

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) September Meeting

Date: 12 September 2025

Location: Grand Junction

Time: 9:00 AM

Break: 10:10-10:25 am

Members Present

Sheila Scanlon, Chair

Sheldon Smith, Member

Raymond Taylor, Vice-Chair

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Howard Richards, Member

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan - Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran

Cemetery of Western Colorado

Services Supervisor

Administrator

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Darin Collazo, Western Region One

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Operations

Source Administrator

Sharon DeVita, CDVA Operations

Guest

Richard Nagley - American Legion, San

Jim Cressman, Veteran

Luis Veteran Coalition

Terry Baker, Veteran

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the August meeting were approved by all with the changes previously mentioned. Ms. Golonka made the motion. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Cressman requested a follow-up regarding his previous inquiries into Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM), noting that he had not received any communication from Mr. Maday following his recent visit to the board. The board informed Mr. Cressman that Mr. Maday had stepped down from his role. Mr. Cressman reminded the board that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not currently recognize IBM as a service-connected disease, resulting in denied claims for affected veterans. He expressed concern over this discrepancy, pointing out that Title 38 classifies ALS—an autoimmune disease closely related to IBM—as eligible for a 100% disability rating. Mr. Cressman urged the board to disclose any actions or inactions taken in response to this issue. In response, Ms. Scanlon recommended that the board draft a formal letter to the VA in support of IBM advocacy. Ms. Golonka further suggested reaching out to members of Congress and the Senate for assistance and reiterated her offer to serve as Mr. Cressman's liaison, requesting his contact information to begin coordination.

Standing Reports

VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

A report from the VCLC Board was not provided as Mrs. Hammon was attending the VCLC Commissioners meeting.

UVC Updates - Kirk Rosa:

A report from UVC was not provided.

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

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

Director Report - Bruce Cowan

CBVA - September Minutes - Approved

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

Veteran Services - Eric Winterrowd:

A report was provided noting recent community outreach events coordinated by the Veteran Services team. It was further reported that the Region 1 candidate declined the offer extended by the State; consequently, the position will remain vacant until the hiring freeze is lifted. Mr. Winterrowd and Mr. Cummings will serve as acting Region 1 RVSOs until the position is formally filled. Additionally, Ms. Reynolds will continue managing the prison program on assignment through April, or until the position can be filled following the conclusion of the hiring freeze

Western Region One Source - Darrin Collazo:

A report was provided noting the continued growth and scheduling of weekly and monthly events at the WROS, along with related outreach efforts. It was further reported that one DEERS operator had resigned. Although this change coincides with a hiring freeze, the anticipated impact on the DEERS program is minimal due to functional redundancies between state and federal staffing resources. Additionally, the WROS anticipates full renewal of its leased space, with lease agreements due in October.

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

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA). NCA will present an award to the Cemetery in October in recognition of operational excellence. Mrs. Ingalls addressed the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) regarding the handling of unclaimed remains from the state. This issue, raised by multiple states, has led to the formation of a committee.

Additionally, the NCA is currently reimbursing cemeteries for spousal and dependent burial costs. Although a line item for this funding exists in the Presidential Budget, it has not yet received support from either the House or the Senate. This proposed

federal legislation would positively impact veterans and their families. The Board advised Ms. Ingalls that she should notify the Colorado legislators of this budget item and ask that they support the proposed legislation.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

An update was provided on the development of the platform purchase order to support next year's grantees. It was reported that the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) had a 25% reimbursement rate in October, with a continued trend of high demand for food and fuel assistance, and lower demand for employment and mental health services. In contrast, Veteran Assistance Grants (VAG) showed the highest need in the areas of mental health, overall well-being, and housing.

Ms. Stamm inquired what specific data the Board would like to receive from the VCLCs. The Board requested information on the general categories to which grant funds are being applied—such as mental health, quality of life, and transportation. The Grants Team will begin tracking both the number of veterans served and the percentage of funds allocated by category.

The Board also requested that VCLCs provide explanations for low grant fund utilization rates. This topic will be addressed during the upcoming VCLC training hosted by the Grants Team. Additionally, VCLCs will be notified that they are expected to spend funds during the first and second quarters of the current grant cycle.

