

6 February 2015

**Board Minutes
9 January 2015
American Legion Headquarters
7465 E. 1st Avenue #D
Denver, CO 80230**

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman –Not Present
Rene Simard, Secretary
Kathleen Dunemmn, Member
Christopher Holden, Member- Not Present
Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member – Not Present
Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
Diane Ricci, CDVA Deputy Director
Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

Richard Sandrock, Governor's Office
Chuck Broerman, El Paso County Clerk and Recorder's Office
Mike Dixon, Senior Director, Colorado Department of Revenue
Tony Anderson, Operation Director, Division of Motor Vehicles, Colorado Department of Revenue
Jason Strickland, Chief Development Officer, Project Sanctuary
Bill Holen, Arapahoe County Commissioner
Marvin Meyers, CBVA Emeritus, UVC

Approval of Minutes from December

Unanimously accepted

Board Member Comments

Rene Simard: Happy New Year to everyone! I have just a couple of comments. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce will host along with the Rotary, "The State of the Base" on January 21st. Col. John Wagner, 460th Space Wing Commander from Buckley Air Force Base will give a review of their activities in 2014 and provide the economic impact of Buckley Air Force Base on the local and state economy. The State of the Base will be held at the Doubletree on Iliff and I-225. If anyone is interested in attending, please contact me. There is a minimum cost for lunch so if you are interested in attending, let me know and I will get you registered. Again, it's the 21st of January, at 11:30am.

Secondly, most of you know George Peck from the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. He is a retired Air Force Public Affairs Officer and is retiring from the Aurora Chamber after 15 years. We will have his retirement party on 30 January and it will also be at the Doubletree on Iliff and I-225. It will be from 5:00PM to 8:00PM. It should be a lot of fun and we are planning to roast him. George has really been the Aerospace and Defense voice in Aurora and he is a great guy! If you are interested in attending, let me know.

Kathleen Dunemn: No comment.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Chair, I wanted to follow-up since our last meeting. Chuck Bruin from the VA came for an outreach at Granby. We had 68 people that signed the roster and probably another 10 to 12 that came in. It was very well received. Mr. Bruin is very knowledgeable and he presented the VA in a very positive light. We also had Lori Hunt from the VAMC skype in and she talked about the Choice Card.

I think it is important for this Board since we are the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs to do a follow-up with the VA. They gauge everything on a straight line regarding the 40 mile radius for the Choice Card purposes. In my case, the Golden Clinic is 44 miles to Granby. It is 36 miles to Frazer so that eliminates Frazer and Winter Park. They also give on that figure the driving miles because this is a mountainous community, the travel distance needs to be taken into consideration. I think we need some better input.

Robby Robinson: The feedback I got from Dana on the last meeting and the briefing we gave the legislature was the need for focus of direction of the Board's efforts in the coming year. A lot of which is this urban versus rural, and the problems are different and the solutions are different. And certainly, the Choice Card they are trying to implement effects rural areas. The next meeting will be at the VA Regional Office. I will ask Renaye Murphy to give their perspective on how that Choice Card is going and I will try to get some input from the Board. I think that would be interesting to get their perspective because it depends on where you come from. It is almost like where you stand, if you are a veteran out there it is not very good

but if you are in the VA, then it is oh so wonderful. Oh is it really? So, we can dig into that a little bit at that February meeting. I will ask for that as a specific issue for them to address.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Chair, I brought just a couple of copies of an email. I don't know if anyone here on the Eastern Slope is privy to this. Paul Sweeney sent me an email (he is like the equivalent to Dan Warvi at the Grand Junction VA.) This email concerns the death of the veteran over there and the email came from Mark McGuile. I only have a couple of copies but I will give them to Robby and let me know if you want to read the email. It is interesting. That is all I have, Mr. Chair, at this time.

Robby Robinson: Dana alerted me to the fact that we need direction for the Strategic Plan. The one we have now is out of date. We ought to set forth a direction so we have some consensus to look at rural issues. We can talk about that more in terms of what we do; it is reflected in the minutes there. We do have Bill Holen here, Arapahoe County Commissioners. Welcome.

Public Comments

Bill Holen: Thank you very much, Robby, I am honored to be here and I should have called to let you know. I am grateful for letting me have the opportunity to share with you. I have several copies of a report we were asked to put together for a task force to examine in a very forensic way issues related to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In addition in a very technical way, examine the current PTSD treatment programs. We looked at the efforts to coordinate between the VA and Denver community services. On the panel, we had many professionals, psychologists, both from the VA and from the private sector, veterans' advocates, and outside research entities that helped us along. We compiled the report in August 2014. We are waiting to present it to Congressman Coffman, who asked me to put this together as did Senator Udall. Due to the election, we have not been able to coordinate our efforts. We will have a press conference or announcement sometime this month to release the report. We have had two or three major public media agencies wanting us to be on television to talk about the findings.

I will leave these copies with Robby and anybody who wants a copy you can take them. If you need more, give me a call.

