

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

Tuesday, June 18, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.  
301 Centennial Mall South, Lower Level Conference Room B

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs (Commission) met on June 18, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lower Level Conference Room B 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 6C on June 3, 2019, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar ([nebraska.gov](http://nebraska.gov)) on April 25, 2019.

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  
Tami Thompson, 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Bill Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
Dave Bloomfield, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District  
Mike Navrkal, Chair of the State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve  
Lieutenant Colonel Garrett Hogan, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Designee  
Major General Rick Evans, U.S. Strategic Command Designee  
Colonel Brian Pukall, 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing Commander

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Phil O'Donnell, Military Affairs Liaison.

## **II. ROLL CALL**

Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield, Navrkal, and Evans were present. Hogan and Pukall were en route.

**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 B. O'Donnell also noted the public notice of the meeting was posted in the Omaha World Herald (page 6C) on June 3, 2019, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar ([nebraska.gov](http://nebraska.gov)) on April 25, 2019.

**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 Hilgert and seconded by Bloomfield 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, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**V. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 31, 2018 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – Action/Vote**

Moved by Rippe and seconded by Hilgert to approve the October 31, 2018 Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

O'Donnell welcomes Colonel Brian Pukall, 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing Commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Garrett Hogan, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Designee to the Commission.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – JUNE 18, 2019**

*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 and no member of the public appeared before the Commission.

## **VII. OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE (AFB) FLOOD RECOVERY UPDATE – 55<sup>TH</sup> WING DESIGNEE**

*Lt Col Garrett Hogan, the 55<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Group Deputy Commander, discussed flood recovery efforts at Offutt AFB.*

Hogan presented an overview of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing military mission to include infrastructure support to tenant commands at Offutt AFB to include the U.S. Strategic Command, the 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing, the 595<sup>th</sup> Command and Control Group, and an annex of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Hogan discussed the early stages of the March 13, 2019 flood at Offutt AFB which covered roughly one-third of the base and damaged about forty-four buildings (or 1.2 million square feet) serving as the operating location for about 3,200 personnel. Additional non-occupied buildings were damaged (utility buildings, bus stop shelters, etc). As of June, the Air Force estimated a repair cost of \$350 million. One key takeaway was that while the base lost 1/3 of its territory, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing continued to execute its mission for Combatant Commanders. There was no break in operations. Safety has been the number one priority during the recovery. Hogan acknowledged the support of the United Kingdom which provided additional opportunities for training. Hogan thanked federal, state, local, and private partners to include the Omaha Public Power District which prevented a disaster from becoming a tragedy. Finally, Hogan noted that pre-flood preparations prevented the loss of over \$100 million dollars of critical communications equipment prior to the actual event.

Bloomfield asked if the flooding will impact Offutt's position in a future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round.

Bohac noted that the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District (NRD) was on track to execute funds to improve the levee to mitigate the flood risk to Offutt. Bohac stated that there is no discussion of BRAC on Capitol Hill right now.

Pukall noted a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report focused on planning with respect to climate impacts. The Department of Defense is now charged to look at weather and climate impacts on installations.

Williams asked how much warning did the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing have?

Hogan described how there was some expectation of flooding from the north (on the Missouri River) but that the flooding also came from the west (on the Platte River basin) which accelerated the timeline.

Hilgert noted that there was a decision to improve the levee a number of years ago and that construction was about to begin on the levee improvements. Hilgert asked if there is a plan to enhance the levee on the Papio basin as well.

Bohac stated that after the 2011 flood the state provided approximately \$13 million to add to the funding stream of the Papio-Missouri NRD. Bohac noted that the 2019 flood was unique in that five rivers (the Niobrara, Elkhorn, Loup, Platte, and Missouri) flooded simultaneously, which was unprecedented in history and led to a minimal response time.

Hilgert hoped the event doesn't happen again.

O'Donnell thanked Hogan, especially given his recent arrival to Nebraska.

#### **VIII. NEBRASKA MILITARY SUPPORT COMMITTEE BRIEF – JEFF MIKESELL**

*Jeff Mikesell, the Director of Military Affairs for the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, discussed the structure and activities of organizations that support Offutt AFB.*

Mikesell described the roles of the USSTRATCOM Consultation Committee (SCC), Nebraska Military Support Committee (NMSC), and the Offutt Advisory Council (OAC). The SCC is a senior civic leader-led organization working in concert with the U.S. Strategic Command to address anything that requires more than small amounts of money. The NMSC, an Omaha Chamber-sponsored organization, is where Mikesell maintains day-to-day contact with federal, state, local, and base officials. The OAC is a Bellevue centric, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing centric organization. Examples of OAC work includes the base picnic and airshow support.

