



Washington State

Legislature

Representative Barbara Bailey Executive Committee:

**Joint Committee on
Veterans' and Military Affairs**

Representative Tina Orwall Senator Steve Conway

Senator Pam Roach

April 30, 2014, Camp Murray Meeting
Minutes

Members present: Hayes, Klippert, Muri, O'Ban, Orwall

Members absent: Bailey, Braun, Conway, Hobbs, McCoy, Roach, Rolfes, Appleton,
Green, MacEwen, Morrell

The meeting was called to order at 1:57 PM by Representative Orwall.

There were not enough members present to approve the minutes of the previous meeting so it was agreed they would be held.

Adjutant General Major General Brad Daugherty addressed the committee on the following topics.

- Force Structure Reductions of the Washington Army National Guard – The current U.S. Army budget for 2015 calls for a loss of 361 army guardsmen out of 6,200 in the state national guard. In 2016, sequestration calls for an additional reduction of 622 army guardsmen. The Washington National Guard is asking Congress to provide an independent commission to analyze the impact of this force reduction before committing to this force reduction plan. Maj. Gen. Daugherty requested the committee members to contact the congressional delegation to encourage the formation of the independent commission.
- Recruiting and retention incentives - The National Guard will be requesting providing state incentive programs for recruiting and retention as the federal incentives continue to be reduced. Most states offer reduced fees for licensing for National Guard members.
- Health Care Coverage – When state National Guardsmen are called into state active duty, they and their families are not covered by state medical insurance.
- Facilities and Construction Maintenance – Due to recent policy changes, the National Guard must obtain the land before it can receive federal funding for new capital projects. Since 2008, the military department's budget has been cut

40 percent, and will expect to be cut an additional 10 percent this year, which makes it more difficult to maintain existing and aging facilities.

- Veterans Benefits – Veterans benefits should be maintained and not subject to further budget cuts.

Representative Orwall agrees to coordinate sending a letter to the congressional delegation regarding the force reduction commission.

Representative Klippert asked if the purchase of land is state money. Maj. Gen. said it is state money and that there is a savings account used to collect the money from the sale of old facilities. That account should be protected from being used to fund other programs.

Representative Hayes asked for a briefing on the Oso landslide review or after action report. Maj. Gen. said that each agency involved is preparing its own after action report. The National Guard hopes to invite Glen Woodbury of the Naval post-graduate school in California to help facilitate a larger review of all the individual components of the response. That will take several months to complete. The lesson learned so far is to get accurate information as soon as possible to evaluate the scope of the situation.

Representative Klippert expressed the importance on educating the local emergency operation coordinators about the available resources from the National Guard to respond to emergencies. Maj. Gen. Daugherty explained that he wants to do more outreach, but the Guard is restricted from using federal funds to provide support to local entity. However, the state could call members in to state active service to use state funding in order to provide educational outreach to local entities and help smaller jurisdictions design a response plan.

Representative Klippert asked if it would be helpful if the state coordinated a meeting and invited the local EOC's to come and receive training on emergency response coordination. Maj. Gen. Daugherty would welcome the opportunity to provide more outreach.

Sean Flynn (OPR) and Sam Brown (SCS) briefed the committee on the veteran and military-related legislation that was passed in the last year:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/2014-04-30/Staff%20Report%202013-14%20JCVMA%20Bill%20Tracker.pdf>

- HB 2115 - Restructures the Officer Promotion Board to consist of at least five voting members who are officers senior in grade to those officers being considered for promotion within the same respective division.
- HB 2130 - Consolidates the Defender's Fund and the Competitive Grant Program within the Veterans Innovations Program (VIP). Repeals sunset provision from

VIP.

- HB 2171 - Amends the Washington Service Members' Civil Relief Act (WSCRA) to authorize a private right of action, or an action by the Washington Attorney General, to enforce the provisions of the WSCRA.
- HB 2315 - Requires certain professions to complete one-time training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management. Requires the model list of training programs in suicide assessment, treatment, and management to be updated periodically and, when practicable, to contain content specific to veterans. •
HB 2363 - Allows dependents of military service members to retain eligibility for developmental disability services while living out of state due to military assignment.
- HB 2397 - Allows registered owners who have been awarded the Medal of Honor to apply for Medal of Honor special license plates for use on up to three motor vehicles.
- HB 2744 - Requires businesses to be incorporated in the state or have its principal place of business in the state to be certified as a veteran-owned business.
- SB 5318 - Expands eligibility to pay resident tuition for students on active military duty, National Guard members, and their spouses and dependents under certain conditions.
- SSB 5691 - Establishes the Walla Walla Veterans' Home. Loosens requirements for residence in state veterans' homes.
- SB 5775 - Allows a person to indicate his or her status as a veteran of the United States military on his or her driver's license or Identicard.
- SSB 5969 - Requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training courses or programs. • SB 6208 - Prohibits certain acts and practices related to assistance in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a veterans' benefits claim. Requires advertisements for events regarding veterans' benefits to include a disclaimer.

Representative Klippert asked whether HB 2363 included any increase in state expenditures. Mr. Flynn clarified that there was no reported fiscal impact or would create any entitlement to services.