We found a basis for several conclusions:

- There is a clearly definable lack of coordination between the Department of Defense and the VA concerning the treatment of PTSD relative to the different modalities of treatment available.
- There is a lack of early identification of PTSD and the issues related to PTSD and TBI.
- There are employment issues and how employment impacts veterans with PTSD as a therapeutic intervention.
- There is a lack of family oriented programs. The impact of PTSD on the family has been negated over the years. The importance of family support is crucial to the treatment process for families with a veteran with PTSD.

- The VA and the Department of Defense do not utilize the best practices. In other words, they take a program and use that program and don't move left or right of it. We found there are many examples of best practices for PTSD in many universities, NIH for example proved to be more effective.
- There are problems with the pharmacology for PTSD treatment. Historically, there have been problems with addiction and psychotropic drugs that aren't really helping the problem.

Our hope is that this report will provide a roadmap for Congressman Coffman who is a member of the VA Committee and help them come up with solutions to these problems. We dedicated a lot of time and resources, on a volunteer basis to help veterans with PTSD and we hope it reached fruition in helping veterans with PTSD. PTSD has reached epidemic proportions with veterans of all eras. We have veterans from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam to modern eras who are still struggling with these issues. I hope some of our recommendations will be utilized in helping these veterans. Does anyone have any questions?

Robby Robinson: I want to make sure we get a copy of the report needs to go to the UVC Chairman, Ralph Bozella.

Bill Holen: I did give a copy to Ralph. Thank you to the Board for all you do to help veterans. I used to be on the Board. The Governor has a copy of this report and we are waiting on feedback from him. We had several Air Force and Army Generals take a look at the report and they were very laudatory about our efforts.

Robby Robinson: I appreciate what you have done for this and for coming today to present to us. I also appreciate all the Arapahoe County Commissioners for their efforts to help veterans.

Bill Holen: We have hired two VSO's and I think we have a good reputation amongst the veterans in our community, in the county, and throughout the state. Thank you very much for your time.

Marvin Meyer: As long as Bill mentioned UVC, I thought I would speak to it. Some of you may not know what UVC is about, United Veterans Committee of Colorado, is a 44 year old coalition of some 53 Veteran Service Organizations and another 24 affiliates. We represent veterans at the Legislative and through Congressional delegations. We focus on issues effecting veterans and their families, active duty, and National Guard personnel. I don't mind saying we have accomplished quite a bit at the Legislature over the years, in terms of major legislative initiatives. We have worked with the Legislature to help frame legislation or to adjust it. At any rate, we are out there and we are serving veterans. The comment I would like to make this morning is that UVC has incorporated a 501C-3 non-profit, tax exempt foundation. Our target populations that we want to provide services for are the veterans, their families, Guard members, Reserve members, and Active Duty. We are looking for our niche: where is it that we want to provide services. We are looking for unmet needs. We know that there are many needs out there, such as the homeless, where this need is being worked on by many entities.

We want to find something that has not fully addressed or woefully under-served. We want you to think about it because we do not want to do what anybody else is doing. As soon as we identify an area that we believe it is what we want to pursue then we will apply for grants from various foundations and grant giving organizations both locally and nationally to help the veterans. Are there any questions?

Robby Robinson: Thank you, Marvin. Are there any other public comments? The focus of today's meeting as far as the Board in educating everyone is license plates. There are 38 veterans' license plates and some of them are free and some exclude the bearer from having to pay a fee. I invited Mike Dixon from the Department of Revenue and Tony Anderson from the Division of Motor Vehicles to come and talk about the different license plates available for veterans and the process for applying for these license plates. Most of these veteran license plates require that you prove you are a veteran. I thought it would be informative to let you know the process since I just went through this myself. I thought it would be good to know the procedures and what the requirements are. If we talk to veterans who have problems with the procedures, sometimes we can help or sometimes United Veterans Committee can help resolve any issues, or change legislation, or propose legislation that may be needed. That is why I have asked for a briefing.

Guest Presentations

Mike Dixon: Thank you for inviting us today and thank you for what you guys do for veterans. I would like to introduce in the state of Colorado the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) works for the Department of Revenue (DOR). In Colorado, there are 54 Clerk and Recorders and they are executive agents for the Department of Revenue for the Division of Motor Vehicles purposes. We have an initiative in collaboration with the DMV and the DOR to issue these license plates for veterans directly from the counties. There are three counties participating at this time, El Paso County, Arapahoe County, and La Plata County. With our huge population of veterans in El Paso County, this initiative has been a very good service to veterans. I came on board initially with a program called, Vets to Trucks, which helps veterans obtain a CDL at a reduced expenses. We would like to thank UVC for their help with the Legislation with the driver's license identifier. We also help veterans get identifiers as veterans on their driver's license. We send a letter every year to the Board about our progress in helping veterans. Our hope is that this will help veterans in the futures in all counties.

Tony Anderson: First off, thank you for the opportunity to share this information today. I apologize for the miscommunication last month. For the presentation, I would like to go over all the military plates that are available. We have a Power Point printout that is being passed out so you will have a visual. Of all the military plates that are issued, the Disabled Veteran plate is the highest issued of all the 38 plates. There are special unique qualifiers for that Disabled License plate through pre-issuance. El Paso issues approximately 46% of the military license plates statewide. I worked with El Paso to identify ways to make this process better for veterans. Our over-all objectives today are to go over all of the veteran plates, the first time issuance plates, the requirements to be issued, and the current process and challenges with

that process. We do know that there are issues and if there are issues that come to your attention, please reach out and let us know. We would like to make it better. I would also like to discuss the service initiative that we are working with El Paso County. If you look at slide number 3 you can see a list of all 38 military plates. There are unique qualifiers for all of these plates with the exception of: USS Colorado, Civil Air Patrol, 4th Infantry, and NORAD. Those are all available to the public; all other plates there needs to be a unique identifier to qualify.

