

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMFORT INN, BISMARCK ND

October 17, 2013
2:00PM

Meeting called to order by Chairman Dean Overby. Pledge of Allegiance said and a Moment of Silence observed for POW/MIAs and those serving overseas.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

John Adolf	Trish Hodny	Carroll Quam
Jeff Hall	Robert Olzweski	Marlin Schneider
Ken Hasby	Ron Otto	Jim Verwey
Jim Haukedahl	Dean Overby	Hal Weninger
Dave Hilleren		

Absent:

Richard Belling	John Hanson
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Motion by Ken Hasby to approve the minutes of July 25 and July 31, 2013, 2nd by Jeff Hall. .

Trish Hodny asked for a correction to the July 25, 2013 minutes. "Equal Justice Works received money to disseminate to nonprofit entities that want to hire attorneys to work with veterans on various issues."

Motion carried.

Marlys Morgenstern, Job Service North Dakota

Introduced Michael Ziesch to give presentation on behalf of Job Service. Michael works in the Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN) as an analyst. They are a state agency entirely federally funded.

- ▶ gave overview of statistical information available.
- ▶ ND experienced a brief brush with the recession in 2009 and that was related to \$40 oil compared to \$150 oil.
- ▶ Job Service mission is to connect job openings with job seekers. There are about 23,000 job openings throughout the State at this time.

▶ most of the in-state people posting job resumes already have jobs, they're looking to move up the economic ladder

Michael was asked if they kept statistics on veterans from outside the area getting employment. Their area does not gather veterans' information, they would need to get it from other sources such as the Vet Reps in the local Job Service centers.

Marlys stated that North Dakota has the highest employment rate in the nation for veterans and disabled veterans.

▶ long term employment projections reports for 10 years are available on the Job Service website as is a 2 year projection. There are many other reports available on the website.

General Sprynczynatyk, ND National Guard

▶ The Guard is presently at the lowest level of deployments; less than a dozen deployed overseas at this time. Gave listing of units on alert.

▶ Completed Federal Government shutdown. 500 employees were furloughed. Within ten most of them were back. Schools and training were cancelled during that time.

▶ This is the 60th year of the withdrawal of troops out of Korea. The Department of Defense and the Republic of Korea came up with the idea of publishing a book of Korean War Veterans. The Guard is looking for ways to get the books distributed to North Dakota Korean War veterans.

▶ Two armories in the State will be closed – Hazen and Cavalier. The Guard is in the process of reviewing the armories and training facilities to make sure they can adequately and efficiently train soldiers for any missions they are asked to do.

▶ ISFAC – about 80 participants in the group talking about what more can be done to provide services to veterans and their families. Coming out of the White House is a new program designed to reach out at the community level.

▶ Not too early to think about the 2015 Legislative Assembly. The Guard is already putting together a list of things to look at for legislation.

▶ The last manned aircraft flew out of Fargo. The Fargo Guard is the only unit that doesn't have manned aircrafts. The Air Force doesn't believe pilots need air time anymore. The Air National Guard in Fargo still does the predator mission and has picked up another mission.

Mark Johnson, Administrator, ND Veterans Home

▶ The areas that the National Guard worked on is looking very good.

▶ Two lawsuits have been settled, two are still outstanding.

- ▶ VA came to the Home and reported no deficiencies. The State came in and reported some deficiencies.
- ▶ Three new board members – Keith Hoveland (Valley City), Judy Lee (West Fargo) and Gary Skarpol (Williston)

Commissioner's Report [POWERPOINT PRESENTATION]

- ▶ Governor appointed one additional FTE VSO in the budget. The position is filled by Mike Conklin, he has two years of experience with the AMVETS. He will still handle the AMVETS claims under an agreement with the National Organization.
- ▶ Hired another new employee – Dan Thorstad.
- ▶ Andrea and Dan participated in the Fargo StandDown; Tom, Mike, Andrea and Dan participated in the Legal Aid Clinic at the Fargo VA
- ▶ Updated committee on Brenda's and Commissioner's outreach and presentations
- ▶ Overview of Fall CVSO Training Conference – September 2013
- ▶ Overview on Loan and Grant Programs
- ▶ 2013 Transportation Vans have been delivered.
- ▶ Met with ND Coordinating Council and determined that requests for monies should be included in the agency budget for the 2015 Legislature: \$2 million for PTWF, \$50,000 for each Service Organizations; VET funding of \$325,000; StandDown monies - \$20,000; Vans - \$30,000 if needed; PTSD dogs - \$50,000; and Agent Orange - \$50,000.

Bob Olzweski asked what has been disbursed out of the Agent Orange funds. Commissioner replied there are billboards in the State with the Department's phone number. There have been numerous calls resulting from the billboards. The next plan is to hold town hall meetings throughout the State to discuss Vietnam veterans issues.

