

**NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME**  
**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Held at NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS HOME, LISBON, NORTH DAKOTA**  
**October 01, 2005**

**PRESENT:** Norris Braaten – Chairman  
Daryl Beard  
Larry Dakken  
Orletta Kilen  
Jerry Meske  
Darrol Schroeder  
Robert Volk  
Neal Asper, Administrator-NDVH

**GUESTS:** Ralph Metcalf, Member of ND House of Representatives for District 24  
Margie Ourenhagen, NDVH Executive Secretary

Meeting called to order by Chairman, Norris Braaten. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a moment of silence for the POW/MIA's.

**MINUTES:** Darrol Schroeder made a motion, seconded by Orletta Kilen to accept the August 16, 2005 minutes as mailed out. Motion carried.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Neal Asper**

- **FINANCIAL UPDATE.** (Handout) With 92% of the biennium remaining, we are right on tract with 92% of our spending authority left. The area of concern is the cost of primary care for our residents. After only two months into the new biennium we have over spent this line item by \$20,643. The Skilled Unit Per Diem increase of \$40.00 more per day will take in approximately \$30,000 more revenue per month. However, we need to request permission from Legislation to accept and spend this revenue.
- **CENSUS:** (Handout) we have 78 residents on the Basic Care Unit and 37 residents on the Skilled Care Unit.
- **ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE:** (Handout)
- **SKILLED WRITE OFF:** Kristin Lneborg, Accounting Manager, requested permission to write off \$332.61 on a skilled account. The individual is deceased and there is no money left in the estate to pay the bill. Documentation has been received from the representative handling his affairs which states that there is no money to pay the bill. Motion was made by Daryl Beard, seconded by Larry Dakken to write off the skilled account in the amount of \$332.61. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Darrol Schroeder, seconded by Robert Volk to accept the financial statements as presented. Motion carried.

**EDUCATION ASSISTANCE:** Discussion was held on the present policy and contract pertaining to the education policy. The current policy allows any individual who wishes to

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further their education to apply for a loan. A contract is also drawn up that will allow the individual to work for the veterans home so many hours and this loan is forgiven. If the individual does not work the required hours they are required to pay back the loan. The veteran's home is required to have a registered nurse on staff twenty-four hours per day. We have approximately \$7,000 in Inter Governmental Transfers money available to be used for nursing education.

Motion was made by Daryl Beard, seconded by Orletta Kileen, instructing Administrator, Neal Asper, to write an education policy that will offer payments for tuition, fees and books for any individual receiving education to become a Registered Nurse. Motion carried.

**LICENSED BEDS:** Currently we are licensed for 112 domiciliary beds with VA and 111 with North Dakota and 38 skilled unit beds. Our average census is 80 domiciliary and 37 skilled.

Discussion was held on the long range planning of building a skilled unit addition. We would not exceed the total beds of 138. Administrator Asper recommended that if a skilled wing is added we decertify from 111 domiciliary beds to 79 beds and convert several semi private rooms to private rooms. According to VA regulation, every two hour drive we technically are permitted 121 total beds at one location. The NDVH is grand-fathered in at 149 beds. Also with the domiciliary beds not being filled our census looks poor.

Discussion was also held on establishing more private rooms, as some of these rooms are very small. We receive calls from veterans who want a private room. Presently we have 21 residents in private rooms. The Administrator recommends at some future date we significantly increase the number of private rooms. Residents shared concerns that the rent would be raised to compensate for the luxury of establishing more private rooms.

Motion was made by Daryl Beard, seconded by Orletta Kilen to delay the decertification at this time but proceed to increase the number of private rooms. Motion carried.

Discussion was held on the charges for private rooms. Motion was made by Larry Dakken, seconded by Daryl Beard to recommend to the ACOVA to charge an additional fee of \$1.00 for a private room. Private rooms are currently charged \$1.00 or \$1.50 per day depending on size. Motion carried.

**KATRINA:** HHS Secretary Leavitt waived certain Medicare & Medicaid program requirements to allow nursing homes to accept people in need of a nursing care. The NDVH sent notice to the NDLTCA that we had eight basic care beds available for displaced veterans and/or their spouses.

**SCUTTLEBUTT:** Mailing costs are approximately \$550 per issue. The scuttlebutt is available on the internet at <http://freewebs.com/ndvhnews>. In the next several issues we will mention this availability. If individuals would prefer to continue receiving the hardcopy they must contact the Activities Department.

The board gave a special thank you to Kathy Wiltse and resident Gary Thomte for the excellent job they do with the scuttlebutt.

**MARKETING DISKS:** The Governing Board reviewed the marketing disks provided by Steve Musser, Executive Director of the five Minnesota Veteran Homes. They were agreeable a disk should be marketed for the North Dakota Veterans Home.

**SURVEYS:** (Handouts) Administrator Asper shared other facilities surveys. There are many areas that are viewed during a state survey which makes a health care facility very vulnerable to deficiencies. The board also discussed the Minneapolis Veterans Home survey and the article that was printed in the Minneapolis Tribune.

**RESIDENT TRANSPORTATION:** Administrator Asper requested from the Department of Transportation to trade in the little bus for a mini van with a lowered floor and manual lift.

**VA MEDICATIONS:** (Handout) Daryl Beard, Jake Reuter and Administrator Asper meet with the Fargo VA to discuss the medication costs. Because the Veterans Home receives the per diem for the residents, the opinion is that it is our responsibility to provide all pharmaceuticals. This includes chemotherapy drugs and other drugs whether they are given at the VA or here. Daryl Beard will be meeting with Mike Jenkins to further discuss the federal register data which states that if a veteran has a service connected disability the VA will pay for that medication. Also discussed was if a resident is being provided specialty care by the VA, shouldn't they be responsible for the specialty care medication. A verbal request was made by Daryl Beard to David Garland to provide us these laws in writing. If this information is not received by November 1<sup>st</sup> Daryl Beard will re-contact Mr. Garland in writing requesting this information.

