

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
Friday, 04 October 2019
Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center
Florence, CO 81226

Members and Guests

Members Present:

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

DMVA Staff Present:

Richard Tremaine, CDVA East Director
Myra Dollar, CDVA East Office Manager
Gail Hoagland, CDVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Program Assistant

Guests Present:

Larry Crowder, state senator
Betty Hanawalt, veteran
Barbara Moore, McCandless CLC Administrator
Aaron Tremain, Mount Carmel Center for Excellence
Michelle Ruehl, veteran

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Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order 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. Rudder invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dailey moved that the October 2019 minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Community Presentations

Aaron Tremain

Mr. Tremain shared a PowerPoint presentation in support of the effort to create new state veterans community living center in the Pikes Peak area. The area lacks capacity to support older veterans in need of an inpatient facility and current projections indicate a significant increase in that target population by 2035. Ideally the initiative would like to secure a property that would allow not only for a new facility with the approximate capacity of Fitzsimons, but would also have space available for permanent supportive housing. A possible site has been identified.

The facility would provide long term care, memory care, respite care, and rehabilitation. The intended model is a public-private partnership similar to that used in Walsenburg. Advocates are requesting the support of the Board because the state would pay 35% of the costs to establish the new facility.

Dr. Caldwell said that sustainability of the facility should also be considered, since while the population of older veterans in Colorado is projected to increase in the near future it is expected to then decline. Ms. Hammon asked if any legislative action would be taken this in the upcoming session. Mr. Tremain said that is currently uncertain. Mr. Crowder asked if the new facility would impact the census at McCandless and Mr. Tremain said that is probable.

Ms. Scanlon asked if the Board could encourage the support of The Adjutant General and the governor's office. Mr. Steen that without a concrete proposal there may be nothing yet to support. Mr. Gonzalez said the Board could offer general support of the strategic effort to support the need for long term care for older veterans in the Pikes Peak region. He cautioned the Board it might not be beneficial to support the legislation before it is written, as the product could include details that the Board would not support. The Board agreed with Mr. Gonzalez suggestion to support the strategic effort and he so moved. Ms. Hammons seconded. The Board will notify The Adjutant General and the governor's office that it supports the concept of a veterans community living center in the Pikes Peak region.

Betty Hanawalt

Ms. Hanawalt presented about the American Legion Auxiliary on behalf of Theresa Brandt, president-elect of The Auxiliary Department of Colorado. Both the National Auxiliary and the Department of Colorado were founded by Congressional charter in 1919. The mission was to offer establish rehabilitation and supportive care for soldiers returning from the war. Through World War II, the organization continued to provided and expand medical aid and assistance to veterans in need, adding a home services component in 1974. Today the Auxiliary advocates for veterans and promotes patriotism through a variety of community programs in hospitals, clinics, and schools.

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The Board here recessed at 10:34 and resumed at 10:45

Unfinished Business

Widow's Tax Letter: the final corrections have been submitted and the letter is being finalized for Mr. Rudder's signature.

Bylaw Review: the bylaw committee intends to meet by phone prior to the stated meeting November. The meeting will have minutes kept and seven days' public notice will be provided.

CCI Panel: Mr. Steen presented his recommendations for the veterans' panel at the CCI winter convention on 02 December. He proposed including a county veteran service officer, a state veterans service officer as well as a member of the Board. The Board accepted his recommendations by consensus.

New Business

VTF funding request: Ms. Hoagland presented a VTF funding request from Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The cemetery requested \$24,400.00 for necessary repairs, specifically to replace concrete that allows water accumulation under the footing of the administration building, address shifting sidewalks throughout the cemetery, sidewalk cracks and joint repairs, and repair of water damage that affects the integrity of the mail roadway. It Mr. Steen moved and Ms. Hammon seconded to fund this request in the requested amount of \$24,400.00. The motion carried.

