

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) Meeting

Date: 1 August

Location: Glenwood Springs

Time: 9:00 AM

Break: 10:10-10:20

Members Present

Shelia Scanlon, Chair

Howard Richards, Member

Raymond Taylor, Vice Chair

Sheldon Smith, Member

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Members Absent

Jasmine Motupalli, Member- Excused

Staff Present

Darin Collazo, Western Region One
Source Administrator

Carissa Snyder - CDVA Operations
Coordinator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Operations

Amy Demege - Women Veteran Service
Coordinator

Sharon DeVita -CDVA Operations

Katie Reynolds - CDVA Operations

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Guest

Brendan Boykin - Remount Foundation

Pat Hammon - VCLC Board of
Commissioners, UVC Representative
Alternate

Pattie Buxman - Surviving Spouse of a
Veteran

CBVA - August Minutes - Approved

Richard Nagley - American Legion, San Luis Veteran Coalition

Shawn Sanders - Veteran

Courtney Striker - Senior Resources and Veterans Services Division Manager, Arapahoe County

Marsha Unruh - Home Front Military Network

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the July meeting were approved as amended, with all members in favor except Mr. Richards, who abstained. The motion to approve was made by Mr. Gonzalez and seconded by Mr. Smith. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Mrs. Buxman and Ms. Sanders provided an overview of the Western Slope Veterans Coalition (WS Vet Coalition), sharing its history and current initiatives. The Coalition operates across Eagle, Pitkin, and Garfield Counties, offering referrals and organizing outreach events. They are currently working on a community project in Silt, which includes plans to construct 22 single-family homes, two multi-family homes, and a community center specifically for veterans. The WSVet Coalition is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 to 16:00 and holds outreach events on weekends. The organization maintains an emergency fund to support veterans and provides a welcoming space where veterans can access services and gather socially. The Coalition serves approximately 3,000 veterans in Garfield County.

Standing Reports

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

A report from the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Legislative Liaison was not provided.

CBVA - August Minutes - Approved

VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

A report was received from the Veteran Community Living Center (VCLC) board providing a review of the previous month's meeting, noting that there has not been a subsequent meeting of the Veteran Community Leadership Councils (VCLCs) since then. No new business or updates were presented. All action items and decisions from the prior meeting remain in effect until the next scheduled meeting.

UVC Updates - Pat Hammon:

A report was received from the United Veterans Coalition (UVC) summarizing recent discussions on legislative goals for the upcoming session. The coalition emphasized the importance of aligning priorities across various organizations and identifying shared legislative interests to support coordinated advocacy. A key priority includes investigating and potentially recovering funds that were previously swept from the cemetery accounts. Continued collaboration is planned to ensure unified and effective legislative efforts moving forward.

Director Report - Carissa Snyder

Mrs. Snyder provided several updates during the meeting. She reported that the Look Listen and Learn Tour (LLL) is scheduled for August 18-23, and a retreat is planned for August 27-28. The National association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs (NASDVA) conference will take place in Wyoming during the second week of September. The next board meeting is scheduled for September, with a board training session set for September 11 and additional training for County Veterans Service Officers scheduled for September 16-19. Mrs. Snyder also noted a forthcoming change in the law, effective August 6, regarding Disabled Veteran (DV) license plates, which will now require submission of the VA Benefit Summary Letter. The DMV has confirmed that the Benefit Summary Letter will be accepted as sufficient documentation. Additionally, Mrs. Snyder shared updates on policies and procedures and introduced

the new CVA 26 legislative concept letter, which proposes changes to the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) allocations.

Veteran Services - Carissa Snyder:

Mrs. Snyder reported that LLL and National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NASCVO) activities are continuing as planned. She announced that a new Regional Supervisor, Mathew Cummings, is expected to begin on August 18. There is currently a vacancy within the Region 1 RVSO positions, with an additional vacancy anticipated as of August 28. The position has been announced and is presently in the interview process.

Ms. Demege provided an update on women veterans' issues. She reported on a recent Women Veteran Roundtable, which addressed the unique challenges faced by women veterans. It was noted that while 55% of women veterans hold a bachelor's degree, many continue to face barriers to employment due to the challenges of transitioning from military to civilian careers. In September, the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) will partner with the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (NASWVC) to develop best practices aimed at improving these outcomes. Ms. Demege also reported that the Veterans Administration (VA) has reinstated Women Veteran Health resources into the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefings, following their earlier removal under DEI policy revisions. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding LGBTQ+ veterans, who may be discharged without coordinator support due to DEI program reductions taking effect in January 2025.