Hilgert described an expansion of the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home (ENVH). The Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs is applying for federal matching funds for the expansion that will lead to additional skilled nursing beds and adult day care.

Mikesell noted a successful public-private partnership resulting from the Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016 leading to a federal department of Veterans Affairs ambulatory care center.

Hilgert stated that the "CHIP-IN" for Veterans Act would be discussed at an upcoming conference of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs at the Omaha Capital District Marriott in August.

O'Donnell closed by illustrating that Nebraska is relatively well organized compared to other states in how a network of organizations support military and veteran affairs.

## **IX. VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATOR BRIEF – TERRY EKLUND**

*Terry Eklund, the Veterans Program Coordinator within the Office of Employment & Training for the Nebraska Department of Labor, will discuss recent efforts to attract and retain veterans within the State.*

O'Donnell opened by noting the passage of LB 138 which creates a new veterans' program coordinator position at the Nebraska Department of Labor and takes effect in September, 2019. O'Donnell introduced Terry Eklund who serves as the Veterans Program Coordinator within the Office of Employment and Training at the Nebraska Department of Labor. O'Donnell stated that the new position established by LB 138 will serve as a nonvoting, ex-officio member of the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.

Eklund described how the Nebraska Department of Labor has 120 staff members in 18 offices around the state who are all trained in the service available to veterans. Eklund described how NDOL's Virtual Services Unit can provide services to veterans who are not close to an American Jobs Center.

Eklund noted that NDOL provides services to veterans, eligible spouses, and employers. NDOL specialists "meet them where they are at" to address barriers to employment (such as homelessness, former incarceration). Then NDOL veteran career coaches (Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists or DVOPs) prepare their clients to become "job ready." Once a veteran is "job ready," a veteran's business specialist (Local Veteran Employment Representatives) works to pair him or her with employers.

Eklund discussed provisions for priority of service conditions or "next in line/head of the line" for services and training for all federal USDOL funded employment programs.

Eklund discussed how the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) could help transitioning service members and military spouses for education and training. Eklund discussed outreach at the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) class at Offutt AFB. NDOL has presented state services to three TAP classes to date. Eklund discussed an NDOL, NDED, NDVA survey to learn why transitioning members stay or leave Nebraska. Eklund discussed the Spouse Transition and Readiness (STAR) workshops at Offutt AFB. Eklund discussed outreach to recently discharged veterans through the Virtual Services Unit.

Eklund discussed visits to career fairs at Fort Riley Kansas and Rapid City (Ellsworth AFB) South Dakota. Eklund noted that NDOL has 4<sup>th</sup> best "veterans entered employment rate" in the country, which is the percentage of individuals employed after exiting the program. Eklund described employer recognition by the American Job Center in Omaha. Eklund described an

Omaha-based “Boots to Fill” program where veteran business specialists serve and support employers. Eklund described the EmployLNK program where NDOL partners with USDVA to provide Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services.

O’Donnell thanked Eklund for his insight.

Bloomfield asked Eklund if he has reached out to the American Legion?

Eklund noted that the regional representatives are supposed to make connections to organizations such as the American Legion. Eklund agreed to provide flyers and information to American Legion Post 252.

Hilgert discussed how he sometimes hears about concerns from colleagues through the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs regarding the implementation of U.S. Department of Labor programs in various states. Hilgert stated that when he draws attention to potential issues his concerns turn to pride given the excellent implementation by the Nebraska Department of Labor.

Bohac asked Eklund if he had any data regarding the success of outreach efforts at Fort Riley, Ellsworth AFB, and Fort Carson.

Eklund responded by noting that he only had a few anecdotes.

Bohac asked Eklund if he had any sense of the impact from licensure reform.

Eklund responded by noting that he did not have a sense of the impact; however, he noted that NDOL and NDVA continue to distribute information about the licensure reforms.

Bohac asked Eklund if he could present on the survey data in the fall.

Eklund explained some of the limitations of the current data; however, he hoped to have more substantial data that he would be willing to present in the fall.

Bohac drew attention to the challenge of adequate housing and asked Eklund if adequate housing had been identified as a barrier to his work in rural Nebraska.

