**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

May 6, 2022

VHA VISN 19

4100 E. Mississippi Avenue

Glendale, CO 80246

Virtual Option via WebEx

**Opening**

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

**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

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Dan Coulter, WROS Support Representative

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest

Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer - Northwest

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer – Southeast

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

**Guests Present**

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer

Keith Gilbert, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Hammon asked if there were any corrections to the draft of the minutes. There were none. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Agenda**

Ms. Hammon recommended to change the agenda to move the VTF grant decisions to the last item of business. There were no objections.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Bosworth said he was just back in the country after vacation and is being caught up. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend and said that it was good to see everyone.

**Old Business**

HCR 22-1003

The Board’s letter of support for HCR 22-1003 was received by the Appropriations Chair. Ms. Hammon said that the resolution is now out of Appropriations. This resolution would extend the state property tax exemption for qualifying disabled veterans Coto Gold Star spouses.

Capitol Committee Statue

The Board’s letter of agreement to relocate the Union Solider statue to JFHA at no expense to DMVA or DVA has been sent to the Appropriations Chair and to the chair and vice chair of the Capitol Improvement Committee. Ms. Hammon said that some veterans have asked that the statue’s new location be more accessible, so the eventual location is not yet settled.

WIG Committees

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

**Reports**

Mr. Callahan said the Division recently held its strategic planning session. The mission and vision statements have been revised to align with the Division’s statutory duties and the vision of DMVA. The mission is to further prompt and efficient service to all Veterans in the state of Colorado on a uniform basis. The vision is to earn and maintain the trust and confidence in those we serve; customers and staff feel welcomed, valued, respected and heard. The Division will accomplish these by assisting veterans with the preparation and filing of claims for veterans benefits, cooperating with and assisting veterans service organizations and advisory groups in helping eligible persons, maintaining the state veterans cemetery in Grand Junction, administrating two grant programs that benefit Colorado veterans, and operating the Western Region One Source. The Division has a projected vacancy which is the appeals specialist. The position has been announced. He is continuing to visit counties throughout the Division’s five regions. The Office of the State Auditor is conducting an audit in regard to VSO performance. Results should be available in July/August. 80% of eligible VSOs throughout the state are now VA accredited. A goal for the next fiscal year will be to secure VBMS access for accredited CVSOs. The Division will adopt the NAVSCO model for training and accreditation, providing multiple opportunities throughout the year for VSOs to acquire 16 CEUs. The Division is entering into a partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, which is a nonprofit organization that assists veterans with post-BVA appeals. This service is provided at no cost to either veterans or the state. The Division will host the NACVSO annual in conference in 2024. This year’s conference is in San Antonio and all of the Division’s state VSOs will attend. DMVA will have a position on a cabinet group formed to address homelessness in Colorado. Congruent with the sunset review, the JBC has requested that by 01 November the Division provide information on WROS services and finances for the preceding fiscal year and produce an outreach plan for underserved veteran populations. DMVA Deputy Executive Director Brey Hopkins is departing and that position has been announced. Resource Director Greg Dorman left DMVA on 03 May.

Mr. Bosworth said that he will attend the NAVSCO training in June, as will some employees from his office. The new award nomination packets from CCVSOA for the Nardini and Conroy awards should be available in June.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said that community partnerships include gun safety advocacy with the United Church of Christ in Longmont and Any is Too Many suicide prevention awareness events on the 22nd of each month. County VSOs have asked to meet weekly rather than twice a month and will be doing so going forward.

Ms. Cunningham said that community partnerships include the Southwest Veterans Collaborative meetings every 2nd Tuesday and various events hosted by the Southern Ute Veterans Association. There will be Veterans Outreach Day in Durango on May 26. Two more VSOs in region are now accredited: Frank Lobue in Montezuma County and Steven Otero in Gunnison County.

Mr. Edginton said there have been three outreach events within the last two weeks that have increased walk-in traffic. Appointments have doubled over the past month. He will attend the Moffatt County Resource Tour next week and has a table at the Grand Valley Highland Games. The Grand Junction VAMC has opened the new Mesa County Center for Recovery, an inpatient wing for substance abuse treatment.

Mr. Moncibais said that community partnerships include mentoring with Veterans Upward Bound, networking with the Home Front Military Network, Mount Carmel Ambassador Board. Outreach continues at the Veterans Court, the Pueblo mission, and the local VFW. Saguache County has a new VSO, Michael Bondurant and Eric has had the opportunity to begin his training. He met with Kiowa County commissioners and the VSO regarding the function of the VSO office. Chaffee County VSO Liesel Hammond has done impressive work assisting local veterans. All countries in the region now have veterans appointed as their CVSO.