Western Region One Source - Darrin Collazo:

Mr. Collazo reported that the DEERS office processed 103 ID cards and reinstated override services in August. The Volunteers of America (VOA) is collaborating with the Salt Flat Tiny Home Community, which includes 13 units with vouchers prioritized for

veterans. The Room 129 facility is approximately 75% renovated, with improvements made to reduce odors. Office 132 is now open and operational. WROS is conducting community outreach with two universities to support veterans seeking to further their education. Mental health wellness events are scheduled for August 14, 21, and 28 at WROS. Additionally, a Veterans Night event will be held on August 28 at the Farmers Market. On July 21, the VA Outreach Coordinator assembled 178 kits for unhoused veterans. Mr. Collazo also highlighted ongoing partnerships with equine therapy programs to assist with fundraising efforts for the organization.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery (VMC) of Western Colorado - Angela Ingalls

Mrs. Snyder reported that grave markers are being provided in a timely manner. Quarterly military honors continue to be conducted, including a recent ceremony honoring a female veteran who received a flag. Additionally, Post and Auxiliary 3981 generously donated granite benches to the cemetery.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

Ms. Stamm introduced guest speaker Mr. Boykin from the Remount Foundation, who presented on equine therapeutic services aimed at assisting active-duty service members with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The therapy utilizes horses, which emit electromagnetic energy that benefits both animals and veterans during treatment.

Ms. Stamm reported that July has started strongly with a significant number of VCLC receipts. To improve attendance, office hours have been scheduled on various days throughout the month. Training sessions were held in July, with a makeup session to be scheduled. Additional VCLC training is planned for late September.

Regarding the Neighborly platform, Ms. Stamm noted ongoing collaboration with IT, which is taking longer than anticipated to meet the requirements of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) standards. Finally, KK funds will be allocated to expand

resources for the Mental Health program, with efforts underway to extend this support further programs to the VCLCs.

Old Business

Report on the Gold Medal Ceremony - Jasmin Motupalli

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Veteran's Clearinghouse - Eric Winterrowd

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Concept Paper - Shelia Scanlon and Lisa Stamm

Mrs. Scanlon and Ms. Stamm reviewed the concept paper related to grant requests. They emphasized the need to include data on the amounts allocated to Veterans Trust Funds (VTFs) over the past three years, as well as information on unused funds. The goal is to ensure sufficient funding remains available for both VTF and Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) programs.

Women Veterans Subcommittee - Sheila Scanlon

Mrs. Scanlon reported that the subcommittee has no updates at this time, as they are awaiting the assignment of a new coordinator.

Legislation for next Legislative Session

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Branding - Shelia Scanlon

Mrs. Scanlon led a discussion on how to best engage with veterans across the state and effectively market meetings, particularly emphasizing the involvement of

CBVA - August Minutes - Approved

regional representatives attending meetings within their respective counties. She also noted plans to focus on website improvements following the next meeting.

Prescription Letter - Shelia Scanlon

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Transportation Grant - Director Bruce Cowan

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Southern Region One Source

Dates were presented to the board for a visit to Durango to tour the old post office building as a potential new location for the Southwestern Region One Source (SWROS). The proposed visit is scheduled for September 15-16, 2025.

Albuquerque VHA collaboration with Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs - Raymond Taylor

Mr. Taylor reported that a new director has been appointed at the Farmington Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), along with new hires in departments across Farmington, Durango, and Raton. An exemption from the hiring freeze has been granted to allow filling of qualifying positions. There have been no changes to Community Care services for ophthalmology, dental, and primary care. Travel pay is performing well, with increased payouts expected within six weeks. New patients are generally seen within two weeks. Townhall meetings continue regularly, although the most recent session experienced a technical issue.

New Business:

Visit New Mexico to meet with VHA Director and New Mexico Board of Veteran Affairs

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

VTF funds for Vehicles at the VMC

The report was postponed to the September meeting.

Board Remarks

Board members shared remarks on various events they attended during July.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions

Mental Health Service

Veterans on the Fringes

Transportation

Homelessness

Food Security

Upcoming Meetings

The Board is planning to visit the following locations and hold a hybrid meeting. However, if weather conditions are deemed hazardous, the meeting will be changed to a virtual-only format.

11 September 2025

Training, Grand Junction, Colorado

12 September 2025

Grand Junction, Colorado

08 October 2025

La Junta, Colorado

14 November 2025

VCLC Walsenburg Colorado

05 December 2025

VCLC Denver Colorado

Adjournment

Mr. Gonzalez made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Taylor seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:48 AM.