

Board Minutes
2 October 2015
Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center
903 Moore Drive, Florence, CO 81226

Dana Niemela, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0839 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-Not Present
Rene Simard, Secretary
Hollie Caldwell, Member
Christopher Holden, Member
William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
Diane Ricci, CDVA Deputy Director
Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant
Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

Barbara Moore, Administrator, Bruce McCandless Community Living Center
John Griego, Senator Bennet's Office
John Dickinson, Resident, Bruce McCandless Community Living Center
Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife
Robert Kemper, American Legion

Approval of Minutes from September

Unanimously accepted

Guest Introduction – Dana Niemela

Barbara Moore, Administrator of the Bruce McCandless Community Living Center explained that the center was the first State Veterans Nursing Home in the nation to be an Eden registered home and will be the fourth nursing home in the country to complete milestone 3. For five consecutive years, the home has been rated five stars. 50 staff members care for nearly 100 residents. The Living Center provides a specialized neighborhood for patients with dementia and three other neighborhoods that offer short-term and long-term care. The facility was built in 1975 and has had over \$8mil in renovations over the last decade. Located in a rural community, it is difficult to find consistent staffing. The facility accepts out-of-state residents. John Dickinson, Resident Council President at Bruce McCandless Community Living Center, thanked everyone for their support. The Resident Council is the governing body of the Center and they meet on the first Friday of every month. A community meeting is held every Monday to encourage communication between residents and staff. Various activities are exhibited on a monthly calendar.

Chris Holden inquired about how the nursing home came to be named. Barbara Moore explained that it was named after Bruce McCandless Sr., a WWII veteran who served in the Navy and received the Congressional Medal of Honor. His son, Bruce McCandless Jr., also served in the Navy and later became an astronaut. The McCandless family has lived in Florence for many generations.

Dana Niemela asked what some of the biggest challenges residents have that are addressed at the Resident Council meeting. John Dickinson replied that the Council continually tries to improve communications in an effort to bring the community together. Staff and residents created several floats for the Florence Pioneer Days parade. Another great success is the annual Halloween party held at the Living Center that establishes youth involvement. On Memorial Day, the local radio station plays military stories provided by resident veterans. Listeners are encouraged to volunteer at the Living Center.

Robby Robinson wondered if loosening VA regulations requiring nursing homes to have 75% of their residents be veterans' would help, since many spouses and widows are turned away. Jack Rudder asked if they have anyone at the Living Center that helps veterans with their claims. A certified staff member is available to help those veterans who live in the Center.

Robby Robinson: He attended the El Paso County Veterans summit. The legislators who hosted it are starting a bipartisan Veterans Caucus in the General Assembly. They will be looking for presentations during the next session. He suggested that the Veterans Affairs Annual Report could be presented if approved by the Adjutant General and the Governor's office.

Jack Rudder: The expansion to Homelake cemetery was rededicated on September 11. As part of a civil war reenactment group, Jack and his group were invited to perform at Fort Garland for Lt. Col. Brey Hopkins' change of command.

Chris Holden: At the Veterans Summit, Chris spoke with Mike Webb of Fort Carson/Transition University reestablishing ties and gaining connections.

Hollie Caldwell: Two veterans are interested in serving on the Veterans Memorial Commission. Their names and contact information were forwarded to Greg Dorman.

Rene Simard: The Aurora Defense Council, 350 members consisting of military and community leaders, will focus this year on homeless veterans. James Gillespie with Mile High Behavioral Health will advise the Defense Council on homeless veteran issues.

Dana Niemela: The Veterans Administration is launching a Veterans Economic Community Initiative. It is important that communities have a voice. My VA Communities has been developed in Colorado Springs and will hold a town hall meeting December 3, from 4-6pm. Board members are strongly encouraged to attend.

John Griego, from Senator Bennet's Colorado Springs office, mentioned that the Mt. Carmel Center for Excellence will be a one-stop for veterans in Colorado Springs. Construction is 50% complete. Federal funds have been secured for the VA hospital in Aurora. Several buildings and a parking garage will not be built, to keep the project within budget.

Robert Kemper, from American Legion in Florence, stated that his challenges and successes have been providing rent and utility payments to deserving veterans.

Theresa Rudder is very active in the Homelake community.

Mickey Hunt: OEF/OIF veterans are in need of jobs and homes in Grand Junction. It is hoped that the Grand Junction VA Hospital Director will ask for a Veterans Economic Community Initiative in the area. The Volunteers of America have a renewed interest in running a one-stop in the vacant Grand Junction Armory. The Capital Development Committee will meet at the Alamosa Armory on October 20. State legislation will attempt to define what a veteran is. The proposal is to adopt the federal definitions. \$13,000 was found for board travel expenses. Board travel funding will not be taken from the Division's budget. Applications are being reviewed for the Strategic Planner position. Mickey attended The Women Veteran's Conference on September 12. San Luis Valley Veterans Coalition met in Alamosa. He felt that the VA did not answer the important questions. The State Veterans Community Living Centers will be visited on October 15 and 16. The Governor's budget will be released on November 1. Both Mickey and General Edwards will meet with the JBC in late November. Mickey is a board member of the Pikes Peak My VA. Gail will provide five to ten grant issue questions to Mickey for the next Pikes Peak My VA meeting. General Edwards has been asked to speak at the next board meeting which will be held at the Wings over the Rockies on November 4. The Chinooks will be back in December.

Diane Ricci: The cemetery expansion is complete. A State Service Officer will be stationed every Wednesday at the Volunteers of America, located on Santa Fe. The Division is down two Service Officers at present. The Regional Training held last week was a huge success. Veteran Homeless Stand-downs will be held October 2 in Pueblo, October 20 in Colorado Springs, October 27 in the four corners area, October 30 in Grand Junction, November 5 in Denver,

November 10 in Fort Collins and December 3 in Longmont. Board members are strongly encouraged to attend the four corners stand-down. Denver's Stand-down may have been moved to a different date due to logistics and/or funding.

Gail Hoagland: The first quarter of the grant cycle is ending. Both unduplicated numbers and outcome measures will be captured. In order to comply with audit requirements, statute and by-laws, Gail trained the Board on Conflict of Interest as it relates to the Veterans Trust Fund. Any connections with a grantee in which a Board member would gain monetary benefits or direct influence would constitute a conflict. Grants for the upcoming year will be accepted December through February. During that time there will be ongoing webinar trainings. Since the Regional Training, many County Service Officers have contacted Gail to request grant funding. Based upon the auditors concerns, as well as recognition that applicants often do not read the policy letter, the application, requirements and guidelines are now in one document. In an effort to remove the grant administrator as the single point of information, the Board will receive a spreadsheet that provides detailed information on current grantees (including the projected number to be served, actual numbers served, timeliness of reports, outcomes notes, etc.) New applicants will need to demonstrate capacity and their projections should be reasonable. Robby noted that the third sentence under Requirements, Terms and limitations should read as follows, "Administrative or capital costs are not allowed, except as noted in statute." Dana added that private and public sector funding is moving towards a business model. Funders are perceived as investors and are more discriminating on how they deliver their money. They are encouraged to fund innovative ideas which may make it harder for smaller organizations. The grant needs to be announced in November. Any changes and recommendations need to be submitted to Gail by the next Board meeting. The Board will also have to vote on the criteria and the point allocations at the next meeting.

Future Meetings

04 Nov – Wings over the Rockies, Aurora Salute to Veterans

04 Dec – Colorado State University, Fort Collins

Old Business

New Business

Rene will check on reserving a conference room for the November 4 Board meeting. The meeting will need to start at 8:30am.

Meeting adjourned 10:30am