Trish Hodny asked if any more information has been given on the PWTF clearing account. Commissioner replied that there is very little information on the account and he is still working on it.

Committee recessed so subcommittees could hold their meetings.

October 18, 2013
9:00 .m.

ACOVA Roll Call:

Present:

John Adolf	Trish Hodny	Carroll Quam
Jeff Hall	Robert Olzweski	Marlin Schneider
Ken Hasby	Ron Otto	Jim Verwey
Jim Haukedahl	Dean Overby	Hal Weninger
Dave Hilleren		

Absent:

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Department of Veterans Affairs/Budget – Ken Hasby, Chair

Carroll Quam will read the minutes.

Reviewed ND Veterans Affairs budget and looked at various items. Requested for reporting purposes a breakdown of grants for a fiscal year showing specific expenditures.

Reviewed Policy 430 and recommended the following changes: be called Commissioner's Discretionary Fund , delete Special small fund and delete "Partial grant".

Reviewed Policy 412 and recommended at the time of the application a CD needed to be locked in for one year or more.

Reviewed strategic plan, no action required.

Committee recommended that periodically, the department staff should be introduced to the ACOVA members.

Motion by Carroll Quam to name it the Commissioner's Discretionary Fund, be given its own policy number and strike "Partial grant" from the last line, second by Trish Hodny.

Ron Otto asked that all the policies be put in the subcommittee's binders.

Trish reported on the subcommittee's discussion that they didn't want to tie the Commissioner's hands in administering the program. There is no set application for this program and perhaps a telephone call will be enough for the Commissioner to make a decision.

Roll call, motion carried unanimously. [MOTION #1]

Motion by Carroll Quam Policy 412, last line to read, “Documentation required that shows at the time of the grant application, the CD was locked in for one year or more.”, second by Trish Hodny.

Ron Otto checked with Human Services and they don't require the CD be designated for burial.

Commissioner Wangen gave the history of why the policy was put in place; it was due to people putting money in a CD for a short time so they could be eligible for a grant.

Friendly amendment by Trish Hodny that the word “designated” be changed to “intended” in the first sentence of Policy 412, second by Carroll Quam.

Discussion on the time remaining on the CD at the time of application. As an example even if they have fifteen days remaining, they would still be eligible for a grant.

Motion carried. Friendly amendment adopted. [MOTION #3]

Amended motion carried.

Commissioner wanted clarification on the policy. Trish explained that the money needed to in a CD at the time of application. It doesn't matter when it was purchased as long as it was locked in for at least one year before the application was completed. Policy change effective today.

Motion by Carroll Quam that under Policy 430, the Deposit Grant be removed and added to the same policy as the Commissioner's Discretionary Fund. The new policy subject line will read, Hardship Assistance – General. On Policy 430, the subject line should read Hardship Assistance - Medical” be added, second by Trish Hodny.

Motion carried unanimously [MOTION #3]

Carroll Quam iterated the committee's recommendation to meet the staff periodically. It could even be done by Skype if needed.

Motion by Ken Hasby to accept report, second by Marlin Schneider. Motion carried.

PWTF/Appeals Subcommittee – Jim Verwey, Chairman

Dave Hilleren read the minutes.

Cathy reviewed the Appeals Handbook. Commissioner Wangen discussed the policies and procedures being utilized. Committee recommended that loan and grant training be given to the CVSO's. Income limits need to be added to Appeals Handbook.

Motion by Dave Hilleren to accept Appeals subcommittee report, second by Jim Haukedahl. Motion carried.

Subcommittee reviewed handouts from Commissioner regarding the balance of the Postwar Trust Fund. The Commissioner will forward Jim Haukedahl's email address to the Treasurer's Office so he can start receiving the reports also.

Motion by Dave Hilleren to accept PWTF subcommittee report, second by Hal Weninger. Motion carried.

Legislative Subcommittee – Ron Otto, Chair

Hal Weninger read the minutes. The subcommittee met with the ND Veterans Coordinating Council. Discussion was held with regards to the possible amendment to the Property Tax Exemption as it pertained to surviving spouses and DIC recipients. Commissioner Wangen may request an Attorney General's Opinion regarding the current Property Tax Exemption law with regards to interpretation. Discussion held on the sources/origins of bills and legislation.

Motion by Hal Weninger to accept report, second by Ron Otto. Motion carried.

Chairman Overby presented Commissioner Wangen with a five year certificate.

Chairman Overby asked the committee if they thought the HIPAA and Board Training yesterday was helpful. The committee agreed it was worthwhile. We're here to work for veterans, let's do the best we can.

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Next meeting will be January 9 & 10, 2014 at the Comfort Inn, Bismarck.

Motion to adjourn by Ken Hasby, seconded by Ron Otto. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Jim Verwey
Secretary