

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

**Friday, January 3, 2020**

**VA Regional Office**

**155 Van Gordon St.**

**Lakewood, CO 80228**

**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:**

Greg Dorman, DMVA Interim Deputy Executive Director, Resource Director and Legislative Liaison

Matthew Biniki, DMVA Legislative Liaison

Richard Tremaine, CDVA East Director

Gail Hoagland, CDVA East Grant Administrator

Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Office Manager

Megan Fraser, CDVA East Administration

**Guests Present:**

Teresa Rudder

Don Davis, Jefferson County Manager, Retired Marine Colonel

Dick Young, Admiral, Vice Chair of United Veterans Coalition of Colorado

LeeAnn Morrill, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Attorney General

**Opening:**

Mr. Rudder began the meeting at 0900.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes presented were edited as follows: pg. 6, Norm Steen – National association of Counties (instead of county commissioners); pg. 2 “It is impossible to direct the county commissioners” to “It is not within the legislative authority to direct county commissioners.”; pg. 3 change “only VSO” to “only one VSO”; pg. 3/5 following Ms. Hoagland change “that” to “than”. Mr. Dailey motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Ms. Scanlon seconded, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

**Speaker: LeeAnn Morrill on Open Meetings Law**

Ms. Morrill provided an overview of the open meetings law, this met the training requirement for the year. Board members made queries for clarification.

### **Public Comments –**

Mr. Davis shared that the men and women in our services have a lot to offer when they transition; he has also found that the men and women in the local government are every bit as patriotic as our military members. The stronger our local government is, the stronger our nation is, because the less our national assets have to be used to assist at the local level. It's time to change the discussion from veterans being damaged goods and needing assistance to everything most veterans bring to their communities. He wants to change the conversation to the uncommon virtues that veterans bring to their companies and communities. Board members thanked Mr. Davis for his remarks and concurred with his opinion.

Mr. Young shared that the unemployment rate for Veterans in Colorado is lower than the general unemployment rate for the general public. He inquired as to where he can find the program information for incarcerated veterans, homeless veterans' initiatives and veterans' nursing homes that are listed on the DVA website? Mr. Dorman provided that veterans' court is provided under the Dept. of Law. Mr. Tremaine said the website needs to be updated. Ms. Caldwell said that the website shouldn't say veterans nursing homes it should state Veterans Living Centers (VLCs).

### **Unfinished Business**

Ms. Hammon moved that the Bylaw Committee Report and Task Force Committee Report be moved to priority one and two as Ms. Caldwell has to leave at 11am. There were no objections.

Ms. Hammon shared that the sub-committee reviewed the existing bylaws and have suggestions of changes for the Board. Their first recommendation is "All Board members must vote in person, or by phone, or by other electronic means (email) when initiated by the Chairman in special circumstances." Discussion ensued. The Board agreed that LeeAnn needs to be consulted as to the legality of this suggested change.

The second recommendation was in regards to section 2a, Special Meetings, specifically the need to vote before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Mr. Dorman said that a public notice needs to be given at least 24 hours in advance. He suggested to strike the word 'special' as all meetings need to have a 24-hour notice. Ms. Caldwell pointed out that all meetings are equal and require the same public notice. Ms. Hammon suggested discussing striking sections 2,3 and 4 of Article III with LeeAnn. Ms. Caldwell agreed, stating that section 1 should be modified to include all necessary information required for scheduling a meeting.

The sub-committee suggested a third revision of the by-laws under section 4 'Officers': "The board may, by vote of majority, appoint a DVA division staff with DVA Director consent to serve as secretary". Discussion ensued. Mr. Dorman suggested "the Board may delegate the responsibilities of the secretary to a member of the DVA staff". The final wording discussed was: "The board may request a DVA division staff with DVA director consent to serve as administrative support".

Ms. Hammon, section 7, the Duties of the Division, timing of when the minutes should be prepared from the previous Board meeting and how much time ahead of the next meeting should the agenda be finalized and sent to the board members. 1 week for each was proposed, agreement was made for 2 weeks for each. One week after the approval of minutes the minutes need to be posted online. 'Continue' was changed to 'continuing' – see meeting minutes of working group on 23 DEC 2019 for the suggested additions. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Scanlon requested help understanding the origin and circumference of the clause 'standards of conduct' found in the ByLaws, Mr. Dorman will assist with this.

Ms. Hammon will provide Ms. Fraser with the finalized suggestions for the Bylaw revisions to be provided to the Board for the next meeting.

Ms. Hammon reminded the committee and visitors present about the Task Force that the Adjutant General put forth. She shared the meeting minutes with those present. She requested the Board put together an advisory summary for the Adjutant General. Discussion ensued between Board members with input from guests. A definition of 'homeless' will be requisite for this project. 'Rural' needs to be a section of the demographics. Gap analysis: The Board won't be able to know how many people aren't being reached by any service whatsoever and who are not retirees.

Ms. Caldwell left at 11:05am

Mr. Dorman was queried as to what exactly TAG has requested. The answer was that a conceptual Scope of Work needs to be presented to TAG. Ms. Hammon said the working group for the task force will have one more call and will produce a suggested scope of work for the Board for the next Board meeting in February.

At 11:12 the meeting adjourned until 11:20.

Ms. Scanlon queried the Board what she can do to reduce the letter CCI letter to make it a single page. The other Board members had no suggestions.