Eklund responded by noting that he would need to follow up in the fall regarding adequate housing in rural Nebraska. Eklund stated that there are a number of resources for the homeless population.

Rippe stated that he would follow up with Bohac to discuss a program NDED is implementing through the federal housing trust fund to target specific populations such as veterans. The

Nebraska Department of Economic Development has turned 7 million state dollars into 100 million in rural workforce housing projects.

O'Donnell noted that LB 138 tasked the veterans' program coordinator to submit an annual progress report to the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs.

O'Donnell noted that the Commission intends to continue to assess and analyze licensure reform in the 2019 Commission report.

## **X. 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 invited Dr. Eric Thompson and Dr. Mitch Herian to discuss the University of Nebraska's Bureau of Business Research proposal to assess the economic impact of Nebraska's military assets. O'Donnell noted that the May 20, 2019 research proposal had not changed.

Thompson noted that with the third iteration of this research there may be an opportunity to review trends. Thompson acknowledged the statutory need to assess the economic impact of Nebraska's military assets to include spending patterns, personnel, and construction spending. Thompson acknowledged the broadening of the assessment to include veteran related programs and spending throughout the state. Finally, Thompson noted special topics and the generation of supporting information to inform the Commission's recommendations.

Herian described five additional special studies within the proposal to include: a profile of best practices, websites, and job search tools for veterans; a catalogue of military leave benefits for state employees; a historical examination of G.I. Bill benefits, funding, and tuition policies in Nebraska; a survey of County Veteran Service Officers; and a special study regarding taxation in Nebraska and Iowa related to settlement patterns at the three digit zip code level. Thompson suggested it may be helpful to look at similarly situated bases near state borders. Thompson emphasized that while the information may not be complete, the intention is to provide additional information regarding how policies affect where military retirees choose to settle.

Thompson confirmed that all Commission members would be contacted as the report proceeds for input and suggestions.

Bloomfield asked if the research would include Colorado and South Dakota in addition to Iowa.

Thompson noted that Iowa is a natural choice given the location of Offutt AFB on the Nebraska Iowa border.

O'Donnell stated that the data is available for mapping at the three digit zip code level.

Pukall suggested including federal tuition assistance within the economic impact study.

Bohac noted that the legislature funds state tuition assistance for National Guard members.

Herian noted that the research included it two years ago

Bohac noted the evolution of Nebraska's state tuition assistance program through LB 450.

Evans suggested taking a careful look at northwest Missouri given what seems to be a trend of USSTRATCOM employees moving to northwest Missouri with the completion of the Highway 34 Bridge to I-29.

Bohac suggested exploring county veteran service officer models in other states with regard to training standards recognizing the county's unique role in Nebraska.

Williams acknowledged the importance of improved standards and training by the CVSOs.

Bohac continued to note that one may be able to identify standards regionally which could be adopted or suggested.

Bloomfield asked if the survey could assess the morale of the CVSOs?

Thompson noted that he could try.

Rippe thanked Thompson, Herian, and O'Donnell for their thorough and impressive work building out on the data, which is very helpful.

Hilgert asked if service connected disability payments would be included and Thompson confirmed that service connected disability payments would.

Hilgert appreciated the multi-faceted nature of the Commission and the many different levels of the research. Hilgert appreciated the continuation of that work.

**XI. MOTION TO CONTRACT WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH FOR Update: Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets PROPOSAL DATED MAY 20, 2019 – Action/Vote**

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Hilgert to contract with the University of Nebraska’s Bureau of Business Research for research proposed in Update: Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets proposal dated May 20, 2019. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**XII. ACTIVITY UPDATE – Military Affairs Liaison**

O’Donnell welcomed Tami Thompson who was appointed by Governor Ricketts to serve as a member of the Commission representing the 1st Congressional District with business experience effective March 8, 2019. O’Donnell welcomed retired Major General Mike Navrkal, who serves as the State Chair for Nebraska’s Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program. O’Donnell welcomed Colonel Brian Pukall, Commander of the 557th Weather Wing and Lt Col Garrett Hogan, the Deputy Commander of the 55th Mission Support Group.

O’Donnell noted ongoing activities to include: participation in the Offutt Advisory Council, Nebraska Veterans’ Council, Nebraska Veterans and Family Task Force, the Lincoln Chamber’s Military Advisory Committee, the VAMC Stakeholders meeting on occasion, and Blueprint Nebraska.

