

**SD Veterans Commission Meeting  
16-17 July, 2007 ~ Paralyzed Veterans of America Building  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

Members present: Chairman Don Loudner, Commissioner Mike Birnbaum, Commissioner Gene Murphy, Commissioner Paul Evenson and Commissioner Bill Locken.

Commission Members met at 8:00 A.M. at the Division Office, they were introduced to the staff and asked question regarding the staffs' duties and their concerns on how to better help our veterans. The Commission and Sue Zilverberg toured the Division Office, Regional Office and VA Medical Center from 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

The SD Veterans Commission Meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. at the PVA Building with Chairman Don Loudner leading all attendees in the "Pledge of Allegiance".

George Summerside welcomed all and thanked Joel Neimeyer and the PVA for providing the commission a place to meet, providing snacks and for the luncheon to be held at noon on July 17th. He introduced Sue Zilverberg from the Pierre office and explained she would be taking minutes for the meeting in Bev Mickelson's absence.

Chairman Loudner then asked Dennis Foell to come forward. Dennis thanked the Commission for hosting his retirement supper held in Sioux Falls and for the gift he received. He stated he was thankful for the opportunity to work with the Commission and he would like to clear up any rumors about his leaving. He was asked to leave his position with SD Division of Veterans Affairs. He then thanked the Commission for the time to speak.

VISN 23 Network Director Dr. Robert Petzel was introduced. He started his report by thanking the Commission for inviting him to speak. Dr. Petzel provided a copy of his report, the following report interests listed as follows:

**Sioux Falls VA and the Black Hills VA**

- New clinics opening in Watertown and Wagner
- Possible 5-6 new clinics opening in 2007-2008
- 11,000 currently in network with 7,000 enrolled

**Poly Trauma Center**

- 180 additional health psychiatrists for mental health needs
- Attempting to reach out to returning veterans
- Access to care waiting is less then 1800 with a goal of 30 days for service
- Special services have not met the goal of 30 days for service (would like to achieve this by October 1, 2007)

**Budget**

- Additional mental health physicians
- Equipment purchases and facility upgrades
- 2% - 4% over workload (in comparison with 5 years growth in workload all at once)
- 13% increase making the growth the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in nation

Dr. Petzel also commented CVSO's in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Iowa have played an important roll in growth seen for veterans seeking medical services. The CVSO's are

a strong group in South Dakota, doing their job. The South Dakota Congressional delegates are also very supportive of our veterans needs in Washington.

Commissioner Birnbaum asked Dr. Petzel if there was a cost study and report in regards to restoring Priority 8's. Dr. Petzel stated hours are being extended at many mental health clinics and expressed his hope of having the Wagner clinic opened next year. Indian Health efforts are also being coordinated.

Commissioner Murphy asked if a study/report is available from congress concerning this issue and commented 50% service connected veterans can go outside the VA if needed. Commissioner Murphy has a concern with a 130 day wait for veterans before diverse medical care can be provided.

It was explained by Dr. Petzel, if needed veterans are able to go outside the VA center, especially with mental health issues or other specialized care.

Commissioner Evenson expressed concern in regards to our female veterans, is there an increase being seen in female medical care and are we addressing those needs correctly, such as female doctor to female veteran. Dr. Petzel does not see a big difference in the type of medical care for men vs. women. He feels many clinics provide female doctors for female veterans, making them feel comfortable to ask for the type of care needed.

Commissioner Locken requested VISN headquarters provide data to show various needs indicated. Geographical means test does not show true evaluation and poses an economical burden on certain areas where assets are limited.

Chairman Loudner thanked Dr. Petzel for his report and the invitation for the Commission to tour the Minneapolis facility whenever possible. Dr. Petzel added Traumatic Brain Injury screening is now being done on all returning veterans; the goal is to do a screening on all previously returned veterans in the future.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, the question was raised from the audience, how the VA determines the amount of pay for physicians. Steve DiStasio answered anywhere from \$200,000 to \$400,000 is paid based on experience and qualifications.

