

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes**  
**Friday, May 01, 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting via WebEx**

**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:**

Brey Hopkins, DMVA Deputy Executive Director  
Matthew Biniki, DMVA Legislative Liaison  
Paul Von Rieseemann, DMVA Budget Director  
Joanne Iglesias, DVAAw Director  
Richard Tremaine, DVAAe Director  
Gail Hoagland, DVA Grant Administrator  
Carissa Snyder, DVAAe Office Manager  
Megan Fraser, DVAAe East Administration

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**Guests:**

Robby Robinson, CBVA Liaison to the SVCLC Commission and Veterans Monument Trust  
Seth Walter, Budget and Policy Analyst, Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting

**Opening**

The meeting was called to order at 09:06 a.m. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Steen moved that the March minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Dailey seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

**Reports**

DMVA

Mr. Rudder recognized Mr. Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins in turn introduced Mr. Von Rieseemann and Mr. Walter and said that Mr. Von Rieseemann would provide information on the DMVA budget outlook, amplified by a slide presentation.

Mr. Von Rieseemann said that the state currently has a \$3 billion deficit. For the current fiscal year, DMVA is required to revert \$572,137. He said that the state can save money through strategies including general fund reversions, creative accounting, federal Influx, program line reduction or elimination, statutory changes, and/or accessing any cash funds. All options are currently possible. DMVA will need to determine how the department can reduce expenses. He shared the projected 2020-2021 budget from the JBC's earlier figure setting, which is expected to change within the next few weeks.

He said that funding for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant and the Veterans Assistance Grant for FY 2020-2021 is currently unknown. From available figures, the current estimate of what will be available to award to VTF Grant applicants is \$860,000 less administrative expenses of \$42,500 and Board travel costs which are typically \$12,000, leaving a net of \$805,500 potentially available. Not included in the deductions were any potential allocations the Division or the WROS.

He said that potential courses of legislative action could be a sweep of the account balances of both the VTF and VAG, to reduce general fund spending and replace the funds with the cash balance of the VAG, and/or to utilize the VTF to fund a portion of the costs of the WROS, in particular the new triage specialist. Mr. Robinson added that there is precedent for this type of action, as the VTF cash fund was raided circa 2002 and the funds later paid back with interest.

Mr. Walter said that while the CARES Act provides federal funds for states during the pandemic, the Treasury is very specific that those funds be used for pandemic-related expenses. Most of the funds are reserved for COVID-19 response efforts and cannot be used as revenue replacement.

Mr. Von Rieseemann said that the Board might consider using VTF cash funds to cover the projected expenses of the WROS, as the triage specialist position is considered necessary and some of the building's utility costs are also covered from the general fund. Mr. Walter said this could be done through increase in the available appropriation from the VTF and would not affect the amount available to grantee organizations. Both gentlemen thanked the Board members for their time and relinquished the floor to Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins concluded the report on behalf of DMVA. He said that the Colorado National Guard has been on site to provide COVID-19 test support in hotspots throughout the state, including meat packing plants that have been affected. This week their priority have been the CLC at Fitzsimons. They are also supporting the new shelters and medical facilities available in Denver, including a 600-bed facility at the National Western Complex for homeless men and a 2,000-bed medical facility at the Convention Center. COVID-19 response efforts are funded federally while retaining the state chain of command.

Mr. Hopkins said that on 16 April he revealed a new plan for DMVA cultural transformation, which he augmented with a slide presentation. The foremost issue is customer service, which is vital to the department's industry. He asked that the Board be provided with a copy of his slides, which provide the details and priorities for the plan.

#### Governor's Office/Legislation

Mr. Biniki reported on behalf of himself and Mr. Dorman. He said that the JBC will convene on 04 May and legislative session will resume on 18 May. The Long Bill needs to be revised and passed.

#### CLC Commission/Veterans Monument Trust

Mr. Robinson said that to date have been two deaths at the Fitzsimons CLC and that testing of patient and staff should be completed this week. CLCs including Fitzsimons are experiencing a shortage of disposable gowns and are seeking sources.

*The Board here recessed at 10:42 a.m. and resumed at 10:52 a.m.*

#### **Veterans Trust Fund Application Review**

Mr. Rudder said that the applications would be reviewed in numerical order. Ms. Hoagland told the Board that two applications had been received after the committee meeting but prior to the extended deadline, so there will be no committee recommendations for those applications. She reminded the Board the currently projected available funds do not account for any prospective allocations to the Division, the WROS, or the cemetery.

