

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
07 October 2016
St. Vrain Community Hub
Longmont, CO 80501

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Rene Simard, Vice Chair
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary
Robert "Bob" McLaughlin, Member
William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director
Ben Mestas, CDVA Director
Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Greg McMahon, American Legion Post 32, Longmont
Tom Daschofsky, American Legion Post 32, Longmont
Dennis Sindelir, American Legion Post 32, Longmont
Cindy Clark, Boulder County Area on Aging
Sherry Leach, Boulder County Area on Aging
Michael O'Hara, Boulder County-Longmont
Karen Townsend, Boulder County Veterans Service Officer
Mike Holliday, Boulder County Veterans Service Officer
Mike Apgar, Boulder Vet Center-HUD/VASH
James Bell, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
Joseph Westbrook, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
Shelly Thompson, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
M. Meyers, Community Member
Judy Nogg, Community Member
Karen Orlosky, Healing Warriors, Fort Collins
Denis Darby, HOPE of Longmont
Alice Sueltenfuss, HOPE of Longmont

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0900 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Robinson provided a correction to the meeting minutes from 09 September 2016 and they were approved as corrected.

Comments

Mr. Robinson stated that he would combine his general comments with commentary on his submitted report. He stated that he continues to serve on the Fitzsimons site advisory group and they are still seeking input from the veteran community. There is interest in providing a continuum of service on the FitzSimons campus. A needs assessment done a few years ago indicated interest in a domiciliary. An updated needs assessment is in progress but it will not be completed until after the advisory group's October 31 deadline for recommendations. Another option on the table is sustainable housing for chronically homeless veterans, though there has been some concern regarding how compatible supportive housing might be with the CLC that is already in place on the campus. Other possibilities include expanded memory care, vocational training, and support for veterans who are single parents. Mr. McMahon suggesting examining the need for assisted living and Mr. Robinson asked what other needs stand out in the Longmont community. Ms. Townsend mentioned housing, citing the high cost of housing all along the Front Range, and this need was echoed by Mr. McMahon. Mr. Robinson thanked the community members for their suggestions.

Mr. Simard stated that the Colorado Defense Council is scheduled to meet on 27 October at the headquarters of the Colorado National Guard. The 22nd Annual Aurora Veterans Salute will be held on 09 November at Wings Over the Rockies. This year's event will honor Vietnam veterans and Mr. Robinson will be the keynote speaker.

Ms. Caldwell stated that she, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Hunt have discussed by email the difficulty in assuring that services provided to veterans are appropriate and there is no misappropriation of funds when different types veteran population are adjacently housed in a single community. She has also been researching existing models for housing different types of veteran populations.

Mr. Rudder stated that events have been quiet in the San Luis Valley. There have been no military funerals this month. He was unable to attend the Durango stand down because the date changed from Wednesday to Thursday, so he was unable to travel to Durango for event and then back to Longmont for the Board meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that he has been in attendance at MyVA meetings and has noted a current focus on assisting veterans who are just getting out of the military with the civilian adjustment. Town hall meetings continue to hear frustration with the Choice program and HealthNet was in attendance at a recent meeting. The governor will visit the Mount Carmel Center for Excellence as they continue to build best practices to limit gaps in assistance to veterans. The Colorado Springs Stand Down is scheduled for 18 October. Mr. Simard asked if it is known how many discharging troops from Fort Carson stay in Colorado, and Mr. McLaughlin responded that is it currently about 15%.

Mr. Dailey echoed concerns regarding HealthNet and the Choice program. Distance and mileage calculations are often incorrect and veterans continue to feel frustrated. Grand County will hold a Salute to Aviation History in Granby on Veteran's Day. He announced that Christopher Holden has resigned from the Board and that Mr. Hunt will address how the vacancy will be filled.

Community Providers Presentations

Karen Townsend and Michael Holliday represented Boulder County Veterans Services. Karen is based in in Longmont and has been a veterans service officer for 34 years. Formerly located with the workforce center, she now works out of the St. Vrain Community Center under Aging Services. She assists the local

American Legion Post in their execution of their VTF grant and will attend the Longmont Stand Down on 17 November. Michael Holliday works out of the Boulder office and mentioned that sees a lot cross-referral between veterans and other community services. This year's Veteran's Day celebration will include a parade and a pinning for Vietnam veterans.