Dick Stearns asked Mr. DiStasio why he was told he was unable to have cataract surgery until fall. Mr. DiStasio responded it could be for various reasons: space, time or individual case assessment.

General Michael Gorman was next to report. His report included the following:

- There was a welcome home for the 147<sup>th</sup> Brigade which recently returned from Afghanistan
- 130 out of B Company mobilized to Afghanistan
- Governor Rounds issued a check for a new van

General Gorman presented a check for \$11,500 to Gene Murphy for SD DAV. Commissioner Murphy said the organization will order new vans in October 2007 with a projected arrival date of May 2008.

Commissioner Evenson thanked General Gorman for coming and went on to say how he had visited with a community member who was a returning Soldier. This Soldier was very proud to be in the Guard and serve overseas in Afghanistan and Iraq - he was proud of the work he was asked to do and the progress he sees being made.

Commissioner Birnbaum explained the timeline for the General's retirement and replacement. This is expected to be done by September 15, 2007. The appointment of a new director will begin after the new Department Secretary has been appointed.

General Gorman thanked George Summerside, Larry Person and Dave Wherry for their efforts in keeping things running within the division – they have not missed a beat. The General also commented he feels this is a different type of war we are fighting. The insurgents are trained to kill Americans. We need to be aware as Americans of what these individuals are capable of.

Benjamin Ready, Senator Thune's office, thanked South Dakota for their solid leadership. The numbers in our VA shows we encourage returning veterans to use what is available to them. It is a must to educate our veterans on the services available to them through the network, family support and all promotions with Military and Veterans Affairs. Mr. Ready thanked General Gorman for his years of service and extended an invitation to all interested groups to attend the Homeless and Needy Convention on September 14, 2007.

Andy Gerlach gave a report on the Department's Strategic Plan in place of Jim Books. The plan will include the following:

- Integration – all aspects, Guard and all divisions
- Veterans Home – update facility, medical care costs
- Armories – looking at demographic areas for feasibility and the cost of current armories
- Transformation – process of military, number of troops (army and air)
- Emergency Management – state active duty, federal, respond correctly to state missions
- Air Guard – is its future relevant to state and federal missions
- C/TVSO's- evaluate this system to ensure local services are provided in a professional manner

Commissioner Birnbaum would like ideas for Legislature compiled and given to Mr. Gerlach by August 1<sup>st</sup> in order to present them to the Governor. Mr. Gerlach then explained the executive process and procedures to the Commission.

Commissioner Locken has researched how we can benefit from the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 67), if it passes into law.

At this time attending organizations were given time to comment. The VFW gave Mr. Summerside their National Resolutions and thanked the Commission for the time to speak. The VFW would like to work with the Commission's process and thanked General Gorman for his service. Clarence Kooistra, DAV, feels the Department and State levels could do more for deceased veterans. Could this be put in the Strategic Plan? He also informed the Commission; Bob Sak will be at the next meeting to explain the Honors Program.

Depleted Uranium was reported on by Steve DiStasio - Acting Director at Sioux Falls VAMC, Informational Report attached. There is an understanding, yet not an understanding where the

VA is concerned. It is reported 15 in South Dakota have been tested for Depleted Uranium (DU). All tested non-positive for depleted, positive for total; if testing results show above total then it becomes depleted. Testing is by urine sample and only 5% take test. Commissioner Birnbaum asked if the test was a takehome/24 hour test and why some chose not to take the test. Mr. DiStasio stated it is a test that can be done at home and he feels there is no concern of DU. Commission member Murphy handed out information on DU to the Commission. The packet included information on national numbers on DU levels and tests. He would like to see a policy developed in regard to DU. Commissioner Locken stated we need to remember it is currently a choice to take the test. DU is in its infancy and is being looked at by the VA. Mr. DiStasio reminded the group anything we do to the body is taking a chance for something to happen to our body, typically on the ground vs. air.

