



SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL

The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars,
Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart

MINUTES OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL MEETING (SDVC), MILITARY HERITAGE ALLIANCE – SIOUX FALLS FRIDAY, 11 AUGUST 2023 - 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM CST

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Council was called to order by President Connie Johnson at 12:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

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

American Legion (TAL): Courtney Steffen, C.P. Van DeList, and Fred Nelson

Disabled American Veterans (DAV): Christine Speirs, Marty Pennock, and Gene Murphy

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW): Anna Arnold and Dan Klimisch

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters 1054 and 959 (VVA): Phil Braeager (1054) and Terry “Hawk” Mayer (959)

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

North Central Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA): Terry Paulsen and Lisa Cummings

Official Officers Excused: (VFW) Derek Besler, (VVA 1054) Gary West, (MOPH) Bill Flippo, and (PVA) Mike Olson

There was a total of 15 present for the meeting (attached sign in roster). 14 signed in with one for VVA 1054 as a sit in and Fred Nelson who was present via online.

3. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

President Johnson called on Secretary-Treasurer Pennock to read the minutes from the July 19th, 2023, SDVC meeting.

On a motion by (TAL) Courtney Steffen and seconded by (VFW) Anna Arnold to waive the reading of the minutes from the July 19th, 2023, SDVC meeting, and approve them as written as they were mailed to members of the council, posted on the website and provided to members prior to the August 11th SDVC meeting. Discussion. Motion carried.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT:

President Johnson called on Secretary-Treasurer Pennock for a Treasurer's Report. Beginning Balance as of July 19th, 2023, was \$10,498.16, with deposits of \$250.00 and expenses of \$143.92 leaving a balance, as of August 11th, 2023, of \$10,604.24.

On a motion by (VFW) Anna Arnold and seconded by (TAL) Courtney Steffen to approve the Treasurer's Report. Discussion. Motion carried.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2024 Chet Sorenson Award:

The South Dakota Veterans Council (SDVC) would like to congratulate Dr. Martin Christensen for being selected as the **2023 Chester Sorenson Veteran of the Year**.

We want to thank him for his Dedicated Service as a Veterans Advocate for all the Veterans in the State of South Dakota.

The SDVC invited him to the South Dakota Fair on August 31st, 2023, in Huron, SD, to be presented this award and he has accepted the invitation.

The day is dedicated to Veterans at the State Fair and a program will start at 10:30 a.m. on the NorthWestern Energy Freedom Stage, in where he will be presented this prestigious award and offered some time to speak to the Veterans of this State.

President Johnson highly encouraged all of members to attend as well.

Legislative Roundtables:

November 15th Sioux Falls – DAV, 12pm -1:30 pm (CST)

November 16th Watertown – The American Legion Post 17, 11am (CST)

November 17th Pierre - The American Legion Post 8, 11am (CST)

November 18th Rapid City - The American Legion Post 22, 11am (MT)

Legislative 2024 Discussion:

July Discussion

1. DAV provided a list of resolutions that it would support in July.

The long-term term health care resolution that was brought up in 2023 will be watched after the 2023 summer study to see what has been identified to address Veterans' needs. If need be, the SDVC will address this topic again in 2024 pending the outcome of the study.

2. VFW discussed introducing legislation to support a bill increasing the amount of money reimbursed from the state to pay for CVSOs from 25% to 50% for full time employees.

On a motion by (TAL) Courtney Steffen and seconded by (VFW) Dan Klimisch to support the salary change outlined in SDCL 33A-1-31 below with the of reimbursement basic salary

**33A-1-31. State aid for salaries of county service officers--
Maximum reimbursement.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs may establish, implement, and maintain a program for providing financial assistance to counties in paying the salaries of county veterans service officers. No county may be reimbursed in excess of ~~twenty-five percent~~ of the basic salary schedule outlined in § 33A-1-32 for any fiscal year

33A-1-32. County service officers--Basic salary schedule.

The basic salary schedule for county veterans' service officers, which may be adopted by any board of county commissioners, is:

- (1) For counties with population of 50,000 and over, \$20,625 a year;
- (2) For counties with population of 20,000 to 50,000, \$19,250 a year;
- (3) For counties with population of 10,000 to 20,000, \$16,500 a year;
- (4) For counties with population of 5,000 to 10,000, \$12,375 a year; and
- (5) For counties with population up to 5,000, \$8,250 a year.

- (1) 3 counties (\$61,875)
- (2) estimate 10 counties (\$192,500)
- (3) estimate 30 counties (\$495,000)
- (4) estimate 20 counties (\$247,500)
- (5) estimate 3 counties (\$24,750)

estimate cost \$1,021,625 could be less if prorated for part time VSO's

The state of SD budge 7.4 billion .00013% one ten thousand of a percent of the budget

6. NEW BUSINESS:

VP duties will include creating a tracking system on bills and assignments

2025 legislative session

1. Exempt 100% permanent and total disabled Veteran from paying up to \$5000.00 in sales tax on food tax.
 - a. Veteran must have received an honorable discharged from the Armed Forces
 - b. Veteran must be a resident of SD 90 days prior to application
 - c. Veteran must have a 100% permanent and total disability rating from the Department of Veteran Affairs

Discussion that the SDVC will have with Secretary Whitlock on items 2-4.

