into the principle. Jeans Day Money: The office developed a brochure for veterans of North Dakota for use in the state. Money was provided to the Stanley transportation program for lodging of drivers.

REPORT OF THE NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME: Ken Anderson offered remarks on the Home operation, changes in resident makeup and budget, also accomplishments at the Home. (Full remarks are on tape and available).

OLD BUSINESS: Robert Hanson offered remarks on the promotion of the Veterans License Plate. Bob went over the proposal sent by the ad agency. He remarked that today only 765 plates have been sold. A brochure of 2 or 4 colors was discussed. It was noted that the council voted not to provide money for a booth at the State Fair. It was noted that the Legion is offering their space at the State Fair for publicity on the plate. Any VSO or veteran wishing to help should contact Jim Clifford. Suggestions were to use free PSA before use of private ads for TV and Radio. Discussion followed on the details of the proposal. It was suggested to use the most inexpensive means to put out a brochure for mail out use. A proposal was have a picture of the plate on one side and information on how to get one on the other side. It was also suggested that we try to come up with a final proposal by the next meeting. Dave Schmidt offered a motion that we develop an insert mailer with a picture of the plate on one side and the information on getting a plate on the other side, second by Bob Hanson, motion passed. A motion by Dave to have the committee get the information on the cost of producing a mailer and return this information to the council, second by Bob Hanson. Discussion followed and the motion passed. A committee of Bob Hanson, Jerry Balzer and Arnold Maier was appointed. A question was asked why we couldn't get a mailer into the mail-outs from the license bureau. It was discussed in detail. It was also suggested that we get a finished product and go back to DOT and see if they would add this to their mail-outs. It was also asked how many mailers will we need.

NEW BUSINESS: Resolutions from the organizations were read and approved as follows.

- 1) Development of new Veterans Preference and Priority Law for Veterans in North Dakota. A motion by Bob Hanson that we accept this resolution, second by Dave Schmidt, passed.
- 2) Have the Governor appoint a Veterans' representative to the North Dakota Workforce Development Board. Motion by Bob Evans to accept this resolution, second by Dale Ronning, motion passed.

A motion by Dave Schmidt that we request an audience with the Governor, recommending the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs be appointed to Work Force Development Board, Evans second the motion, and passed.

President Jim appointed a committee of Dave Schmidt, Bob Evans and Rick Ryan to put together a letter to the Governor.

Rick Ryan asked what action the council will take on the resolution passed on veteran's preference? A recommendation by Dave Schmidt that the Department Commanders appoint an individual from each Organization to set a plan of attack, and meet the evening prior to the next council meeting. The appointments must be made soon, so they can get to work on this. It was also noted that the council had looked at the Klinisky bill and had approved certain line items in the bill and disapproved others.

It was recommended that Rick Ryan and Ray Harkama serve as counsel and resource on this committee and also have copies of the prior bill and the draft proposal be available to the committee.

GOOD OF THE ORDER: Evans noted that the present supply of council stationary would be used before ordering new. Evans made note that the Secretary of State has mailed out the Lobbyist Report form. This needs to be completed and returned. It was also It was decided to register Arnold Maier as our interim lobbyist with the Secretary of State.

John Mullen offered a motion that we research the possibility of hiring a lobbyist, second by Bob Evans, passed. John Mullen and Tom Moe will look into this. Rick offered a subject for discussion at the next meeting, the need of an Executive Director. . Arnold Maier recommended that Bob Hanson submit their expenses on preparing the report

TIME AND PLACE: The next meeting will be held at the Expressway Inn at Fargo September 24,25, 1999 at 9:00am.

SCHEDULING CONCERN: Medora Veterans Weekend.

A motion by Dave Schmidt to adjourn, second by Jerome Krejci, passed. the meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.