

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
Friday, 01 February 2019
VFW Post 1
841 Santa Fe Drive
Denver, CO 80204

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:

David Callahan, CDVA East Acting Director
Gail Hoagland, CDVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Program Assistant

Guests Present:

Katy Barrs, Clinic Director, The Sturm Center
John Keene, Commander, VFW Post 1
Robby Robinson, CBVA liaison to SVCLC Commission and Veterans Monument Trust
Theresa Rudder, President, General Federation of Women's Clubs of Colorado

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Opening:

Mr. Dailey called the meeting to order at 1006 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey thanked all in attendance and invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Caldwell moved that the minutes of the 04 January meeting be approved as submitted and Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Rudder said that homelessness among veterans continues to be a problem in the San Luis Valley, exacerbated by the cold weather. Suicide prevention is an ongoing priority. His office has been assisting resident of the Homelake Domiciliary who experience a gap between the rent and their available income.

Dr. Caldwell said that Porter Adventist Hospital is implementing the Columbia protocol to assist in screening for suicide risk and effective prevention. Dr. Caldwell is creating a training on this protocol to be used within the Centura Health network and will include specific screening for veterans and military.

Mr. Steen said that as a member of NACO's Veterans and Military Services Committee, he will participate on a call this week regarding nationwide strategies to reduce veteran suicide. The goal is to assemble practices to reduce the suicide rate among veterans, military, and family members. Recent proposed legislation would provide federal funding for county veterans service officers.

Ms. Scanlon said that the plan to include woman veterans in the exhibits at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC is to incorporate artifacts into the current displays. They are currently seeking items to include. Efforts are underway to secure funding for state Women Veterans Coordinator, which will be a dedicated position not partially allocated as a general service officer.

Ms. Hammon said a recurrent problem for veterans seeking emergency room care is that veterans assume that the hospital notifies VHA. This is not the responsibility of the hospital and veterans receive unexpected bills for emergency care. The Western Slope One Source is nearly complete including the interior and the grand opening is scheduled for 09 May. The WSOS is holding open houses to market the facility to nonprofits. Healing Waters and Comeback yoga continue to be active and well attended. Total Health Alliance of Eagle County is preparing crisis management training for first responders.

Mr. Gonzales said that El Paso County has been working to assist veterans and others adversely affected by the government shutdown. The Lindstrom CBOC in Colorado Springs will hold a mental health awareness training on 02 February.

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Mr. Dailey said he attended a S.A.V.E. presentation at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC, which was also attended by the county veterans service officers from Arapahoe and Broomfield counties. He recommended that CDVA include S.A.V.E. in its annual training. Beginning in February the VAMC will provide a mobile veteran medical center in Grand County; this even will recur every third Tuesday for a 6-8 month trial period. The Boulder Vet Center is providing outreach to Summit County. Veterans' town halls are scheduled to be held in Frisco in and in Kremmling in April. The event will include the Summit County veteran service office, community organizations, and representations from both VBA and VHA.

Community Presentations

VFW Post 1

Mr. Keene provided the history of VFW Post 1 and its current work in the community. The post was established in 1899 in the wake of the Spanish-American War. The intent was to advocate for and organize benefits and rights for veterans involved in overseas conflicts. Post 1 established its current location five years ago, as part of effort to modernize the organizations and increase its community involvement. They have utilized their new location in the midst of Denver's art district to display and sell veterans' art. Today they also display art from additional artists in the community, with approximately 80 percent of the wall space reserved for veterans. They offer wellness programs for veterans and families, participate in the district's First Friday events, and collaborate with a wide variety of veteran and community organizations. Long-term plans include acquisition of an apartment building to use for affordable housing for veterans.

