

Board Minutes
June 3, 2016
Homelake CSVNH
3749 Sherman St., Monte Vista, CO 81144

Dana Niemela, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0936 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present:

Dana Niemela, Chair
Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair
Rene Simard, Secretary-present via phone conference
Hollie Caldwell, Member
Christopher Holden, Member
William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director
Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator
Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

John Ardre, President Democratic Council at Homelake
Jayne Salisbury, Women Veterans
Linda Joseph, Veterans Coalition of San Luis Valley
Bob Galey, Veteran
Charlotte Bobicke, Senator Bennett's Office
Lewis Hientz, USMC
Frank Muniz, Alamosa County Veterans Service Officer
George Wilkinson, Ex-County Commissioner for Alamosa
Tom Bobicke, American Legion
Lynne Ciancio, Retired US Army Veteran
Jake Reynolds, civilian supporter
Mike Atwater, Mineral County Veterans Service Officer
Pam Self, CVCLC for Homelake

Bert Dorosy, Homelake resident
Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife
Orlando Gallardo, Conejos County Veterans Service Officer
Jim Sheeran, Saguache County Veterans Service Officer
Larry Crowder, State Senator
Mary Ann Sheeran, Saguache County VSO Assistant
Aaron Tremain, via phone conference

Approval of Minutes from May

Unanimously accepted

Community Discussion

Ms. Niemela briefly explained the role of the Board, thanked Homelake for hosting the meeting and then introduced Pam Self with Homelake CSVNH. Through the Veterans Trust Fund, Homelake is able to provide aromatherapy and massage. Several massage chairs have been purchased as well and new, adjustable dining room furniture for the dining room renovation will be purchased with the new (FY 16-17) grant. On their additional wish list is tracking equipment for small items like hearing aids and dentures, items frequently lost or misplaced by those with dementia. The starting price for such equipment is \$10,000.

Mr. Rudder introduced Linda Joseph and Jayne Salisbury with the Veterans Coalition. Six counties in the San Luis Valley work with their County Commissioners to provide a variety of community services like keeping local clinics staffed. The Coalition holds quarterly meetings, to keep the community involved in veterans' topics. Saguache County tax pays for community projects. Strategic planning support was provided by the American Legion. They were selected at the beginning of the year to be a community partner with the Office of Rural Health VA project. With funding of \$70k, the Coalition created a suicide prevention model: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) which has partnered up with Adams State University to train area VSOs and emergency responders. Table top exercises were implemented with various scenarios so that they could troubleshoot any weaknesses that were found. Veteran farmer programs are also in demand. A film will be shown called Ground Operations that addresses training and resources for the program. The next quarterly meeting will be held June 24.

Jayne Salisbury with Women Veterans stated that it is difficult to identify female veterans in the valley and that many are not taking advantage of benefits. Efforts have also been made to work with area museums to get the word out about their organization. Ms. Niemela offered to help the organization network with other Women Veterans groups and thanked them for all they do with suicide prevention.

Senator Crowder stated that a domiciliary is needed in the Denver area. Fort Logan received allocated land for their expansion. Senator Crowder is looking to expedite Service Dog training. Military disabled with a military rating of 100% permanent and total are now eligible for the Property Tax Exemption that was previously only offered to Veterans with a 100% permanent and total VA rating. The Fort Lyons facility is a model for homeless rehabilitation. Senator Crowder requested a letter of support from the Board for VA Secretary Bob McDonald.

Mr. Robinson inquired about the Tobacco Tax Referendum. Senator Crowder stated that he would not support additional taxes.

The Board was invited to tour the cemetery at Homelake.

Mr. Dailey asked where the money came from for the suicide prevention program.

Ms. Caldwell referred Jayne Salisbury to Gail Hoagland to assist them with their grant proposals.

Frank Muniz thanked Gail for her help in obtaining a VTF grant. Currently, the area has four volunteer drivers for veterans. The Choice Program is helping some. Mr. Robinson addressed Mr. Muniz's issue of more funding for volunteer drivers stating that the State is very limited and can only offer authorized per diem. Ms. Caldwell mentioned that utilizing the younger, tech-savvy veterans might help in getting transportation needs met.