2. **Certain disabled residents and residents held as prisoners of war eligible for reduced license fees.**

Any resident who meets the requirements of this section may apply to the licensing office of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks in Pierre and receive a resident small game license and a resident fishing license upon payment of a reduced fee to be established by the Game, Fish and Parks Commission in rules promulgated pursuant to chapter 1-26. A resident is eligible for the reduced fee if the resident:

- (1) Receives a veterans allotment for a forty percent or more disability which is deemed a service-connected injury or has received the United States Veterans' Administration K Award;
- (2) Has served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States or has served as a member of the armed forces reserve or national guard, and the resident is forty percent or more disabled for the purposes of receiving social security benefits;
- (3) Was held as a prisoner of war; or (ADD PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT)
- (4) Has a total disability as defined by rules promulgated by the Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

The resident small game license and the resident fishing license are valid for a period of four calendar years if the licensee remains a resident of the state. A veteran may provide proof at the time of application of receipt of such an allotment, social security disability benefits, or award. Any other applicant shall provide proof of any disability on a form provided by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

3. **New Section in 41-6-10.3** – To appreciate and acknowledge the service and sacrifices of SD Veterans, South Dakota GF& P will issue a combination hunting and fishing licenses to all qualifying Veterans who apply at one-half off the current rate.

4. 41-17-13.4. Free admission and reduced fees for certain veterans.

Any South Dakota resident who receives a veteran allotment for a ~~total~~ **(ADD 50 % OR GREATER)** disability which is deemed a service-connected injury or has received the United States Veterans' Administration K Award;**(ADD PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT)** any resident who was held as a prisoner of war; or any resident who has served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States or as a member of the armed forces reserve or the national guard who is classified by the Veterans Administration as ~~totally~~**(ADD 50% OR GREATER)** disabled as a result of a service connected injury may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park or recreation area, and any such person may receive a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical service fee established pursuant to § [41-17-1.1](#) or [41-17-14.1](#). Any person who applies for and qualifies for free admission under the provisions of this section shall be issued a lifetime park entrance license by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The Game, Fish and Parks Commission shall promulgate rules pursuant to chapter [1-26](#) establishing criteria and procedures for obtaining free admission and reduced fees pursuant to this section and for the issuance of a lifetime park entrance license.

5. Resolution

On a motion by (TAL) C.P. Van DeList and seconded by (VFW) Dan Klimisch for the SDVC to support the Major Richard Star Act and for the President to send correspondence to the U.S. Congress immediately.

RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE MAJOR RICHARD STAR ACT

WHEREAS, reform to military retirement and disability compensation rules for combat-injured troops is long overdue; and

WHEREAS, Over 50,000 military retirees with significant combat-related injuries must unfairly forfeit every dollar of earned retirement pay for every dollar they receive in disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, combat-injured veterans and their families should NOT be financially punished for injuries veterans sustained in combat; and

WHEREAS, military retirement pay is a benefit earned for vested years of service to our great nation, while service-connected disability pay is awarded to compensate for reduced earning potential due to lifelong injuries and illnesses incurred while in military service; and

WHEREAS, combat-injured veterans and their families should NOT be forced to choose between either the military retirement they have earned or the disability compensation they are authorized for their injuries.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the South Dakota Veterans Council that we support the immediate passage of the Major Richard Star Act and urge our South Dakota Congressmen to support its passage either as a stand-alone bill or as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act.

Discussion. Motion carried.

6. SDVC Federal Tax-Exempt Status: The SDVC has a new federal EIN and is compliant with the state as a non-profit domestic corporation.

On a motion by Treasurer-Secretary (DAV) Marty Pennock and seconded by (TAL) Courtney Steffen to approve the SDVC to obtain a non-tax-exempt status immediately. Discussion. Motion carried.

7. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Date: Sept 20, 2023
City: Rapid City, SD
Venue: VFW Rapid City Post #1273
Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm (MT)

8. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Grand Opening of the CBOC in Rapid City – August 17th, 2023 – handout provided

9. CLOSING COMMENTS

The SDVC will be gathering in the early evening hours of September 19th at a venue in Rapid City,. The exact location and time will be determined at a future time. It is the intent that all SDVC members would come and participate, relax and enjoy some time together prior to the next SDVC meeting on September 20th. More to follow.

10. ADJORNMENT:

On a motion by (VFW) Dan Klimisch and seconded by (TAL) C.P. Van DeList to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.