

MINUTES
South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting
September 25, 2019
Conference Call – 3:45 am (CT)

The meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission was called to order at 3:45 pm (CT) on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, by SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock. The meeting was held via conference call.

All legal requirements as outlined in SDCL 1-25-1 and 1-25-1.1 were met for this meeting.

Roll Call - Commissioners present were: Brooks Schild, KC Russell, and Jim Ross.

Staff Present: Secretary Greg Whitlock, Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, and Public Information Officer Audry Ricketts.

Review of Agenda – Commissioners approved the agenda as presented.

Consideration of Minutes –Commissioner Russell moved approval of the January 9, 2019, Commission meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Schild. Motion carried.

SDDVA Update –Secretary Whitlock updated the Commissioners on Department staffing. He noted that two FTES were added to our mix, one state veterans service officer and one field service officer. We hope to have the new field service officer located in the northeast corner of the state. He also noted that the Department had added a new special projects coordinator. Guy Arnold is serving in this role and has been working closely with the team at the State Veterans Home on staffing and resident recruitment.

Secretary Whitlock also noted that the Department currently has two employees on deployment.

Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard summarized the 2019 legislative session and reviewed House Bills 1007, 1044, 1080, 1081, 1111, 1171, 1201, 1260 and SB 155.

Deputy Secretary Pollard also briefed the Commission on the state veteran’s cemetery. He noted that South Dakota was approved for a \$6.9M grant from the National Cemetery Administration. Groundbreaking for the cemetery was held on September 9 with over 300 in attendance. We anticipate dirt work to start in October or November and completion of the project 12-18 months from when dirt moves.

Questions were asked on funding, water, and how veterans buried at other cemeteries will be processed.

Deputy Secretary Pollard noted that information on the cemetery was on the Department’s website and that pre-application forms are already being received.

Secretary Whitlock provided an update on the State Veterans Home and the recent 130th anniversary celebration. He commended the staff for their dedication to ensuring a successful celebration.

South Dakota Veterans Council Update – No update provided.

Old Business – No Old Business

New Business – None

Election of Officers – Commissioners asked that this be handled at their next meeting.

Public Comment – Secretary Whitlock opened the floor for public comment. No comments received.

Commissioners also discussed the role and expectation of the Commission. Commissioners also discussed the dedication/groundbreakings of CBOCs in Pierre, Watertown, and Aberdeen.

Commission meeting adjourned at 4:18 pm.