O’Donnell noted outreach activities to include: presenting the Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets via webinar on April 19th and a Memorial Day event in Winside, Nebraska.

O’Donnell reported that the annual report of Nebraska’s Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs was submitted to the Governor and the Legislature on November 15<sup>th</sup>. O’Donnell highlighted the Commission’s recommendation to take into account the guidance of the Defense State Liaison Office.

O’Donnell described Legislative Bill 6 and Legislative Bill 115 that were signed into law on May 7th of this year and address two of the Defense State Liaison Office’s key issues. Specifically, LB 6 sustains in-state tuition until enrollment by changing residency provisions relating to persons on active duty and their dependents for college tuition purposes. LB 115 addresses residency requirements for school enrollment by temporarily waiving the requirement for children of military members.

Additionally, O’Donnell noted that LB 153, which changes provisions relating to the taxation of military retirement benefits, is now on General File. O’Donnell acknowledged that there were a number of other military and veteran related bills that passed during the 2019 session which the Commission intends to note in this year’s annual report.

O'Donnell discussed key takeaways from the the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) Installation Innovation Forum in March. The key takeaways included:

- The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment, Robert McMahon, emphasized that having an installation in your community is a privilege not a right and asked what actions are states and communities taking today to keep earning that privilege. McMahon noted that a DoD BRAC request was unlikely and that he was not a fan of the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP).
- The 325th Fighter Wing Commander at Tyndall AFB, Col Laidlaw, emphasized: the importance of building resilience through exercises, relationships, understanding the full cost of recovery to local budgets, and non-Federal Acquisition Regulations procurement models such as Intergovernmental Support Agreements.
- The authority to enter into an Intergovernmental Support Agreement may be delegated to an installation commander up to \$15 Million. Using a contracting squadron as the primary point of contact was noted as a best practice.
- An ADC State Council meeting focused on advocacy for funding the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) at the \$100 Million level and managed by the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). OEA recently released its annual Defense Spending by State report.

O'Donnell discussed key takeaways from the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) National Summit in Washington DC and the Nebraska Breakfast on June 12th. Key takeaways included:

- A continued emphasis on occupational licensure reform and a new emphasis on studying licensure implementation rather than simply knowing whether or not a bill has passed.
- Two speakers, Senator Martha McSally and 2nd Lady Karen Pence emphasized military spouse hiring initiatives and strongly encouraged community leaders to sign on with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's efforts.
- A number of panels and speakers focused on the potential implementation of the Defense Community Infrastructure Program. Authorized in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) allows DOD to work with state and local governments by providing a matching grant to address the critical off-base infrastructure needs that directly affect the military value and the resilience of our installations. To date, no funds have been appropriated to the program.
- Additionally, there was significant emphasis on installation resilience to include preventative resilience. One speaker noted that when he was serving in the DoD, his office had the opportunity to provide a \$30 million dollar grant to help build up the levies around Offutt AFB and the office declined because it was an "off base" project.

O'Donnell concluded that after meeting with other State advisors, he is pleased to report that Nebraska is well positioned on a number of fronts to include the Commission report, inclusion of

military impacted school districts, and mechanisms for communication and advocacy with Nebraska's federal Congressional delegation.

Bohac asked if O'Donnell had interacted with the Defense State Liaison Office.

O'Donnell noted that he has been in touch with Mr. Martin Dempsey who is the Midwest Regional Liaison for the Defense State Liaison Office.

Hilgert noted that Omaha would host the annual conference of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs.

**XIII. ELECTION OF A CHAIRPERSON PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF *Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-603* – Action/Vote**

*Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-603. Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs; officers; meetings; records.*

*The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary from among its members.*

*The commission shall meet two times each year at such times and places as shall be determined by the chairperson and shall keep a record of its proceedings. The chairperson may call special meetings at any time he or she deems necessary. The secretary shall mail written notice of the time and place of all meetings in advance to each voting and nonvoting, ex officio member of the commission. The secretary shall also provide notice of all meetings as provided under section 84-1411.*

Moved by Bloomfield and seconded by Rippe to elect John Hilgert as chairperson of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**XIV. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRPERSON PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411* – Action/Vote**

*Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-603. Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs; officers; meetings; records.*

*The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary from among its members.*

*The commission shall meet two times each year at such times and places as shall be determined by the chairperson and shall keep a record of its proceedings. The chairperson may call special meetings at any time he or she deems necessary. The secretary shall mail written notice of the*

