

MINUTES  
STATE OF NEBRASKA  
COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS  
301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 95083, Lincoln, NE 68509-5083

Wednesday, May 23, 2018 - 10:00 a.m.  
301 Centennial Mall South, Lower Level Conference Room A

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs (Commission) met on May 23, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lower Level Conference Room A of the Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska.

In compliance with the provisions of *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411*, printed notice of this meeting was posted at the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA). In addition the notice was published in the Omaha World Herald on page 7C on May 9, 2018, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar (nebraska.gov) on March 22, 2018.

In compliance with the provisions of *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-602 and §55-603*, a quorum was established with all six voting members. A written notice of the time and place of the meeting was mailed to all members in advance of the meeting. The aim of these minutes is to comply with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, specifically *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1413*.

Commissioners present:

Dave Rippe, Director, Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
Major General Daryl Bohac, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard  
John Hilgert, Director, Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Rita Sanders, 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Bill Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
Dave Bloomfield, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District  
Paul Cohen, Chair of the State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve  
Colonel J. David Norton, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Designee and 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing Designee

Excused Commissioners:

Major General Richard Evans, U.S. Strategic Command Designee

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield, Cohen and Norton were present. Evans was excused.

**III. ENTRY OF PUBLIC NOTICE INTO THE RECORD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT, SPECIFICALLY *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411*. ADVISE THE PUBLIC THAT THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT APPLIES AND IS PUBLICALLY POSTED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1412*.**

Military Affairs Liaison, Phil O'Donnell, announced the location of the Open Meetings Act on the wall of Lower Level Conference Room A. O'Donnell also noted the public notice of the meeting was posted in the Omaha World Herald (page 7C) on May 9, 2018, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar ([nebraska.gov](http://nebraska.gov)) on March 22, 2018.

**IV. MOTION TO DESIGNATE ENTRY OF PUBLIC NOTICE FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS IN THE OMAHA WORLD HERALD AND ON THE NEBRASKA.GOV CALENDAR PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411* – Action/Vote**

Moved by Sanders and seconded by Hilgert to designate entry of public notice in the Omaha World Herald and the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar on [nebraska.gov](http://nebraska.gov). Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**V. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 13, 2017 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – Action/Vote**

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Bloomfield to approve the November 13, 2017 Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting Aye: Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Abstain: Rippe. Motion carried.

**VI. REPORT – APRIL 13, 2018 TOUR OF NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD FACILITIES AND ASSETS - Military Affairs Liaison**

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs met on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. in the Nebraska National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters Building, 2433 NW 24<sup>th</sup> St, Lincoln, Nebraska, pursuant to the provisions for special meetings in *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-603*.

Commissioners present:

Dave Rippe, Director, Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
Major General Daryl Bohac, Adjutant General of the Nebraska National Guard  
John Hilgert, Director, Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Rita Sanders, 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Dave Bloomfield, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District

Five of six voting members of the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs constituted a quorum of the Commission. Four participants received a briefing from Maj Gen Bohac regarding the structure, locations, facilities and operational capabilities of the Nebraska National Guard.

**VII. MOTION TO DESIGNATE ENTRY OF PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE OMAHA WORLD HERALD AND ON THE NEBRASKA.GOV CALENDAR FOR THE APRIL 13, 2018 TOUR OF NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD FACILITIES AND ASSETS PURSUANT TO *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411*. – Action/Vote**

In compliance with the provisions of *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411*, printed notice of the meeting was posted at the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. In addition the notice was published in the Omaha World Herald on page 8C on April 6, 2018, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar (nebraska.gov) on March 22, 2018.

