

**Board Minutes**  
**March 2, 2018**  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**1355 S. Colorado Blvd., Suite 201, Denver, CO 80222**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0906 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:

Duane Dailey, Chair  
Jack Rudder, Vice-Chair  
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary (via phone conference)  
Lacey Golonka, Member  
Norm Steen, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Greg Dorman, Legislative Liaison  
Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director  
Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator  
Dave Callahan, DMVA Strategic Planner  
Claire Dean, CDVA Interim Office Manager

Guests Present:

Dick Young, UVC  
Leanne Wheeler, UVC  
Sheila Scanlon, Women Marine Association  
Stephanie Vivirski, Women Marine Association and Team Red White and Blue  
Theresa Rudder, President-elect, General Federation of Women's Clubs of Colorado

**Approval of Minutes from February**

It was moved by Mr. Steen and seconded by Mr. Rudder to accept the February minutes with corrections. The motion carried.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell had nothing to add.

Jack Rudder: Mr. Rudder listened to the Veterans Caucus at the Capitol prior to his confirmation to the Board.

Lacey Golonka: Both Ms. Golonka and Mr. Steen were confirmed to the Board. Ms. Golonka welcomed today's guests.

Norm Steen: On March 12, Mr. Steen will attend a faith-based homeless veteran outreach. Bill 4457 from Congressman Lamborn did not pass. On March 13, American Legion Post 171 will be recognized for their community work rebuilding a veteran's home in Cripple Creek. Mr. Steen serves on Advisory Board for the Military Care Network. One of the goals is to find the veteran purpose in their life. The Pikes Peak National Cemetery is set to open in late spring. It will be federally run.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey and Ms. Hoagland recently attended a meeting in Westcliffe requested by the grantee to resolve some grant issues. It was stressed that grant money from the Veterans Trust Fund is for veterans in need. While attending SB 157 hearing, Mr. Dailey heard the same concerns that he routinely hears in Grand County, that it's difficult to navigate the system and veterans are not sure what they are entitled to.

Dick Young: Mr. Young was surprised that the DVA was the only organization to testify against the recently defeated Women Veterans Bill. He said that there are problems, but mostly with the VA. Many female veterans will only meet with other women with regards to their issues. Mr. Dailey clarified that he testified as a County Service Officer, against the proposed money that was to be taken from the Veterans Assistance Grant, not as a Board member. Ms. Golonka stated on the record that she had testified as a female veteran, not in the capacity as Board member. She then asked Mr. Young about staffing and why a separate office is necessary when the State office already exists and helps female veterans. Mr. Young stated that he didn't know how many staff would be needed and that he was not sure how many female veterans live in Colorado. Ms. Golonka asked if the guests would want to have an open dialog with any of the three women currently serving on the Board to address their issues.

Leanne Wheeler: The Women Veterans Bill, by Senator Williams, would have created a sponsor-funded outreach position. Ms. Wheeler wondered if the State understands what female veteran needs are, if they are addressing those needs and if the grant money goes towards those needs.

Mr. Dailey asked Ms. Caldwell to speak about her background which she did. Ms. Caldwell stated that transitioning out of the military is somewhat different for women than men. Although she agrees conceptually in addressing the issues, she does not agree with taking grant money away from any veteran.

Mr. Dorman stated that he testified on the technical piece of the bill and that the Board continues to stay neutral on positions.

Mr. Steen testified as a County Commissioner, who feels that the creation of a second office to differentiate would be passing the buck. The focus should be to take care of all veterans regardless of race, gender or religion. And the second issue Mr. Steen had was with funding. Ms. Wheeler said the money sponsored for the bill was in an amendment. Currently, the VA is not structured to support the young female veterans. It is hoped that the Board will collaborate with those individuals who supported the bill.

Sheila Scanlon: Ms. Scanlon perceived that it was the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs that opposed the bill and wondered how we move forward. It is not enough to have a link on the website for female veterans.

