

APPROVED
South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting
December 8, 2011
Conference Call

The conference call meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission was called to order at 10:00 am (CT) on Thursday, December 8, 2011, by Chairman Bill Locken.

Staff noted that all legal requirements as outlined in SDCL 1-25-1 and 1-25-1.1 were met with regard to this meeting.

Roll Call - Chairman Locken asked staff to take roll call. Roll call indicated Commissioners Mike Birnbaum, Wade Hubbard, Bill Locken, Gene Murphy, KC Russell and John Noyes. were present for the conference call meeting. Commissioner Murphy noted that Donald Dahlin, VFW Judge Advocate, was in his office participating in the call as well.

Staff Present: Deputy Secretary Steve Harding, Veteran Affairs Director Charles Claussen, and Public Information Officer Audry Ricketts.

Review of Agenda – Chairman Locken asked if there were any additions or changes for the proposed agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Noyes, seconded by Commissioner Birnbaum, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Consideration of Minutes – Chairman Locken asked the Commission how they wished to handle the October 4-5, 2011, Commission meeting minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Hubbard, seconded by Commissioner Russell, to approve the October 4-5, 2011, Commission meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Legislative Review – Chairman Locken called on Deputy Secretary Harding for an update on the Department's legislative issues. Deputy Secretary Harding noted that the Department of Veterans Affairs had one bill that would be submitted as an agency bill. The Department will be submitting a bill requesting \$1M to continue funding the Veterans Bonus program for the next four years.

Harding reported that the South Dakota County Commissioners Association will be introducing a bill to allow for veteran indication on driver's license. Harding noted that the Department would go on record in support of this legislation.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Hubbard, seconded by Commissioner Russell, to support both of the bills reviewed by Deputy Secretary Harding. Roll call voted indicated Commissioners Hubbard, Locken, Russell, Noyes, Birnbaum and Murphy all voted aye. Motion carried on a 6-0 vote.

Deputy Secretary Harding then briefed the Commissioners on the status of the East River and West River Veterans Home projects.

Following Deputy Secretary Harding's report, Commissioner Birnbaum inquired about how Commissioners would be informed of other legislation that might come up. Chairman Locken noted that all legislation would be reviewed at the Commission meeting in February.

Discussion ensued with regard to who should be badged or serve as a registered lobbyist for the Veterans Commission. A motion was made by Commissioner Russell, seconded by Commissioner Birnbaum, to authorize Wade Hubbard to represent the Commission and lobby on their behalf. Discussion ensued. Deputy Secretary Harding noted that the Department was not planning to badge any commissioners during this legislative session. A voice vote was taken. Voting aye were Commissioners Hubbard, Locken and Russell. Voting no were Commissioners Noyes, Birnbaum, and Murphy. Motion did not carry. Veterans Commission will not have a registered lobbyist assigned this year.

Deputy Secretary Harding noted that once all legislation has been introduced, the Department will furnish the Commissioners with a list of bills impacting veterans during the February Commission meeting.

Commissioner Hubbard and Director Claussen briefed the Commission on the status of the Veterans Court project.

Old Business – Chairman Locken asked if there was any old business to come before the Commission. There was none.

New Business – Chairman Locken noted that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for February 6-7, 2012, in Pierre. Agenda ideas should be forwarded to Audry as soon as possible. Locken noted that three items that would be on the agenda would be: a legislative update, veteran's court update and an update on the Sicangu Akicita Owicaha Veterans Cemetery.

Commissioner Murphy reviewed the information received from the VA with regard to the forums they would be hosting in western South Dakota. Murphy also shared with the Commission that the state is now trying to get a handle on the number of veterans employed by the state.

Chairman Locken asked if there was any further business to come before the Commission. There being none, the conference call adjourned at 11:20 am.

Bill Locken, Chairman