



SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL

**The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars,
Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 1054 & 959
Military Order of the Purple Heart**

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th, 2022, AT THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 22 818 E. SAINT PATRICK STREET, RAPID CITY

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Council was called to order by President Connie Johnson at 9:03 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:

Vice President Kevin Hempel led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

3. ROLL CALL:

Secretary/Treasurer Marty Pennock called the roll call showing the following members present:

American Legion (TAL): Doug Feltman, Kevin Hempel, Fred Nelson

Disabled American Veterans (DAV): Dan Francis, Gene Murphy, Marty Pennock

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW): Anna Arnold, Dave Baumiller, Mike Mullen

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 1054 and 959 (VVA): Jerry Denman (1054), Phil Braeger (1054), Terry "Hawk" Mayer (959)

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH): Connie Johnson, Ken Teunissen, Buck Underwood

North Central Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA): Terry Paulsen and Mike Olson

Official Officers Excused:

Tom Hafner (VFW), Phil Braeger (VVA 1054), Bill Flippo (MOPH), Jon Tilk (MOPH), Lisa Cummings (PVA). Anna "Waltner" to "Arnold" (VFW) name change will be posted on an upcoming SDVC member 2022-2023 roster.

There was a total of 44 present for the meeting and 41 that signed in (attached sign in roster).

4. WELCOME DISTINGUISHED GUESTS / VISITORS /ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Johnson welcomed members of the Council and Guests.

5. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

President Johnson called on Secretary-Treasurer Pennock to read the minutes from the July 20th, 2022, meeting.

On a motion by (VVA) Terry Mayer and seconded by (DAV) Gene Murphy to waive the reading of the minutes as they were mailed to members of the council, posted on the website and provided at the meeting. Discussion. Motion carried.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT:

President Johnson called on Secretary-Treasurer Pennock for a Treasurer's Report. Income as of September 23rd, 2022, was \$12,828.56 and expenses of \$103.60 leaving a balance of \$12,724.96.

On a motion by (PVA) Terry Paulsen and seconded by (VFW) Anna Arnold to approve the Treasurer's Report. Discussion. Motion carried.

7. INVITED GUEST SPEAKERS:

Executive Director VISN 23: Robert McDivitt covered in detail the following:

- VISN 23 geographic area review
- FY2023 Budget approval in progress
- Golden Age Games in 2022 – 500 Veterans in Sioux Falls
- Director search in progress for the SFVAHCS nationally – President Johnson will be on the board. This position will be appointed by the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Pendergrass will extend his tour to cover the position until it is filled.
- PACT Act will define VA health care for the next 20-30 years
- Status after the AIR Commission was stopped – reassessment of capabilities in SD
- Overview of large budget items for construction in SD
- Electronic health record in SD – 2024. Expect delays

Medical Center Director / CEO BHVAHCS: Lisa Curnes covered in detail the following:

- Home health care – 24 Veterans enrolled – Started in June
- Ambulance Transportation Service – Started in September
- C&P Exams have been prioritized for environmental exposure exams
- CITC Update – 11.1 Day Average with no unscheduled after 30 days
- Home based primary care expanded to Scottsbluff and Pierre
- Construction update to facilities in the BHVAHCS
- Rapid City CVOC opening 2023 – Open house will precede
- Challenges in the BHVAHCS – Rural Transposition, C&P Exams and Staffing

Acting Director SFVAHCS: Dr. Timothy Pendergrass covered in detail the following:

- C&P examiner now in Dakota Dunes
- Received an award in Washington D.C. for Most Improved in Outpatient Experience Award (FY2021)
- Construction update to facilities in the SFVAHCS
- Staffing concern – shortage of key staff and nurses
- CITC update
- Respite care discussion

Dakotas Regional Office Director: Shawn Bohn covered in detail the following:

- PACT Act overview with questions from the audience
- Hiring with increase of VA dollars will surge FTE to 190 by the end of the quarter
- Update on Blue Water claims nationally and in SD

Director VA Black Hills National Cemetery Director: Terry Corkins covered in detail the following:

- Handed out flyer (attached), Booklet “Planning Your Legacy” – he has available for VSOs
- Overview of 155 national cemeteries
- VA BH National Cemetery has approximately 900 burials /year
- Staff of 18 for the Cemetery
- Eligibility for the Cemetery – Honorable discharge by a Veteran (Federal definition)

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Update: Secretary Whitlock covered the following:

- Staffing Veteran Home – 21 CNA and 5 Nurses.
- Hot Springs low pool of applicants and lack of housing
- Rent some of the structures to current employees
- Wing closure – loss of 13 beds/rooms
- Claims processing – 183 // 10 processing
- Bridge Dedications on Veterans Day – 30 Completed / 60 Applications on File
- Wreaths Across America – 2nd Annual - December 7th – December 11th

Ms. Veteran South Dakota Update – Ms. Kaylan Harrington covered the following:

- 21 Year Army Veteran – Ms. Veteran America – 30 October 2022
- Final Salute Inc. is the company – safety of women
- Cornerstone in Rapid City only VA certified facility in South Dakota
- Since 2012 – Over \$705,000.00 raised and 8,000 women served

On a motion by (DAV) Gene Murphy and seconded by (TAL) Fred Nelson to donate \$250.00 to support Ms. Harrington in her trip in October. Motion carried.