Moved by Rippe and seconded by Sanders to designate entry of public notice in the Omaha World Herald and the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar on nebraska.gov. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – FOR APRIL 13, 2018 TOUR OF NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD FACILITIES AND ASSETS**

*In accordance with provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1412, the public shall have the right to attend meetings of the Commission and to speak on matters related to Commission business. Any person may appear before and address the Commission concerning any item on the agenda for that meeting. Further, any person may appear before and address the Commission at any annual or scheduled meeting on any matter concerning the Commission not on the agenda by notifying the Commission Secretary in advance of the meeting at which the person desires to address the Commission. A reasonable time limit [usually five (5) minutes] shall be placed upon each individual appearance before the Board, and no more than thirty (30) minutes shall be allowed for public comment, unless a majority of the quorum present shall extend such time limit. The Chairperson shall have the right to prohibit appearances by persons presenting needlessly repetitious or redundant testimony.*

O'Donnell asked if anyone would like to address the Commission. Members of the public declined.

**IX. APPROVAL OF TOUR OF NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD FACILITIES AND ASSETS MINUTES – Action/Vote**

Moved by Sanders and seconded by Hilgert to approve the April 13, 2018 Tour of Nebraska National Guard Facilities and Assets Minutes. Prior to voting Rippe and Bloomfield thanked

Bohac for the opportunity to learn more about the Nebraska National Guard. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

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O'Donnell asked if anyone would like to address the Commission. Members of the public declined.

## **XI. ACTIVITY UPDATE – Military Affairs Liaison**

O'Donnell welcomed Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) Director Dave Rippe.

In November O'Donnell electronically submitted the Commission's annual report in accordance with *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-606*.

Ongoing activities included participating in the Offutt Advisory Council, Nebraska Veterans' Council, Nebraska Veterans and Family Task Force, the Omaha Chamber's MilTAG, the Lincoln Chamber's Military Advisory Committee, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Stakeholders meeting.

Outreach activities over the last six months included presenting the Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets to the Lincoln Chamber's Military Advisory Committee, the Nebraska Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee's Annual Planning and Awards Meeting (APAM), and to County Veteran Service Officer training in Grand Island. Additionally, O'Donnell participated in Vietnam Veterans Commemorations for Buffalo County in Kearney and at the State Capitol with Governor Ricketts and Maj Gen Bohac. O'Donnell also participated in a 55th Wing Ceremony recognizing Gail Farrell for his service in World War II.

Major Developments over the last six months:

For the first time in six years, the Department of Defense is not asking Congress for a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round in its Fiscal Year 2019 budget request.

The Service Secretaries (notably Dr. Heather Wilson) sent a memo to the National Governors Association noting that they will “encourage leadership to consider the quality of schools near bases and whether reciprocity of professional licenses is available for military families when evaluating future basing or mission alternatives.”

This spring the State Board of Education, Nebraska’s Attorney General, and Governor Ricketts (March 19th) approved revisions to the Nebraska Department of Education’s Rule 21, allowing military spouses to receive a three-year teaching permit in Nebraska with a valid out-of-state license. As noted in the Commission's Annual report (2017) on pages 15-16, "In 2017, the NDE staff have continued working with Senator Sue Crawford and a constituent, who is a military spouse, regarding certificates or permits to be teachers in Nebraska for military spouses to see if regulations could be amended to address this topic."

Also this spring, the Nebraska Supreme Court adopted a rule amendment creating “Class 1-D applicants” for admission of military spouse attorneys to the Nebraska Bar effective March 21. O’Donnell provided advice to Leslie Walter, Nebraska’s point of contact with the Military Spouse J.D. Network.

In May, the Council of Economic Advisors issued a report regarding military spouses in the labor market in conjunction with an Executive Order (EO) to enhance noncompetitive civil service appointments of military spouses. This EO promotes military spouse hiring and adds a reporting requirement to federal agencies. Eliminating the two year limit on noncompetitive appointments and any geographic restrictions (within 5 CFR 315.612) is where there could be substantive change.

In 2018, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law:

Legislative Bill 96, which provides an eligible activity for assistance from the Site and Building Development Fund.

Legislative Bill 901, which requires the Director of Aeronautics to consult with the Military Department in certain structural permitting decisions.

Legislative Bill 682, which provides consumer protection and civil relief for service members and requires the Nebraska National Guard to provide its members a list of their state and federal consumer protections.

