

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

Minutes of the

GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 16, 2009
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Ken Svedjan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Ken Svedjan, Larry Bellew, Randy Boehning, Kari L. Conrad, Glen Froseth, Karen Karls, Ralph Metcalf, Michael R. Nathe, Louise Potter, David S. Rust, Blair Thoreson, Dave Weiler, Alon C. Wieland; Senators Dick Dever, Robert M. Horne, Elroy N. Lindaas, Richard Marcellais, Carolyn Nelson

Member absent: Representative Bette B. Grande

Others present: Jim W. Smith, Legislative Council, Bismarck

Representative David Monson, member of the Legislative Management, was also in attendance.

See attached [appendix](#) for additional persons present.

It was moved by Senator Nelson, seconded by Representative Rust, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the October 27, 2009, meeting be approved as distributed.

CLASSIFIED STATE EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION SYSTEM AND STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS' SALARIES STUDY

At the request of Chairman Svedjan, the Legislative Council staff reviewed a memorandum entitled [Comparison of Elected Officials Among Selected States](#). She said the states selected for comparison are the states included in the 10-state salary survey conducted by Human Resource Management Services and include Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming. She said the survey provides information on population, elected or appointed status, salary, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions supervised, fringe benefits, statutory requirements to hold office, and primary duties and responsibilities for each office in each state. She reviewed the following survey results:

- **Governor** - The Governor is an elected position in all states. The primary duties include being the chief executive officer of the state; supervising all executive and other state agencies; signing and vetoing legislation; authorizing executive orders; granting reprieves, pardons, and commutations; and being commander in chief of the militia except during a federal activation. All states except Kansas require the Governor to be a certain

age ranging from at least 18 years to at least 30 years of age and to be a state resident. North Dakota requires its Governor to be at least 30 years of age and a state resident for at least five years. The highest-paid Governor is from Oklahoma and is paid \$140,000 per year and supervises 28.1 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Governor is from Colorado and is paid \$90,000 and supervises 79.4 FTE positions. North Dakota's Governor's salary of \$105,034 ranks 7th out of the 11 states surveyed. The North Dakota Governor's office has 18 FTE positions.

- **Lieutenant Governor** - The Lieutenant Governor is an elected position in all states. The primary duties include being the successor to the Governor's office, presiding over the Senate, and serving on several boards or commissions. All states except Kansas have the same requirements as the Governor to hold office. The highest-paid Lieutenant Governor is from Oklahoma with an annual salary of \$114,713. The lowest-paid Lieutenant Governor is from Colorado with a salary of \$68,500. North Dakota's Lieutenant Governor's salary of \$81,538 ranks 5th out of the 11 states surveyed. In Wyoming the Secretary of State fulfills the Lieutenant Governor's duties. In South Dakota the Lieutenant Governor is a part-time position. In Kansas the Lieutenant Governor also serves as the Governor's chief of staff and elects to receive that salary.
- **Secretary of State** - The Secretary of State is elected in 10 states and appointed by the Governor in Oklahoma. The primary duties include being the chief election officer, being the custodian of official government documents, and registering corporations and other business organizations. Seven of the states require the Secretary of State to be a certain age ranging from at least 18 years to at least 31 years of age, and most states require the Secretary of State to be a state resident. The highest-paid Secretary of State is from Missouri and is paid \$107,746 per year and supervises 255 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Secretary of State is from Colorado and is paid \$68,500 and supervises 133.9 FTE positions. North Dakota's Secretary of State's salary of

\$83,550 ranks 8th out of the 11 states surveyed. North Dakota's Secretary of State's office has 28 FTE positions.