*time and place of all meetings in advance to each voting and nonvoting, ex officio member of the commission. The secretary shall also provide notice of all meetings as provided under section 84-1411.*

Moved by Hilgert and seconded by Bohac to elect Dave Bloomfield as vice-chairperson of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**XV. ELECTION OF A SECRETARY PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF *Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1411* – Action/Vote**

*Neb. Rev. Stat. §55-603. Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs; officers; meetings; records.*

*The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary from among its members.*

*The commission shall meet two times each year at such times and places as shall be determined by the chairperson and shall keep a record of its proceedings. The chairperson may call special meetings at any time he or she deems necessary. The secretary shall mail written notice of the time and place of all meetings in advance to each voting and nonvoting, ex officio member of the commission. The secretary shall also provide notice of all meetings as provided under section 84-1411.*

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Hilgert to elect Tami Thompson as secretary of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Rippe, Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**XVI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Col Pukall – 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing

Col Pukall noted that the Chief of Staff of the Air Force wants Airmen to be engaged in the community. Leaders at Offutt have the responsibility to inform Airmen of the opportunities within their local community. Pukall described how the 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing is a STEM heavy Wing and how the Air Force sponsors a number of meteorology programs at civilian institutions for advanced degrees. Meteorology is global and thrives on artificial intelligence and data analytics. Pukall described how the meteorological community grows its company grade officers from the enlisted ranks so partnerships with local academic institutions have promise. Pukall anticipates that there may be a 5 year contract awarded focused on technology application development and sustainment.

Maj Gen Evans – U.S. Strategic Command

Maj Gen Evans described how USSTRATCOM trained through the flood while it was in the middle of a global exercise. Evans noted that the transition to the new Command and Control Facility (C2F) is ongoing. Evans noted that General Hyten was nominated to serve as the Vice Chairmen Joint Chiefs of Staff and that nearly 75% of the flag officers and senior executive service personnel could be transitioning. Evans noted that the flood did not impact the new USSTRATCOM Headquarters and that the space mission would soon be assumed by U.S. Space Command. Evans described how some USSTRATCOM billets may change over time to USSPACECOM billets; however, he believed that the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) mission may result in new billets as a Nuclear Enterprise Center (NEC) evolves. The NC3 mission fits into the STEM education and systems architecture conversation. Evans noted that the SCC may be involved with establishing a deterrence park where the two missiles in front of building 500 could find a new home. Finally, Evans noted that he was on track to retire in the fall.

#### Lt Col Hogan – 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Designee

Lt Col Hogan was pleased to support USSTRATCOM and the 557<sup>th</sup> Wing. Hogan noted Col Gavin Marks relieved Col Manion.

#### Mike Navrkal – State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Navrkal discussed the ESGR's annual recognition banquet in April. Nebraska employers continue to support members of the Nebraska National Guard and members of the Reserve component.

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

Williams thanked Maj Gen Bohac for the National Guard's tremendous response to the flood.

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

Maj Gen Bohac described the response to the flood which included 113 rescues in very tough conditions. Bohac enumerated rescues by the State Patrol, volunteer fire departments, and other entities resulting in a "whole of state" response to an unprecedented event. Bohac noted that it may take up to 9 years for a full recovery. Bohac suggested inviting Tim Burke who serves on the SCC and as an Air Force Civic Leader to speak to the Commission on his perspective as a civic leader in the State of Nebraska. Bohac described the plan for repairs at Camp Ashland noting the significant infrastructure investment and role it plays in training active, reserve, and national guard personnel. Bohac commented on the development of the Bellevue Readiness Center at 25<sup>th</sup> and Capehart Road. Bohac described a potential partnership with the Defense POW MIA Accounting Agency for off base activities to potentially include academic partnerships and a center of excellence.

Dave Rippe – Nebraska Department of Economic Development

No comments.

Tami Thompson – 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District

Thompson shared her background in business education and with the Nebraska National Guard.

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

Bloomfield thanked Maj Gen Bohac and the Nebraska National Guard and praised the response to the flood.

John Hilgert – Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs

Hilgert thanked Maj Gen Evans for his service. Hilgert highlighted the hiring of a behavioral health specialist who could potentially leverage USDVA suicide prevention resources.

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

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Bloomfield to adjourn. Voting Aye: Bohac, Hilgert, Thompson, Williams, Bloomfield. Excused: Rippe. Motion carried. Commission adjourned 11:49 a.m.