Legislative Bill 685, which provides a funding priority for special-needs military dependents under the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Bellevue Public Schools has been selected to receive a Department of Defense (DoD) STEM grant through the Military Families Mission of the National Math + Science Initiative's College Readiness Program. The public event at Offutt AFB to announce the grant is pending the Governor's availability on August 27-29, 2018.

Commissioner Sanders and O'Donnell will attend the Association of Defense Communities National Summit in Washington DC, June 18-20, 2018, the Nebraska Breakfast on June 20th, and will briefly meet with members of Nebraska's congressional delegation, schedules permitting.

On May 14th, Perry Wiggins, Executive Director of the Governor's Military Council for the State of Kansas moderated another teleconference to discuss a draft proposal to establish a Midwest Defense Alliance with Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Nebraska. Organizational documents are under review. O'Donnell intends to track and report on this effort as it evolves.

On the workforce development front, O'Donnell hosted a meeting of employment specialists with retired Brigadier General Marianne Watson, Director of Outreach with the Center for America. This effort led to the development of a guide for employers as they work to hire veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members. Additionally, personnel from the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL), NDVA, and NDED are continuing work to retain and attract veterans to Nebraska. Two lines of effort are underway.

O'Donnell introduced Bradley Pierce with NDED who is shepherding a line of effort to survey and inform service members as they participate in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at Offutt AFB.

Bloomfield asked how long the program is available. O'Donnell responded that the program is available for up to a year after a mobilization for Reserve Component members and that it could be made available under certain circumstances.

Bohac noted that typically a service member participates during his or her last year of service prior to separation or retirement.

Rippe asked Bradley Pierce to speak about his work.

Pierce discussed working with NDVA, NDOL, and NDED and that it is the first time that the State has been able to gather this sort of survey data for business recruitment.

Rippe noted Pierce's work on talent mapping and business recruitment given that the availability of talent seems to drive business recruitment.

Bohac asked for Pierce's thoughts about expanding the survey to National Guard and Reserve Component.

Pierce noted that the working group discussed including the National Guard and Reserve Component; however, the working group decided to focus on the Active Component at Offutt and work to expand the survey from there.

Cohen encouraged Pierce to include Guard and Reserve members in studies and work given that there is always increasing pressure on Guard and Reserve members to decide how active they should be relative to their civilian careers.

Pierce noted that he continues to work with Ned Holmes, a program support specialist for the National Guard Employment Support Program.

O'Donnell outlined the second line of effort, a pilot project between NDVA and NDOL to use DD-214 data and reach out to veterans and offer employment resources. In the first group of 30 veterans 4 found value in the resources provided.

Hilgert noted the challenge of identifying and reaching out to veterans prior to separation instead of when the State receives their discharge.

During the Governor's Roundtable on April 23th, Dave Nelson, a member of the Nebraska Veterans' Homes Board representing Paralyzed Veterans of America, asked Governor Ricketts and Director Hilgert what they could do to expand the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to pre-9/11 veterans. Mr. Nelson's interest in H.R. 5674 Title I, Subtitle C, Section 161 to expand the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to pre-9/11 veterans has been brought to the attention of the state staff of Nebraska's congressional delegation.

O'Donnell noted that a veteran expressed concern about the application of Nebraska's Veterans Preference Laws as they relate to school hiring announcements and decisions. O'Donnell brought this matter to the attention of the Nebraska Council of School Attorneys which intends to draw attention to the Nebraska Veterans Preference Law during the School Law Seminar on June 15th in Kearney.

#### Future Developments:

A group of Nebraska leaders representing business, agriculture, government and higher education announced the formation of Blueprint Nebraska, a statewide coalition that will develop a plan for economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity as Nebraska looks to its next 150 years and beyond. Of note, one of the fifteen Industry Councils is focused on Military and Veteran's Affairs. If given the opportunity, O'Donnell intends to be engaged in this effort given

potential overlap between a Military and Veteran’s Affairs Industry Council and a Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.

The University of Nebraska Lincoln’s Bureau of Business Research (UNL-BBR) finalized its proposal to update the Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets. *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-606* tasks the Commission to “prepare an annual report summarizing the military assets of Nebraska, including installations and missions, and the economic impact of the military assets in Nebraska.” Additionally, the report shall include “recommendations for preserving and sustaining military assets and missions existing in Nebraska and recommendations for actions which the state can take to encourage expanding such assets and missions.”

