

MINUTES

STATE OF NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS

301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 95083, Lincoln, NE 68509-5083

June 21, 2022 - 1:30 p.m. - 301 Centennial Mall South, 4th Floor, NDVA

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs (Commission) met on June 21, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA), 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Commissioners present (voting members):

John Hilgert, Director, Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs

Tami Thompson, 1st Congressional District

Dan Donovan, 2nd Congressional District

Dave Bloomfield, 3rd Congressional District

Commissioners present (nonvoting, ex officio members):

Jana Dye, Veterans' Program Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Labor

Nikki Nader, 55th Wing Designee

Colonel Damon Vorhees, 557th Weather Wing Designee

Commissioners excused (voting member):

Anthony Goins, Director, Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Major General Daryl Bohac, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard

Commissioners excused (nonvoting, ex officio members):

Rick Evans, Chair, State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Major General Bob Stevenson, U.S. Strategic Command Designee

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Phil O'Donnell, Military Affairs Liaison.

II. ROLL CALL

Hilgert, Thompson, Donovan, Bloomfield, Dye, Nader, and Vorhees were present. Goins, Bohac, Evans, and Stevenson were excused.

**III. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES –
Action/Vote**

O'Donnell noted changes to the draft meeting minutes based off of the advice of the Deputy Legal Counsel of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs. Of note, the draft material in agenda item XI, Commissioner Comments, was removed given that it was not an actionable agenda item.

Moved by Thompson and seconded by Hilgert to approve the November 10, 2021, Commission meeting minutes. Voting Aye: Hilgert, Thompson, Donovan, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – June 21, 2022

O'Donnell dispensed with reading the Commission's public comment rule and opened the floor to Mr. Daryl Harrison.

Harrison noted his affiliation with the Nebraska Veterans Coalition, his role as Committee Chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee for the American Legion in Nebraska, and his role with the Nebraska Medal of Honor Foundation. Harrison discussed his work dedicating US-20 as the Medal of Honor Highway. Harrison expressed his appreciation for the work on the Governor's Challenge focused on preventing veteran suicide. Harrison offered his support and the support of his organizations to the Commission.

V. U.S. SPACE COMMAND UPDATE – Military Affairs Liaison

O'Donnell provided an update since the Commission's last meeting on November 10, 2021, regarding the City of Bellevue's self-nomination to host the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command.

On May 11, 2022, the DoD IG released its "Evaluation of the Air Force Selection Process for the Permanent Location of the U.S. Space Command Headquarters" DOGIG-2022-096. This 112-page redacted report concluded that "Overall, we determined that the 2020 Basing Action directed by the SECDEF complied with Federal Law and DoD policy and that the Basing Action process was reasonable."

On May 18, 2022, Alabama Senator Tommy Tuberville wrote to Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Inhofe highlighting the findings of the DoD IG report and the yet to be publicly released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report. Senator Tuberville advocated that it was time to move forward with the decision to locate U.S. Space Command at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville Alabama.

On June 2, 2022, the GAO released its 89-page report "U.S. Space Command – Air Force Should Develop Guidance for Strengthening Future Basing Decisions" GAO-22-106055. The GAO recommends that the Air Force develop guidance for future strategic basing decisions that is consistent with GAO's Analysis of Alternatives (AOA) best practices, and determine the basing actions to which it should apply. The Air Force neither agreed nor disagreed.

As of June 2022, the decision to move U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Huntsville, Alabama appears to still stand.

Moving forward we will continue to monitor the process and decision. Obtaining an unredacted copy of the DoD IG report is still a goal. Perhaps more importantly we will look to see what key issues the Defense State Liaison Office proposes for FY23 and also closely monitor any changes or updates to the Support of Military Family assessments for Nebraska.

O'Donnell thanked the 55th Wing for its support.

VI. DELIBERATION – COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT AS REQUIRED BY NEB. REV. STAT. §55-606, RECOMMENDATIONS, COURSES OF ACTION

O'Donnell introduced Dr. Mitch Herian from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research to present a research proposal titled The Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets: An Update for Fiscal Year 2021.

Herian described the core components of the economic impact assessment along with the special study designed to assess Department of Defense and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs contracting within Nebraska.

Bloomfield asked what the research would cost.

Herian noted that the proposed cost was around \$27,000 and similar to previous years studies.

O'Donnell asked Herian if he would be contacting each of the Commissioners.

Herian confirmed that he would be.

O'Donnell described what may be asked of the 557th Weather Wing in terms of input to the Commission report.

VII. MOTION TO CONTRACT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH FOR Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets: Update for FY 2021 PROPOSAL DATED MAY 31, 2022 PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF NEB. REV. STAT. §55-605 and §55-606 – Action/Vote

Moved by Hilgert and seconded by Donovan to contract with the University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research for Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets: Update for FY 2021 proposal dated May 31, 2022 pursuant to *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-605 and §55-606*. Voting Aye: Hilgert, Thompson, Donovan. Bloomfield abstained. Motion carried.

VIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Each of the Commissioners had an opportunity to share comments.

IX. MOTION TO ADJOURN – Action/Vote

Moved by Bloomfield and seconded by Donovan to adjourn. Voting Aye: Hilgert, Thompson, Donovan, Bloomfield. Motion carried. Adjourned at 2:03 p.m.