#### **VT 21-01, VFW Post 8661, Conifer**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 86.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$8,400. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$8,400.00**

#### **VT 21-02, American Legion Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs**

Mr. Dailey recused himself from discussion. Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 79.3. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Scanlon asked if the line item for eye exams was allowable, as VHA can provide those exams. Ms. Hammon said not all veterans enrolled in VHA are eligible for vision care and that some veterans in need of the care are not enrolled in VHA at all. Mr. Tremaine asked whether that eligibility is verified. Ms. Hoagland said that as a term of the grant, the grantee is required to determine that the service would not be a duplicate one available from VA. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$35,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$35,000.00**

#### **VT 21-03, American Legion Post 62, Craig**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 63.6. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$6,000. The recommendation was based on the lack of justification of need in the application and the fact that as of March, the applicant still had \$3,000 remaining of the current year's \$8,000 in grant funds. Ms. Scanlon moved that this application be funded in the recommended amount of \$6,000. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$6,000.00**

**VT 21-04, American Legion Post 44, Steamboat Springs**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 86.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$5,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$5,000.00**

**VT 21-05, VFW Post 5231, Cortez**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.3. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$50,000. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$50,000.00**

**VT 21-06, DAV Chapter 48, Durango**

Ms. Hoagland said that this applicant has withdrawn their application. The post has informed her that it will not have their assistance program this year and is likely to close.

**No funding: application withdrawn**

**VT 21-07 Spencer-Young VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 89.3. The committee recommended funding this application at the current funding level of \$75,750, as the need for an increase was not well justified in the application. Mr. Dailey so moved. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Ms. Hammon suggested that the Board consider funding the application in full at the requested amount of \$80,500 due to the need that exists in the area. Mr. Dailey said that the justification of need should have been in the application. As there was no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. Four were in favor of the motion. Ms. Hammon and Dr. Caldwell opposed. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$75,750.00**

**VT 21-08 Department of Colorado VFW, Lakewood**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 79.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$50,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$50,000.00**

**VT 21-09 American Legion Post 11, Trinidad**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 74.9. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$27,000. Mr. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$27,000.00**

**VT 21-10 American Legion Post 67, Berthoud**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 70.4. The committee recommended removing retreats as an ineligible line item, leaving a funding recommendation of \$27,000. Dr. Caldwell so moved. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$27,000.00**

**VT 21-11 American Legion Post 09, La Junta**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 84.6. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$29,920. Ms. Hammon seconded. Ms. Scanlon asked if the budget needed clarification. Ms. Hammon stated it did not as the vast majority of the funds are for transportation only. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$29,920.00**

**VT 21-12 American Legion Post 1980, Woodland Park**

Mr. Steen recused himself from discussion. Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 56.2. That is below the minimum score required for consideration. This was also the case for the committee. Ms. Scanlon asked if the application could still be discussed. Ms. Hoagland said not unless some board members were willing to modify their scores to bring the average to the required amount. All but one board member scored the application below 60. Ms. Hammon said that the grantee has a problematic history with the grant, both failing to expend and noncompliant. She asked if Ms. Hoagland could comment on the grantee's performance. Ms. Hoagland said that the current grant cycle was the grantee's third consecutive year of poor performance, and that the problems include lack of compliance, disregard of grant policies, failure to use the surveys, and difficulties with both required reports and documentation of expenses. The grantee has had site visits and on-site training. Mr. Dailey asked if a particular person was the source of the problems. Ms. Hoagland said that she has been unable to pinpoint a single root cause. The grantee uses a board to make their grant decisions. She has met with the entire board and has been on multiple phone calls attended by the entire board. Dr. Caldwell said that the application should not be considered because it did not receive the minimum required score, and like applications have been denied in previous years. Ms. Hammon moved that this application not be considered. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Do not fund, application score ineligible**

**VT 21-13 American Legion Department of Colorado, Denver**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.9. The committee recommended funding this request in part at \$30,000 to see if the new applicant is able to execute. The application met the requirements but is one of the lowest scores in consideration. Mr. Dailey so moved and Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Ms. Hammon asked the committee members to comment on the recommendation to fund in part. Mr. Rudder said the committee average score was also low, and the applicant is new so there no record of performance to consider. As there was no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$30,000.00**

**VT 21-14 American Legion Post 18, Greeley**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.1. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$35,000. This previous grantee has demonstrated capacity and reasonable projections, but the range of service is small compared to the amount of the request. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in part at \$35,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$35,000.00**

**VT 21-15 VFW Post 5843, Meeker**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 74.3. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$9,000. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$9,000.00**

