

MINUTES  
STATE OF NEBRASKA  
COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS

301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 95083, Lincoln, NE 68509-5083  
Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs Conference Room

Wednesday, May 31st, 2017  
10:00 a.m.

The Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs met on May 31, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, 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. In addition, the notice was published by the Omaha World Herald on page 5D on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and posted to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar (nebraska.gov) on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Commissioners present:

Courtney Dentlinger, 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 Matthew Joganich, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Designee and 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing Designee  
Major General Richard Evans, U.S. Strategic Command Designee

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

The Commission convened at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Nebraska State Office Building), 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska. Attendance, with the exception of Colonel Joganich, is indicated above.

**III. ENTRY OF PUBLIC NOTICE INTO THE RECORD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT. ADVISE THE PUBLIC THAT THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT APPLIES AND IS PUBLICALLY POSTED.**

Military Affairs Liaison, Phil O'Donnell, announced the location of the Open Meetings Act at the door (between the conference room and lobby of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs). O'Donnell also noted the public notice of the meeting was posted on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in the Omaha World Herald, and on the nebraska.gov delivery system.

**IV. MOTION TO DESIGNATE ENTRY OF PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE OMAHA WORLD HERALD AND ON THE NEBRASKA.GOV CALENDAR – Action/Vote**

Moved by Sanders and seconded by Bohac to designate entry of public notice in the Omaha World Herald and the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar on nebraska.gov. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried. Colonel Joganich arrives (10:08 a.m.), and is welcomed to the meeting.

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

O'Donnell welcomed the Commission and thanked John McNally and Charlene Sheltraw for their support in effectuating the Commission. O'Donnell highlights efforts building a network, meeting Commissioners, joining the Association of Defense Communities. O'Donnell noted plans to attend the Association's National Summit June 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> in Washington DC. O'Donnell also noted efforts to identify best practices, increase awareness of State and Federal legislative activity, and meet the statutory requirement for annual report. Moving forward, goals include building an effective team within the Commission, building a team of teams with other entities, and developing a baseline report from which to measure progress using economic techniques to grow Nebraska.

**VI. ELECTION OF A CHAIRPERSON – Action/Vote**

**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.**

**Source: Laws 2016, LB754, § 3. Effective Date: July 21, 2016**

O'Donnell notes that "from among its members" means from the six voting members.

Moved by Dentlinger and seconded by Bloomfield to elect John Hilgert as the Chairperson for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Hilgert states that the role of Chairperson is fairly limited and that the Military Affairs Liaison is full time primary point of contact for the Commission. Sanders asks about the term length for the Chair. Hilgert suggests one year. O'Donnell noted that Statute does not define a term limit for the Chairperson. Hilgert emphasizes that the agenda of the Commission is not the agenda of the chair. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

## **VII. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Action/Vote**

### **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.**

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**Source: Laws 2016, LB754, § 3. Effective Date: July 21, 2016**

Moved by Hilgert and seconded by Sanders to elect Courtney Dentlinger as the Vice-Chairperson for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Bohac noted that the Commission may be better served by having representation from one of the congressional districts and asks if Bloomfield would be interested in serving as the Vice-Chairperson for a one year period. Hilgert withdraws his nomination of Courtney Dentlinger.

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Dentlinger to elect David Bloomfield as the Vice-Chairperson for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

## **VIII. ELECTION OF A SECRETARY – Action/Vote**

### **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.**

**Source: Laws 2016, LB754, § 3. Effective Date: July 21, 2016**

Moved by Bohac and seconded by Hilgert to elect Rita Sanders as the Secretary for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

#### **IX. MOTION TO ESTABLISH PUBLIC COMMENT RULE – Action/Vote**

**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 at least twenty-four (24) hours 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 notes that the draft public comment rule was reviewed by the Assistant Attorney General and by the Legal Counsel of the League of Nebraska Municipalities. Bohac noted that the requirement for 24 hour notice to the Secretary may be restrictive. Dentlinger agreed with Bohac. Bloomfield emphasized the time limit. Bohac offered to amend the public comment rule to strike **at least twenty-four (24) hours** from the public comment rule.