Veteran Lanny Stricherz informed the Commission the Department of Defense has two bills in Congress in regards to DU - maybe they will get something done or do what is asked of them. Commissioner Locken requested Mr. Stricherz provide the bills.

Commissioner Murphy brought up DU Bill 235 – makes veterans aware of DU and testing available. He is disappointed the State has not passed a bill of this kind and feels our veterans have not been notified of testing when they leave or return. Todd Otterberg stated he has been on the job for 15 months. He was provided a checklist which included the exam information. Mr. Summerside also stated our veterans are given this information through outreach materials provided to them on return and this topic was covered in last year's CVSO training. General Gorman feels implementation of this bill is already being done in South Dakota. Commissioners Locken and Birnbaum also feel DU measures are being taken in our state. Rick Barg, VFW, inquired on how many tests are available and how accurate are they. Mr. DiStasio said there is one test (Amino – ASSA) available taken over a 24 hour period. Preliminary work with MRI testing is not developed or studied enough at this time.

Chairman Loudner moved to the next agenda item, Congressional Office Representatives.

Benjamin Ready with Senator Thune's office began by informing the Commission on the following:

#### **Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act**

- Legislation would instruct Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to work together to solve problems such as Walter Reed Hospital, general care of Soldiers, etc.

#### **Office of Rural Health in the VA – Salazar-Thune-Tester Rural Veterans Healthcare Improvement Act of 2007**

- Office was created last year
- Objectives:
  - Innovation – work with area community centers to get the best care for veterans
  - Five Centers of Excellence established to research ways to improve care for rural veterans
  - Improve fee-basis healthcare for rural veterans
  - Transportation – grants up to \$50,000 to increase mileage for medical travel

#### **Disabled Veterans War Memorial**

- Authorization for memorial to expire this year
- S. 824 would extend timeline to 2015 for the establishment of a national memorial to disabled veterans

- Memorial funded by private donations

### **Community Based Outpatient Clinics**

- Watertown and Wagner clinics are being pushed by Senator Thune and all South Dakota congressional delegates

### **Mandatory Funding**

- Currently no one in the Senate has introduced mandatory funding legislation
- If introduced Senator Thune will review, if similar to Senator Johnson's or Senator Thune's legislation, Senator Thune will cosponsor

Steven Dahlmeier reported Congresswoman Herseth-Sandlin is working on VA budget, which is the largest increase in history of VA. The funds are to help with the following:

### **VA Budget**

- Reduction of 400,00 claims backlog for veterans waiting for disability and other claims
- Medical services are \$3.4 billion above 2007
- VA health care facilities maintenance
- Plan to include five Polytrauma Centers and three Centers of Excellence for Mental Health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder fully operational this year
- Support the development and operation of a toll-free phone and web-based hotline
- Address the needs of veterans suffering from mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder

Other points of interest included in Representative Herseth Sandlin's report:

### **Adaptive Housing Bill – HR1315**

- Gives permanent housing to disabled veterans currently residing in a family home
- Up to \$14,000 may be used to adapt the family member's home to meet the service member's special needs

### **Services to Prevent Veterans Homelessness Act (H.R. 2378)**

- Serves to prevent homeless veterans and provide assistance to organizations in helping provide needed housing to veterans

### **CBOC**

- Approval of community based outpatient clinics for Wagner and Watertown has been strongly advocated by Rep. Herseth Sandlin in the House of Veterans Affairs Committee and in meetings with Senator Nicholson

### **H.R. 637**

- Bill setup to grant Federal Charter to the National American Indian Veterans, Incorporated
- Remains in House Judiciary Committee

### **Code Talkers Recognition Act**

- Rep. Kay Granger is to reintroduce the Code Talkers Recognition Act
- Presently the Granger office is gathering input from tribes
- Concerns on the cost, medals that will be made available and who should receive the medals
- Rep. Herseth Sandlin supports the bill – waiting on language