Mickey Hunt: I have a question. As I look at the plates listed here, I see the Distinguished Flying Cross listed twice. Is that a mistake or are there only 37 plates?

Tony Anderson: It should be 38. It must have been a mistake to have it listed twice. I may have omitted one. I will make note and make that updated. So of the 38 plates, the average monthly issuance is just over 2,500 plates per year. The most common plate is the Disabled Veterans plate and that is issued about 670 Disabled Veteran plates per month across the state.

Duane Dailey: Excuse me maybe I did not hear you. When you say, first time issue, is that the first year it is issued?

Tony Anderson: The first plate issuance, so if you would have a DV plate it is exempt taxes and fees of course for the life of that plate.

Duane Dailey: Thank you for that.

Tony Anderson: If you look on slide 4, is a list of the first time free issuance plates. There are eleven plates. The free first time issuance plates include the Disabled Veteran plate, the Disabled Veteran Handicapped plate, the Medal of Honor plate, the Distinguished Service Cross plate, the Distinguished Flying Cross plate, the Air Force Cross plate, the Purple Heart plate, the Silver Star plate, the Navy Cross plate, the POW plate and the Pearl Harbor Survivor plate. Distinguished Flying Cross was added most recently. These free first time issuance military special license plates are exempt from all taxes and fees. Currently there are just over 23,000 DV plates issued and of that just under 10,000 are in El Paso County. So, that is where this partnership is working in hand. This partnership with El Paso County was formed due to the high volume and the area of biggest impact. We have been working with Chuck and his team for about a year now to develop this service initiative to put customer service first. As you will see later on in the presentation, this is a complex process, especially for El Paso County. Underneath at the bottom of slide 4, there is some statutory reference for everyone's review.

If you look on page 5, the requirements are listed for the free first time issuance of the Disabled Veteran plate. The veteran must meet one of the following:

- Permanent service-connected disability rated at 50% or more
- Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet
- Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands
- Loss of sight in both eyes

On slide 6, we are going to continue with the requirements. The verification of these qualifications, the veteran must have an eligibility letter in writing from the VA or from their branch of service on official service letterhead. This is where it is challenging. The way Colorado statute is written, it needs to explicitly state that the veteran has a 50% service-connected, permanent disability. Many times these letters are missing one or more items. This can be very challenging and this is where many of the letters are sent back.

Robby Robinson: The problem is that the letter does not state that the veteran is 50% or more disabled?

Tony Anderson: The letter is not acceptable if it does not include "service-related or service-connected." We see some that do omit the 50% disabled and that would cause an issue as well.

Robby Robinson: Diane, question to you. If I am a veteran and I am rated 80% disabled, to get that disability rating it has to be service-connected, right?

Diane Ricci: Well, you can have a rating and have it be non-service connected because it is for pension purposes only. You can also be rated at 80% and it is not permanent and total.

Marvin Meyer: The letter could say or should say 50% or more as rated by the VA. That designation was left out when we would have people come in for the property tax exemption. They would say, I am disabled, but that designation was not rated by the VA.

Tony Anderson: It also has to have the service-connection.

Discussion of the different letters and ways they come from the VA.

Chuck Broerman: What we found is when the veteran calls to get a letter from the 800 number they are not getting the appropriate letter. They may be talking to someone at the call center in Maine, and it is a call center where the letter they send does not have service-connected for the disability rating because they are not aware of what the particulars are as far as Colorado statutes. Our staff has worked very hard to make sure they are getting the right letter. There is a new national letter that seems to be working well. In El Paso County, the Colorado Springs Community Based Outpatient Clinic does have a letter that can be used to get the process kicked off. Having the veterans go straight to the clinic in Colorado Springs to get the appropriate letter has been a great assistance to our veterans in El Paso County.

Tony Anderson: We also need to have a copy of the veteran's DD214 and it must be an Honorable Discharge in order for them to qualify for the plates. They are required to show ownership of the vehicle with either the copy of the title or the registration documentation. This is very similar to the process to when you are renewing your own vehicle. On slide 8, is the process on how qualified individuals obtain a free first time issuance by meeting the previously listed requirements and they need to complete the form DR 2380,

Disabled Veteran License Plate Application. We require this application be completed as well as all of the documentations in order for this process to be completed.

On slide 9, we are going to talk about currently up until November when we started with El Paso, all transaction were required to be mailed in to the DMV in Lakewood. Researching this has been a challenge because all other counties normally have a \$4.00 transaction fee. So far putting the feelers out with El Paso County, Arapahoe County and La Plata County, that has not been a sticking point with them. The service to the veteran has been more important.

The applications can be submitted in person or by mail to the DMV in Lakewood office.

