**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

April 1, 2022

WebEx

**Opening**

Ms. Scanlon called the meeting to order at 0902 while Ms. Hammon resolved a tech issue. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POW’s, MIA’s, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty. Mr. Taylor requested a moment of silence for Otero County Veterans Service Office Jay Scott, who died on March 30.

Ms. Hammon reassumed the gavel. She announced that the VTF grant application training would be moved to the end of agenda to accommodate attendees who may not wish to remain for that training.

**Members Present**

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

**Staff Present**

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer Supervisor

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast State VSO

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest State VSO

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest State VSO

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

**Guests Present**

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer

Aleah Farrell, Public

Keith Gilbert, Larimer County Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Wendy Mendoza, Public

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Eric Winterrowd, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

**Approval of Minutes**

Regarding the draft of the March 2022 minutes, Ms. Hammon corrected verb tense and spelling on pages two and three and asked that Ms. Ingalls, Ms. Stamm, and Mr. Robinson have their titles specified with their reports. Ms. Scanlon corrected the name of the speaker at the Colorado Women Marines Association February 12 event to Lieutenant General Lori Reynolds, USMC Retired. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Golonka seconded. The motion carried.

**Agenda**

Ms. Hammon announced a change in the agenda. The VTF training will be at the end of the meeting, so that non-Board member attendees who do not wish to remain can leave.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Bosworth acknowledged the loss of Otero County VSO Jay Scott. He said that he attended the CDVA spring training in Grand Junction and thanked the state VSOs and Mr. Callahan for the event. The officers of Colorado County Veterans Service Veterans Service Officers Association are reviewing association’s bylaws and revising the nomination packets for the Nardini and Conroy awards. They are considering developing a service pin for county veterans service officers.

**Old Business**

HCR 22-1003

Ms. Hammon said that HCR-1003 is headed to Appropriations and asked that Ms. Golonka draft a letter of support from the Board to the committee. The Board previously voted to send a letter of support. Ms. Hammon said the letter should be sent prior to the House Appropriations deadline of April 15.

Capitol Committee Statue

Ms. Hammon asked the pleasure of the Board regarding the Capitol Committee statue relocation. The consensus was to send feedback to the committee supporting relocating the statue at DMVA headquarters at no expense to DMVA. Mr. Taylor volunteered to write the letter.

WIG Committees

Ms. Hammon reminded the WIG committees to attempt to meet in April. The meetings must be open and minutes taken.

**Reports**

Ms. Hammon asked that a report from Mr. Dorman’s office be emailed to the Board. Ms. Scanlon asked for an update regarding the Womens Veterans Service Officer. Ms. Hammon said the new FTE had passed the JBC and is now in the Long Bill. She asked Mr. Callahan to report on the Division’s plans for that position.

Mr. Callahan said the position will be announced with the intent to have it filled by July 01, which is the start of the state fiscal year. It will be based in Colorado Springs with the cooperation of the El Paso County Veterans Service Office. At Ms. Hammon’s request he then continued with his report. He said that the Spring Training was held on March 28-29 and will be held the last week of March in Grand Junction moving forward. The annual conference will be held in August on the Front Range, this year in Colorado Springs. Both trainings will have virtual options. Additional trainings will be held virtually on alternate Wednesdays throughout the year. He expressed his sympathy for the family of Jay Scott.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said the office at the Windsor Readiness Center is now shared with the Family Resources team. She is in the office on Mondays and the remote the remainder of the week. Lincoln County VSO Laurrie Rodgers, VSO from Lincoln County is retiring today and Joy Johnson has been appointed to that role. She and Mr. Callahan were able to visit 12 of the 15 counties in the northeast region in March. The counties meeting for group TRIP training completed the training in March and are now prepared for accreditation.

Ms. Cunningham said she will attend a breakfast at Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County on April 5. La Plata County VSO Greg Dotson won a DMVA You Rock award that presented at the spring training in recognition of his leadership and community involvement.

Mr. Stem said he presented a DMVA You Rock award to Arapahoe County VSO Eric Winterrowd at the spring training. Mr. Stem has received a great deal of positive feedback from veterans regarding the service provided by Mr. Winterrowd. Visits to county veterans service offices from Mr. Stem and Mr. Callahan are being scheduled. Adams County is having a veterans resource fair on April 18.

Mr. Edginton said that he is scheduled to get his VA PIV card Monday and will then have access to VA systems. At the spring training he presented a DMVA You Rock award to Mesa County VSO Tony Lee, who has been a great asset to veterans and to Mr. Edginton in his role of state VSO. Mr. Edginton has conducted outreach to Colorado Mesa University and was able to begin the claim process for two veterans. Visits to county veterans services offices by Mr. Edginton and Mr. Callahan will take place in May. He is collecting a calendar of events from the counties in his region. He will attend the Mesa County Resource Fair is scheduled for April 26 and Beaconfest on April 28.

Ms. Hammon asked Mr. Callahan to explain the You Rock award. He said it was developed by a DMVA NextGen team to support employee recognition. Recipients receive a certificate and a rock painted with the Colorado flag that says You Rock. These can be presented to anyone making a valuable contribution to the veteran community. The certificate template can be obtained from the DVA administrative office; contact Carissa Snyder or Beth Maxwell.