### **Category 8**

- June 8<sup>th</sup> a hearing was held by the House of Veterans' Affairs Committee to gain input from the veteran's community in order to help draft legislation

### **Woodrow Keeble Medal of Honor**

- Due for consideration by the Defense Secretary
- Letters of support have been sent

Amy Bilka-Skilbred reported Senator Johnson's office is keeping up on duties for the Senator. He is continuing to recover and hopes to return to the "hill" soon. Senator Johnson recently hired a new Legislative Assistant, Krista Lamberaux, who will deal with Military and Veterans Affairs. Ms. Bilka-Skilbred also included the following points of interest:

### **Funding for Veterans Affairs**

- Funding for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is \$37.2 billion, \$2.6 billion above the President's budget and \$13.6 billion above the Independent Budget Request
- Medical Services accounts within the VHA provide \$2.9 billion, \$1.8 more than the President's request - the additional funding directs the VA to prioritize its emphasis on mental health services
- Bill included report language commending the VA for approving the establishment of CBOCs in Watertown and Wagner, SD

### **Legislation**

- Senator Johnson is cosponsoring the Retired Pay Restoration Act - this bill authorizes full concurrent receipt of retired pay for retirees with regular retirements
- Currently individuals rated at 100% disabled are authorized for full immediate concurrent receipt
- Retirees with a disability rating of 50% or higher will have their full benefits phased in over the next 7 years
- The bill will eliminate the phase-in period for retirees with a disability rating of 50% or higher and extend eligibility for concurrent retirement and disability payments to retirees rated less than 50%

### **Combat-Related Special Compensation Act**

- The Senator is cosponsoring S. 986, which provides pro-rated retirement benefits to military personnel based on years of service and their base pay rate at the time they retire
- Bill will allow service members to receive disability compensation from the VA without it being offset by their pro-rated retirement pay

### **SBP-DIC**

- Survivor Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation is being cosponsored by the Senator
- This legislation will fix current inequities in the military treatment of survivors of veterans by off setting the reduction of SBP benefits for each dollar receive in DIC compensation

### **Military Health Care Protection Act**

- Senator Johnson intention is to introduce a new mandatory funding bill in Congress upon his return to the Senate

### **Codetalkers**

- Re-introduction of this bill will be lead by Senator Inhofe as in previous years

### **Native American Charter**

- Plans to introduce bill upon return

### **Sgt. Keeble, Medal of Honor**

- This matter has been in the works for the past 5 years
- The Secretary of the Army endorsed the Medal of Honor for Sgt. Keeble last year

- Senate passed Emergency Appropriations bill in May to waive the time limits and give the President and the Department of Defense the authority to consider Sgt. Keeble for the Medal of Honor
- Action must be made by the President and Department of Defense
- Senator Johnson continues to monitor the progress and encourages the Administration to approve this overdue honor

Commissioner Birnbaum asked if there was a time limit for the action taken to present Woodrow Keeble with the Medal of Honor. Mr. Dahlmeier said this action is on the desk of the Defense Secretary and has been for approximately a year. Mr. Ready added the completion of these matters has a lot to do with the Committee Chair pushing them through.

Category 8 was brought up by Commissioner Murphy, inquiring as to its current standing. Mr. Ready said different ways are being looked at to increase funding. Commissioner Murphy asked if the mileage increase is supported by all. All delegates are in favor of this increase and a field hearing is currently underway. Commissioner Murphy also asked about mandatory funding. Mr. Ready commented a bill could possibly be introduced upon the return of Senator Johnson, which Senator Thune's office will sign. Commissioner Evenson feels there is need for the Department of Labor to look at job placement and education in regard to returning veterans. Commissioner Locken commented the geographical means test needs to be looked at in order to better serve the needs of South Dakota veterans, also get the word out the Linn Clinic of Pierre has contracted to see veterans in Wessington Springs. The Congressional Delegates were thanked for taking time out of their schedules to report to the commission. It was asked of the Commission, in the future, to please provide an advance notice of meetings for travel purposes. All representatives will provide an electronic summary of their report to be attached to meeting minutes.