Before deliberating agenda item XII, Bohac brought the conversation back to legislative bills that work to make Nebraska a more military friendly state. Bohac suggested that the Commission should evaluate after a year’s period to see if the bills noted had the intended effect (to include changes to Rule 21, etc.). The goal would be to report back out a year from now the results of these broad efforts. For example, are people actually taking advantage of the licensure act (and other measures)?

Cohen noted Senator Crawford’s work in the interim to analyze the effectiveness of occupational licensing processes. Hilgert noted that the structure used to analyze the processes may be useful in evaluation and impact. Hilgert suggested that Nebraska may not always “follow up” after a law is passed. Bloomfield questioned Sen Crawford’s effort to look at just the military or to look at everything (such as tax incentives). Cohen noted that it was his understanding that Senator Crawford’s interim study would focus on those bills that affected the military and pick up some others along the way.

## **XII. DELIBERATION – COMMISSION REPORT, RECOMMENDATIONS, COURSES OF ACTION**

*Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-606. Report; contents.*

*The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs shall prepare an annual report summarizing the military assets of Nebraska, including installations and missions, and the economic impact of the military assets in Nebraska. The report shall also include recommendations for preserving and sustaining military assets and missions existing in Nebraska and recommendations for actions which the state can take to encourage expanding such assets and missions. The commission shall submit the report electronically to the Legislature, the Governor, and the commanding officer of every military base in Nebraska on or before November 15 of each year.*

O’Donnell introduced Dr. Eric Thompson and Dr. Mitch Herian with the University of Nebraska’s Bureau of Business Research.

Thompson expressed excitement to update previous research and work on Task 3 that was recommended in the last report and see if there is any change with two years' worth of results. Hilgert asked if there was anything else that might be of interest to the Commission.

Herian noted that a broader study regarding how tax policy at the State level impacts migration patterns could be informative. Herian explained that a "full blown" study could be done to really drill down on the issue. Thompson suggested looking at the military related businesses in Nebraska, those that don't necessarily work directly with the military, impact of those businesses in the state economy and ties to labor force opportunities.

O'Donnell noted and discussed how other states conduct defense supply chain analysis.

Rippe asked and O'Donnell confirmed that the economic impact analysis is an annual statutory requirement. Rippe then asked if funding was provided for this research when the Commission was created.

Hilgert noted that the funding had to be found.

O'Donnell explained the 60/40 cost share between DED and NDVA for the 2017 annual report. O'Donnell suggested that the 2018 annual report would be funded solely by NDVA.

Rippe asked about the contracting process and whether the Commission took proposals from multiple vendors last year.

O'Donnell outlined 4 courses of action to assess the economic impact of military assets in Nebraska. These courses of action included: contracting with a private sector consultant (such as SRI International), contracting with a local or Nebraska-centric organization (such as UNL-BBR), contracting with a non-local organization (such as another University), or producing an "in-house" report. From these courses of action, the private sector option was presumed to be too expensive; an "in-house" report may have lacked sufficient credibility; cost and credibility were also considered with potential non-local organizations. UNL-BBR provided sufficient credibility and expertise in the Nebraska economy; UNL-BBR also offers overhead discounts for the State of Nebraska likely leading to the lowest cost; and finally, contracting with UNL-BBR provided an opportunity to strengthen university-government collaboration around economic development objectives pursuant to SRI International recommendation #4 in Supporting Innovation-Led Growth in Nebraska, June 15, 2016.

Cohen asked Thompson if there is a way to quantify the impact of the military to the State's workforce and how growing the workforce is necessary to grow business. Thompson noted the section in the 2017 report that developed an estimate of the net increase in the size of the state's labor force due to the presence of military assets. However, that analysis was focused on Offutt AFB and not on the entire State and on veterans as a whole. Thompson noted that there is some

potential to look at the workforce impacts in conjunction with the Department of Economic Development.