Looking at slide 10, there are some challenges with the current process. Whenever the application is submitted to the Lakewood Office, it should be either in person or by mail. We looked at the gaps in service time, especially with the USPS when the paperwork was not complete and it had to be mailed back. We also examined what was specifically wrong with applications being denied or taking longer for example: there was no DD214, or the letter did not include the required language. This has been a challenge and we are working on it.

For the last slide 11, we are working on the Service Initiative with El Paso County as the pilot for issuing the free first time issuance plates within the County. This allows for individuals to work directly with their county motor vehicle office and it eliminates confusion on what office completes the transaction. The county issues a temporary plate while the license plates are manufactured at the prison. This model is based on what is done in the hunting industry. We have so much money tied up in inventory that we did not want to lose that. By having the Service Initiative in El Paso County, this first one is done with the Clerk and Records Office and the second one is done at the DMV in Lakewood. We want to integrate that so that it does not matter what vehicle you have, you would be completing that transaction with the Clerk and Records Office. So that completes my portion of the presentation. Chuck do you want to add anything?

Chuck Broerman: There are a higher percentage of transactions in El Paso County because of the various military installations that we have. From the Academy, to NORAD, Peterson AFB, to Fort Carson, we have a large population. This plate is a privilege that you guys have earned and we very much want to say thank you to the veterans. We understand the frustration that you guys go through in making sure you have the right letter and making sure it has the right terminology. We have worked so much with that over the years that when Tony mentioned that this was an opportunity for us to pilot that and reduce the number of steps a veteran has to go through, we jumped at the chance. We realize that there is not necessarily compensation to do that but we want to do this because of our constituency in El Paso County. We are happy to do that. We have been doing it for several months now, about three months or so and we are working out some of the bugs. This new national letter is more bullet proof. When we tell the veterans about the new national letter, it does help in the process when we are sending things on to Lakewood. We are using a POD (point of delivery) process to help get that plate to the veterans. We don't have any inventory in the office. It has been a great help to our veterans in our community. We are happy to do that. We have taken the state's process and kind of made it our own. We have made a few tweaks to it and happy to roll it out to other entities ready to participate.

Tony Anderson: So we are going to continue piloting even though we have had some gaps. There are issues that have popped up as we roll out statewide. Arapahoe and La Plata are test sites to see what challenges and pitfalls are there. Then we will open it up to all county offices to be able to have that opportunity to be a part of the process.

On the last slide, you will find our contact information if there are any questions or if you have a group that would benefit from a presentation. The military plate was earned and we want to be able to assist in any way to make this process more efficient for the veteran. Let me open it up to any questions or comments.

Marvin Meyer: Gentlemen, thank you. I think that is the most comprehensive presentation on the veterans' license plate that I have ever heard. And I have heard a number when I was over at 18th and Pierce many years ago. Do you have some idea what the distribution of funds on the sale of plates would go? What happens to the distribution of funds on the sale of plates that have a fee? If there is a \$5 to \$6 dollars for manufacturing, then the balance goes to where?

Tony Anderson: The material fee for manufacturing the plates goes to the Department of Corrections- the metal of the plates, the tags, and the registration. There are several plates that cost \$50.00 for the issuance fee and of that \$50.00; \$25.00 goes to the Licensing Service Cash Fund. That helps support the DMV funding. The other \$25.00 goes to the Highway User Trust Fund. Tax and fees are then distributed within the county. From the \$4.00 transaction fee for all registration documents, .50 cents goes to the insurance database and .50 cents goes to the CSTARs Account. A lot of the taxes and fees, specifically the ownership tax, actually stays within the county so the County Commissioners divvy that out. Of each of the fees, we have the Road and Bridge fee which is \$30.00 and that goes to the Highway User Trust Fund. I can get you more of a breakdown if that would interest you.

Marvin Meyers: That was very helpful. Back in the mid 90's, when I went with a few others to your department over on 18th and Pierce, veterans did not have any discretionary funds for veterans services until we were able to get the Veterans Trust Fund in about 2001 so we could provide financial assistance for various veteran priorities. What we were trying to do way back, was to see if we could get .50 cents per plate for any veterans plate that was issued. And that would go into a veterans fund or discretionary fund to take care of specified needs veterans have. We were told that you can't do this. We got that from a number of legislatures. But I think anything is doable. The point being veterans are buying the plate; they would be thrilled to know that .50 cents per plate would go to help veterans. We do have many needs that are unmet. If you would like to reflect on that because it still needs to be pursued because the thing that turns us on is when somebody says it can't be done.

Mike Dixon: I would like to comment on that. I think you are right when you say anything can be done. It would take a change of the law. We operate under the law and what the statute allows us to do. As I said upfront, there are a few things we are able to do to help veterans but we have an appropriation that tells us to spend so much money and we can only do so much. When they establish laws and tell us where the funds go, we pretty much have to abide by the law. Clearly, anything is possible. You could pursue this in legislation.

Marvin Meyer: Veterans would not be adverse to those .50 cents to help their fellow veterans. Robby, this is something that I will bring up again at UVC. We have left it dormant for many years. Thank you.

