

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes**  
**01 June 2018**  
**Spanish Peaks Veterans Community Living Center**  
**23500 US Highway 160**  
**Walsenburg, CO 81089**

**Members and Guests**

**Members Present:**

Duane Dailey, Chair  
Jack Rudder, Vice Chair  
Pat Hammon, Member  
Robby Robinson, Member  
Norm Steen, Member

**DMVA Staff Present:**

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Executive Director  
Dave Callahan, DMVA Strategic Planner, CDVA West Interim Director  
Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator  
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

**Guests Present:**

Charlene Baldwin, American Legion Auxiliary  
Gary Baldwin, American Legion  
Bill Beck, American Legion  
Ed Calahan, American Legion  
Lynne Ciancio, veteran  
Florence Cisneros, American Legion Auxiliary  
Gerald Cisneros, American Legion  
Mary Criel, resident  
Bill Gust, Colorado Department of Human Services  
Paula Hill, Spanish Peaks Quality Assurance Coordinator  
Sam Holland, resident, president of resident council  
Carmen Lara, volunteer  
Michael Lockwood, resident  
Colin Lowe, veteran  
Lisa Lowe  
Joe Marion, resident  
Mary Martinez  
Pat Messasoia  
Lionel Montoya, CFO Spanish Peaks  
Jan Novak, veteran  
Brian Ortiz, veteran  
Cheryl Rogers, American Legion Auxiliary  
Dave Rogers, American Legion  
Patti Rowe, community member  
Theresa Rudder, President Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs  
Ed Salazar

April Secor, Spanish Peaks Administrator  
Jay Scott, CVSO Otero County  
Bill Shephard, American Legion  
Evelyn Shepard, American Legion Auxiliary  
Edwin Spitzer  
Nick Vigil, CVSO Huerfano County  
Roger Watkins, Spanish Peaks  
Kay Whitley, CEO Spanish Peaks

### **Opening**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0902 hours. Proceedings began with presentation of the colors by American Legion Post 16, a reading of the poem Common Solider performed by Gary Baldwin of American Legion Post 16, and a rendition of Taps. This was followed by the pledge of allegiance recited in unison and then a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas.

Mr. Dailey identified the Board and thanked all in attendance. The roll of Board members was called and it was noted that this would be the final roll call for longtime member Robby Robinson, attending his last meeting as a Board member.

Mr. Robinson gave an update to the Board from the SVCLC commission, saying that Mr. Gust reported on the finances of the Spanish Peaks hospital and that costs have been adjusted and operating losses reduced. Mr. Dailey asked if Mr. Robinson would continue in his role as the Board liaison to the SVCLC commission and Mr. Robinson agreed. Mr. Dailey presented Mr. Robinson with a plaque honoring his years of service to the Board and commended him on his continuing contribution to and advocacy for the wellbeing of Colorado veterans.

2

Mr. Dailey said that Ms. Golonka was waiting to join the meeting by phone while some technical difficulties were addressed. He then invited introductions from DMVA staff and from around the room.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Dailey corrected page two of the drafted minutes to clarify that the town halls held in the month of April were in Summit County and in Grand County. The minutes were approved as corrected.

### **Board Member Comments**

Ms. Hammon said the VOA office in Eagle County is assisting with the local housing crisis. The Grand Junction hospital held its quarterly forum and reported that surveys have been positive and staffing levels at the hospital are good. Primary care is now available in Glenwood Springs and the Glenwood Springs resource center continues to do well. Eagle County now provides a daily shuttle to Grand Junction. The VFW has just awarded its annual scholarships.

Mr. Rudder said that Memorial Day events in the San Luis Valley included a ceremony at the cemetery at Homelake, a USAF flyby, and a Civil War reenactment. The veterans coalition continues to focus on suicide prevention. Veterans to Farmers and Healing Waters continue to assist veterans in the San Luis Valley.

Mr. Steen said the Veterans Commission Engagement Board held its first meeting for the Pikes Peak region on 22 May. This complements a nationwide effort by VA to actively engage with veteran communities. Current and upcoming events include the Air Force Academy hosting the DoD Warrior Games 01-09 June, a veteran job fair at Mount Carmel on 21 June, Veterans Day at the El Paso County Fair on 14 July, and Vet Fest at Sky Sox Stadium on 04 August.

Mr. Robinson said that he spoke at the Grand Lake Memorial Day celebration. The event was well attended.

Mr. Dailey said that Mr. Robinson was also the grand marshal of the Grand Lake Memorial Day parade and thanks him for his participation that day. The parade's history extends to survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He attended a panel discussion on access to VA health care in Denver in May. It was noted of the average 22 veteran suicides per day, 14 of those veteran were never in VA health care.

