



# SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL

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



POST 8, 520 S. Pierre St., PIERRE

15 JANUARY 2025 – 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM CST

Microsoft Teams Meeting Information

Meeting ID: 281 504 409 876

Passcode: RXD8u4

## 1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

- President Connie Johnson

## 2. Prayer & Roll Call

- Vice President Anna Arnold led the council in opening prayer and conducted roll call of the council showing the following members present and a Quorum was met. Officers not in attendance, DAV Kim Hubers, and MOPH Bill Flippo & Buck Underwood.

## 3. Welcome Distinguished Guests and Visitors

- President Connie Johnson

## 4. Minutes of Last Meeting & Treasurer Report

President Johnson called on Treasurer Pennock for a Treasurer's Report.

Motion to accept the minutes as written by Gene Murphy

2<sup>nd</sup> Hawk Meyer

Motion carried

Treasurer report by Marty Pennock beginning balance:

SD Veterans Council to submit the annual 990, Marty will be handling that before March 15<sup>th</sup>. Motion to add Anna Arnold as the signature authority as of today by Marty Pennock

2<sup>nd</sup> Glynis Collier

Motion carried

Motion to approve the treasurer report by Terry Paulson

2<sup>nd</sup> by Gene Murphy

Motion carried

## 5. Endowment Fund Report & Recognition of Individuals

- President Connie Johnson reported there were only \$100 of contributions for the month of January thus far. Ending fund balance: \$3,429,767.82 with an availability to spend is: \$299,226.50

## 6. Updates from Each Veterans Service Organization

### PVA:

- Lost Mike Olson in November and held a celebration of life a week ago in the office.

**TAL:**

- Youth clerical contest at the District level
- Feb 14-16 for the Legislative Conference
- Department level training at the Legislative Conference event, with the National Commander in attendance
- Washington Conference to meet with the Delegates of South Dakota in Washington D.C.
- District meetings where there will be new District officers in Huron
- State Convention will be in Huron June 19-22 of 2025
- Boys State registration is open. Any Junior that wants to attend any week long event that helps them to learn how the legislative process happens. June 2nd-6th at Northern State University in Aberdeen
- Youth Trouper Academy will be 23rd -27th of June in Pierre. Application Deadline is March 21st
- Scholarships are currently open for higher education
- State education scholarship applications are due in March
- Currently at 85% in Membership

**DAV:**

- State Convention April 25-27 in Aberdeen at the AmericInn
- Sending DAV members to DC in Feb 23-26
- August 8-13 the National Convention will be in Las Vegas
- On the eastern side of the state, 10 Veterans got to go deer hunting and they all got their own deer from the Game Fish and Parks. The meat was given to "Meals for Vets" for the needy Veterans in the Sioux Falls area.
- Big thanks to Sara and her team this past Christmas. Able to deliver packages to the Veterans stuck at the VA for the holidays. Completed a Christmas thank you meal for the workers at the VA.
- Scholarships are available
- Women of the Armed Forces on May 4<sup>th</sup> are having a Women's Conference
- Ceremony held March 28<sup>th</sup> to recognize the Vietnam Veterans at the DAV
- August 13<sup>th</sup> at Prairie Green there is a golf tournament, anyone can sign up.

**VVA 1054:**

- Bob Frink reported finishing up the year and was able to give \$35,000

**VVA 959:**

- Hawk Meyer reported on Vietnam Veterans Day is going to be March 28<sup>th</sup> at the DAV. Would encourage all Vietnam Veterans to attend this special event at 10 am.

**MOPH:**

- Connie went on her first deer hunt from the Game Fish and Parks Veterans event. Was able to harvest the deer and keep the meat for her family.
- Winter Warrior Fest on December 31<sup>st</sup> in Brookings. Collaboration between Wounded Warrior Project and MOPH.
- The handout for the GF&P is only a draft at this point. The GF&P would like our organizations to look at the handout and see how they can make it better, or give feedback.
- GF&P is going through their commission to add purple heart recipients for free lifetime access to all state parks. This is a win for the SDVC as it will give us more information about who are the purple heart recipients in the state.

**VFW:**

- Glynis Collier reported we just had our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winners at the awards banquet. We also had our Legislative Conference on Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> and it was a huge success. We discussed the current legislation with the Legislators
- March 1-6 is the VFW National Legislative Conference in DC.

- Membership raffle is raffling off an AR-15. Annual members have a chance to win 1 free ticket, and those who become life members receive 7 tickets for an opportunity to win the AR-15 at the state Convention.
- A family in Pierre lost everything in a fire and are looking for a place to stay and are also looking for donations to help the family.
- Suicide prevention is key for this time of year. Please do buddy checks.