- **Attorney General** - The Attorney General is elected in 10 states and appointed by the Governor in Wyoming. The primary duties include being the chief legal counsel and adviser for the state, providing opinions on legal or constitutional questions, and enforcing consumer protection laws. Ten states require the Attorney General to be a state resident, seven states require the Attorney General to be a certain age ranging from at least 18 years to at least 31 years of age, and five states require the Attorney General to be licensed to practice law in the state or a member of the state bar. The highest-paid Attorney General is from Wyoming and is paid \$137,150 per year and supervises 247 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Attorney General is from Colorado and is paid \$80,000 and supervises 396.2 FTE positions. North Dakota's Attorney General's salary of \$91,719 ranks 10th out of the 11 states surveyed. North Dakota's Attorney General's office has 202.5 FTE positions.
- **Superintendent of Public Instruction** - The Superintendent is elected in four states and appointed by the Governor or State Board of Education in seven states. The primary duties include enforcing state and federal laws pertaining to public schools and related programs and administering policies and rules of the State Board of Education. In three states--North Dakota, Colorado, and Wyoming--the Superintendents have supervisory control over the states' blind or deaf schools, and in North Dakota and Colorado the Superintendents have supervisory control over the State Library. Four states require their Superintendents to be a certain age ranging from at least 21 years to at least 31 years of age. Two states--Colorado and Montana--require their Superintendents to hold an advanced degree and a bachelor's degree respectively. Six states have no formal requirements for the Superintendent. The highest-paid Superintendent is from Colorado and is paid \$223,860 per year and supervises 557.3 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Superintendent is from Wyoming and is paid \$92,000 and supervises 124 FTE positions. North Dakota's Superintendent's salary of \$95,116 ranks 10th out of the 11 states surveyed. North Dakota's Department of Public Instruction has 99.75 FTE positions.
- **Tax Commissioner** - The Tax Commissioner is appointed by the Governor in all states except North Dakota where the Tax Commissioner is elected. The primary duties include the collection of taxes and fees, administration and enforcement of tax laws, and auditing of tax

returns. In several states the department is known as the Department of Revenue and includes additional duties. In Colorado the duties also include administering the lottery, gaming, and racing and enforcing liquor laws. In Iowa the duties include enforcing bingo and tobacco regulations and issuing motor vehicle registrations and driver's licenses. In South Dakota the duties include administering the lottery. The highest-paid Tax Commissioner is from Colorado and is paid \$146,040 per year and supervises 1,512.7 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Tax Commissioner is from North Dakota and is paid \$90,678 and supervises 133 FTE positions.

- **Insurance Commissioner** - The Insurance Commissioner is elected in three states and appointed by the Governor in five states. In three states--Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota--the duties of the Insurance Commissioner are assumed by another state agency. The primary duties include licensing, supervising, and regulating insurance companies. North Dakota requires its Insurance Commissioner to be at least 25 years of age and a state resident. Missouri also requires its Insurance Commissioner to be a state resident. The other six states with an Insurance Commissioner have no formal requirements to hold the office. The highest-paid Insurance Commissioner is from Missouri and is paid \$120,000 per year and supervises 545 FTE positions. The lowest-paid Insurance Commissioner is from North Dakota and is paid \$83,550 and supervises 45.5 FTE positions.
- **Public Service Commission** - The Public Service Commission is elected in five states and appointed by the Governor in six states. The primary duty includes the regulation of electric, gas, telecommunications, and water utilities; pipelines; and transmission lines. Three states have a minimum age requirement of 25 years of age to hold this office. Eight states have no formal requirements to hold the office. The highest-paid commissioner is in Kansas with an annual salary of \$134,750 and supervises 214 FTE positions. The lowest-paid commissioner is in Nebraska with an annual salary of \$75,000 and supervises 48.89 FTE positions. Each North Dakota commissioner's salary is \$85,830 and ranks 10th out of the 11 states surveyed. The North Dakota Public Service Commission has 43 FTE positions.
- **Agriculture Commissioner** - The Agriculture Commissioner is appointed by the Governor in nine states and elected in North Dakota and Kansas. The primary duties include promoting the agricultural industry and related products; pest control; inspecting and licensing various aspects, including commercial feeds, packing plants, and livestock sale barns; disease control