Stephanie Vivirski: The way we treat our female veterans is a problem. Ms. Vivirski would like to know that the top three priorities are and how we are going to address them. More referral services for homeless female veterans with children are needed. Female doctors and female CVSOs should be offered to veterans prior to appointments. Mr. Dorman stated that many counties are limited with only one Service Officer and some are only part-time employees. Homeless veterans are addressed through the Department of Local Affairs, not DMVA due to departmental funding.

Ms. Caldwell mentioned that we could track how many female veterans we are serving through grant programs and possibly changing the grant application process to include more female-oriented programs. Ms. Golonka explained that part of the Strategic Plan is to provide better advocacy by identifying and finding ways to fill gaps in veteran's assistance.

Greg Dorman on behalf of Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt is currently attending the Women Veterans Expo in Houston, Texas. Any underspending of the Veterans Assistance Grant is a grantee's issue, not a Board or Grant Administrator issue. The \$24k of unused grant money would not cover the costs associated with Women's Veteran Bill. The website is a work in progress. Mr. Dorman briefly went over the Board's statutes and its capacity. SB18-135 Update to CO Code of Military Justice is currently in the House.

Ben Mestas: After hearing testimony and reviewing the veteran's record, it was found that the veteran's regular service officer was out the day of her appointment and so staff had her see a male service officer instead. Veterans are given every opportunity to turn down service officers for any reason. Staff has been directed to ask whether or not a client wishes to see a female service officer prior to setting appointments. Two thirds of the Division is female. The Appeals Specialist, Office Manager and Claims Assistant are all female. One of the three new hires will be a women's coordinator who is to attend this year's National Women's Conference in June. Mr. Mestas would like input and suggestions from those individuals who supported the Women Veterans Bill. He is researching best practices with other states on serving female veterans. Ms. Wheeler requested a formal strategy with the help of Mr. Callahan. There will be a vacancy on the Board July 1, 2018. Ms. Golonka met with Kathleen Wirkus to discuss job responsibilities for the women's coordinator and would like to include them in the discussion.

*Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 10:45am, and resumed to labor at 10:55am.*

Gail Hoagland: Of the \$25k Veterans Trust Fund money returned, Mr. Mestas motioned to reallocate \$21k for cemetery irrigation projects. Construction bids will be needed. Mr. Steen motioned for approval, Ms. Caldwell seconded and the motion carried. Only one of the 27 VTF

applications was pulled out of consideration as they were not in good standing. About 2 million was requested from the 47 VAG applicants. Ms. Hoagland asked the Board to make a firm recommendation regarding consideration of incomplete Assistance Grant applications. Ms. Caldwell motioned that the Board stay consistent with the application policy that all applications must be complete when submitted. Mr. Rudder seconded and the motion was carried.

Ms. Hoagland may ask for the Boards help in contacting VAG trustees who have been underperforming. Mr. Steen mentioned that some of the trustees have been waiting a long time for reimbursement money. Reimbursements will only be processed when all of the proper documentation is received. Grant applications will be emailed out to the Board by Friday, March 9. All scoring sheets need to be turned in electronically no later than March 28. Each application needs to be kept separate from one another and our IT Department will not allow them to be transferred on zip files. Mr. Dorman will work with IT to find a secure document sharing program. Ms. Hoagland will create notebooks with print outs for those who need them at the next Board meeting. If there is a conflict of interest, the Board member must recuse themselves. Ms. Hoagland went over the application review process in detail. Any application that scores below 60 will not be considered.

Dave Callahan: Mr. Callahan asked both Mr. Rudder and Ms. Caldwell to submit any changes they may have on the Strategic Plan section SPI4 in the next two weeks.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Dailey would like to continue the discussion on Board conference calls.

### **Future Meetings**

April 6, 2018 – Aurora Chamber of Commerce

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Steen. The meeting adjourned 12:38pm.