

Meeting Minutes

Idaho Medal of Honor Commission

Thursday, December 23, 2004

10:30 a.m. MST

Intergovernmental and Fiscal Law Division

Idaho Attorney General's Office

700 W. Jefferson St., Rm. 119

Boise, Idaho

Present at the physical meeting location

Bill von Tagen, Attorney General's Office

Megan Ronk, Governor's Office

Trish Stack, Governor's Office

Melissa Ward, Mr. von Tagen's secretary (taking minutes)

Present via conference call

Bill Douglas, Kootenai County Prosecuting Attorney

Mike Becar, Executive Director, Peace Officers Standards & Training

Doug Borah, District 2 Vice President, Idaho Peace Officers Association

Blair Olsen, Jefferson County Sheriff

Absent

Ron Anderson, Nampa Fire Chief

Joe Rice, Soda Springs Police Chief

Attendance was taken, and the meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman Bill von Tagen at approximately 10:30 a.m. MST.

The group reviewed the proposed Idaho Medal of Honor Commission Timeline 2004-2005, as submitted by Bill von Tagen. Bill Douglas requested that the letter and nomination form be mailed to law enforcement and fire agencies by January 31, 2004. He noted that the March 15, 2004, deadline for the 2005 awards remain a strict deadline and any nominations received after March 15th be held over for consideration the following year. Mr. Douglas also requested that the April Commission meeting be reserved for the discussion of nominations received and decisions on the 2005 award recipients. Mr. von Tagen added an item under June 2005 for a debriefing of sorts to discuss the first ceremony and what improvements we might be able to make for ensuing years' ceremonies.

Regarding the "call for nominations" mailing, Mike Becar indicated he would provide an electronic copy of his law enforcement agency mailing list to Bill von Tagen, and Mr. von Tagen's office would coordinate with Ron Anderson regarding obtaining a similar fire agency mailing list.

Mr. von Tagen stated he would, the first week of January, generate and submit an article regarding the Idaho Medal of Honor to the Idaho Peace Officers Association for inclusion in their next publication (in January or February) and will include a nomination form. Commission members were encouraged to communicate with Mr. von Tagen regarding any pertinent information for the article. Mr. Douglas mentioned that agencies should be instructed to research their historical files for posthumous awards. The Commission will need to make firm decisions regarding criteria for award consideration. It will be difficult to tell nominating agencies "no" when they submit nominations that do not meet the criteria for the Medal of Honor. It may be a challenge to effectively explain the importance of the award. Mr. von Tagen pointed out that early awards may be historical and posthumous in nature and that we may need to limit the number of awards presented each year. Mr. Douglas stated that the "burden of proof" would be on the nominating agency to make the case that the nominee is deserving; it's not up to the Commission to research further. It may be a challenge to determine heroism deserving of the award. Doug Borah pointed out that there's a distinction between accidents and heroism.

Mr. von Tagen reminded everyone, as nominations are floated, if meetings take place between Commission members to discuss the nominations or other Commission business, such meeting could fall under the Open Meeting Law, and procedures would need to be followed, accordingly.

Megan Ronk noted that Governor Kempthorne will not be available to participate in and/or present awards at the first ceremony if it is held on May 20, 2005, as he will be out of the country, on an Asian trade meeting May 14 through May 28. He very much wants to participate in the first ceremony. Would it be possible to choose another date and still coincide with the annual Peace Officers Memorial ceremony? Mike Becar conveyed the importance of and desire for the Governor's presence. Because no date has yet been publicly announced, Mr. Becar did not think it would be a problem, at this early juncture, to schedule the Peace Officers Memorial ceremony on a different day and will confer with his board members. Ms. Ronk stated their first choice would be May 6th but that they could probably make May 13th work, if necessary. Mr. Douglas pointed out that May 8th is Mother's Day, so scheduling the ceremony for May 6th may hold just that much more significance. Mr. Becar stated that he may have a commitment on May 6th but will get back to the Commission after reviewing his calendar and conferring with the Peace Officers Memorial board members.

Bill Douglas noted that the Commission stationery looks sharp and that all of the information regarding the board members appears to be correct.

It was decided that a Commission meeting in January would be left open at this point and scheduled at a later date, if warranted. Mr. von Tagen will explore the possibility of a meeting in conjunction with the Idaho Association of Counties' event in Boise the second week in February. Perhaps the Commission could meet at the Attorney General's Office.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Becar and seconded by Doug Borah. The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.