in domestic animals; and enforcing laws pertaining to humane treatment of animals. Nine states have no formal provisions regarding the qualifications to hold office. North Dakota requires its Agriculture Commissioner to be at least 25 years of age and a state resident for five years, and Missouri requires its Agriculture Commissioner to be a practical farmer versed in agriculture science. The highest-paid Agriculture Commissioner is from Colorado and is paid \$146,040 per year and supervises 293 FTE positions. The lowest-paid commissioner is from North Dakota and is paid \$85,830 and supervises 74.5 FTE positions.

- **State Auditor** - The State Auditor is elected in nine states, appointed by the General Assembly in Colorado, and appointed by the Legislative Post Audit Committee in Kansas. The primary duties include performing or providing for audits of state agencies. Five states require their auditor to be a certain age ranging from at least 25 years to at least 31 years of age. Seven states require the auditor to be a state resident. Kansas and South Dakota have no formal requirements for this office. The highest-paid auditor is from Colorado and is paid \$145,140 per year and supervises 73 FTE positions. The lowest-paid auditor is from South Dakota and is paid \$78,363 and supervises 18 FTE positions. North Dakota's State Auditor's salary of \$83,550 ranks 9th out of the 11 states surveyed. The North Dakota State Auditor's office has 51.8 FTE positions.
- **State Treasurer** - The State Treasurer is elected in nine states, appointed by the Commissioner of Management and Budget in Minnesota, and appointed by the Governor in Montana. The primary duties include cash management, investment of funds, and banking services. In seven states--Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming--the treasurer is also responsible for unclaimed property. Six states require the treasurer to be a certain age ranging from at least 18 years to at least 31 years of age. Six states also require the treasurer to be a state resident. Four states have no formal requirements for the office. The highest-paid treasurer is from Oklahoma and is paid \$109,250 per year and supervises 90 FTE positions. The lowest-paid treasurer is from Colorado and is paid \$68,500 and supervises 133.9 FTE positions. North Dakota's State Treasurer's salary of \$78,900 ranks 9th out of the 11 states surveyed. The North Dakota State Treasurer's office has 7 FTE positions.

The Legislative Council staff reviewed a list of salaries for the North Dakota's Governor's appointed cabinet members. She said the Governor is the highest-paid elected official in North Dakota, and the State Treasurer is the lowest-paid elected official.

Seven of the Governor's appointed cabinet members receive a higher annual salary than the Governor.

In response to a question from Senator Dever, the legislative budget analyst and auditor said the state constitution does not require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to hold a valid teaching license. He said prior to 2007, state statute required the Superintendent to hold a professional teaching license during his or her term of office. He said the requirement was removed by the 2007 Legislative Assembly based in part on the Attorney General's Letter Opinion 2007-L-05 dated February 13, 2007. He said the opinion indicated that "a court faced with the issue would determine the requirement that the superintendent hold a valid teaching license to be unconstitutional."

At the request of Chairman Svedjan, the Legislative Council staff reviewed a memorandum entitled [Compensation System Consultants](#). She reviewed a list of 11 potential consultants the committee could consider to provide consulting services relating to the committee's study of the classified employee compensation system.

Chairman Svedjan reviewed a memorandum prepared by the Legislative Council staff entitled Government Services Committee - Potential Consulting Services. He said the memorandum identifies the following items a consultant could evaluate to provide options and develop recommendations regarding the state's classified employee compensation system:

1. Methods used to develop and determine position classifications.
2. Methods used to set pay grade minimums, maximums, and midpoints.
3. Appropriate market comparisons.
4. Methods to minimize salary inequities both within an agency and within state government.
5. Methods of developing and sustaining a consistent long-term salary increase administration policy for state government, including the use of cost-of-living increases, across-the-board increases, merit increases, equity increases, and performance increases.
6. A budget and appropriation process for providing funds to agencies to administer the state's salary increase policy.
7. Fringe benefits.
8. Recruitment and retention tools.