Ms. Scanlon asked that future VSO reports include the number of women veterans have been served. Mr. Taylor complimented the work being accomplished under the regional structure.

Mr. Coulter, WROS Support Representative, said the VA has a lease in process for three additional offices and that should be final by 01 June. There are more than 30 VA staff members now on site. State auditors toured the WROS and the VMC in April. The DEERS office will open soon and will have weekend hours available, at first monthly due to the waiting list and then quarterly.

Ms. Hammon referred the Board to the written report submitted by the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Ms. Stamm, Grant Administrator, said that the VAG review committee met on 26 April. There were 30 applications. There were 12 new applicants. The final review is schedule for 12 May. Applications have shown that outreach is needed in some parts of the state. Notes for applications revision include statistical information, survey results, and operating budgets. The training will include more information on grant writing. She is also working with IT to have a shared drive available for future application cycles. She will reach out to grantees next week regarding remaining funds so that they can be expended by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Maday asked if it is known how this year’s new applicants learned about the grant opportunity and suggested adding that to the grant application.

**Remarks**

Ms. Motupalli apologized for being unable to attend in person. One of her children has been ill. Gusto’s Veterans Heritage Month concluded at the end of April with more $2,000 raised over raised for international resettlement committee, which Gusto will match.

Ms. Golonka relayed her remarks in the WebEx chat. The Women Vets of Colorado is just starting to come back online. Xcel Energy is finalizing their sponsorship of the Veterans Day parade. Her Xcel Energy veterans replacement is Maytham Alshadood. He comes from Congressman Crow’s office and is an Iraqi refugee. Xcel is very happy to have him aboard.

Mr. Gonzalez said he attended the quarterly Hails and Farewells of the local Chamber of Economic Development’s Military Affairs Committee on 18 April. On 10 April he attended a forum by the local space foundation on Why Space Matter. He attended the Home Front Military Network’s reception celebrating their merge on 03 May.

Mr. Maday said he recently participated in a panel at the National Defense University in Washington D.C. on the future of communications, command, and control. Google’s employee veteran network is hosting a virtual career week in June and he will provide details as they become available so that the information can be distributed. He will need to attend the June meeting virtually.

Ms. Scanlon said she attended a fundraising dinner for U.S. Marine Memorial on April 9. The memorial may become a joint memorial moving forward. The Women Marines Association continues to receive requests for assistance and may expend their VAG grant before the end of the year.

Mr. Taylor said veterans have recently experience difficulties with nursing home admissions due to staffing problems at the CLCs. Ms. Scanlon asked if pay is the issue and Mr. Taylor said that is a factor. Ms. Hammon said some organizations use travel nurses, but that is becoming more difficult due to lack of housing and Mr. Taylor agreed that affects recruitment also. General Jesse Morehouse will be the guest speaker at the Memorial Day observation at the local cemetery.

Ms. Hammon said she attended the most recent WROS Advisory meeting and they are happy to have Mr. Coulter on board. She also attended a meeting of local nonprofits and many are experiencing some of the staffing issues seen at the CLCs. A new associate VSO has been hired in Eagle County. Robby Robinson is doing well with his recovery from a stroke. Since he cannot report on behalf of the CLC Board of Commissioners at this time Elizabeth Mullins will be invited to upcoming meetings. The bill regarding the Veterans Information Clearinghouse has been sent to Appropriations. The Long Bill passed and the Division has funds for the Womens VSO, who will also perform other EDI functions. The 10th Mountain Division Memorial Day service will be held in person after a two-year hiatus.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Ms. Hammon said that the next meeting is scheduled for June 3 in Durango, as it seems there are flights available. Ms. Snyder will checking on lodging and meeting space, beginning at the DoubleTree.

The August meeting will be in Steamboat Springs. The Routt County VSO has already secured a meeting room and can assist with lodging.

It was decided that the September meeting will be Colorado Springs and the October meeting in the Northeast. Mr. Bosworth may have meeting space available for September and Ms. Antista-Bianchi will assist with October

August 5 Steamboat Springs

September 9 Colorado Springs

October 7 Northeast Colorado

*The meeting recessed at 10:21 a.m. to prepare for VTF Grant decisions. The meeting resumed at 10:35 a.m.*

**New Business**

VTF Grant Decisions

Ms. Stamm led the discussion and the applications were considered in numerical order.

