

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
Friday, 01 March 2019
ECHCS Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1020 Johnson Road, Room 1372
Golden, CO 80401**

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
Greg Dorman, DMVA Legislative Liaison/Resource Director
Gail Hoagland, CDVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Program Assistant

Guests Present:

Bill Conroy, Former CDVA Director
Theresa Rudder, President, General Federation of Women's Clubs of Colorado

1

Opening:

Mr. Dailey 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. Dailey welcomed Mr. Conroy and introduced him. He then invited introductions from Board members and staff. He reminded the attendees that the traditional agenda format was adjusted for the meeting to ensure sufficient time for VTF Grant application review training.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Gonzalez said corrected the spelling of his last name, which was correct in the attendance register but wrong elsewhere in the document. He also corrected line 8 in the summary of Mr. Callahan's report, changing the word "process" to "proceed." Ms. Hammon moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Rudder seconded. The motion carried.

VTF Application Review Training

Ms. Hoagland provided a history of the VTF grant program and the current application, scoring system, and program policies. The existing standards are based on the results of the performance audit of the VTF Grant conducted by the Office of the State Auditor in FY 2013 and on the criteria of DPA's Grants Unit, which uses OMB's Uniform Grant Guidance to inform its requirements of state grant programs.

Mr. Conroy addressed the Board regarding VTF history and the 2013 audit. He said the initial grant processes assembled by DMVA distributed funds efficiently, which was a priority for the department. The performance audit found deficits in accountability and in the suitability of some budgets and budget items. The initial changes to the VTF grant program were in response to the problems identified by the audit.

Mr. Dailey said that he joined the Board immediately after receipt of the audit results, and he recalled that there were 114 program deficits in the report. He commended Ms. Hoagland on her work to create the current program and its structured accountability.

Mr. Dorman said that he was working for DMVA when the audit took place. He said that the State Auditor's office wanted more metrics and an even greater degree of accountability from grantees. The department successfully rebutted some of the recommendations because such requirements would place significant strain on grantees, and were likely to adversely affect service delivery.

Ms. Hoagland said that since the modifications made in response to the audit, other changes have been necessary due to the requirements of the DPA Grants Unit. One requirement is a pre-award risk assessment that is now part of the application materials. Risk assessments can be highly detailed and run up to 24 pages long, but to streamline the process for VTF applications the DMVA form uses a two-page check-box form. The form elicits critical information necessary to assess risk and determine how much monitoring a grantee organization is expected to need. VTF grantees are usually high risk as they are not traditional nonprofits. Volunteers often manage the service programs and the organizations are unlikely to have complex accounting systems.

2

Ms. Hoagland distributed copies of the audit findings that are specific to the Board accompanied by the DMVA responses. A copy of the document is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Steen said that the audit report and recommendations seem inflexible and mechanical, and that service delivery should be the priority. Dr. Caldwell said that the recommendations should guide an objective process and that accountability from grantees is necessary. Mr. Dorman said it is difficult to maintain a balance between accountability and difficulty. Ms. Hammon said that she also serves on the CDPHE Board of Health and the DMVA grant process is much less stringent by comparison to the policies of that department with much more support available to grantees.

Mr. Conroy asked if training is available to applicants and grantees. Ms. Hoagland said that application webinars are conducted throughout the application cycle. Grantees receive a handbook of rules and policies at the beginning of the grant cycle and a kickoff webinar is required at the beginning of each grant year. Applicants are permitted to ask questions during the application process, which is not a common practice. However, this level of support is important to provide since most VTF applications are being prepared by post and chapter volunteers rather than professional grant writers.

Ms. Hoagland distributed copies of the 2019-2010 VTF application form. Ten webinar trainings were held to assist applicants during the process. The webinars follow the application exactly with explanations and examples of how to answer the questions.