Chairman Svedjan said an effective salary system should not require additional funding for equity adjustments. He said the system should be based on market surveys with adequate appropriations made by the Legislative Assembly.

Representative Conrad said she believes Human Resource Management Services is effective and does not believe a consultant is needed to assist with the study.

Chairman Svedjan called on Mr. Ken Purdy, Human Resource Management Services, who presented information regarding fringe benefits

provided by North Dakota and 10 other states, including Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office. Mr. Purdy reviewed the following information for the states:

- The number of classified and unclassified employees and the average salary for classified and unclassified employees.
- Annual leave accrual rates.
- Sick leave accrual rates.
- Holidays allowed per year.
- Other types of leave provided.
- Disease management and managed care programs.

- Employer/employee monthly contributions to health insurance.
- Dental insurance.
- Accidental death and dismemberment and long-term disability coverage.
- Employee assistance and wellness programs.
- Life insurance.
- Retirement contributions and plan provisions.
- Retirement benefits.
- Retirement system status and demographics.
- Benefit value comparison.
- Central states regional total compensation analysis.

The following table provides information on North Dakota and other states included in the 10-state survey relating to contributions for health insurance, retirement, and the total value of all benefits:

	Health Insurance Premium - Family Coverage		Retirement		Total Value of All Benefits Per Hour ¹
	Employer Contribution	Employee Contribution	Employer Contribution	Employee Contribution	
North Dakota	\$826	\$0	4.12%	4.00% ²	\$10.89
Colorado	\$869	\$326	12.15%	8.00%	\$10.60
Iowa	\$1,275	\$225	6.65%	4.30%	\$13.72
Kansas	\$586	\$330	7.57%	4.00% ³	\$9.60
Minnesota	\$1,185	\$130	4.75%	4.75%	\$12.53
Missouri	\$651	\$283	12.75%	0.00%	\$12.20
Montana ⁴	\$626	\$204	6.90%	6.90%	\$9.74
Nebraska	\$1,624	\$432	7.49%	4.80%	\$15.26
Oklahoma	\$752	\$0	15.50%	3.50%	\$15.47
South Dakota ⁴	\$481	\$274	6.00%	6.00%	\$8.50
Wyoming ⁴	\$1,099	\$178	11.25%	0.00%	\$13.13

¹Total value of benefits includes values for vacation, sick leave, paid holidays, health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, retirement, and Social Security and is based on a standardized average salary and five years of service.

²The employee contribution is paid by the state.

³The employee contribution increases to 6 percent for employees becoming members after July 1, 2009.

⁴States included in the three-state survey.

In response to a question from Representative Nathe, Mr. Purdy said he will provide information at a future committee meeting regarding states in the central states survey that were previously providing 100 percent of health care premiums and now require employee contributions.

Mr. Purdy presented information regarding terminology used in North Dakota Century Code Section 54-44.3-01 relating to merit and fitness for a position. He said the language currently in the section is the original language included in House Bill No. 1120 enacted in 1975 by the 44th Legislative Assembly.

Chairman Svedjan called on Ms. Bonnie Johnson, County Administrator, Cass County, who presented information on Cass County's compensation system. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Johnson said Cass County has 400 employees. She said annually, as part of the budget development cycle, the county sets the structure for the pay administration plan based on the financial condition of the county. She said the

county personnel policy manual includes a pay philosophy for wages and salary administration.

Ms. Johnson said every three years the county conducts a comprehensive system review and a market study to determine the base for the county salary scale. She said the county pay scale starts approximately 6 percent above market and matches market at the upper end of the pay scale. She said the pay scale is adjusted annually to reflect cost-of-living adjustments unless the adjustment is negative.