Ms. Scanlon asked the Board consider whether holding meetings in the evenings would allow a greater number of veterans to attend. Mr. Steen said that publishing a meeting calendar six months ahead would also help. Ms. Scanlon suggested that the December meeting could be held on Thursday evening rather than Friday morning. Mr. Dailey said that could prove difficult for Board members who work full time and need to travel to the meeting. Ms. Hammon said that she is willing speak to Post 103 in Littleton about meeting space in December and to inquire about the possibility of an evening meeting and report back to the Board.

Ms. Hammon said that Michael Kilmer has begun his position as director of VHA ECHCS and that she would like to invite him to speak at the November meeting. Mr. Rudder said that he would speak to Rene Simard to ensure that the Board members attending the luncheon after the November meeting have a table together.

CLC Presentation

Barbara Moore introduced Dave, the president of the residents' council. She thanked the Board for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant awards current and past. It has helped them to afford essential construction and is currently funding the establishment of a Scandent system. She said McCandless serves a wide range of care need and that the resident council is essential to McCandless because in their facility the residents drive the decisions concerning priorities and improvements. The group also selects the activities and events to ensure they are occasions that the residents enjoy. Dave also thanks the Board for the VTF funds and for the support. He said that enjoys the community at McCandless. He spent some time at another state CLC and was happy to return to Florence. Mr. Steen asked if there is pressure to keep a full census. Ms. Moore said there is not pressure but it is important. They have to have 94 residents to maintain their full funding. He asked if they experience any marketing challenges. Ms. Moore said that one is that they have no private rooms, and the rooms they have are small. Redesigns of the space have been considered, but they are disruptive and very expensive.

Reports

Mr. Tremaine said that representatives from the woman veteran advocacy group met with the governors' office and that the meeting was productive. CDVA East will soon announce a VSO position that will emphasize diversity and inclusion. The MOU with VHA will allow VSOs to visit inpatient veterans for claims assistance is still in progress.

Mr. Ruder referred the Board to Mr. Robinson's written report and said that Mr. Robinson has accepted the appointment as the Board's liaison to the SVCLC Commission and to the Veterans Monument Trust. Ms. Scanlon reminded the Board that now that some compensation improvements have been made in regard to CLC staff who provide direct care, the next anticipated legislation will probably concern compensations for nutrition and facilities staff.

Ms. Hoagland referred the Board to her submitted reports. Of note was that at year-end of the last cycle, veterans' self-reported outcomes match the statutory priorities of each grant, with the majority of

VTF recipients reporting a decrease in urgent need and a majority of VAG recipients reporting improved health and well-being. Ms. Scanlon asked if Ms. Hoagland has concerns about any VTF grantees so far this year. Ms. Hoagland said that she is not concerned, but is proactively paying monitoring visits in October to grantees in Cortez and Durango.

Mr. Rudder referred the Board to Ms. Iglesias's written reports. CDVA West is in the final stages of hiring a new cemetery director. The WROS has two new tenants moving in and is working on various improvement projects, including parking, HVAC, acoustics, and creating a children's play area.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Scanlon said that Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center has made improvements to its mammography unit, including more curtains for better privacy.

Dr. Caldwell said that she assisted Nicole DeNari, who attended the September meeting, get in touch with the Centura Health CEO.

Mr. Dailey said that he visited the Eyes of Freedom Lima Company memorial while it was on display at the Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center. Snow Mountain Ranch will hold its annual Veterans Day event. The Commander of the American Legion of Colorado and a National Vice Commander of the American Legion will attend, the latter serving as the keynote speaker.

Mr. Steen said that the CDOT project to help make VA health care accessible to veterans using public transportation is in progress. He told the Board that recent changes have limited on-base health care to current servicemembers and not retirees. He has been reappointed to NACO's Veterans and Military Services Committee.

Ms. Hammon said that suicide prevention is still a topic of focus in Eagle County, as a veteran committed suicide in the jail in September using a ligature method. Dr. Caldwell said that ligature risk prevention is a significant topic in health care and well as corrections. Ms. Hammon is serving on Senator Bennett's selection committee for the Air Force Academy.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 06 November – Wings Over the Rockies, Aurora
- December – date/time TBD – Littleton

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Dailey moved to adjourn. Ms. Hammon seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.