Superintendent Larry Wilcox gave the State Veterans Home report and provided informational handouts including an activity report and state law changes pertaining to cost of care. The report given included the following:

#### **Facility Upgrades**

- 35% matching funds were used to update the central air, fire codes and other life safety issues
- Heating system will be converted next year

#### **Administrative Rules Changes**

- Medication - Plan B Medicare cannot administer residents on referral
- 60, 90, 120 days waiting period

#### **Care Level and Costs for Residents**

- Currently 70% of care rate for care level and costs
- Would like care rate changed to 80% of net worth
- Single resident in home retain a minimum of \$120 of income - couples retain \$225 from combined income

Commissioner Birnbaum confirmed the increase from 70% to 80% for care rate. At this time Mr. Gerlach explained the process of changing a law and acknowledged this would be part of involving the Commission on Administrative Rules. Superintendent Wilcox feels "net worth" will give the correct legal terminology. Current residents will be raised to 80% requiring cost of care only.

Chairman Loudner asked for a motion. Commissioner Birnbaum moved to raise the care rate from 70% to 80% of net worth for resident care. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Evenson. All voting in favor, motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P.M. until Tuesday, July 17, 2007 at 8:00 A.M..

The meeting was reconvened at 8:00 A.M., Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> by Chairman Loudner. He also led all attendees in the "Pledge of Allegiance".

Chairman Loudner asked Mr. Summerside if there were any administrative duties to take care of. A correction to the minutes was the only item needing to be resolved, which Chairman Loudner wanted to correct at a later time.

John Smith with Dakota Regional Service Center gave an overview on staffing changes and center relocations of counselors to take place by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Three positions are to be filled
- Goal is to see new hire changes by 2009
- Highest staffing seen in 15 years
- Centers are reaching out to help veterans in the neighboring states of North Dakota and Iowa
- 18% of needed care is currently Gulf War veterans

Commissioner Birnbaum posed a question on how veterans find out about VOC-Rehab. Contact C/TVSO's, applications filled out upon veterans' return and outreach materials provided through the Department.

Diane Woodson, Women Veterans' Coordinator (Sioux Falls VAMC) and Shanna Purcell, SD DVA jointly presented the Women Veterans' Report. Ms. Purcell began by informing the Commission she attended the Women Veterans' Convention in May 2007 in Branson, MO and how this is an excellent way to be kept informed and updated on various issues. The organization is geared to work toward and inform veterans on the following:

- Working to ease the transition of soldier to veteran
- Working to get health records electronically – access easily – pushing for a strong reenrollment in education
- Maintain employment that does not aggravate disability
- 9% increase seen in women utilizing Voc-Rehab
- VA exam – DOD exam use same exam to determine disability
- 85% of raters do not feel they have the time to appropriately rate veterans
- Black Hills Women Veterans' Organization working to fund plan that will honor women veterans

Diane Woodson presented additional information involving women veterans' medical care:

- 1020 female veterans
- 1-7 returning veterans are women with most medical issues being handled at discharge station
- Upgrade in standards needed in medical care

- A yearly inventory form is sent to Regional Office
- Working with Outreach/Support Groups to improve the overall program

Commissioner Locken asked about ways to better reach or encourage female veterans in South Dakota.

A motion was made by Commissioner Locken for the Veterans Commission to go on record to oppose attorneys' fees as allowed in the recently passed Federal Legislation. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Birnbaum, all in favor, motion passed.

Commissioner Murphy would like to see a breakdown on types of care needed by women veterans and suggested articles be put in various organizational newsletters for the women veterans including ads for care, conferences, etc.

Ms. Woodson also stated outreach areas include Sisseton and Flandreau Health Fairs; the Legion includes an outreach presentation on Women Veterans issues. PR information can be given to Lila Speckel, Legion Auxiliary, for distribution to state newspaper. Connie Heggledad with the VFW Auxiliary encourages women to be visible in order to help with concerned issues. It was requested, by the Commission, reports be available before presentation. Reports can be given to Mr. Summerside.