Ms. Johnson said the county does not give across-the-board pay raises. She said cost-of-living adjustments are provided to all employees, and any additional pay increases are based on performance.

In response to a question from Representative Svedjan, Ms. Johnson said the county begins its budget process in May and completes the process by October 1 of each year. She said pay increases are effective the following January 1. She said funding for the pay increases are appropriated to each department.

In response to a question from Representative Weiler, Ms. Johnson said the county has very few job

openings each year. She said the highest turnover is in the area of corrections.

In response to a question from Representative Svedjan, Ms. Johnson said recruitment and retention for hard-to-fill positions is managed by compensating employees close to county trend lines and market salaries.

In response to a question from Representative Potter, Ms. Johnson said employee salaries are the first priority considered during the county's budget process. She said remaining dollars are prioritized for other county needs.

In response to a question from Senator Lindaas, Ms. Johnson said the county is self-insured with Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota administering the health plan. She said the county requires its employees to pay a portion of the health insurance premium. She said the county uses a formula to determine the employee share. She said employees currently pay 12 percent of the premium for a single policy, 17 percent for a single policy with dependents, and 22 percent for a family policy.

Chairman Svedjan called on Ms. Sharon Klein, Human Resources Manager, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, who presented information on Basin Electric's compensation system. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office. Ms. Klein said Basin Electric Power Cooperative has a total of 2,016 employees with 1,623 employees in North Dakota. She said 50 percent of the employees are represented by a union. She said the compensation system for nonunion employees was reviewed in 2001 with the assistance of several employee focus groups. She said a consultant was hired to identify market salaries and review Basin Electric Power Cooperative's salaries. She said the review determined 92 percent of the employees were being paid appropriately. She said the largest variances between Basin Electric Power Cooperative's salaries and market salaries were for the engineers who were being paid below market and plant supervisors who were being paid above market. She said plant supervisors required higher salaries because union employees in certain positions governed by the union contracts were being paid similarly to or, with overtime, being paid more than the supervisors.

Ms. Klein said the review of the compensation system resulted in the number of pay grades being reduced from 101 grades to 22 grades. She said performance zones were created for each pay grade. She said Zone 1 is for new employees and salaries are in a range slightly below market, Zone 2 is for employees who have been in their position for more than one year and salaries are in a range near market, and Zone 3 is for long-term employees and salaries are in a range near or above market.

Ms. Klein said the company's new compensation system became effective in 2001. She said market surveys are done throughout the year and technical adjustments may be made three times each year to

ensure employees are included in the right performance zone. She said salary reviews are conducted annually which include a review of the consumer price index, affordability, and a comparison to bargaining agreements.

In response to a question from Representative Wieland, Ms. Klein said the performance zones are adjusted, if necessary, after the annual salary review.

In response to a question from Representative Karls, Ms. Klein said Basin Electric Power Cooperative has hired several graduates of the Bismarck State College power plant technology course. She said there are usually 150 to 250 qualified applications for every job opening for a laborer or field technician. She said these jobs are included in the bargaining agreements with unions and are not part of the nonunion compensation system.

In response to a question from Representative Svedjan, Ms. Klein said the budget for salary increases is based on a percentage of the current salary and funding is allocated to each department. She said the department supervisor determines the share of the allocated funding given to each employee.

In response to a question from Representative Froseth, Ms. Klein said there is a complaint appeals process for nonunion employees and an arbitration process for union employees who have complaints or salary disputes.

In response to a question from Senator Dever, Ms. Klein said Basin Electric Power Cooperative has reduced benefits for new employees. She said Basin Electric Power Cooperative's cost for its retirement plans for 2009 will be \$28 million. She said these costs are anticipated to increase by \$10 million for 2010. She said the board of directors approved a plan in 2005 to reduce the retirement benefit factor from 2 percent to 1 percent for employees hired on or after January 1, 2006. She said these same employees will receive a 1 percent increase in the 401k match. She said health plan deductibles were increased from \$250 to \$500 a few years ago and from \$500 to \$750 effective January 1, 2010. She said the \$750 deductible is anticipated to decrease the company's health care costs by 2.5 percent in 2010.