Ms. Hammon reminded the Board of their discussion from the last meeting in regards to improving communication about the Board's activity to veterans. She suggested asking the DVA to assist with reaching out to the AL, VFW, VVA, UVC, Purple Heart, DAV, team Rubicon, Team White and Blue, Project Sanctuary and the veteran liaisons at each community college, etc. so they can announce where the Boards upcoming meetings are. Ms. Fraser was tasked with getting the appropriate state contacts.

Mr. Dailey congratulated Carissa Snyder on her promotion. He also checked with Ms. Snyder if everything the Board is tasking the administrative staff with at DVA East is an appropriate amount of work or if it is too much. Ms. Snyder said that all requests are manageable.

Ms. Snyder shared that the Governor's report went to Mr. Dorman today.

Ms. Hammon highlighted the letter from Joanne Iglesias at Western Region OneSource, thanking the Board for the monies they voted for at the last meeting.

#### **New Business –**

The February meeting date no longer has any conflicts associated with it. The next meeting will be Feb 7 2020 at Mt. Carmel in Colorado Springs.

The VFW Post in Burlington for March is grateful the Board wants to have a meeting there but is warning the Board about high winds and snow drifts at that time of year and suggested they come another time. The upcoming meeting locations are as follows: April – Aurora; May – Cortez; June – Steamboat Springs. Grant training is expected to be the night before the March meeting in Burlington. Ms. Hoagland suggested coming up with a plan B for March, discussion ensued.

Ms. Hammon motioned to move the March meeting to the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center and move Burlington to August 2020. Ms. Scanlon seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favor by the Board. Ms. Hammon will notify Ms. Fraser if she is able to secure a room.

#### **Reports**

Mr. Dorman shared that there is no military day currently scheduled at the Capitol. General White was selected to be the Director of Space Operations for National Guard which is a 2-star billet; Colonel Scott Sherman will become the Director of the Joint Staff, which is a 1-star billet; the current G3 Colonel Charlie Davey will become the Army Chief of Staff. Today is Greg Dorman's last day as interim Deputy Director, Mr. Hopkins starts tomorrow. The Legislative Session starts on January 8<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Biniki will be at the Capitol daily managing everything there. The Department of Human services has a 3.5 million reduction of funds in their budget request in regards to CLCs. Mr. Dorman encouraged the Board to communicate through Division staff to the Nursing Board chair.

Ms. Snyder reported for Mr. Tremaine at DVA East. The job position for two VSOs closes on Jan 13<sup>th</sup>. The position for the Program Assistant just closed. We are still in talks with the Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center to give our VSOs access to patient units for veterans seeking mental health services. We are interested in pursuing get a TBI specialist on the team of VSOs at DVA East. Narrowing in on the hotel for the conference in September. There may be a virtual training in the spring. Office staff is still short a person at DVA East. VBMS training has not yet been scheduled. Monthly reports from County Veteran Service Officers should still be directed to Diana Debor.

No report from Robbie Robinson

Ms. Hoagland had nothing additional to provide other than her written report. She invited questions from the Board on her written report. Ms. Scanlon queried in regards to the grantees that are in non-compliance and how to recuperate funds from grantees who have not yet spent anything. Ms. Hoagland said that she is working with each of the non-compliant grantees and that it can take time to make the

necessary changes. There is no policy about cross-quarters reimbursement. Discussion ensued. Mr. Steen and Mr. Dailey shared frustration about how VTF funds are being utilized, he does not feel that Veterans are being served as best as they could be.

Mr. Steen queried those present about how many VFW and AL posts there are state-wide. Mr. Dailey answered there are at least 200 AL posts. There are only 30 VTF grants given annually. Mr. Dailey reminded the Board of the history of the VTF fund and praised the work Ms. Hoagland is doing. Ms. Hammon informed the Board that they should expect a grant request from Pitkin County. Those applying for HISSA grants must be enrolled in VA Health Care.

Ms. Hammon highlighted the report from DVA West, they held a Wreaths Across America at the Cemetery in Grand Junction and they placed over 2,000 wreaths.

### **Board Member Remarks**

Mr. Dailey participated in Wreaths Across America in Kremling. They placed approximately 154 wreaths. 80 wreaths were accidentally sent to Ft. Logan but they were able to be placed later. There are many homeless vets who need assistance. He appreciated the program 'Volunteers for America' and the work his local coordinator is doing.

Mr. Gonzalez was a guest speaker at VFWs Voice for Democracy; also participated in Pikes Peak Wreaths across America, lots of children attended.

Ms. Hammon said there is lots of homelessness and lots of vets in transit along I-70. She highlighted a young man who is a single dad of two living in a trailer with no running water.

Ms. Scanlon had a very successful Christmas at Buckley Air Force Base, everybody who attended received a gift and breakfast, it was done by One Marine Association. The United Veterans Coalition, is having a banquet on April 19<sup>th</sup> she will be the conduit as Board members submit the checks for the event to ensure they get to sit together.

Mr. Steen reminded the Board that he has the National Association of Counties Veterans Service Committee meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> in D.C. They will be discussing HR 5516 Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act (CVSO) bill, it provides federal monies to states for veteran outreach and service and was proposed by Mike Leven out of California. Mr. Steen proposed providing a letter of support to Congressman Leven to support HR 5516 and to write letters to our own Federal elected officials. Mr. Steen also requested that Aaron Tremaine provide an update about Veterans Living Center plans for the Colorado Springs area at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Rudder said he missed his Wreaths Across America event for the first time in 12 years. He was told it took about 12 min to be placed, it was well below zero so the process went quickly. His AL group did 36 funerals and 16 honor guards.

Mr. Dailey motioned to adjourn  
Mr. Gonzalez seconded.  
Board voted unanimously to adjourn as 12:18pm.