

APPROVED MINUTES
South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting
October 8, 2014
Canyon Lake Cottage
Hot Springs, SD

The meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission was called to order at 10:00 am (MT) on Wednesday, October 8, 2014, by Chairman Hubbard. The meeting was held at Canyon Cottage on the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Campus in Hot Springs.

Chairman Hubbard 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 - Commissioners present were: Mike Birnbaum, John Noyes, Wade Hubbard, Jim Ross, KC Russell and Lori Vosika.

Staff Present: Secretary Larry Zimmerman, Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Brad Richardson, Randall Meyers, Audry Ricketts, Heather Henderson and Steve Oliva.

Guests Present: Ken Irwin, Dan Cullen, Darwin Goodspeed, Jeff Gorr, James Dodds, Srey Austin, Orlando Morrison, and Jeff Norris.

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

Consideration of Minutes – Chairman Hubbard asked the Commission how they wished to handle the January 30, 2014, Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Russell moved approval of the January 30, 2014, Commission meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Birnbaum and motion carried. Chairman Hubbard asked the Commission how they wished to handle the February 15, 2014, Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Russell moved approval of the February 15, 2014, Commission meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Birnbaum and motion

Chairman Hubbard called on presenters for their updates/briefings.

SFVAHCS Presentation – Sioux Falls VA Health Care Center Director Darwin Goodspeed briefed the Commission on new construction projects, women veterans healthcare, purchase of outpatient care, specialty care, valet services, wait times, CBOCs, telehealth and outreach.

VABHHCS Presentation – Black Hills VA Health Care Center Director Steven DiStasio briefed the Commission on census numbers, partnership with Walgreens for flu shots, recruitment practices, wait times, Ebola, successes and challenges.

Department Report – Chairman Hubbard called on Secretary Larry Zimmerman for an SDDVA Department update. Secretary Zimmerman introduced all staff present and briefed the Commission on the

restructuring and rebuilding of the Department. He then briefed the commission on Operation RAV and legislative measures that have been discussed.

Deputy Secretary Pollard briefed the Commission on CTVSO vacancies, veteran complaints, current claims statistics and trends, appeals, fully-developed claims, digitalization, claim development timeframe, adjudication. Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Superintendent Brad Richardson briefed the commission on culture of change and the construction progress of the new state veterans home, census, growing numbers at the Home. .

Vet Centers Update – Jim Dodds provided the Commission with an update on the trends they are seeing at the Vet Centers, PTSD, need for additional counselors, programs and services available, and outreach.

Veterans Court Update – Jeff Norris briefed the Commission on the Veterans Court, Public Safety Improvement Act, timeline, PTSD, TBI, suicides, Norris defined who is eligible.

Cemetery Updates – Srey Austin, Black Hills National Cemetery, and Orlando Morrison, Sicangu Akcita Owicaha Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Cemetery briefed the Commission on the status of their respective cemeteries.

Old Business – Chairman Hubbard asked if there was any old business. There being none, the Commission move on to New Business.

New Business – Chairman Hubbard noted that the Commission needed to discuss and study their role. It was suggested that with the positive and continued interaction between the department and the Commission, that perhaps the need for the Commission had outlived itself. Discussion followed on the possibility of the Commission focusing on OEF/OIF veterans, women veterans and/or Vietnam Veterans. No action taken.

Secretary Zimmerman noted that the legislative breakfast would be held Thursday, January 29, 2015, at 6:30 am in Pierre. Invitations would be forwarded at a later date.

Election of Officers – Chairman Hubbard noted that the Commission needed to select new leadership for the Commission. Chairman Hubbard then opened the floor for nominations for chairman. Commissioner Ross nominated Mike Birnbaum for chairman, Commissioner Vosika seconded the nomination and voice vote indicated unanimous support for Mike Birnbaum for chairman. Chairman Hubbard then opened the floor for nominations for vice chairman. Commissioner Russell nominated Jim Ross for vice chairman, seconded by Commissioner Noyes. A voice vote indicated unanimous support for Jim Ross for vice chairman. Chairman Hubbard indicated these individuals will take office January 1, 2015.

Secretary Zimmerman and Commissioners commended Commissioner Hubbard for his service on the Veterans Commission (2008-2014).

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm (MT) for a tour of the construction of the new State Veterans Home.

Wade Hubbard, Chairman