In response to a question from Senator Horne, Ms. Klein said the turnover rate at Basin Electric Power Cooperative has consistently been between 2 percent and 3 percent over the last few years. She said Basin Electric Power Cooperative anticipated retirements to be a critical issue; however, the company has successfully filled positions vacated by retirements. She said it is more difficult to recruit for positions in the Gillette, Wyoming, area than in North Dakota due to the high cost of living in Gillette.

The committee adjourned for lunch at 12:30 p.m. and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

Chairman Svedjan asked for committee discussion relating to the committee's study of the classified state

employee compensation system. He said the current system has many positive qualities but could benefit from an independent review by a consultant.

Representative Wieland suggested the consultant be asked to recommend a philosophy statement for the state's compensation system.

It was moved by Senator Dever, seconded by Representative Wieland, and carried on a roll call vote that the committee issue a request for proposal for the purpose of obtaining consultant services to evaluate the effectiveness of the classified state employee compensation system and make recommendations for improvements. Representatives Svedjan, Bellew, Boehning, Froseth, Karls, Metcalf, Nathe, Potter, Rust, Thoreson, Weiler, and Wieland and Senators Dever, Lindaas, and Marcellais voted "aye." Representative Conrad and Senators Horne and Nelson voted "nay."

It was moved by Representative Bellew, seconded by Representative Nathe, and carried on a voice vote that the request for proposal for the purpose of obtaining consultant services include the following specific areas to address:

1. **Methods used to develop and determine position classifications.**
2. **Methods used to set pay grade minimums, maximums, and midpoints.**
3. **Appropriate market comparisons.**
4. **Methods to minimize salary inequities both within an agency and within state government.**
5. **Methods of developing and sustaining a consistent long-term salary increase administration policy for state government, including the advisability of using cost-of-living increases, across-the-board increases, merit increases, equity increases, and performance increases.**
6. **A budget and appropriation process for providing funds to agencies to administer the state's salary increase policy.**
7. **Fringe benefits.**
8. **Recruitment and retention tools.**
9. **A state compensation philosophy statement.**

CAPITOL COMPLEX AND STATE FACILITIES STUDY

Chairman Svedjan called on Mr. John Boyle, Director, Facility Management Division, Office of Management and Budget, who presented information relating to the Capitol complex and state facilities study. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Boyle said the original Capitol grounds included 320 acres of land. He said 160 acres were sold to finance construction of a new Capitol building after the first building was destroyed by fire. He said additional acres were sold, donated, or are used for

easements and right of ways. He said the current Capitol grounds include 132 acres.

Mr. Boyle said the Capitol building fund was originally granted 32,000 acres. He said the fund currently includes 9,994 surface acres and 27,000 acres of mineral rights.

In response to a question from Senator Nelson, Mr. Jeff Engleson, Land Department, said acreage held by the Capitol building fund was sold at auction as North Dakota was being settled. Mr. Engleson said 5,000 acres were sold with the state reserving no mineral rights. He said in 1939 the state began reserving 5 percent of the mineral rights, in 1941 the reserve was increased to 50 percent, and since 1960 the state reserves 100 percent of mineral rights. He said the trust fund is expendable and money from the trust fund has been spent over time to maintain the Capitol.

Mr. Boyle reviewed the square footage requirements for state agencies that lease space in the Bismarck-Mandan area and pay the majority of rent from the general fund. He said a new building would require 92,000 gross square feet to accommodate these agencies. He said these agencies are paying a total of \$1.7 million in rent for the leased spaces for the 2009-11 biennium.