**VA SURVEY:** This inspection was held September 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>. The exit interview was very positive. We will receive a listing of the deficiencies and write a Plan of Correction when received.

**TURN BACK OF FUNDS:** (Handout) Administrator Asper addressed the Veterans Home "turn-back of funds in the amount of \$1,255,752 for the last biennium in a letter to Chairman Braaten.

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT FOLLOW-UP:** The North Dakota Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee met Wednesday, August 31, 2005 at the Roughrider Room, State Capitol, Bismarck, ND. Gordy Smith from the State Auditor's Office was very complimentary of the progress and direction of the North Dakota Veterans Home. He also reported to the Legislation that the performance audit no longer needed follow up documentation. Most of the questions discussed were concerning the ACOVA. Chairman Rudy Jenson responded to the legislature's questions and concerns.

**NASVH SUMMER CONFERENCE:** Administrator Asper gave a report on the NASVH conference which was held in Seattle. He felt attending these conferences that are attended by all the state veterans' homes is very beneficial.

**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING REIMBURSEMENTS:** Discussion was held on the Governing Board Members reimbursement when attending an ACOVA meeting. The ACOVA does receive general fund dollars for travel expense; therefore the reimbursement for travel is to

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be paid from the \$20,000 set aside in the Post War Trust Fund. The ACOVA requested that the NDVH reimburse the four Governing Board Members who attend the ACOVA meetings. Prior to the Governing Board existence the ACOVA consisted of fifteen members. Seven members were the ACOVA Subcommittee and seven were the NDVH Subcommittee. Each department reimbursed their own subcommittee members. The ACOVA voted that the NDVH reimburse the four members that set on the ACOVA who are members of the NDVH Governing Board. The other members of the ACOVA would be paid from the \$20,000 set aside in the Post War Trust Fund.

At the ACOVA meetings, when these four members of the Governing Board are in one room that constitutes a Governing Board Meeting. However, the newly created seven members Governing Board normally hold their meeting separate from the ACOVA meetings either at the Veterans Home or by holding a conference call.

Motion was made by Jerry Meske, seconded by Orletta Kilen to deny any further authorization of travel reimbursement for the ACOVA meetings when the Governing Board members attend who are members of the ACOVA for the sole purpose of attending an ACOVA meeting. A roll call vote was taken Daryl Beard – No; Larry Dakken & Robert Volk – abstain, Orletta Kilen, Jerry Meske & Darrol Schroeder – yes. Motion carried.

When the ACOVA meeting is held in conjunction with a Governing Board meeting the reimbursements will be billed to the veterans' home.

**TIME CLOCK:** A time clock called time track has been installed at the Veterans Home. The clock is all computerized. Hopefully all staff will be using it by the end of October.

**ARMY TANK:** This tank, which sets on the veteran's home grounds, is inspected on an annual basis for upkeep. This year they requested we weld it from the bottom and have it painted. The veteran's home maintenance department has completed this.

**STAFF:** Nickela Runch has been added to the NDVH staff to assist the Accounting Department and the Director of Nursing.

Other employees hired were Lisa Scwab, Health Information Technology, and Susie Schlecht as the Social Service Transportation Coordinator and Driver.

**POLICY ON "WHISTLE BLOWERS":** (Handout) This policy was presented to illustrate to the board how a whistle blower is protected.

**ADMINISTRATORS APPRAISAL REPORT:** This report was submitted to the ACOVA.

**STATE AGENCY:** The board was made aware that several states are questioning if their veterans home should continue to be operated as a state agency due to cost and quality of care issues. Some states contract the management of their veterans' homes to private companies or operate as private agencies of the State for the purpose of providing a higher quality of care with less cost. The administrator suggests that the board should look into the possibility of the

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Veterans Home becoming a private agency of the State managed by the ACOVA and NDVH Governing Board. The state has delegated the management of the Veterans Home to the ACOVA, but as a state agency and not as an instrumentality/private agency of the state.

**CLOSING COMMENTS:**

Thank you to Ralph Metcalf, Member of ND House of Representatives for District 24, for attending the Governing Board meeting. Your attendance helps us to learn more about Legislation and it helps you to learn more about us, we value your input and support.

Mr. Metcalf stated the State of North Dakota and himself appreciate all the effort that the Governing Board puts into a meeting to see that the Veterans of North Dakota are well taken care of. Mr. Metcalf stressed to the board to always keep in mind what is best for the veterans, not necessarily what is best for the state or the employee. He thanked the NDVH Governing Board Members for taking the time out of your private operations and lives to set on this board. He also reminded the Board that he is interested in working with them on anything they have in mind that requires legislator assistance.

Discussion was held on the Legislative action lowering the residency requirement from one year to thirty days. Also discussed was the age requirement of a spouse which was lowered from 55 to 45 and the statement requiring to be married for five years was deleted.

Discussion was held on the skilled care per diem and the spouses' eligible to enter the unit. VA regulations state spouses can not exceed twenty-five per cent of census. The Governing Board would like legislation to place a cap on the spouses that can be in our skilled care at any one time. At this time the percentage of spouses at the NDVH is significantly less than 25 percent.

Discussion was held on the Administrator not filling a skilled room with a spouse as it may take a considerable length of time to find another female resident.

**DATE, LOCATION & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

NDVH Governing Board will hold a telephone conference call Tues., December 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM. (This meeting was rescheduled to a face to face meeting Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. at the Veterans Home)

Motion was made by Orletta Kilen, seconded by Daryl Beard to adjourn this meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Neal Asper  
Administrator

/mo