**VT23-01 American Legion Post 44**

**Area Served**: Steamboat Springs

**Amount Requested:** $3,880.00

**Score:** 84.4

These grant funds would be used for transportation, financial assistance including rent, temporary housing, food, medicines and emergency medical treatment. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $3,880.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $3,880.00**

**VT23-02 American Legion Post 62**

**Areas Served:** Moffat, Routt, and Rio Blanco Counties

**Amount Requested**: $8,000.00

**Score:** 79

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, temporary housing, and rides to medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Motupalli asked if duplication between VT23-01 and VT23-02 is a concern. Ms. Hammon said it would not be because the service providers cover such a large geographical area. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $8,000.00. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $8,000.00**

**VT 23-03 VFW Post 5231**

**Area Served:** Montezuma County

**Amount Requested** $60,000.00

**Score:** 75

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance with housing, utilities, mental health and substance abuse resources, and a Stand Down. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this application covers some of the same geographic area and VT23-10 and VT 23-02, but they serve a large number of resident veterans as well as may passing through. Ms. Motupalli said the application would be stronger if metrics were available to demonstrate quantifiable impact. Ms. Scanlon and Mr. Maday agreed. Ms. Stamm said that she will provide more coaching to applicants for the next application cycle in regard to demonstrating measurable outcomes. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $8,000.00. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $60,000.00**

**VT23-04 American Legion Post 75**

**Areas Served:** Montezuma, Dolores and La Plata Counties

**Amount Requested** $50,000.00

**Score:** 74.6

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance for housing, food, utilities, mental health and well-being, transportation to medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Mr. Taylor said that the budget is unclear. Ms. Hammon said the Stand Down is historically a successful one. Ms. Scanlon suggested funding the application at this current amount of $40,000, since the increased amount was not well justified. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the amount of $40,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $40,000.00**

**VT23-05 American Legion Post 88**

**Areas Served:** Grand, Summit, Jackson Counties

**Amount Requested:** $35,000.00

**Score:** 83.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, transportation, medical, prescriptions, outreach, stand-down products through a voucher program for dental, grooming and optical, and food assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $35,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $35,000.00**

**VT23-06 DAV Chapter 44**

**Areas Served:** Montezuma, Dolores, and La Plata Counties

**Amount Requested**: $73,700.00

**Score:** 81.4

These grant funds would be used for assistance with basic needs and health and wellness, including access to a wellness facility. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is $50,000.00. Ms. Scanlon asked for the status of current spending by this grantee. Ms. Stamm said there is currently $6,000.00 remaining. M. Hammon said the budget contains some administrative costs. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of $50,000.00, consistent with this year’s funding. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $50,000.00**

**VT23-07 American Legion Post 11**

**Area Served:** Las Animas County

**Amount Requested:** $20,000.00

**Score:** 81.0

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, therapy, vision, dental, and unexpected emergencies. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this [program serves a large county with a high poverty rate. Ms. Scanlon said the requested amount was reasonable.

Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $20,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $20,000.00**

**VT23-08 DAV Chapter 48**

**Area Served:** La Plata County

**Amount Requested**: $93,630.00

**Score:** 88.6

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, temporary lodging, rent, and mental health and substance abuse treatment. This is a returning applicant and former grantee. Ms. Scanlon questions the amount requested in the budget. Mr. Taylor said the applicant was using an out of date application form. Mr. Gonzalez asked what the last funding amount was for this applicant. Ms. Stamm said it was $50,000.00. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $50,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $50,000.00**

**VT23-09 VFW Post 5843**

**Area Served:** Rio Blanco County

**Amount Requested:** $3,750.00

**Score:** 82.2

These grant funds would be used for travel to and from medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is $5,000.00. The consensus was to recommend funding this application at $5,000.00. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $3,750.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $3,750.00**

**VT23-10 VFW Department of Colorado**

**Areas Served:**  Statewide

**Amount Requested:** $40,000.00

**Score:** 86.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance to veterans in need. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this is a longstanding grantee with no issues. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $40,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $40,000.00**

**VT23-11 American Legion Post 22**

**Areas Served:** Adams, Weld, and Larimer Counties

**Amount Requested:** $40,000.00

**Score:** 78.7

These grant funds would be used for financial and emergency services. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon said the amounts for rent utility assistance seem high. Ms. Stamm said mortgage and rent assistance payments from grantees often exceed $3,000.00. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $40,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $40,000.00**

**VT23-12 VFW Post 3641**

**Areas Served:** Pueblo County and surrounding areas

**Amount Requested:** $40,400.00

**Score:** 80.8

**Recommended Funding:** $40,400.00

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance and a homeless fair. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon said the budget total is higher than the amount requested in the application. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the amount of $40,400.00, which is the amount on the application. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $40,400.00**