In response to a question from Representative Froseth, Mr. Boyle said it would cost approximately \$9 per square foot annually to maintain a new building on the Capitol grounds and \$4 to \$6 per square foot to maintain a building off the Capitol grounds. He said the maintenance costs would not include extraordinary repairs.

In response to a question from Representative Conrad, Mr. Boyle said it costs more to maintain buildings on the Capitol grounds because of the higher level of services that are provided on the Capitol grounds. He said the Capitol is a public building that needs to be maintained at a very high standard.

Mr. Boyle said the 2009 Legislative Assembly provided the Facility Management Division with \$1.775 million for parking lot repairs. He said the judicial wing parking lot has been improved and 35 parking spaces added. He said the north parking lots will be improved in the spring and summer of 2010. He said the cars currently park facing east to west. The improvements made will result in cars being parked facing north to south. He said this change will add 30 to 40 parking spots.

Mr. Boyle reviewed needed repairs and improvements on the Capitol grounds. He said restoration projects have been identified in preparation of the Capitol's 100th anniversary. He said cost estimates in 2010 dollars for the projects total \$20.1 million, of which \$16.2 million is from the general fund and \$3.9 million is from the Capitol building fund. He said the projects would be completed over several bienniums.

In response to a question from Representative Svedjan, Mr. Boyle said repairs and maintenance

projects are prioritized first according to life safety issues, second according to Americans with Disabilities Act issues, and then whether it is a major or minor renovation.

OTHER COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairman Svedjan called on Major General David Sprynczynatyk, Adjutant General, to provide information on services provided to veterans by the North Dakota National Guard.

Major General Sprynczynatyk introduced Mr. Rob Keller, Director of the Service Member and Family Support program, who presented information on the services provided to veterans and their families. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Keller said the Service Member and Family Support program is a partnership with the North Dakota National Guard and North Dakota servicemen and servicewomen and their families. He said prior to September 11, 2001, the North Dakota National Guard family support program had one full-time employee and a few volunteers. He said the Service Member and Family Support program currently has 37 full-time employees and over 100 registered volunteers to assist over 58,000 North Dakota veterans, servicemembers, and their families. He said there are five military Family Assistance Centers in North Dakota located in Bismarck, Jamestown, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot. He said over the past year, program outreach specialists have contacted and met with over 9,000 North Dakota veterans and provided case management services to almost 700 veterans. He said benefits provided by the program include:

- Chaplain.
- Survivor outreach.
- Reintegration.
- Suicide prevention.
- Sexual assault response.
- Transition assistance.
- Outreach.

In response to a question from Senator Horne, Mr. Keller said the Service Member and Family Support program will work with county veterans' service officers to enhance services to veterans. He said outreach and transition personnel encourage clients to contact their county veterans' service officer.

In response to a question from Representative Conrad, Mr. Keller said most requests for areas of assistance relate to medical needs, Department of Veterans' Affairs claims, mental health, employment, or education. He said services have been provided to 22 World War II veterans, 26 Korean era veterans, 69 Vietnam era veterans, 46 Desert Shield/Desert Storm veterans, 152 Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom veterans, and 328 peacetime veterans.

In response to a question from Senator Marcellais, Mr. Keller said outreach program personnel will visit rural communities upon request.

In response to a question from Senator Dever, Mr. Keller said the program previously had a contract with Mental Health America of North Dakota for suicide prevention hotline services. He said the contract was not renewed due to a lack of funding. He said the FirstLink program of Fargo is working with the Public Service Commission to begin providing these services.

Chairman Svedjan said county veterans' service officers and county commissioners will be invited to the next committee meeting.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND STAFF DIRECTIVES

Chairman Svedjan anticipates the next meeting of the Government Services Committee to be in February.

It was moved by Senator Nelson, seconded by Representative Karls, and carried on a voice vote that the committee adjourn subject to the call of the chair.

No further business appearing, Chairman Svedjan adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Becky Keller
Senior Fiscal Analyst

Allen H. Knudson
Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:1