**VT 21-16 American Legion Post 22, Northglenn**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.1. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$30,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Ms. Hammon queried the number of veteran to be served as listed in the application, which is 10. That would be \$3,000 per capita. Ms. Hoagland said this was likely an error, as in the current year the grantee has served far more than 10 veterans. Ms. Scanlon and Mr. Steen both said that the Board must consider the application as written. Ms. Scanlon asked Ms. Hoagland to comment on the grantee's current performance. Ms. Hoagland said the grantee has received an increase for a total amount of \$25,000 and has expended all of it. Ms. Hammon suggested that the Board consider funding the application as \$25,000 based on the grantee's demonstrated capacity. Mr. Dailey declined to amend his motion and as there was no further discussion he called for the question. Mr. Dailey was in favor and all others opposed. The motion failed. Mr. Steen moved that the application be funded in part at \$25,000. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$25,000.00**

**VT 21-17 VFW Post 3641, Pueblo**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 75.6. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$15,000, as the capacity of the new applicant is unclear and the statement of need was not well supported. Ms. Scanlon asked the committee members to amplify why only \$15,000 was recommended, but no additional reasoning was offered. Ms. Hammon pointed out that the application states an intent to serve 150 unduplicated veterans. She moved that the application be funded in full at \$20,100. Mr. Steen seconded. Ms. Hoagland said the one of the budget line items is for the Pueblo Stand Down, which is on the budget of other VTF applicants and that of one of the VAG applicants, the last of whom has supported the Stand Down for several years. Dr. Caldwell said that the grantee would need to be informed that they cannot use grant funds to make a donation to the Stand Down. Ms. Hammon agreed that the applicant would have to be instructed to buy specific items. There was no further discussion and Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$20,100.00**

**VT 21-18 American Legion Post 9-11, Palmer Lake**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.1. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is working on compliance and expending this year's allocation. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$4,000. Mr. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$4,000.00**

**VT 21-19 American Legion Post 103, Littleton**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 81.4. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$30,000, as this grantee has relied heavily on the Arapahoe County Veterans Service Office to execute this grant and that office is currently experiencing 100% turnover. Mr. Dailey moved that be application be funded in full at \$37,500. Mr. Steen seconded. Ms. Hammon asked what the funding was for this grantee in the current year and how much if any was remaining to be spent. Ms. Hoagland said they current funding is \$37,500 and there is currently \$12,000 remaining. Mr. Rudder said they are unlikely to expend. Ms. Hammon said that she agreed with the committee's recommendation. Dr. Caldwell concurred. Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. Mr. Dailey and Mr. Steen were in favor and all others opposed. The motion failed. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in part at \$30,000. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$30,000.00**

**VT 21-20 VFW Post 4061, Canon City**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 64.3. The committee did not consider this application, as the committee's average score was below 60. Ms. Hoagland said that the committee also thought that the bid for the van was an excessive amount. She also said that the post's statewide governing body has provided a caution in regard to this post. Mr. Steen agreed that the van amount seemed high, particularly if compared to the bid obtained by the Rifle CLC for a similar vehicle. Dr. Caldwell asked if the post intended to use the vehicle for other than medical transportation and Ms. Hoagland said possibly, and also for transportation for non-veterans. Ms. Hammon asked if the grant agreement could specify how the grant-funded vehicle can be used and Ms. Hoagland said it could. Ms. Scanlon suggested the Board fund the application in the amount that the Rifle CLC is using for a van. Ms. Hammon agreed and said the grant agreement would specify the use and purpose of the vehicle. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in part at \$41,000, to be used for a van with the discussed stipulation regarding its use. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Ms. Hoagland said she would monitor and perform a site visit. There being no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for ballot. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$41,000.00**

**VT 21-21 American Legion Post 32, Longmont**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 57.3. The committee did not consider this application, as the committee's average score was also below 60. Ms. Hammon asked what the problems were with the application and/or the grantee. Ms. Hoagland said it was incomplete, as pages are missing and only questions one through seven were addressed. Currently the grantee is very slow to spend grant funds and will not expend at least half of this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon asked if the missing pages could be a fax error. Ms. Hoagland said applications are required to be mailed. She said the grantee also struggles with documentation. She has performed a site visit and could suggest a new grant manager for the grant. Mr. Rudder invited a motion. Ms. Hammon said the Board members could revisit their application scores in the interest of prospective modification. Mr. Steen said that the application could not be considered due to its score. Dr. Caldwell agreed. Mr. Steen moved not to consider the application. Mr. Dailey seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Do not fund, application score ineligible**