## 7. Guest Speakers Invited

- SD Department of Veterans Affairs: Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard
  - SD Department of Veterans Affairs: Director of Veterans Cemetery Erin Brown
    - Recently Completed Wreaths Across America placing 490 wreaths honoring over 790 veterans
    - Continue to receive lots of interest and requests from community
  - Sioux Falls Veterans Administration Health Care System: Executive Director / CEO Sara Ackert
    - Starting January 2025, new rules grant presumptive service connection for certain cancers due to exposure to fine particulate matter. This includes urinary bladder cancer (effective Jan 2) and various blood cancers (effective Jan 10) for veterans who served in specific regions during the Gulf War and post-9/11 conflicts. If a veteran files for these conditions, the VA will first try to connect them directly or secondarily to service before addressing other claims.
  - Black Hills Veterans Administration Health Care System: Executive Director /CEO Spencer Mion
    - Community Living Centers: 52 available beds, HS and FM have a census of 45.
    - • HS DOM: Census of 34 (low due to the Holiday). Continue to increase census (34 in Dec.
  - Black Hills Veterans Administration Health Care System: Executive Director /CEO Spencer Mion
  - Dakotas Regional Office: Tracee Metcalf Dakotas Regional Office Supervisory Staff Assistant
  - U.S. Congressional Representative Liaisons for Senator Thune (Ben Ready), Senator Rounds (GP Carmichael and Bob DeJong), and Representative Johnson (Dani
8. Unfinished Business
- Legislative Review – President Johnson gave a review of the bills the SDVC supported and went over the current bills that have been dropped in regards to Veterans and Military affairs.
    - SB 52
    - HB 1010
    - HB 1038
    - HB 1046
  - Secretary position is still available.

## 9. New Business

- SDDVA Budget – President Johnson
- Motion for Election in April 2025 – President Johnson
  - Motion to change the date of the election for officers in the bylaws to the April meeting instead of July meeting. The reason behind this is because when we elect in July, the SDVC is already behind in the legislation process.
    - Motion to change the election dates to April in the bylaws by Gene Murphy.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Terry Paulson
    - Motion carried
- Meeting Dates and Locations for 2025 – Vice President Arnold
  - April 16<sup>th</sup> - Hot Springs – State Veterans Home
  - July 16<sup>th</sup> - Mitchell – VFW
    - 105 N Main St, Mitchell, SD 57301 (upstairs, take the elevator located by the back door of the Post)

- August 20<sup>th</sup> - Online
- September 17<sup>th</sup>– Yankton – VFW
  - 209 S Cedar St, Yankton, SD 57078
- October 15<sup>th</sup> – Online
- November 19<sup>th</sup> – Sioux Falls – DAV – start of Legislative roundtables
  - 1519 W 51st St, Sioux Falls, SD 57105
- Motion to accept the dates for the upcoming year by Anna Arnold
  - 2nd Gene Murphy
  - Motion carried

#### **10. Good of the Order and Closing Comments**

- Representative Tim Goodwin spoke on getting rid of the Secretary of Department Affairs and combining the SDDVA with the Department of the Military. Discussion ensued.
- Senator Larry Zikmund discussed with the group asking for support to put a State Veteran’s Home on the East Side of the state.
- The SDVC Legislative mixer will start at 5:30 pm CST in the American Legion Post #8.
- Next meeting April 16, 2025, at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs.

#### **11. Closing Prayer**

- Vice President Anna Arnold provided a closing prayer.

#### **12. Honors to the American Flag and Adjournment**

- President Connie Johnson rendered honors to the Flag.

On a motion by Terry Paulson (PVA) and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Anna Arnold (VFW) to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm CST.

#### **13. Past South Dakota Veterans Council Meetings**

20 October 2021 (SD Military Heritage Alliance Bldg., Sioux Falls). 12 January 2022 (Red Rosa, Pierre, SD). 20 April 2022 (SD Military Heritage Alliance Bldg., Sioux Falls). 20 July 2022 (The American Legion Post 17, Watertown). 28 September 2022 (The American Legion Post 22, Rapid City). 16 November 2022 (The Disabled American Veterans, Sioux Falls). 11 January 2023 (The American Legion Post 8, Pierre). 19 April 2023 (Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home). 19 July 2023 (Rosalies, Sisseton). 11 August 2023 (SD Military Heritage Alliance Bldg., Sioux Falls). 20 September 2023 (VFW Post 1273, Rapid City). 25 October 2023 (Executive Suite Research Park, Brookings, SD). 15 November 2023 (Disabled American Veterans, Sioux Falls, SD). 10 January 2024 (The American Legion Post 8, Pierre). 17 April 2024 (VFW Post 1273, Rapid City). 26 June 2024 (Teams Meeting). 17 July 2024 (VFW Post #17 Yelduz Shrine Center, Aberdeen). 21 August 2024 (VFW Post #791, Yankton). 16 October 2024 (The American Legion Post 74, Brookings). 20 November 2024 (Disabled American Veterans, Sioux Falls). 15 January 2025 (American Legions Post #8, Pierre).