Ms. Iglesias said that the VA HUD/VASH program has been moving their furniture in this week and the move should be complete by the end of the week. Liberty Mutual is renewing their lease for an additional month. There is one vacant office space available for $450 per month, currently is use as flex space. Dan Coulter joined the team and WROS Support Representative on March 21. March events at the WROS have included additional classes and wellness groups, the Mountain States PVA conference, seminars on home loans and Medicare, a presentation from the council on aging, and the spring training. WROS events average about 300 attendees per month but is March the count was 573. In outreach, the WROS participated in the Mesa County and Montrose County Resource Fairs and a ceremony for Vietnam veterans held at the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park in Fruita.

Mr. Callahan reported on behalf of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The improvements to the committal shelter will be completed in May, Ground crew members will receive additional training at Fort Logan National Cemetery in May and additional training is scheduled moving forward. The kiosk that assists visitors in finding grave locations is down but is scheduled for repair. The CWT assistant has been replaced by VA work study Ashlie Ray and Sophie Hayner is the new coordinator for the Honor Guard Stipend Program. The VMC also participated in the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park ceremony for Vietnam veterans and will participate in Missing in America the first week of June. Ms. Iglesias explained that the Missing in America project has identified veterans’ cremains that have not been interred and will hold a military honor funeral for those veterans prior to interment at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. In regard to the stipend program, 68 invoice have been processed and paid to date.

Ms. Stamm, Grant Administrator, said that all payments are up to date and being processed within less than 10 days. In March 35 payments were processed. There have been 21 applications received for the VTF Grant and 32 for the Veterans Assistance Grant. The grant report provided to the Board indicates current VTF grantee who did not apply for funding this year. Ms. Stamm reached out to those organizations and has learned that effects of the pandemic have made it difficult, although some expect to reapply next year.

**Remarks**

Mr. Gonzalez said that he attended a local West Point Founders Day luncheon on 11 March. On 23 March he attended the county chamber’s “State of the MAC” event produced by the Military Affairs Committee. On 29 March he attended a welcome reception for Retired General Hyten who will be living in Colorado Springs.

Ms. Motupalli said she now has official custody of her niece. At Gusto the affinity group is preparing to lead a virtual workout on April 14 and a mental health workshop of April 19, which will focus on advocacy, affordability, and accessibility. On April 21 she will host an intersectionality panel with members from different portions of the affinity group, including veterans, Pride, visible and invisible disabilities, women, black, and latinx. A monthlong fundraising campaign will benefit the Denver International Rescue Committee which supports refugee resettlement efforts.

Ms. Golonka said she is now transitioning her replace at Xcel’s veterans program. Xcel is considering becoming the presenting sponsor for the Veterans Day Parade in 2022. She is working to reinstate the Womens Veterans of Colorado nonprofit that disbanded in 2020 with a goal to start a foundation.

Mr. Maday said he had no remarks and thanked his colleagues for their hard work.

Ms. Scanlon said that on April 9, General John Allen, USMC Retired, will be a guest speaker at a fundraiser for the U.S. Marine Memorial. General Allen is president of the Brookings Institution and is the former commander of NATO International Security Forces and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. She will be teaching at U.S. Army War College both this spring and in summer.

Mr. Taylor said that Archuleta County has resumed having department head meetings once per month. He was interested to note that four of the department heads are veterans. The county is purchasing a vehicle to for veterans’ transportation. The Vietnam War Commemorative had 75 attendees and featured a flag folding and a Native American blessing.

Ms. Hammon said she has been busy with mental health committees; they are working on establishing a crisis center. Housing is a continuing problem. Pandemic funding is available to pay but no housing is available. The area has been busy with funerals and color guards. Memorial Day celebration plans are underway; a local high school has a new drum corps that is very proficient and that group will participate in the event. The last session of the season is approaching for veterans ski days; during the winter veterans have been able to ski for free from 6:00-12:00 on Thursdays. In veterans services, she has noticed an increasing number of male veterans aged late 70s and older who performed part time or gig work for resorts in the area and now are trying to live on extremely limited funds in retirement. Many are not eligible for VA pension and finding assistance is proving difficult.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Ms. Hammon said the next meeting is scheduled for May 6. She has secured meeting space at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC. The VAMC follows CDC rules and requires that visitors be fully vaccinated and wear masks. She asked that Board members let Ms. Snyder know if they have a conflict with either of the requirements. The June meeting is scheduled for Durango and August for Steamboat Springs. Virtual options will be available.

*The meeting recessed for 10 minutes at 10:26 a.m. to prepare for VTF Grant application training. The meeting resumed at 10:36 a.m.*

**New Business**

VTF Application Training

Ms. Stamm shared a presentation on how to score the Veterans Trust Fund Grant Applications. It began with an overview of the grant’s origin and purpose. The VTF Grant is to assist Colorado veterans in need of financial or material assistance. Nonprofit organizations eligible to receive funds must be nationally recognized veterans service organizations.

The Board received instruction regarding conflict of interest and were introduced to the application scoring rubric. The rubric explains the qualifications and scoring windows for when application responses exceed, meet, partially meet and do not meet the criteria for each category. The Board then considered sample exercises to practice scoring according to the rubric.

The Board was also introduced to the Excel scoring sheet, a map showing the geographic distribution of applicants, and a scoring addendum that indicates whether applicants are current grantees or new applicants with notes on current compliance and spending. Along with the applications, the Board members received copies of the rubric, the scoring sheet, the map, and the scoring addendum.

Ms. Scanlon recommended for the benefit of new Board members to have copies of the applications convenient at the May meeting when decisions are made, either electronic or hard copy, so that they can be referred to during discussion.

Ms. Hammon thanks Ms. Stamm for the presentation. She reminded the Board that these decisions are one of the Board’s most important responsibilities. Ms. Stamm invited all to contact her if they have any questions.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.