The Sturm Center

Dr. Barrs provided information on The Sturm Center. The Center is part of the University of Denver School of Professional Psychology Center designed to train students to provide direct behavioral health services to veterans, service members and their families. The Center has four missions: training, clinically relevant research, outreach and community educations, and direct clinical services. The Sturm Center clinic offers behavioral and mental health services, with a sliding scale used to increase accessibility. They can assist with DBQ's for VA claims and with the documentation necessary for discharge upgrades.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that DVA East added two new service officers in January. They are currently training and will attend NACVSO training in Nebraska in April. Ben Mestas has returned to DVA East as a state veterans service officer. James Poteet will assume his appeals specialist role full-time and be located at the VARO beginning 01 March. A position of division director for CDVA East has been announced. He will attend the Annual Women Veteran Empowerment Exposition in Houston in March. A bill is being drafted for the woman veteran license plate and sponsor are being sought. Further details from CDVA West are available in the submitted report from director Joanne Iglesias. He distributed copies of the Strategic Plan and the Board discussed whether to process with the SPI committees as confirmed. It was noted that if more than one board member serves on the same committee the meetings will need to be scribed and published.

Mr. Robinson said the Veterans Monument Trust is still soliciting bids concerning repair of thee broken light. The CDHS budget proposal concerning salary increases for SVCLC employees is pending. JBC has not yet set figures. The letter of support from the Board has been sent DMVA leadership. The Spanish Peaks SVCLC is seeking a new administrator. Groundbreaking for the transitional living facility being constructed on the Fitzsimons campus was held in December.

The Board here recessed at 11:43 and resumed labor at 11:55.

Reports

Ms. Hoagland said that current statistics indicate that the percentages of women veterans served by each grant stream are respectively 10.4 percent and 14.8 percent for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant and for the Veterans Assistance Grant. One VTF grantee has agreed to a downward modification of their contract.

Discussion/Action

There are currently four VTF grantees who are out of funds and have applied for additional funding. The requirements for additions funding is that the organization must have spent at least 65 percent of its grant by the middle of January, are in full compliance, demonstrate the need, and can provide assurance that the funds will be expended by 15 June. Requests submitted to the Board for consideration were:

American Legion Post 9, La Junta: \$2,000.00 for transportation. Mr. Gonzales moved that the funds be awarded as recommended. Mr. Rudder seconded. The motion carried.

VFW of Colorado, Lakewood: \$10,000.00 for veterans assistance. Mr. Steen moved that the funds be awarded as recommended. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

VFW Post 5843, Meeker: \$4,000.00 for transportation. Ms. Scanlon moved that the funds be awarded as recommended. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

American Legion Post 103, Littleton: \$5,000.00 for veterans assistance. Mr. Steen moved that the funds be awarded as recommended. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Ms. Hoagland said a legislative change will be required to allow the VTF Grant to permit costs involved in vehicle ownership when granting funds for a vehicle purchase. Also to be considered is that DAV chapters are required by the national organization to surrender vehicle titles to VA.

Ms. Scanlon asked if there was an update on pay for county veterans service officers. Mr. Steen said as CCI has no standing committee concerning veterans, the annual conference may be the best opportunity to communicate with county commissioners. Ms. Scanlon suggested a letter in advance of the conference to the board s of commissioners, and Mr. Gonzales said that might give them notice of the topic and allow them time to research. Mr. Steen suggested tailoring the letters by county to give the exact dollar amount provided by the state. He and Mr. Callahan will work on the letter.

Upcoming Meetings

01 March Golden CBOC: VTF application training
05 April Aurora: VTF discussion and vote

Ms. Hammon suggested adjusting the date of May meeting to 09 May so that it might be held in Grand Junction and coincide with the grand opening of the Western Slope One Source. The ribbon cutting is in the morning so the meeting time would have to change to the afternoon. Mr. Callahan said that Board members who wish to fly to Grand Junction from Centennial have the option available. Mr. Dailey said the current meeting location has the advantage of having been arranged by congressional district. Ms. Hammon moved and Ms. Scanlon seconded that the May meeting be held on 09 May at the Western Slope One Source at 02:00 p.m. The motion carried with Mr. Dailey and Mr. Gonzales dissenting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder moved to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Caldwell. The meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m.