Mickey Hunt: Is there any example of a plate, such as the Bronze Star plate, that when I bring in my DD214 that says I have a Bronze Star, then I get a Bronze Star plate. Is there any reason why I would have to prove that again on an annual basis?

Tony Anderson: On an annual basis, you should be just doing a renewal. Why, do you have a situation?

Diane Ricci: I do. I go every year. I have a Bronze Star plate and the DMV makes me show up every year. I cannot renew online and like Mickey just said, my Bronze Star is allocated for the rest of my life. It is a waste of my time and it is a waste of the person's time that I have to go and speak to at the DMV. Especially in my particular case, I am the only person on my vehicle registration. It's my plate, I'm still breathing. I don't understand why I can't do it online.

Tony Anderson: What county are you in?

Diane Ricci: I have lived in both El Paso and Douglas counties. I have had to go in physically and renew with both counties every single year.

Tony Anderson: I will make a little note to research that and get back with you.

Diane Ricci: Thank you. That would be awesome.

Robby Robinson: You walked through a process that allows you to do this by mail. It allows you to take your documents to Lakewood to get a license plate. We are talking here about getting veterans plates in the mail. I am not sure everybody knows that, so it is an education issue. Why is that system, doing it by mail, not working? If you are out in Durango, then the mail seems like it would be the best. Here's where I am coming from, if I go out to some tiny little county, where there are 27 veterans, I don't think the Clerk and Recorder would recognize the military documentations that are needed. It sounds to me like the mail thing ought to work, but it sound like you are saying it doesn't always work.

Mike Dixon: You can find room for improvement in any program. The vast majority of folks would probably want to go to their DMV office and get it done in a one-stop process. Or they can mail it in if they want to. It gives them the option.

General discussion about the mail in applications for special military license and free first issuance licenses.

Robby Robinson: Purple Heart Plates, for example, is there a form you fill out for the Purple Heart plate?

Tony Anderson: That is correct. There is a specific form you fill out for that one.

Robby Robinson: For each of the fee exempt plates there are unique requirements. You mail these to Lakewood where they have the expertise to look at a DD214 and understand the abbreviations on it and they will know that the SS means Silver Star. That is all still verified at Lakewood. If it goes down to the county level, I hesitate to think that there is anybody qualified to understand the documentation.

Chuck Broerman: I can see your perspective, but I think in El Paso County we are in a unique situation because we see the volume and understand the process.

Rene Simard: So there will be counties where it makes sense to have the Service Initiative and then in other counties it will make sense to use the mail in option?

Tony Anderson: In Aurora, you would see the same thing with the larger military presence. It is would make more sense to have a one-stop shop.

Mike Dixon: It is just an additional service, another way to get it.

Robby Robinson: What we can do is if you need changes to the law, then the Board can always help initiate that process. I am speaking for the Board, you understand? We are a Type II Board and we work for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. We, as a Board have the authority to do this, and we have the authority to talk to the Governor about it. If the Governor says, I don't want to do that then this Board does nothing. That is essential part of the state government. UVC is totally different. It is a good idea to get support from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Governor's Office. However, not every voice buried in the Department of Revenue or Local Affairs gets heard. Sometimes you have another channel to get to. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs thinks it is a good idea, and then the Board can do that. We can do that.

United Veterans Committee (UVC) is nonpartisan and they can do what they want. They are largely a lobbying organization. I am not advertising or suggesting, but Mike when you said, "Gee, this is the law and that is the way it is." You are absolutely right! If you need a law changed, then it is our charter to bring it to the attention of the Department, the Legislature, and the Governor.

Marvin Meyers: That is another thing UVC can do and have done over the years.

Mike Dixon: We work for the Governor and we have a neutral position. We get to introduce four Bills per year to help with the programs and we generally don't address specific groups. That does not mean that when groups want to advocate for different programs. It is exciting to

hear that you might want to help veterans and we are here in an advisory capacity if you need data or information.

Robby Robinson: Diane and her folks work with veterans every day. They mostly come in for benefits and claims process. The County Veteran Service Officers don't work for them. Duane, here, is a County Veteran Service Officer and they are county employees. Her office serves as a hub and a network. It also provides means of communicating to County Veteran Service Officers any changes, procedures, or whole new angle that identifies what the problems are. I just want to make sure people know what happens in the veterans' world, happens to you.

Mike Dixon: These are the current procedures and yes we do follow the law. One thing we historically have had issues with is how to communicate. Clearly, our website could have a page with specific information for veterans to improve this communication. A page dedicated to specific veteran issues, the military plates, information on requirements, and renewal.

Mickey Hunt: If you do that, you probably want to contact Diane. You may want to link the veterans' page to our website. I just got my DV plates a month ago and I have to compliment you guys. It was a great process.

General discussion about how long it has taken to get license plates and the difference in different counties.

Duane Dailey: Could you tell me which license plates do not require a veteran to get it?

Tony Anderson: 4th Infantry, Civil Air Patrol, USS Colorado, and NORAD.

Duane Dailey: Mike, I have a question, you are tied up with Department of Revenue. You stated that there is no charge for veterans for the veteran identifier on their license. It used to be \$14.00. So, what is the charge for a CDL license with the veteran identifier?