The Small Business Administration report was given by Chuck Hughes, Deputy District Director. SBA has loans available for veterans called "guaranteed loans". 85% of loan is guaranteed. Administration went to congress to setup the Patriot Express. This loan was reduced from 5 to 3 days for approval. 20 of these loans have been approved across the county since its effective date of June 28, 2007. Mr. Hughes and Mr. Summerside will meet in order to work on ideas to clarify and advertise the loan program to the veteran community. Handouts included with report.

The Washington, DC representative for National Cemetery System was unable to attend. Chairman Loudner would like to proceed with a Federal Cemetery in eastern South Dakota and would like to add the National Cemetery System to the October meeting agenda. Handouts from Chairman Loudner were provided.

Mr. Foster, SD Veterans Council commented the study is important and feels legislature has a better chance getting projects like this through. It also takes up to \$700.00 to transport deceased veterans for burial. Commissioner Birnbaum requested a handout be provided on organizations sponsoring cemeteries.

Brian Wallin, Team Leader for the Vet Center in Sioux Falls was asked by Chairman Loudner to give a report. Mr. Wallin showed a geographical map showing communities with current clinics, outreach clinics and future needed clinics.

The oral report included the following points of interest:

- Offices are designed as drop in centers
- Of the 53,000 veterans - married/family veterans are better prepared for these services
- Team Leader position had been vacant for two years
- Goals are being developed to expand services
- Recognition for staff be sent to the association

Commissioner Locken made a motion to recognize two staff members currently helping to manage the Vet Center office over the past two years. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Murphy, all voting in favor, motion carried. Commissioner Locken will compile the information needed on the two staff members and send to Brian Wallin.

At this time a motion was made by Commissioner Murphy to support an outreach center in Pierre, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Birnbaum, all voting in favor, motion passed.

Warren Aas inquired on the wait time for walk-ins; he heard it takes 4-6 weeks before an appointment can be made to accommodate the veteran. The goal is no more than one week for a walk-in appointment to be setup. Delbert "Jim" Foster thanked Mr. Wallin for the work he is doing as Team Leader.

State Association Chairman of C/TVSO's, Wayne Vetter, reported the following:

- Concern about C/TVSO's losing their jobs
- Annual training in August
- Mr. Vetter would like to review proposal concerns with officers before the training meeting in August - in order to keep them informed

Commissioner Birnbaum would like to have had the proposal prepared for today, but it needs to go through proper channels. He also stated the C/TVSO's can be assured the proposal changes will not affect job security. It will implement job evaluation and allow for a public office, computers, etc. to better serve the veterans' needs. Commissioner Locken said current laws are being looked at and the Director will be asked to implement them. Details are being worked out at the Commission level at the present time. It was iterated by Commissioner Birnbaum the goal of the evaluation is to better serve our veterans and to gain support from counties. Other goals are to inform the County Commissioners of a C/TVSO's performance and to self evaluate in order to improve on ones job performance was added by Dave Wherry. He also stated letters will be provided to the County Commissioners as needed. These letters will be developed on a three level basis. The first letter would be generic in nature; the second would be a strong correspondence of request for improvement and the third letter would be consideration of replacement. It is felt by Commissioner Locken the proposal will help our Field Officers in asking for county support and details of the proposal will be available when completed. Commissioner Birnbaum would like to allay any fears and assure counties, they will keep authority. Mr. Summerside reported five counties presently have partnership and feels the first year or so will be learning years.

Ms. Speckel feels the outside information survey is a good thing. Dick Stearns showed concern on how a C/TVSO will be evaluated by the county when hired with multiple job titles. Mr. Summerside advised the officer would be evaluated on the job performance he or she is doing as the C/TVSO. Other job titles would be evaluated by the county, per their discretion.