Dennis Sindelir represented American Legion Post 32. He thanked the Board for the invitation to the meeting. He said the post currently has a VTF grant of \$60,000, of which \$10,000 is earmarked for education. He stated that while the post understands the statutory reasons for specificity when applying for and executing the grant, those requirements add complexity that at times complicate execution, and it has been a learning process to find the best ways to accommodate urgent needs. He mentioned that at one point advance payments of grant funds were available and were helpful. Mr. Dailey stated that advance funds can be requested for up to 25% of the grant and not in excess of \$10,000. Ms. Hoagland said the post would have to send a request for an advance that documents what the post has done to try to raise the funds. Mr. Sindelir thanked them both for the information. Ms. Hoagland and Mr. Dailey encouraged the post to call with any questions about how to execute their grant.

Mr. Bell, Mr. Westbrook, and Ms. Thompson from CDLE represent that department's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. The program utilizes veterans' employment representatives at local workforce centers. The U.S. Department of Labor also supports intensive services for veterans who need employment assistance.

Cindy Clark and Sherry Clark represented the Area Agency on Aging. They have recently added county veterans services to their department. Boulder County veterans tend to older and many do not actively seek assistance. Co-locating veterans services with aging services should help facilitate aid to aging veterans who qualify for various types of assistance, such as Medicare, in-home care, mental health care, respite care and caregiver support.

The Healing Warriors Program was represented by Karen Olosky. Healing Warriors provides acupuncture, craniosacral therapy and healing touch to veterans and active duty service members for assistance with pain management and PTSD symptoms. They advertise through word of mouth and attend Northern Colorado Stand Downs and are VA Choice provider.

Public Comment

Mrs. Ray Meyers addressed the assembly in regard to Veterans Helping Veterans Now, a veterans' assistance nonprofit that was founded by her husband in 2007 but which closed its doors last year. Veterans Helping Veteran Now provided a wide array of services, including acupuncture, massage therapy, group counseling, transportation, and showers and food for homeless veterans, as well as helping local police find assistance for veterans with mental health issues. Upon its dissolution many involved continued to find common ground in veterans' issues, and have since held community meetings regarding topics that affect veterans in northern Colorado.

At this point in the proceedings the meeting elected to recess, and Mr. Dailey dismissed the members at 10:32 a.m. The meeting was called from rest to labor at 10:47 a.m. and public comment resumed.

Alice Sueltenfuess from HOPE for Longmont addressed the group. HOPE addresses homelessness through services and programs focusing on dignity, empowerment and self-sufficiency. They have street outreach and provide and drop-in center two nights a week. One gap they encounter frequently is locating mental health care for veterans that does not require veterans to travel to the VAMC in Denver.

Community members concluded that it would be helpful to have contact information for the different organizations present and Mr. Dailey agreed to have the list posted on the CBVA web page within one week of the meeting.

Reports

Mr. Hunt reported that the new board member has been selected and he will provide that name to the Board one that commission has been offered. He encouraged Post 32 to continue to work the department in regard to their grant and to make their success story the standard for other grantees. He mentioned that the needs presented by Longmont's veteran community may indicate that it needs a veteran's one-stop such as the one currently being established in Grand Junction.

Mr. Mestas referred the Board to his submitted report but added detail on the cemetery audit, which showed a performance rating of 85%. The deficiency that was noted was the untimely delivery of VA gravestones, which is not within the cemetery's control. However, cemetery staff will follow up to see what can be done to expedite these deliveries.

Ms. Hoagland also referred the Board to her submitted report, her only addition that having recently had the opportunity to visit several CLCs it was good to see the difference made by VTF funds.

Discussion Items

Mr. Dailey announced the Board committee representatives: Mr. Simard for Grants, Mr. Rudder for Training, and Mr. Robinson for CLCs.

Mr. Dailey reminded the Board that the grant application process was revised and improved last year and that this we that could be expected to continue. Ms. Hoagland requested that Board members review the application and scoring rubric and send her their suggestions. The goal is to have the new applications available in November.

New Business

The Board discussed and confirmed dates and location for upcoming meetings:

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| November 09, 2016 | Wings Over the Rockies – 08:00 a.m. start |
| December 02, 2016 | VA Regional Office |
| January 06, 2017 | Fort Lyon |
| February 03, 2017 | tbd |
| March 03, 2016 | CDVA |
| April 07, 2016 | CDVA |
| May 04, 2016 | Durango |

Adjournment

Mr. Dailey requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion was made by Mr. Simard and seconded by Ms. Caldwell. The meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.