**VT 21-22 DAV Chapter 44, Cortez**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 72.5. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$50,000. This grantee has been slow to spend and has had minor problems with documentation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in part at \$50,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$50,000.00**

**VT 21-23 American Legion Post 75, Cortez**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.1. This application was received after the committee assembled and thus there was no committee recommendation. This is a new applicant with demonstrated capacity but unclear projections according to the application. Ms. Hammon said the need in the area is justified, particularly in light of the prospective closure of DAV Chapter 44. She moved to fund this application in part at \$40,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$40,000.00**

**VT21-24 American Legion Post 2, Pueblo**

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 71.1. This application was received after the committee assembled and thus there was no committee recommendation. This is a returning applicant with prior compliance issues and unclear capacity and projections. Ms. Hammon mentioned \$5,000 in the budget for the Pueblo Stand Down. Ms. Hoagland said that a VAG applicant is requesting \$8,600 for the same items for the Stand Down and has provided these items for Stand Down for several years. Ms. Scanlon asked if it would be possible to fund only the assistance portion of the application. The budget contains events, which are not eligible. Ms. Hammon said removing the events and the Stand Down items would leave a budget of \$17,500. She moved to fund the application in the amount of \$17,500. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in part at \$17,500.00**

The Board here assessed subtotals before discussing the applications from the CLCs. It was determined that if there was enough remaining of the projected funds to fund all of the requests from the CLCs if that proved to be the pleasure of the Board.

**VT 21-28 SVCLC Homelake**

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$51,924.42 for recliners for resident rooms, privacy curtains, and valances. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$51,924.42**

**VT 21-26 SVCLC Rifle**

Dr. Caldwell moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$40,814.00 for a van. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full at \$40,814.00**

**VT 21-27 SVCLC McCandless**

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$52,000.00 for an entertainment system for residents. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full \$52,000.00**

**VT 21-29 SVCLC Fitzsimons**

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$24,750.00 for a Scandent system. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund in full \$24,750.00**

**Unfinished Business**

Bylaws – there has been no response yet from the Attorney General’s office regarding proposed bylaw changes. Mr. Biniki said that he would follow up.

CCI Letter – the letter has been sent by email. Mr. Rudder says he has had follow up inquiries from a few commissioners. Ms. Fraser said there were there were a few email addresses that have not yet been obtained. Mr. Steen said he probably has them and will provide them.

**New Business**

Mr. Rudder asked the members their pleasure for the next meeting. The consensus was to hold the June meeting virtually via WebEx.

Dr. Caldwell said the Board may want to entertain a motion to allocate funds to the WROS to fund the triage specialist and utilities, as mentioned by Mr. Von Rieseemann and Mr. Walter. Ms. Hammon moved to allocate \$150,000 from the VTF cash fund to support the triage specialist and utility costs for the WROS. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Mr. Steen asked if the WROS also serves non-veterans and Ms. Hammon said that it does not. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

**Board Member Comments**

Ms. Hammon said that Eagle County has seen an increase in domestic violence incidents during the stay in place order. The county is practicing social distancing and mask-wearing in public. Mr. Rudder complimented Ms. Hammon on her office’s efforts to support veterans during the pandemic.

Mr. Steen said the Teller County has employed a volunteer force to make calls and deliver meals during the stay in place, and that veterans have been very active with the volunteer force. He said that the meeting fell on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of a member of his command. SPC Derrick Lutters lost his life to an IED in Iraq on 01 May 2005.

Mr. Gonzalez said that COVID-19 efforts has kept El Paso County very busy. Access to mental health care for veterans has been an area of focus. He thanked the Board members for their commitment to supporting veterans during this time.

Mr. Dailey said that both Grand and Summit Counties have been busy and it has been difficult to accomplish some tasks. Mental health has been a significant concern and the VAG has been assisting in those counties. Mr. Rudder thanked Mr. Dailey for his efforts.

Ms. Scanlon had no comments.

Dr. Caldwell thanked the grant committee for proceeding without her as she needed to prioritize her professional commitments to Centura Health during the response to COVID-19. She said that many health care workers are now finding themselves on mandatory PTO or furloughs as health care systems endeavor to meet their payroll obligations.

Mr. Rudder thanked the Board members for their time and patience with the long virtual meeting. His Homelake office is still unavailable, so he continues to work from home as much as possible.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

05 June – Virtual via WebEx

07 August - Burlington

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder invited a motion to adjourn. Mr. Steen so moved. Ms. Hammon seconded. The meeting adjourned at 01:11 p.m.