Cohen sees value in an assessment of the workforce impacts associated with the presence of military assets, especially to inform economic incentives to attract and build a workforce in Nebraska.

Thompson agreed to work in information related to this topic.

Bloomfield noted that the Commission needs to be sure to look beyond Omaha and include assets outside of Omaha such as the Army Aviation Facility in Grand Island, which has an economic impact.

Thompson clarified that the economic impact included all of the State and that only the labor market impact had been limited in the 2017 report.

Bohac noted that Task 3 included conducting a general study of how base closures and loss of missions have impacted local and state economies. Bohac explained that equally interesting is a DoD thread that future basing decisions and future BRAC decisions will consider factors such as quality of life indicators in communities (ratings for schools, public infrastructure, and mass transit, et al). Bohac suggested that it might be worthwhile to look into these indicators as well.

Thompson agreed that this is an important point given that a lot of private businesses are considering these quality of life indicators. Given that UNL-BBR will be gathering information regarding what is attractive to veterans, then it makes sense to look at what is attractive to service members while they are in the service. Thompson agreed that examining quality of life indicators could also be added to the effort.

Bohac noted that looking at ratings of schools, ratings of services in base communities at a lower political subdivision level (city, village, and county level) may inform future discussions for retaining talent within the State.

Sanders noted that it would be nice to know whose scorecard the military is using.

Bohac suggested identifying the most commonly used indices or scorecards across the United States.

Cohen noted that USA4MilitaryFamilies scorecard (from the Department of Defense State Liaison Office) is one.

**XIII. MOTION TO CONTRACT WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH FOR Update: Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets PROPOSAL DATED MAY 9, 2018 – Action/Vote**

Moved by Hilgert and seconded by Sanders to contract with the University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research for research as described in the May 9, 2018 proposal Update: Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets and informed by the Commission deliberation on May 23, 2018. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

#### **XIV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

##### Col Norton – 55<sup>th</sup> Wing / 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing

Norton thanked the State of Nebraska and local communities noting the teacher license reciprocity change. Norton is excited about the Bellevue Public Schools event (the DoD STEM Grant Roll Out) in August. Norton offered to support refining information regarding the TAP program at Offutt AFB.

##### Paul Cohen – State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

Cohen announced that beginning on October 1, 2018, Major General Mike Navrkal will serve as the new ESGR State Chair. Cohen emphasized how important ESGR is for National Guard and Reserve members to succeed in their civilian and military careers. Cohen reminded the Commission that Nebraska is in competition with 53 other states and territories for the missions it has. Cohen noted that the military portion of the economy is important. Cohen thanked the Commissioners for their service.

##### Bill Williams – 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District

Williams highlighted the significance of Memorial Day and encouraged participation in Memorial Day events.

##### Maj Gen Bohac – Adjutant General Nebraska National Guard

Bohac stated that he had nothing further to add.

##### Dave Rippe – Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Rippe discussed a recent trip with Governor Ricketts to visit LinkedIn. Rippe explained LinkedIn's "economic graph" which illustrates where talent and skills are going to and from. Rippe anticipates gaining more insight from LinkedIn's Research and Data team and sees this engagement as a great learning opportunity for the State of Nebraska.

##### Rita Sanders – 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District

Sanders discussed her continued involvement in the community.

Dave Bloomfield – 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District

Bloomfield thanked the Commission for the tour of National Guard Facilities and Assets. Bloomfield reminded the Commission that now is the time to submit ideas to the legislative branch.

John Hilgert – Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs

Hilgert invited the Commission to attend the ribbon cutting on August 25<sup>th</sup> for the Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney. Hilgert noted that the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs is now the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Agency in the State. Hilgert discussed the significance of the next biennium budget request given the increased size and reorganization of the Agency. Hilgert announced that NDVA will host the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) annual conference in Omaha in August 2019 where he will be named President of NASDVA.

O'Donnell recognized members of the public and thanked them for their support.

**XV. MOTION TO ADJOURN – Action/Vote**

Moved by Sanders and seconded by Bohac to adjourn. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried. Commission adjourned 11:06 a.m.