She reminded the Board that VTF application are considered private property of the applicants if and until the applications are funded. Neither the applications nor their contents can be disclosed to outside

parties at this time. She reminded all of the conflict of interest policy: if a voting member is directly involved with any applicant organization, that person must disclose the affiliation and recuse themselves from scoring and discussion of that application. Board members must also recuse themselves in the case of any personal bias that might affect their objectivity regarding an applicant.

Ms. Hoagland distributed the scoring rubric, which describes how to score each category based upon the published criteria. A copy of the rubric is attached to these minutes. She said that the Board will also receive a map showing the geographic location of all applicants. She then provided a fictional sample for scoring practice and led the Board through the exercise.

Ms. Hoagland said that applications are due by 3:00 p.m. on 01 March. She will review the application for completeness. They just have an original signature of the authorized representative and must have all the required attachments. All applications that meet those minimum requirements will be sent to the Board members for scoring. She asked the Board to send their scores no later than 29 March so that the scores can be compiled prior to the next meeting. Applications from CLCs need to be read but they do not need to be scored.

The Board VTF subcommittee will meet on 21 March and submit its recommendations to the Board. The Board will vote on all applications on 05 April.

The Board here recess at 10:43 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:58 a.m.

Mr. Dailey asked if there were any questions in regard to the scoring process and rubric. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Hoagland if information is available regarding the timeliness of grant reimbursements. Releasing the gavel, he addressed the Board as a representative of a VTF grantee, saying that VTF reimbursement have been markedly slow during the current grant cycle.

3

Ms. Hoagland said that the issue is known and that Accounting has run behind due to staffing issues. Earlier in the week she was informed that a reimbursement request processed on 11 January had not yet been paid, and she notified the department Controller that the department is in violation its grant agreement. The grant agreements require that reimbursements be paid no late than 45 days from the processing date. Her understanding is that Accounting currently has only one staff person processing all of the payables.

Mr. Dorman said that he will advise the Deputy Executive Director. Dr. Caldwell asked if the Board should submit an official inquiry. Mr. Dorman said they are welcome to do so, but he is willing to relay the inquiry on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Dailey asked if it would help if grantees requested advances rather than submitting for reimbursements. Ms. Hoagland said it probably would not, as requests for advance have to be approved individually by the Controller and thus usually take longer than reimbursements. Ms. Hammon suggested drafting a letter to department leadership that would be ready to send if there is no resolution by the date of the April Board meeting, and Mr. Gonzalez and Ms. Scanlon agreed. Ms. Hoagland said that the timing of reimbursement payments ebbs and flows according to the workflow and staff available in accounting but that these delays are a more pronounced than usual. She provided an update from her 01 March email, stating that reimbursements from 30 January are being processed. This brings the current wait time into compliance.

Mr. Dailey resumed the gavel and invited a motion concerning the Board's preference regarding a letter to the department. Ms. Scanlon moved that since the grant agreement violation is no longer active, the Board prepare a letter in case it is needed in April but to allow Mr. Dorman to relay the Board's interest in the meantime. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Hammon will draft the letter and Ms. Scanlon will review.

Discussion/Action

VTF Webinars

Mr. Dailey asked if all of the Board members have attended a VTF webinar. Three members have but only one within the past year. Mr. Dailey reminded the Board the VTF Grant is the Board's charge and encouraged all the members to attend at least one webinar per cycle.

SPI Committees

Ms. Hammon said that Board voted on SPI committees in October and those appointments were reviewed as follows:

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, DVA designated staff
- 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

Mr. Dailey said that the committees as created do not contain more than one Board member apiece and therefore are able to meet without public notice. Mr. Callahan recommended designating a lead for each committee so that committees can begin work. The committee leads that were decided are as follows:

SP 1

- 1.1.2 CDVA West Director
- 1.2.1 CDVA East Director
- 1.3.1 CBVA Chair
- 1.4.1 Tabled

SP 2

- 2.1.1 David Callahan
- 2.1.2 David Callahan
- 2.1.3 David Callahan
- 2.2.1 Tabled

SP 4

- 4.1.1 Norm Steen
- 4.2.1 Tabled

May 09 Quorum

Mr. Dailey asked the Board to affirm an anticipated quorum on 09 May at the Western Region One Source. Mr. Rudder, Dr. Caldwell, Ms. Hammon, and Ms., Scanlon plan to attend, so a quorum is anticipated.