Charlotte Bobicke with Senator Bennett's office spoke of additional funding for County Service Officers and the Choice Program.

Aaron Tremain added that he would like more publicity for the State Veterans Community Living Centers.

A local small business owner shared his experience of homeless veterans searching for food in the trash containers at his car wash. He also shared a story about a Vietnam Veteran that he recently met.

Bob Gale, a pastor new to the area, said that there needs to be a ministry alliance in the region and the churches might be able to help Mr. Muniz with volunteer drivers.

Orlando Gallardo thanked everyone for their support and encouraged state representatives to attend more community meetings.

Mr. Dailey asked Senator Crowder about House bill 16-11-97, allowing veterans to transfer their experience into school credits and certifications.

Senator Crowder asked how much Veterans Assistance Grant money is not being used. Ms. Hoagland replied that \$50k has not been allocated and then explained both the application process and the deadlines.

Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 11:03am, and resumed to labor at 11:22am.

Reuben Mestas: Mr. Mestas proposed training the Board in August on the grant programs and the sunset review. He indicated that the cemetery at Homelake is part of Homelake and therefore is not funded by his Division, but he will make every effort to assist them. Additional funding for the Homelake cemetery will need to be addressed in the Annual Governor's Report. Mr. Mestas requested funding for the new office conference room come from money that a grantee turned back. Mr. Dailey inquired about the future Strategic Planner and whether or not the Division's training would coincide with that training. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board approve the transfer of funds from the grant funds returned by a grantee to the Division for the conference room. Mr. Dailey seconded the motion. Ms. Niemela requested a list of items needed for the conference room. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Gail Hoagland: Ms. Hoagland notified the Board that the Homeless Stand-Down in Durango is scheduled for October 5 and 6. All Board members will receive a request in July to update their

Conflict of Interest forms. The Greeley American Legion Post has offered to host the Board for a future meeting.

Mr. Robinson asked how to prevent underspending of the Veterans Assistance Grant. Welcome Home Montrose has not spent a dime of their grant money. Ms. Hoagland responded that she encouraged them to return their contract. We cannot terminate a contract without initiating a legal process, and involving the Attorney General's office. Under the current contracts, there is no specific language dealing with underspending timelines. Other State agencies pay their grantees quarterly and require very lengthy reporting.

Mr. Robinson wondered how to implement unspent Veterans Trust Funds for the cemetery, Division and Living Centers. Criteria and grant requirements do not fit Community Living Centers. Ms. Hoagland recommended the Board change the policy and process for them and vote on any changes. It may be possible to earmark money for the cemetery, Division and Living Centers and change the application process to a priority list of needs. A lengthy discussion ensued with regard to divvying up the money. Gail will provide a drafted policy change at the next Board meeting which will be for the 2016-2017 year.

Dana Niemela: Ms. Niemela stated that DORA needs information from the Board for the Sunset Review by October 15. Greg Dorman is currently working on collecting the information required. Mr. Mestas will check on deadlines and let the Board know next week.

With Ms. Niemela stepping down as Board Chair, the two-year position is available. Mr. Robinson nominated Duane Dailey for Chair. Ms. Caldwell seconded the nomination and it was approved by unanimous vote. With Duane Dailey's seat now vacant, the Vice-Chair position is available. Mr. Holden nominated Rene Simard. Ms. Caldwell seconded the nomination and it carried unanimously. Mr. Simard accepted the position of Vice-Chair. The Secretary position will temporarily remain vacant.

Old Business

None

New Business

On behalf of TAG, Deputy Director Mickey Hunt and Division Director Ben Mestas, Ms. Niemela was presented with a plaque thanking her for her service on the Board. Dana thanked everyone for their commitment on veterans' issues.

Future Meetings

TBD

Meeting adjourned 12:22pm