### **Community Presentations**

#### Spanish Peaks Veteran Community Living Center

Ms. Secor briefed the Board and other attendees on the community living center at Spanish Peaks. Recent expansion of telehealth services has improved access to care and made it faster to get referrals. Psychiatric services are also available via telehealth. Recent activities included a Mother's Day luau and a Memorial Day observation, as well as recurring events such as shopping trips, dining out, and art gallery visits. Upcoming events include fireworks for Independence Day and a Rolling for Freedom fundraiser in August. The CLC recently earned a five-star CMS rating and the hospital was named one of the top 20 critical access hospitals by the National Rural Health Association. They are currently working on incentives to recruit and retain CNAs with such programs as paid training and tuition reimbursement. The mill levy passed in May is anticipated to help offset some of the impact of recent cuts to state provider fees.

#### American Legion Post 16

Adjutant Dave Rogers welcomed the Board to Huerfano County. He said that the county population is 14.4% veterans, more than twice the national average. Post 16 currently administers a VTF grant and this has been their first year to do so. As the grant administrator he said he observed two noticeable trends among veterans who need emergency assistance: either they are waiting for social service assistance which is progressing too slowly for their needs or they are waiting until they are in crisis before seeking assistance. He shared anecdotes about veterans who have been assisted by the grant funds within the past year. The post has not encountered any homeless veterans in the area, but the county does have an older population and those individuals often need more services. Problems with the Choice program are ongoing. He thanked Ms. Hoagland for her support with the administration of this grant.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Scott said that the local American Legion post decorated more than 1,700 graves for Memorial Day. Veterans in La Junta have seen a decrease in the number of primary care providers available to them due to difficulties with Health Net.

Ms. Rogers spoke for Ms. Criel, who said that the American Legion and Auxiliary helped her to get her voice box. She thanked the Board for their visit.

Mr. Montoya said that having the hospital and CLC adjacent has helped to facilitate resident's access to care, including hospital visits.

Mr. Baldwin agreed with the concern regarding access to primary and specialty care. Appointments scheduled as far away as Pueblo are sometimes cancelled and veterans are left with nowhere to go. He asked Ms. Whitley if she could confirm a rumor among residents that employees were instructed not to disclose that day's Board meeting at the CLC. Ms. Secor said that the meeting was announced in the resident council meeting and published to local CVSOs. Ms. Whitley said she will check the communication boards to make sure information is communicated uniformly. Ms. Lara said that she also heard that the meeting information was not published. She would also like to see more attention paid to residents' concerns.

Mr. Dailey asked what the process of inquiry is for resident concerns. Ms. Secor said she is the facility grievance officer and that the grievance policy and grievance forms are published and available throughout the facility. She also receives reports of concerns mentioned in resident council meetings. Mr. Marion said that residents often do not grieve because they do not think that complaints will result in action.

Mr. Beck asked whether any percentage of the mil levy was designated for only the CLC. Mr. Montoya said the mill levy is not thus restricted and the funds are available to entire complex.

Mr. Marion and Ms. Criel expressed concerns in regard to pain management. Ms. Secor said that there are CMS regulations in place that require the CLC to reduce the utilization of psychotropic and pain medication.

4

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Mr. Dailey thanked all of the residents for speaking and encouraged them to continue to share any concerns.

### **Recess**

The Board here recessed from 10:33 a.m. to 10:51 a.m.

### **Reports**

Mr. Hunt said DMVA will visit Spanish Peaks in October. He met with the UVC legislative committee on 29 May. He reminded posts and CVSOs in attendance that the fiscal year is closing and grant funds must be expended.

Mr. Callahan said with the increasing service capacity provided by the new One Source on the western slope, the Division of Veterans Affairs has been geographically divided into East and West regions. Groundbreaking for the One Source is scheduled for 20 July and the facility will open in January. Additional funding has been approved to support county veterans service offices.

Ms. Hoagland had no additions to her submitted report.

**Discussion Item: Additional VTF Funds**

Ms. Hoagland said that at the end of the legislative session the JBC issued a fiscal note increasing the available funds in the Veterans Trist Fund by approximately \$102,000.00. She asked for recommendations from the Board but did not advise reopening the application process. Mr. Robinson said that other entities than veterans organizations can utilize the funds, namely CLCs, the Grand Junction cemetery, and the Division. He moved to request proposals from those three agencies. It was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Action Items**

Executive Session

Mr. Steen moved that the Board hold an executive session. It was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried. The Board and Ms. Hoagland recused for the session. The executive session opened at 11:16 a.m. and closed at 11:27 a.m. Mr. Dailey advised all in attendance that no decisions were made in executive session and that it was for informational purposes only.

Strategic Plan

Mr. Callahan said he had provided all of the Board members a draft of the current plan. In discussion the time frame of the plan was decided as State Fiscal Years 2018-2020. It was moved that Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Rudder that the strategic plan be adopted. The motion carried.

**Upcoming Meetings**

- No meeting in July
- 03 August                      Gunnison
- 07 September                TBD, possible annual training
- 05 October
- November TBD
- 07 December
- 04 January
- 01 February
- 01 March
- 05 April
- 03 May
- 07 June                        elections

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Robinson made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Rudder. The meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.