

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
Friday, 05 October 2018
American Legion Post 18
809 30th Avenue
Greeley, Colorado 80634**

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Jack Rudder, Vice Chair
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary
Patricia Hammon, Member
Norm Steen, Member
Sheila Scanlon, Member
Longinos Gonzalez Jr., Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Executive Director
Ben Mestas, CDVA East Director
Gail Hoagland, CDVA Grants Administrator
Leann Paul, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Wendy Bailey, AVSO Weld County
Amber Barthel, VSO Weld County
Ralph Ellison, American Legion Post 18
David Fry, CVSO Larimer County
David Meek, American Legion Post 18
Don Morrison, American Legion Post 18
Nickie Phillips, AVSO Weld County
Patricia Reynolds, AVSO Larimer County
Maria Seacrest, Regional Director, Office of Senator Cory Gardner
Toby Taylor, CVSO Weld County

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Opening:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0903 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey greeted all in attendance. The Board members identified themselves for the record and for the benefit of the guests. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room.

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the draft of the September 2018 minutes were provided by Ms. Hammon. Committee appointments were discussed and calendared to be finalized at the October meeting. It was moved by Mr. Rudder and seconded by Ms. Hammon to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion carried.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Scanlon said that since the previous discussion of issues at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC regarding women's care, she has been herself there for a mammogram. She was impressed with the professionalism, privacy, and equipment and has notified her network of how well the appointment went. The clinic has some remaining issues that are being addressed, and she will report ongoing progress to the Board. There is also an effort underway to include the women's clinic in display materials for the medical center. The women's summit held in Colorado Springs on 22 September was well attended.

Ms. Caldwell said the VA has been experiencing technical problems in regard to housing stipends for veterans receiving GI Bill benefits. Many payments have been delayed and provided in incorrect amounts. The VA has acknowledged the problem is working to rectify, but there is currently no timeline for when the issue will be fixed.

Mr. Rudder said that he has learned that the Fort Lyon program does not accept residents who have been court-ordered into treatment. He said that a van has been purchased for the Alamosa County transportation program with funds from the Veterans Trust Fund Grant, but the vehicle is currently in storage because the VA will not accept the title and its accompanying responsibilities if the van is used to transport veterans to appointments that are not paid for by VHA. Discussions are underway in regard to how to pay for the vehicle's registration, license plates, insurance, maintenance, and fuel.

Ms. Hammon said that the local Healing Waters program has been given permission to fish due to the waters getting cooler and the first trip is scheduled for next week. Veterans Day events scheduled to date include 20 school programs, a service at Freedom Park in Edwards, and an annual event at the Western Slope Veterans Collation in Glenwood Springs. The Glenwood Springs event will feature a speaker from the Museum of American Values for Medal of Honor recipients. A town hall planning meeting for the Grand Junction VAMC will be held in May. This two-day event includes five counties and will be hosted by Colorado Mountain College, which is willing to provide some lodging for veterans from outside the immediate area.

Mr. Steen said that veteran homelessness in the Pikes Peak area is of increasing concern. Mount Carmel is in receipt of a three-year grant to help address the problem. The Peak Military Care Network will debut an "Honoring the Brave" fundraising breakfast on 16 November. His recent travels to Washington, D.C. provided an opportunity to discuss taxes, tariffs, the military, and other issue pertinent to Colorado veterans.

Mr. Gonzalez attended an El Paso County veterans' summit held at Mount Carmel on 20 September. The new Pikes Peak Cemetery will begin accepting cremations in November, but the full opening of the cemetery will not be until 2019. He and Mr. Steen both attended the State of the Wing at Peterson AFB on 04 October. Retired Cornel Victor Hernandez has been named El Paso County Veteran of the Year. Mr. Hernandez was instrumental to the establishment of the Pikes Peak Cemetery.

Mr. Dailey said that there is an open invitation to the annual Veterans Day event at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby on 12 November. Recent fires in Grand County have been a concern, and several have been in areas where homeless veterans are often located.

Community Presentations

American Legion Post 18

Mr. Ellison provided information on several veteran community events. A flag retirement will be held at Post 18 on 03 November. The Veterans Clinic in Loveland will host flu shot clinics on 13 November and 27 November, and there will be one in Fort Collins on 20 November. Local veteran organizations are working on arranging transportation to these clinics from the Greeley Mall. Veteran transit services will also be going from house to house to provide flu shots for veterans who are not ambulatory. A new CBOC is planned to be opened in Johnstown.

He then supplied some statistics about the local veteran population. There are approximately 5,623 veterans in Greeley and roughly 10% of them are homeless. Homelessness is one of the biggest issues confronting the veteran community in Greeley. He next invited post member Don Morrison to comment on his experience with the Veteran Trust Fund grant application process.

Mr. Morrison said that he has been frustrated by the grant application process. He invested significant time in preparing the post's application and was disappointed when it was denied. Weld County has a veteran in need who could be aided with grant funds.