Mike Dixon: It should be \$39.00 for the CDL license and no fee for the veteran identifier.

Duane Dailey: I had a veteran who was charged \$39.00 for the CDL license and charged \$7.00 for the veteran identifier.

Mike Dixon: He should not have been charged the additional \$7.00 fee for a veteran identifier after August 2014.

Tony Anderson: Any outreach opportunities that you know of please let us know. We will be glad to partner and collaborate with you to educate the public.

Robby Robinson: The notion of the veterans' page and the link to CDVA is a good idea. You can also use us to communicate this stuff. Marvin's group meets once a month with about 70 different Veterans organizations involved. If you need to get the word out on a change or

something, we have access to a lot of veterans' communications modes. If we need to take a recess so you can ask questions or you are welcome to stay for our normal reports? I want to thank you for coming today. It has been very useful information and I am glad to understand the process better.

Diane Ricci: If you have any significant events with the license plates, I run the Department website. If you have anything significant to add to the website, please communicate with me directly so I can add the information. Here is my contact information so we can coordinate this information.

Robby Robinson: Thank you for the informational presentation.

Reports

Governor's Office

Richard Sandrock: This month, the Governor's office will be announcing a partnership with Western Dairy Association and Fort Carson Transition Assistance Program in order to create job opportunities for veterans in rural agricultural jobs across Colorado. This will be done in two stages. Stage one will be all of Colorado's agricultural cooperatives: Western Dairy, Western Corn, Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Egg Producers, and Sugar Beet Growers will be providing more of their job needs across the Western Slope and through the Eastern Plains to Fort Carson. Fort Carson's HR people will collating those jobs and the career counselors will make those career fields known to soldiers transitioning out of the military at the 30, 60, and 90 day marks. Those jobs will be immediate. So if you drive a dairy truck in the military, and there is a job for a dairy truck driver, then you have immediate opportunities.

Stage II, we are working with the same cooperatives and at the same time, working with National Agricultural Organizations to create training programs. So this could be a fellowship or internship where soldiers and airmen could have the opportunity to get funding to have an internship on a family farm. I mentioned a couple of months ago that there are 20,000 family farms in Colorado. The average farm consists of two people and the average age of Colorado farmers is 69.2. So our goal is to get additional funding not from the state but from these coops, to give these young men and women the opportunity to live with families and train in agricultural environments. If this is not for them, then there will be the opportunity to go to school for agricultural sciences. Sometime in the next week or two, Western Dairy will be announcing this in their newsletter. There will be more to come on that in the future.

At the request of Fort Carson Transition Assistance Program I am working to develop, "Why should a soldier or airmen stay in Colorado?" The story they told me is, "You've got a kid in Detroit who can't find a job and he is running around with the wrong crowd so he joins the Army. He stays in the military for 4 years and then when he is going through TAPS, they are asked what is he are going to do when he gets out of the Army, the soldier says he is going back to Detroit, but there are still no jobs in Detroit. Because they did not take the time to do research, it is comfortable and lazy to go back to where you came from. I have been working with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) to let young service

members know about the regions of Colorado, jobs that are available, careers, see what trade is growing, different trade schools available, which trades need people working in them, and the quality of life to see reasons to stay in Colorado. Oh by the way, you can ski and all that other stuff. That is what I have been working on. You have heard me talk about the Veterans in Piping Program. The Veterans in Piping had 16 soldiers graduate and of the 16, only 3 stayed in Colorado, even though there are 1,000's of welding jobs that are needed.

Speaking to OEDIT, I have been working with the aerospace champion, Jay Lindell. He has advised me that advanced manufacturing opportunities that are big in Colorado. So we are working to bring those opportunities to Fort Carson as well. Yesterday, I met with the HR Director at Lockheed Martin and they said they have a lot of manufacturing jobs that are paying anywhere from \$15-\$25 per hour for entry-level positions in their advanced manufacturing plant. They can't find applicants in Colorado, so they are doing nationwide searches for these jobs. With one-to-two months of certification, the service member could get a \$20.00/per hour job to start with, even if that is not what they are going to do with the rest of their life at least they are not going to go waste the GI Bill or get drunk in Mom's basement.

So now that we have connected Fort Carson and Lockheed Martin, Lockheed is exploring how to direct separate soldiers to these jobs. Could be HRC working directly with soldiers at Fort Carson, we are seeing if they will be working directly together for programs such as Veterans in Piping. We want these soldiers to have the job training so they can walk into a guaranteed job.

Rene Simard: How would that work with the Transition Assistance Program at Buckley?

Richard Sandrock: The gentlemen that work with transition at Fort Carson are not traditional stovepipe they actively work with their counterpart at Buckley to help make transition better for all service members. This is not just an Army thing. I have not personally reached out to the guy at Buckley AFB because the guy at Fort Carson told me he had it covered. His name is Mike Webb. He is in charge of the Fort Carson Transition Assistance Program.

Last month, the dignified transfer in Rifle out on the Western Slope for Captain William Dubois from Colorado. The Western Slope went all out for the support for his family and community. It went very well. Approximately a thousand people came out to provide support for the dignified transfer and a thousand came out for the services. At the funeral, there were people pouring out of the building. I know members of his family were very grateful for Colorado coming out and doing what they do best: honoring the veteran. The family members wanted to let them know they appreciate the show of support and were very moved by the community turnout. For anybody who was even tangentially involved in that, "Thank you from the family." Does anybody have any questions for me right now?

