

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
CONFERENCE CALL

January 31, 2011
12:05pm

Meeting called to order by Chairman Lyle Schuchard.

Roll Call:

Present:

John Adolf
Lee Finstad
Mike Fisher
Jeff Hall
John Hanson

Ken Hasby
Dave Hilleren
Orletta Kilen
Mark Landis
Ron Otto

Dean Overby
Carroll Quam
Lyle Schuchard
Jim Verwey

Absent:

Ron Braaten

Chairman Schuchard reported that the action today is to vote to support or not support H.B. 1379 and to vote to support or not support an amendment to H.B. 1429.

H.B. 1379 redefines the Administrative Committee. There are three ex-offio members and three voting members. The voting members are the state treasurer, secretary of state, and director of human services. The Governor would appoint the Commissioner. The bill also contains language that the Commissioner may set-up advisory committees.

***Motion by John Hanson to not support H.B. 1379, second by Mike Fisher. [MOTION #1]
Motion passed unanimously.***

H.B. 1429 relates to County Veterans Service Officers. There is a proposed amendment to the bill which states "All County Veteran Service Officers must maintain training, certification, and accreditation as set forth by the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs." This replaces the language containing National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Motion by Lee Finstad to approve the proposed amendment, second by Mike Fisher.

Chairman Schuchard asked for those who are for the amendment to speak first.

Lee Finstad spoke on the statutes that deal with the Department's being responsible for the training of the service officers. It seems to go hand in hand with accreditation. He feels its important to elevate the Department so that its visible and is responsible for all the action that is with the century code.

John Hanson feels it would be better since it would all be the same training and to better track the service officers so they all receive the same training.

Mike Fisher sees no reason why the local veterans organizations can be used to accredit the veterans service officers.

Dean Overby agrees with the amendment. The Commissioner/office can bring who they need to train, they can still bring in NACVSO. It's important to get the best training possible and keep it all in one place.

Chairman Schuchard asked for those who oppose the amendment.

Mark Landis stated it is the same verbage that was reject two years. This proposal is a step backwards. NACVSO sets one training standard, this proposal allows for any type of accreditation to suffice. Only NACVSO has cross accreditation with other national service organizations and this is important to service officers in the field. There are twenty cvso's who are not accredited. There is no compelling, rational reason to change the current law.

Ron Otto stated you need to have a level of expertise in the trainers and that level of expertise does not exist at the Department, at all. That was one of the reason the national association was pressed into service last legislation session. The legislators agreed there is an organization that basically was founded on the training and continued training and accreditation of county service officers. They wrote the book on it. The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers deal with federal statute and they train on that level.

Jim Verwey has a few concerns. As a service officer he is accredited with all these organizations. If he's not accredited, he cannot get into talk with the different service organizations at a national level to get information on a veteran. If we don't go with the national accreditation, will the other organizations recognize the State? If they recognize the State, that's okay. I want a guarantee they will recognize the State as the trainer.

Motion passed, 10 yeas, 4 nays (Adolf, Landis, Otto, Verwey)

Motion by Ken Hasby to adjourn, second by John Hanson. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Otto
Secretary