Representative Orwall asks members to make any suggestions for future agenda items for the committee to consider.

Representative Hayes asked the committee to consider allowing spouses of active duty military members to have a priority in enrolling in higher education classes.

Representative Orwall asked the committee to consider a follow up to HB 2315, which calls for connecting psychiatry and social service work to suicide prevention, including for veterans and having a report on the development of those areas.

Lieutenant Colonel Adam Ilwaszuk briefed the committee on the National Guard Capital Facilities Management Office.

The National Guard is able to obtain 75 percent federal funding to construct new projects if the state needs to supply the remaining 25 percent. Federal funding shares the cost with the state for maintenance and repair at 50 percent. The Guard relies on state funds to purchase land as well as.

The Guard has completed a 25 year strategic plan that includes a "regionalization modernization concept" to reduce the number of facilities while increasing efficiency and use from those facilities. The Guard has divested in a number facilities over the last 10 years, from 46 readiness centers down to 35 centers, with 3 more under development.

Senator O'Ban asked what percentage of the total cost of the project will be owned by the federal government, given the 75-25 percent split in funding. Lt. Maj. Ilwaszuk said that the ownership varies depending on the cost of the land that the state purchases.

Repair and maintenance costs for existing facilities currently stands between \$8.4 and \$22.7 million, depending on the level of repair needed. There is no state money dedicated to these projects that could be used to obtain federal match money.

Construction projects that are currently funded include the Readiness center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Pierce County Readiness Center, Yakima Training Center, Bellingham/Whatcom County Readiness Center and Joint Forces Headquarters Readiness Center.

The Thurston County Readiness Center needs a \$7.68 million state appropriation in order to keep approximately \$34 million of federal funding for construction.

The need for maintenance and repair will continue to increase if not addressed and eventually facilities may be completely lost, like the old Bellingham Readiness Center.

Lt. Maj. Ilwaszuk highlights the design concepts for the Yakima and Information Operations Readiness Centers.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/2014-04-30/Ilwaszuk,%20Adam%20Military%20Department.pdf>

Kristine Reeves presented on the Military and Defense Sector. The Office of Military Affairs was created in 2013 in the Department of Commerce out of a recognized need to coordinate economic development in the military sector in the state. The OMA coordinates with the Military Department, the Governor's Office and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The military sector support a broad range of economic activities and represents a \$16 billion industry. The military is the state second largest public employer in the state.

The OMA is working on developing a list of all companies in Washington that have defense contracts, including companies based in-state and out-of-state. The OMA is working to bring Washington businesses together to compete for contracts and to promote a competitive advantage in pursuing defense contracts.

The OMA mission statement is to: "Support and inform statewide sector specific economic development efforts by strengthening state and federal collaborations that support military & defense infrastructure, military & defense industry and public, private and social sector partnerships in all communities across the state."

The OMA will identify opportunities for partnership with different industry sectors in both the private

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/2014-04-30/Reeves%20MD%20Sector%20Presentation.pdf>

Senator O'Ban asked how the OMA is addressing the potential reduction in force issues. Ms. Reeves said that is something the office is working on and accounting for both the active service and inactive/ National Guard components.

Mary Forbes presented on several programs in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Ms. Forbes described the partnership with the Department of Corrections on developing veterans pods in the corrections system, particularly regarding shifting the cost of health care for elderly inmates from Medicaid to veterans health care. This would increase the reimbursement rate for DOC as well as increase the level of care for the inmates.

The DVA is working on transition services through the governor-ordered Washington State Military Transition Council, which coordinates services among multiple jurisdictions, including state agencies and Joint Base Lewis McChord.

The Veteran's Transitional Management Network (VetNet) includes a technology platform being established and piloted at JBLM, which will create a series of tasks and training available to members as they transition out of the military in order to guide them into education or employment opportunities. The DVA is also working on

connecting state agencies and employers with the data and resources for the transitional training and services.

The DVA will follow up on Representative Hayes request for priority enrollment for military spouses.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/20140430/Forbes,%20Mary%20Department%20of%20Defense.pdf>

Representative Muri asked about providing education resources for veterans while they are incarcerated. Ms. Forbes said that inmates do not have access to the Internet in prison, but it is something that DVA is working on with DOC in order to increase Internet accessibility to increase educational opportunities.

Mark San Souci presented on the Department of Defense (DOD) legislative action in Washington. The DOD has regional liaisons to coordinate priority legislation in all the states for the benefit of military personnel. These priorities are developed in coordination with Congress, the DOD and the White house. Washington has passed bills that have been designated by DOD as priority issues, including providing academic credit for military service, veteran treatment courts, military spouse licensing transfer, consumer protection against predatory lending, providing in-state tuition for military service members, and providing Medicare application waivers for military dependents - which is the first bill of its kind to pass.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/2014-04-30/San%20Souci%20DSLO%20April%2030th.pdf>

Ted Wicorek spoke for the Veterans Legislative Coalition and said that Jim Sims could not make the meeting, and that their agenda had been covered by the staff bill presentation.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/JCVMA/Documents/20140430/Sim,%20Jim%20Veterans%20Legislative%20Coalition.pdf>

Representative Orwall said that the next meeting will be set at a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 PM.