Moved by Bloomfield and seconded by Hilgert to establish a public comment rule as amended (below) for the Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

*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 ~~at least twenty-four (24) hours~~ 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.*

## **X. DELIBERATION – COMMISSION REPORT, COURSES OF ACTION**

### **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.**

**Source: Laws 2016, LB754, § 6. Effective Date: July 21, 2016**

O'Donnell noted four courses of action to assess the economic impact of military assets in Nebraska (contract with a private sector consultant e.g., SRI; contract with a local or Nebraska-centric organization e.g., UNL-BBR; contract with a non-local academic organization e.g., another University; or produce an "in-house" report). After identifying the respective strengths and weakness of each option, O'Donnell opened the floor for questions to Dr. Thompson with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Bureau of Business Research. Hilgert questioned the timing of the Commission report. O'Donnell walked through the timeline noted in the proposal. Cohen noted the need to include the Reserve Centers across the State. Hilgert suggested that the research team contact all of the Commission members. Bohac questioned whether the proposal would fully meet the entire intent of the statute within the timeframe. Hilgert and Bohac agreed that the Commission will have to develop recommendations for the final report. Hilgert and Cohen noted flexibility in the degree of specificity for report recommendations. Bloomfield offered insight into the legislative calendar. Cohen noted the importance of "getting it (the report) right" versus "getting it (the report) fast." Bohac noted that the UNL-BBR report in and of itself will not be the final report. Bloomfield asked Dr. Thompson if the Commission can receive the draft sooner, moving the first draft due date to September 15<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Thompson agreed that this was feasible. Evans suggested a review of the 2008 BRAC Task Force study and an evaluation of the 2008 BRAC Task Force recommendations with the follow on year coming up with new recommendations. Hilgert articulated that the recommendation component for the November 15, 2017 report would be an analysis of the 2008 BRAC Task Force study combined with the UNL-BBR study.

Dr. Thompson was pleased to be working on this important economic topic and opportunity.

**XI. MOTION TO CONTRACT WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH FOR THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NEBRASKA MILITARY ASSETS PROPOSAL DATED MAY 2, 2017 – Action/Vote**

Moved by Hilgert and seconded by Sanders to contract with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research to execute The Economic Impact of Nebraska Military Assets proposal dated May 2, 2017 with an amended first draft due date of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (in lieu of September 22, 2017). Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

**XII. BRIEF – Teri Clark – VetSET Project Update**

O'Donnell introduced Teri Clark with the VetSET Project. Teri Clark discussed the history of the VetSET Project rooted in a 2014-2015 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health grant to the rural health departments across the State of Nebraska. VetSET project coordinators aim to increase an understanding of military culture, create solid partnerships with community entities, and reach out to families. Clark highlighted the “No Wrong Door” training to communities which increases State-wide military cultural competence. Clark described partnerships with public health departments leading to “Vets in all policies” with employers and community organizations.

Clark answered questions from Williams, Bloomfield, regarding County Veterans’ Service Officers and Public Health Departments.

**XIII. BRIEF – Jeff Mikesell – Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce MilTAG Update**

O'Donnell introduced Jeff Mikesell, Senior Military Liaison with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, who advocates for the military mission at Offutt Air Force Base (AFB). Mikesell discussed levy improvements leading to plans for replacing the Offutt AFB runway. He also noted progress toward completion of the new U.S. Strategic Command headquarters building.

Mikesell fielded questions from Bloomfield regarding mission growth within the unmanned aerial vehicle mission. Mikesell fielded questions from Dentlinger regarding ways to improve Nebraska’s position to compete for military missions. Colonel Joganich noted that Offutt is well positioned to support the unmanned aerial vehicle mission given its communications and electrical infrastructure. Cohen noted a historical point regarding Air Guard transition to the KC-135R. Major General Evans noted historical points regarding the Air Force Global Strike Command and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service office in Rapid City. Evans encouraged the Commission to ask what is our long-term vision for the base and what (missions) do we want to go after? Dentlinger noted that strategic communication and engagement should be part of the recommendations in the Commission report.