Weld County Veteran Services

Mr. Taylor also provided demographic information on the service area. He said that according to his research, between 2020-2030 the population growth rate will be approximately 3.2% and in the next decade will slow to 2.6%. The veteran population in the area has grown 1% per year for the past 10 years, and this is reflected in the number of disability claims processed by his office.

Ms. Barthel stated that in VetraSpec (operating system) Weld County has in the system 3,995 Veterans that are coming into the office to gain services. The Veteran population in Colorado as a whole has decreased from 407,616 in 2015 to 403,326 in 2016. The Veteran population of Weld County increased from 16,902 to 17,174 from 2015 to 2016. Veterans in the area range from rural farmers to urban oil field workers, to homeless in the city. With the growing population in Weld County and coming up on the 20th anniversary of the start of the war, numbers will keep rising. The areas that the CVSO help the Veterans with the most is health care, education, compensation, burial / death benefits, and health care enrollment.

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Public Comments

Mr. Fry said that the Larimer County Workforce Center also provides targeted service for veterans including assistance with job placement and training.

Ms. Reynolds said that the Larimer County veterans service office is extremely busy. The office sees more than 30 clients every day and receives more than 2,000 phone calls each month. The office layout needs some improvement to both accommodate this volume while affording veterans necessary privacy.

Recess

The Board recessed at 10:30 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:42 a.m.

Reports

Mr. Hunt thanked the post for hosting the meeting and particularly Mr. Morrison for his feedback regarding the post's grant application. For the benefit of the group, he clarified the difference between the Veterans Assistance Grant and the Veteran Trust Fund Grant. He announced that Joanne Iglesias has been appointed CDVA West Director and that the newly vacated position of cemetery director Grand Junction is being reviewed prior to announcement. The Western Slope One Source is on track for its opening date in 2019. The proposal for the woman veteran license plate will be considered in the upcoming legislative session.

Mr. Mestas said that Dan Warvi is assisting with the complication in regard to van for Alamosa County. He reminded the group that the VHA Choice program concluded on 30 September and that the new program is VHA Community Care. There is a possibility that in the future the new program will be run by Tricare. All other matters were address in his submitted report.

Ms. Hoagland said that the grant cycle has had a busy first quarter. Approximately 20% of the first quarter reports have been received; the deadline is 15 October. Survey results to date indicate that nearly 30% of veteran served are female, and Ms. Hoagland will update that statistic once the remaining reports have been received. She has several site visits planned to VTF grantees in October. She reviewed the timeline for the 2019-2020 grant cycle: the scoring criteria and application will be reviewed by the Board at the November meeting and application materials will be posted by 01 December. The criteria for applications and for reimbursement documentation must be done in keeping with state and audit requirements

Mr. Dailey read into the record a report from Robby Robinson, the Board's delegate to the SVCLC commission. Last year's failed legislation to allow the SVCLCs to pay employees at market rate rather than within the state employee legislated ranges is a continuing concern.

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Discussion and Action Item

The Board discussed which members accompnay [any the Adjutant General on the annual visits to the SVCLCs. Ms. Caldwell, Ms. Scanlon, and Mr. Rudder will each attend.

The Board discussed the ongoing issue in regard to allowing SVCLCs to pay competitive wages. It was decided that the Board will brief the TAG on the topic. Ms. Hammon will draft a letter for the Board to review.

The Board considered the assignment of members to the committees established in the bylaws and by the strategic plan.

The recurrent committees:

Annual Training:	Pat Hammon
State Veterans CLCs:	Robbie Robinson
Strategic Planning:	Pat Hammon, Jack Rudder
Tribute to Veterans Monument Trust:	Robbie Robinson
Veterans Trust Fund Grant:	Hollie Caldwell

The strategic planning committees:

SP 1

- 1.1.2 Two DVA Directors
- 1.2.1 Two DVA Directors
- 1.3.1 Board Chair, and two DVA directors or delegated representatives
- 1.4.1 DVA appeals specialist, legislative liaison, two DVA directors

SP 2

- 2.1.1 Chair or designated representative, two DVA directors
- 2.1.2 Dave Callahan, two DVA directors
- 2.1.3 Pat Hammon, Greg Dorman, Leann Paul
- 2.2.1 Chair or designated representative, Dave Callahan, two DVA directors

SP 4

- 4.1.1 Norm Steen, legislative liaison, grant administrator, CDVA east director
- 4.2.1 Norm Steen, legislative liaison

Ms. Hammon recommended additional board members per committee as well as a designated scribe. Mr. Steen moved that the committees be confirmed as drafted and Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried with Ms. Hammon dissenting.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 07 November Wings Over the Rockies, Aurora
- 07 December VA Regional Office, Lakewood
- 04 January Fitzsimons SVCLC, Aurora

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Steen. The meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.