Rene Simard: I would just like to say, Maj. Gen. (retired) Jay Lindell is a great guy. He works very hard to attract and keep jobs in Colorado. He is more than willing to go out and talk to people about the importance of aerospace and defense in Colorado.

Richard Sandrock: If you do know folks from industries who are looking to hire, please get me their contact information. If it is legitimate employment opportunities, then I want to talk to

them about veterans' unemployment. When veterans come to me, I tell them to skip the job fairs. I welcome the opportunity to help them get connected so more veterans can get jobs.

Gail Hoagland: Richard, I will get you the name of someone who contacted us for funding. I spent 45 minutes on the phone with her yesterday. Her entire program is focused on agricultural training for veterans. I think there may be I will get you the contact information.

Discussion about job fairs and legitimate opportunities for veterans.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)

Mickey Hunt: Capt. Dubois's Funeral in Rifle was well attended. Maj. Gen. Edwards and the Governor, Richard and I took the Blackhawk and attended. The Governor presented the Colorado Flag to the family in addition to the U.S. Flag. There was a "Missing Man Formation" from Nellie AFB. Maj. Gen. Edwards and I testified at the Joint Budget Committee. I testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee along with Gen.

The decision items of note are:

- Requested one FTE for a Strategic Planner
- Approved for additional funding for County Veterans Service Officers, \$550,000 annually. Currently, counties have to do a match.

Dana presented for the Board. She did an excellent job. She raised some interesting questions about veterans' issues. She talked about rural issues and access to mental health care. There was a lot of press there in the room. After our testimony, there was another testimony from a counselor in Grand Junction who complained about treatment for a veteran at the Grand Junction VAMC who passed away during the holidays. Even though the press was not there for us, it still helped raise some awareness of our issues.

30 January 2015 – Military Appreciation Day at the Capitol.

20 January 2015 – Capital Development Committee Meeting (Maj. Gen. Edwards and Mr. Hunt will present)

Duane Dailey: Of that \$550,000, is that money earmarked for County Veteran Service Officers only or is it going to go to snow plowing, etc.?

Mickey Hunt: By statute, it has to go to County Veteran Service Officers only.

Marvin Meyer: Mickey, that is very refreshing to hear that the money will go to the County Veteran Service Officers. May I ask how that money will be allocated out to the counties equally?

Mickey Hunt: It is allocated equally. It will be \$8.00 per hour in addition to what they are currently being paid. We know that El Paso County or Arapahoe County, the CVSO are paid better than La Plata. Basically, this is to help out the rural counties where some of the County Veteran Service Officers are volunteers.

Discussion of County Veterans Service Officer compensation and the progression through the years.

Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs

Diane Ricci: Good morning, everyone. Provided before you is both a chart and report from Dick Gigliotti from the Grand Junction Cemetery was provided for you from Ben for your perusal. I am just going to highlight a couple of things on there. One is the donations for CY2014 are up at \$10,627.00, which is a 34% increase over CY2013. With the expansion project, they are still getting the silt out of the upper pond and they are working on the four new columbariums. As of Monday, the new columbarium was being used. They just wanted me to remind everyone that we have seven columbariums. We started with 4 and each one has 662 slots in them which equals approximately 18 months for burying our veterans. In approximately six years, we might need more columbariums. This is just something to put on your long-term radar. I want to remind you that the 2015 County Veteran Service Officer Training is coming up sooner than later. I am working on it all. It will be from Tuesday, April 28th through Friday, May 1st. It will also be in Colorado Springs at the Marriott down there. Mickey, I have a slot for you, I was anticipating you being there for opening day and opening comments. So be aware that you already have a slot for that with Ben first thing in the morning. For the Board meeting scheduled February 6th, Ben wanted me to ask if you wanted to have the Pre-Audit Meeting either before or after the Board meeting. The Audit Meeting will be on 10 February. Do you have any questions?

Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers

Kathleen Dunem: The Community Living Centers are doing well. They are all financially stable. The quality of living for the centers is very high. The annual report was submitted for the Community Living Centers. The Commission is currently looking at the impact of minimum wage, and minimum wage barriers. We are looking at electronic medical records being implemented. Fitzsimmons will be the first to come on board and the rest will come on board the every other month.

As we discussed last meeting, there is a national problem treating individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) whether they are veterans or not and with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are combative. It is very difficult to find beds for combative patients. They are running out of beds that are designated combative. The main concern as we move past the Korean War Veterans is that with some of the newer veterans PTSD is more prevalent in from the newer conflicts. This means the need for beds for the combative patients will increase, as will the need for more security and more care needs for those patients, requiring trained staffing. We have really good Community Living Centers. They are way above the national standards. They always receive great awards and are looking to stay on top of this trend. Vicki Manley is still at the helm and she is doing a really good job.

Robby Robinson: Are there any questions for Kathleen?