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

##### **Major General Evans – U.S. Strategic Command**

Major General Evans noted that he serves on General Hyten's staff on Title 10 federal active duty and serves the Commission in an advisory role where he can give advice but not advocate to the Air Force. Evans noted that the U.S. Strategic Command is a tenant on the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing's property. General Hyten emphasized that his role under Title 10 is to give advice but not advocate to the Air Force. Nebraska's Air National Guard ranks 52 of 54 in authorized strength. Nebraska's Air National Guard is larger than the Air National Guards in Guam and Virgin Islands. Evans commented on some historical anecdotes associated with the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) process and noted that the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing is the economic engine at Offutt AFB.

##### **Colonel Joganich – 55<sup>th</sup> Wing / 557<sup>th</sup> Weather Wing**

Colonel Joganich acknowledged a phenomenal relationship with the entire community. He looks forward to continuing to strengthen these relationships. Colonel Reynolds and Colonel Dickerson believe the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing is very well positioned to support future missions and are looking forward to any opportunities for partnerships.

##### **Paul Cohen – State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve**

Cohen noted that the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve combines the interests of employers and service members. Cohen emphasized the importance of having the State of Nebraska support the military.

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

Bloomfield acknowledged a belief that only Omaha and Bellevue benefit from Offutt AFB and suggested reaching out to Veterans' groups across the State.

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

Williams noted the potential negative economic impact if losses occur at Offutt AFB.

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

Sanders highlighted the importance of relationship building in support of Offutt AFB. Sanders noted the need of State level engagement in support of the levy issue and runway replacement. Sanders highlighted the role of Metropolitan Area Planning Authority and the Joint Land Use Study.

### **John Hilgert – Nebraska Department of Veterans’ Affairs**

Hilgert noted that Offutt AFB is something that all Nebraskans can be proud of. Hilgert discussed legislation impacting veterans, especially LB340 which merges the Division of Veterans Homes with the Nebraska Department of Veterans’ Affairs, creating the 4<sup>th</sup> largest agency in the State of Nebraska. Hilgert was pleased with the teamwork between the Commission and with the Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

### **Major General Bohac – Adjutant General Nebraska National Guard**

Major General Bohac noted military facilities in 23 communities across the State and discussed the impact of these facilities on local economies. Bohac stated that 97% of the Nebraska National Guard’s funding is federal thus advocacy is important for all of the military within the State of Nebraska. Bohac explained why it is important to “look across installation” (for efficiencies) instead of “at installations” using Building D at Offutt AFB, an oversize utility consumer, as an example. Bohac emphasized following the federal debate on BRAC and reviewing the 2008 BRAC study. Bohac provided historical perspective on the 2005 BRAC and the potential to move personnel from Lincoln to Offutt. The relationship between the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing and Air National Guard is incredibly robust. Additionally, the relationship between the Lincoln Airport Authority and the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing is important for the Offutt AFB runway replacement. Bohac acknowledged that inviting military leadership is important given how the leadership can provide information to bodies such as the Commission.

### **Courtney Dentlinger – Nebraska Department of Economic Development**

Dentlinger suggested a SWOT analysis of Nebraska’s installations and infrastructure before the Commission makes recommendations. Dentlinger noted a need for prioritization and establishing timelines for each of the goals of the Commission. In addition to UNL-BBR work, the Commission should consider what else the State may have to support military missions, what are the State’s weak points, what are opportunities (drones), and what are the threats. Dentlinger highlighted that strategic engagement includes public engagement with Nebraskans which would be essential to build support for any recommendations going forward.

### **XV. MOTION TO HOLD THE NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, October 25th, 2017 – Action/Vote**

Moved by Sanders and seconded by Hilgert to hold the next meeting of Nebraska’s Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.

### **XVI. MOTION TO ADJOURN – Action/Vote**

Moved by Major General Bohac and seconded by Bloomfield to adjourn, 11:57 a.m. Voting Aye: Dentlinger, Bohac, Hilgert, Sanders, Williams, Bloomfield. Motion carried.