Old Business

Report on the Gold Medal Ceremony - Jasmin Motupalli

Mrs. Motupalli reported on the recent Congressional Gold Medal ceremony honoring multiple World War II veterans in Washington D.C. The event, which had been seven years in the making, was described as deeply meaningful. Some veterans were posthumously recognized, and attendees received a commemorative coin symbolizing the Congressional Gold Medal. She met with Congressman Crow both before and after the meeting to discuss available benefits and programs for veterans. Mrs. Motupalli emphasized the importance of continued representation at such events

Veteran's Clearinghouse - Eric Winterrowd

The next meeting with the vendor is currently being scheduled. Monthly statistics, previously provided by the Webmaster, will be requested from the new Webmaster going forward.

Concept Paper - Director Bruce Cowan

There are surplus funds available in the VFT grant, which could be reallocated to support the VAG grant—a move that would be particularly beneficial in the event of a budget shortfall. Historically, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) has addressed such shortfalls by withdrawing spending authority from the VAG and increasing the VFT's spending allotment in an effort to keep both programs whole.

However, because the VFT and VAG are funded through distinct funding sources, this reallocation strategy has not successfully restored both programs to full operational capacity.

The Concept Paper proposes a formal reallocation of excess VFT funds to the VAG grant to ensure both programs are made whole. To support this proposal, Ms. Stamm presented three years of VFT funding data, demonstrating a consistent surplus during her tenure.

The board has requested a presentation from the Budget Director detailing the allocation of funds for both the VAG and VFT programs over the past three fiscal years. As a result, a vote on the reallocation cannot proceed until this discussion with the Budget Director takes place.

Women Veterans Subcommittee - Sheila Scanlon

Ms. Scanlon is working with Mrs. Mendelson to liaise with the new VA Eastern Region Women's Coordinator.

Legislation for next Legislative Session

Two legislative items were reviewed by the Board for potential inclusion in the 2027 Legislative Session. A concept paper was discussed that would allow for the reallocation of unused funds from the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) to the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) program. In addition, a proposal was considered to expand the statute to all for "comfort items". Both items were discussed, and further action was deferred pending additional review and input.

Branding - Sheila Scanlon

Outreach efforts for the September meeting were carried out using the flyer, Coffee Time, and the WROS social media platforms to announce meeting times and encourage veteran attendance. A discussion was held regarding the potential distribution of flyers to veteran organizations listed on the clearinghouse in advance of upcoming meetings, with the goal of increasing awareness and participation.

Prescription Letter - Sheila Scanlon

An update was not provided.

Transportation Grant - Director Bruce Cowan

A Transportation grant report was not provided.

Southern Region One Source - Director Bruce Cowan

A visit to Durango was scheduled for September 22-23, 2025, as part of ongoing coordination between the Board and DMVA leadership.

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

It was reported by Mr. Taylor that the Director was currently in Durango to identify clinicians and expand service partnerships with vendors in the southwestern region of Colorado. These efforts were intended to address challenges related to travel reimbursement and enrollment barriers for veterans seeking access to primary care. A town hall was also being held to focus on MyHealtheVet and mental health services that are not currently available in the Durango area. It was noted that the Director meets regularly with Mr. Taylor, Mr. Odum, and local Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) on the third Thursday of each month.

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

It was expressed by the Board that a joint meeting was desired with the Director, Regional Veteran Service Officers (RVSOs), and the New Mexico Board of Veterans Affairs. The presence of Director Cowan at that meeting was specifically requested. A motion was made by Mr. Gonzales to advise The Adjutant General (TAG) of this intent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Richards and subsequently approved by the Board.

New Business:

The board did not discuss new business.

Board Remarks

Then board reflected on events they attended in August. The board also held a discussion on Veteran Services offered to the Southern Ute Tribe. There was also conversation around ongoing efforts to display historical photographs at the VMC, highlighting the importance of preserving and showcasing Southern Ute history.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions	Homelessness	Transportation
Veterans on the Fringes	Mental Health Service	Food Security

Upcoming Meetings

08 October 2025	La Junta, Colorado
14 November 2025	VCLC in Walsenburg, Colorado
12 December 2025	TBD Denver, Colorado
13 December 2025	Wreaths Across America
09 January 2026	Virtual
13 February 2026	VCLC Florence, Colorado
04 March 2026	VCLC Denver, Colorado
10 April 2026	Buena Vista, Colorado
08 May 2026	Joint Force Headquarters
05 June 2026	VCLC Rifle, Colorado

Adjournment

Mr. Taylor made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:41 AM.