Veterans' Trust Fund

Gail Hoagland: One item of note, we needed to make an administrative change to the policy letters there was an incorrect date. The policy letters for both the VTF and the VAG indicated that the first quarterly report was due on September 15, when it should have been October 15. The date has been changed for both of the letters, but I wanted you to know since you voted to approve the final draft of the letter.

Robby Robinson: Since it is an administrative change, it is not necessary for us to vote on it again.

Gail Hoagland: Both grants engaged in an education presentation webinar with the potential applicants. The webinars were well received. There is some grumbling about the change in general but I think that is to be expected.

After the Joint Budget Committee meeting the State Audit Committee had a very brief overview of the VTF Audit and they seemed to be very complimentary in their comments. I think we have achieved what we needed to achieve, so all signs are positive at this point.

Discussion of the brief overview and the Audit Progress Report submitted in December.

Robby Robinson: So, they were reflecting on the update on the report submitted in December. We ought to mention the return of funds. That money that is freed up, it won't increase the amount available to the applicants?

Gail Hoagland: The money that was returned if from a VAG applicant, they just did not want to deal with the paperwork. The statute indicates that it gets rolled into next year's money. We can accept donations and we can solicit funding in that fund.

Robby Robinson: The issue for the Department is what to do with the freed up money for the Veterans Assistance Grant.

Discussion/Action: Annual Report of the Board

Robby Robinson: You have a copy of the Annual Report of the Board to the Governor. We should vote on this as a final draft.

Rene Simard: Motion to approve the final draft of the Annual Report to the Governor.

Duane Dailey: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say, aye. That is **unanimous**.

In the last meeting in December, there was some discussion of the need to update the Strategic Plan. The last time we had someone help us with a strategic plan, it cost approximately

\$27,000. It is a plan that is out of date it is 2015 now and that is when it runs out. There has been little time or effort to do a new one with the time spent on the Audit. From reading the minutes, we ought to have a focus for the Board. The rural issues and mental health care seem to be prominent issues. As Duane can confirm, the priorities are different in different communities. Where homelessness may be a big issue here in Denver, in Burlington, the biggest issue for veterans may be transportation. I think it would be worthwhile to look at unique issues impacting veterans. From conversations with Dana through Colorado Serves, the strategic plan should focus the Board's efforts on rural veterans needs and on outreach. I would like to propose that we utilize the County Veterans Service Officers as the focal point of the needs of veterans in their communities. The CVSO has the pulse of what the veterans in their communities needs are. With the new money for the CVSO's we may see less turnover and more of them being full time employees.

Mickey Hunt: For the future of outreach, this is a generational issue. Where a CVSO may be great at serving veterans of their generation, one specific veteran has college age veterans that they are not connecting with, missing an opportunity to serve the younger veterans. Another issue out in front is how we treat veterans of the current wars. Current veterans are mostly combat veterans with unique issues, unique ways of communicating such as use of social media, i.e., Facebook. Some people may think it is a website, but from my experience with Colorado Serves, it is actually building a network to help get out there and get going. A good example is when I visited Grand Junction, where there is a good network for meetings and collaboration between providers. One of the key ingredients to a network is the non-profit connections. I met a spouse who is wife of a veteran with PTSD. She needed help and she had no resources. I had been up there for the Mental Health Summit and from the networking contacts; I was able to refer the family to Rocky Mountain Human Services. These non-profits are getting money specifically for veterans, military members, and their families. PTSD impacts whole families; the spouse needs treatment as much as the veteran. The spouse, children, all the family members need treatment as much as the veteran. So, that is an issue to take before the Board and I would encourage you to look at.

Discussion of mental health services and non-profit organizations and the importance of connecting resources with the CVSO's.

Marvin Meyer: Mickey, as you are traveling around, you are finding out that there is a great need for services for families. What did you uncover as the biggest need?

Mickey Hunt: I would think mental health treatment for the whole family. Project Sanctuary does a great job reaching the whole family. Their success story is in treating the whole family. We have a lot of non-profits with funds to serve those families.

Marvin Meyer: Have you had feedback for Colorado network of mental health providers?

Mickey Hunt: Each community has its own needs. You need to have both veterans and the providers in the same room to have that conversation.

Marvin Meyer: The fact that a service is available does not mean it is assessable.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Chairman, as you look at venues for future meetings, Granby would love to host the Board for a meeting. I would like to invite Debbie Blanc from the CLC and Jason Strickland with Project Sanctuary. We need to make inroads with relationships inside the VA so we can work together not against each other.

Future Meetings

6 February 2015, 9:30AM, VA Regional Office, 155 Van Gordon, Lakewood, CO 80228 in the Director's Office

6 March 2015, 9:30A, El Paso County, Location TBA, will include Mike Webb from Fort Carson TAP Program.

New Business

Mickey Hunt: I would like to address attendance. I would like the Board Members to know what the expectations are for attendance to Board meetings.

Robby Robinson: The authority for this Board is in statute and the Board Members are appointed by the Governor's Office.

Mickey Hunt: The Board Members appointed had a known expectation for attendance going in.

Discussion of the importance of attendance to Board meetings.

Duane Dailey: I would like to invite the Board to come to Grand County to have a meeting.

Discussion of the Board going to Grand County for a meeting. It will be discussed next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:24am