Congressional Delegate Updates from the Staff of Senator Thune and Senator Rounds:

Jess Ewing with Senator Thune's Office

- Introduced Phil Rolas as new member to his team
- Ellsworth AFB – B21
- NDAA
- PACT Act

Bob Dejong with Senator Rounds' Office

- Gerald's Law Act
- Vets Access Records Act
- Expresscriptions
- Senator Rounds meetings with VA Secretary about timely care

Mike Beakart with Senator Rounds' Office

- Retiring in 45 days
- Handed out two flyers (attached) – Local Dental Care and DAV claims opportunity

8. ENDOWMENT UPDATE:

Endowment Fund Balance Update -Terry Paulsen: (attached)

9. RECOGNITION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS: None

10. UPDATES FROM EACH VSO:

MOPH: Ken Teunissen

- Congratulated President Johnson on receiving vehicle from Billion Auto
- National Convention review – August 14-18, 2022, in Rapid City
- Continue on with Purple Heart County and City

VFW: Anna Arnold

- National Convnetion in July 2022
- Dept. moved to SD Heritage Alliance Building in August
- Membership drive is priority
- Support the PACT Act
- Fall Conference in Oacoma October 7-9, 2022

DAV: Dan Francis

- Dept of SD DAV and Auxiliary Fall Conference Oct 8th, 2022, DAV HQ in Sioux Falls
- District 14 Fall Meeting Oct 22nd, 2022, Billings, MT
- Tentatively posed to order two new vehicles in 2023-2023 West River HTP
- Handed packet of information to the group
- Two National Interim Committee Members from SD were appointed
- Joe Parsetich – New National Commander – from Montana

VVA:

959 – Terry Mayer

- POW/MIA Remembrance Day – September 16th, 2022, in Sioux Falls

1054 – Jerry Denman

- Veteran Video spreading around nine county area
- Thanked the DAV for allowing the use of the State Fair Building

TAL: Feltman

- Honor Flight 13 – Encouraged all to attend on Saturday Oct 1st, 2022, Homecoming event – Sioux Falls
- October 10th -13th, 2022– Commander/Adjutant Convention
- May 1st -3rd, 2023 – National Commander will be in South Dakota

PVA:

- Oct 21 Dueling Piano sponsorship – selling tables
- 2 Pheasant Hunts 2022 – 45 Veterans / 70 birds each hunt
- Platt 2 Day Hunt
- PVA Banquet – 7 October – Sioux Falls

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Legislative 2023 Discussion:

Notes from Anna Arnold – Meeting SDDVA Veterans Healthcare Task Force (attached)

No Change to the following:

The SDVC approved to introduce a resolution to lobby the State of South Dakota to amend South Dakota Codified Law Chapter SDCL 10-4-10 and 10-4-41, to include the service-connected disabilities 70%-90% for the property tax exemption.

The SDVC approved to lobby the South Dakota Legislature during the 2023 session to pass legislation to amend SDCL 33A-1-22 to include the stipulation that counties with Veteran Populations of 1000 to 3999 according to the most recent Annual VA GDX Report have at a minimum one full-time dedicated County Veterans Service Officer; and for counties with greater than 4000 Veterans an additional one full-time dedicated County Veterans Service officer be employed for each additional 4000 Veterans.

The SDVC approved to introduce a resolution to the South Dakota Legislature to research placement of Veterans in community nursing homes with funding from federal, and State governments and Veterans in rural states.

12. NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed Future SDVC Meetings:

November 16th, 2022, Sioux Falls, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (CST) - DAV
January 11th, 2023, Pierre, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm (CST) – TAL

Future Legislative Roundtables:

November 16th, 2022, Sioux Falls 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (CST) – DAV & PVA
November 17th, 2022, Watertown 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (CST) – VVA
November 18th, 2022, Pierre 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm (CST) – TAL
November 19th, 2022, Spearfish 10:00 am – 11:30 am (MT) – VFW

14. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

On a motion by (DAV) Dan Francis and seconded by (TAL) Kevin Hempel to hold the next meeting on November 16, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (CST), in Sioux Falls at the DAV, 1519 W. 51st St. Sioux Falls, SD. Motion carried.

15. GOOD OF THE ORDER: None

16. CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business before the council, Vice President Kevin Hempel led the council in the benediction followed by a salute to the colors from President Connie Johnson.

On a motion by (TAL) Doug Feltman and seconded by (VFW) Anna Arnold to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 p.m.