George Summerside, Acting Director for SD Division of Veterans Affairs, reported the following:

- Earl Schultz reported a grant was received
- Report from Todd Kolden is in packet

- Three steps to assure goals within the Division
  - Teamwork – e.g. manual efforts are being worked on by all Division Staff, John Fette and Dave Stroh have researched the cemetery issue
  - Accountability – e.g. assure all staff are professional and willing to go the extra step for the veteran
  - Goals – looking at each staff member and measuring outreach, liaison, etc.
- Keep staff technologically updated
- Cross-train staff within office setting and in the field, inclusion with C/TVSO's important

Mr. Summerside concluded with the following remark "Recognize the Issues and Work the Solution".

Commissioner Murphy would like to see C/TVSO's sent for training in the future. Mr. Summerside advised there will be a training held in Pierre the end of August and a data spreadsheet on trainings will be provided at the next meeting. Commissioner Evenson inquired as to how many times during the year a Field Officer makes scheduled visits to the C/TVSO's. Larry Person, SD DVA, said the Field Officers try to schedule a visit once a month depending on how much supervision is required for handling claims.

The issue of losing officers out of the Sioux Falls office and is there a plan in place if we do was posed by Commissioner Evenson. Mr. Person advised officers from the Pierre office can fill in if and where needed, this plan has been used in the past and is effective. Commissioner Evenson also asked if there are counties where CVSO's have not gotten paperwork submitted in a timely manner and could this cause a law suit. Mr. Person advised when this occurs the appropriate action has been taken with the individual. Lionel Torgrude feels with current laws in place there could be a law suit. Mr. Summerside feels the Division is taking a proactive stance with a check and balance system, improving the professionalism of those within our network would minimize the potential for lawsuits.

Commissioner Loudner requested a budget at the next meeting and asked for comments from the represented veterans organizations.

Rick Barg, VFW State Adj./Qtr. – thanked the Commission and appreciated the time to speak on issues.

Gary Watts, American Legion Commander – introduced Jerry Towns, American Legion Post #15 Vice Commander.

Lila Speckels – requested an abbreviation list to better understand what the reference pertained to.

Connie Heggstad – liked the abbreviation list and enjoyed the meeting.

Dave Jungemann, Rapid City TREA – their group is continuing to work on various projects, TRI-CARE being at the front along with membership.

Gene Murphy, DVA – newsletters can be found on the table, thank you to all organizations for your input on the placement and model of vans to be purchased.

Joel Niemeyer, PVA Executive Director – Joel expressed his concern with Dennis Foell leaving, reported 50 computers were donated to PVA for distribution in South Dakota. Joel invited

everyone to stay and enjoy the picnic lunch to be served after the meeting and thanked the Commission for having the PVA host the meeting.

The next meeting was set for October 22 and 23, 2007 in Hot Springs at the State Veterans Home. The Commissioners will arrive on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October.

A motion was made by Commissioner Evenson to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Locken.

Commssioner Murphy requested a correction be made to the minutes of the June 22, 2007 meeting. He made a motion to add "and South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs" in the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence after VA, motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Evenson. Minutes were approved with correction, all voting in favor, motion passed.

Commissioner Murphy thanked the PVA and expressed concern about time frame for appointing the director and Adjutant General. He also requested we inform the Commission on who receives the minutes (does the Governor receive a copy) and where they are kept on file.

A motion was made by Commissioner Evenson to meet with the Govenor prior to the October meeting on legislative issues. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Locken, all voting in favor, motion carried.

A letter is to be sent to the Governor with a request to meet prior to the October meeting.

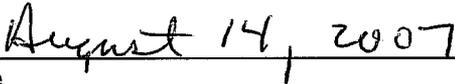
At 11:50 A.M. a motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Loudner, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Locken, all in favor, motion passed.

Lunch was sponsored by the PVA in Sioux Falls.

Respectfully submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George Summerside, Acting Director  
SD Division of Veterans Affairs

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Zilverberg, Recording Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date