

APPROVED
South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting
February 8, 2012
Conference Call

The conference call meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission was called to order at 2:00 pm (CT) on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, 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 Ken Laughlin, PVA Government Affairs Director and Doug Callahan, PVA Board of Director, were in his office participating in the call as well.

Staff Present: Deputy Secretary Steve Harding, Veteran Affairs Director Charles Claussen, Public Information Officer Audrey Ricketts and Veterans Field Supervisor Larry Person.

Review of Agenda – Chairman Locken asked if there were any additions or changes for the proposed agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hubbard, seconded by Commissioner Birnbaum, to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote indicated: Birnbaum – aye, Hubbard - aye, Locken – aye, Murphy – aye, Russell – aye and Noyes– aye. Ballot vote indicated six ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Consideration of Minutes – Chairman Locken asked the Commission how they wished to handle the December 8, 2011, Commission meeting minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Russell, to approve the December 8, 2011, Commission meeting minutes as presented. Roll call vote indicated: Birnbaum – aye, Hubbard - aye, Locken – aye, Murphy – aye, Russell – aye and Noyes– aye. Ballot vote indicated six ayes and 0 nays. Motion carried.

Chairman Locken noted that the Sicangu Akicita Owicaha Veterans Cemetery would be on the agenda at the next meeting.

Legislative Review – Chairman Locken called on Deputy Secretary Harding for an update on the Department's legislative issues as well as legislative issues impacting veterans. Deputy Secretary Harding reviewed the following legislative bills:

HB-1046: An act to revise certain provisions regarding child custody during a soldier's deployment.

HB-1047: An act to revise certain provisions relating to military law.

HB-1048: An act to expand the Board of Military Affairs.

HB-1049: An act to add certain definitions regarding the Department of the Military.

HB-1050: An act to revise certain provisions regarding National Guard discipline and courts-martial.

HB-1106: An act to restore funding for certain salary and expense reimbursement programs relating to veterans' service officers and to make an appropriation therefor.

HB-1188: An act to provide widows and widowers of certain veterans free or reduced fees for certain hunting and fishing licenses and admission to state parks and other facilities.

HB-1205: An act to exempt federal veterans' disability benefits from certain support obligations and other claims.

SB-4: An act to make an appropriation to continue the veterans' bonus program and to declare an emergency.

SB-80: An act to exempt motor vehicles owned by certain active duty military servicemembers from the motor vehicle excise tax.

SB-81: An act to provide for a special license plate for certain persons on active duty in the military.

SB-87: An act to allow military spouses to receive unemployment compensation if they leave their jobs due to a spouse's military transfer.

SB-113: An act to provide for special motor vehicle license plates for recipients of the silver star medal and recipients of the bronze star medal.

SB-189: An act to provide a designation on certain non-driver identification cards, driver licenses, and permits that the card holders or licenses are honorably discharged veterans.

Deputy Secretary Harding then briefed the Commissioners on the budget hearings for both departments, the VABHHCS, the status of the state veterans' home projects and the Bureau of Personnel's veteran's preference endeavor. Deputy Secretary Harding noted that a panel was being assembled to review the proposals received for the eastern veterans' home and that they would be meeting the end of February.

After considerable discussion, the Commission asked that the next meeting agenda include a discussion and review of the statutes referencing the K award.

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 asked the Commissioners for dates for the next Commission meeting. After considerable discussion, the Commission decided to have the next meeting May 21-22, at the National Guard Museum in Pierre. Locken asked staff to make the respective arrangements and to draft an agenda, based on the items discussed during this meeting, and be forwarded to the Commission as soon as possible.

Chairman Locken asked if there was any further business to come before the Commission. There being none, the conference call adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Bill Locken, Chairman