Reports

Mr. Dorman said that the Senate confirmation of the appointments of Mr. Gonzalez and Ms. Scanlon will be on 25 March at 01:30 p.m. He requested a copy if digital copy of the artwork for the Woman Veteran license plate to provide to the sponsors. He advised the Board regarding the letter to boards of commissioners encouraging support of county veterans service offices, saying the statue provides funds up to the specified amount to reimburse those spent in support of the county veterans service office. Mr. Steen will revise the Board's letter to capture the correct wording. Ms. Scanlon asked about the status of the letter in support of the CDHS budget proposal to raise the pay of CLC staff. Mr. Dorman and Mr., Callahan will confirm.

Mr. Callahan reported that CDVA East is hiring a director, an office manager, and an administrative assistant. Carissa Snyder is the LEAN champion for CDVA East. The four new CVSOs from CDVA East will attend NACVSO training in April. Six regional trainings will be conducted by state VSOs in April. The position of State Women Veterans Coordinator is being submitted for approval. It is unknown at this time whether the position will be under DMVA or CDVA East.

Ms. Hoagland said that she was invited to help create the state's Grant Management 101 training. She bought a request for a contract modification to increase the fund allocation for VT 19-17, American Legion Post 62 in Craig by \$2,000.00. Ms. Hammon moved to approve the modification. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Hammon asked if any additional information was available on the performance of VT 19-07, American legion Post 32 in Longmont or VT 19-20, American Legion Post 22 in Northglenn. Ms. Hoagland said that VT 19-07 has modified the grant agreement to decrease funding and that she has had three on-site meetings with VT 19-20. The post has appointed a new grant manager.

5

Board Member Comments

Ms. Hammon said that the Western Region One Source will hold an open house on 08 March from 04:00 p.m. – 08:00 p.m. There are 12 rental spaces available and five commitments to date. The One Source will have a state VSO and DAV will continue to have a VSO available at the hospital.

Mr. Steen said as chair of the Board of Directors of Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, part of their current mission o to support and protect veterans, military members, and families, including advocating for increased community-military relationships. The National Association of Counties Veterans and Military Services Committee will meet on 03 March in Washington, D.C. with a focus on suicide prevention and associated best practices.

Ms. Scanlon said that UVC will hold its awards banquet on 07 April at the Renaissance Hotel in Stapleton. Ticket prices will increase after 21 March. She encouraged Board members to let her know if they want to attend and if there are enough people she will reserve a table. March 2019 marks the 74th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima. Survivors and family members will attend a remembrance ceremony on the island.

Mr. Gonzalez said that Senator Gardner has announced his VA Readiness Initiative. This includes several bills that are based on four pillars: expanding access to services, encouraging innovation, VA accountability, and empowering transitioning service members. Construction has begun in Colorado Springs on Freedom Springs, a housing development designed to offer permanent housing to homeless veterans.

Dr. Caldwell said the Columbia protocol has been rolled out to the Centura Health Network. This suicide risk assessment has been endorsed by both the DOD and VHA and can be used by laypeople.

Mr. Rudder said this March meeting mark his fourth anniversary as a member of CBVA and his seventh as a VSO. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve on behalf of Colorado veterans.

Mr. Dailey said the Veteran Town hall in Frisco will be held on 29 March. The Warrior Bonfire Program held an event in Granby in February and Parker's Platoon participated the Grand Lake Pond Hockey Classic. Warrior Bonfire is a multi-day retreat for post 9/11 Purple Heart recipients. Parker's Platoon assists veterans with TBI, PTSD and related diagnoses through activities and retreats.

Upcoming Meetings

- 05 April Aurora Chamber of Commerce: VTF Grant
- 09 May Western Region Once Source
- 07 June Westcliffe

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Scanlon. The meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m.