**VT23-13 American Legion Post 0009**

**Areas Served:** Bent, Crowley, and Otero Counties with some services in Prowers and Pueblo Counties

**Amount Requested:** $20,119.15

**Score:** 87.6

These grant funds would be used for transportation of veterans to appointments. This current grantee is compliant with fair performance. Ms. Stamm said this grantee has had difficulties with the survey and she will assist them with outcomes if they receive funding. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the round number amount of $21,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $21,000.00**

**VT23-14 American Legion Department of Colorado**

**Areas Served:** Greater Denver Metro Area

**Amount Requested:** $25,000.00

**Score:** 82.6

These grant funds would be used to assist with housing. This is a returning applicant and former grantee. The application addresses a prior theft that affected the organization. There has been a criminal investigation and charges have been filed. Mr. Gonzalez said the application was not very thorough and Mr. Taylor agreed. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of $20,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $20,000.00**

**VT23-15 Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center**

**Amount Requested:** $27,303.03

These grant funds would be used for massage therapy, a coffee bar, and Scandent system support. Ms. Motupalli asked if administrative expense were permissible for CLCs. Ms. Stamm confirmed they are allowed. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $27,303.03. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $27,303.03**

**VT23-16** **Homelake Veterans Community Living Center**

**Amount Requested:** $30,869.00

These grant funds would be used to upgrade the wall-mounted flatscreen TVs that are currently in each resident room and to add Bluetooth headphone technology. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $30,869.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $30,869.00**

**VT23-17 Fitzsimons Veterans Community Living Center**

**Amount Requested:** $109,914.00

These grant funds would be used to replace the CLC’s transit van. The VTF Grant has a $100,000 maximum allowable. Ms. Stamm said they the committee recommended funding this application at $100,000.00 because that is maximum allowable under the grant rules. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application at $100,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $100,000.00**

**VT23-18 Rifle Veterans Community Living Center**

**Amount Requested:** $21,699.99

These grant funds would be used to purchase a Needle Point Bi-Polar Ionization air purifying system and a speaker system. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the round number amount of $21,700.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $21,700.00**

**VT23-19 VFW Post 12063**

**Areas Served:** Custer, Fremont, Huerfano and Pueblo Counties

**Amount Requested:** $85,500.00

**Score:** 93.8

These grant funds would be used for financial and emergency assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is $70,000.00. Ms. Hammon said this area is fairly isolate with a low average income. Ms. Scanlon asked if this grantee is projected to expend their funds this year. Ms. Stamm said that they are. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of $75,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $70,000.00**

**VT23-20 Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado**

**Amount Requested:** $39,911.00

These grant funds would be used for installation of ADA door actuators at the administration building, stucco renovation to administration building, and repair to three WWII-era military jeeps that are utilized as a caisson during military honors and interment services, as well as at parades and community events. Mr. Maday moved to fund this request in the round number amount of $40,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $40,000.00**

**VT23-21 Western Region One Source**

**Amount Requested:** $60,000.00

These grant funds would be used for to fund the WROS Support Representative/Triage Assistant. Funding this position will ensure all DVA staff, WROS tenants, and Veterans, a first point of contact at the WROS. Mr. Gonzalez said that going forward this this expense should be part of the DVA budget. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this request in the requested amount of $60,000.00. Ms., Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $60,000.00**

**VT23-22 DAV Chapter 21**

**Areas Served:** Eastern Denver Metro, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert Counties

**Amount Requested:** $28,850.00

Ms. Stamm said that this application was received by March 1 but was late to VTF because the applicant erroneously applied under the Veterans Assistance Grant. These grant funds would be used for housing, utilities, food, and transportation assistance and for wheelchair repairs and meals .Mr. Taylor said it was unclear who was doing the repairs referenced in the budget and who the recipients of the meals are. These could be administrative expenses. Mr. Maday moved to fund this application in the amount of $15,000.00 due to the possible administrative expense. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $15,000.00**

**VT23-23 American Legion Post 16**

**Area Served:** Huerfano County

**Amount Requested:** $8,000.00

Ms. Stamm said that this application was received by March 1 but was late to VTF because the applicant erroneously applied under the Veterans Assistance Grant. These grant funds would be used for housing, utilities, food, and transportation assistance. Mr. Taylor said the amounts on the budget do not match the total amount on the application. Mr. Gonzalez said that if awarded the applicant might be able to request additional funds mid-year. He moved to fund this application in the requested amount of $8,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

**Decision: Fund at $8,000.00**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn. Mr. Maday seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Raymond, jasmine