

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

November 5, 2021

WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0902. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was held for POW's, MIA's, Support for our troops in action, at this time. Added moment of silence to families who lost Veterans this month.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair
Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair
Longinos Gonzalez, Member
Sean Maday, Member

Staff Present

Laura Clellan, Adjunct General of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Greg Dorman, DMVA Interim Deputy Executive Director, Resource and Legislative Director
David Callahan, CDVA Director
Beth Maxwell, Administrative Assistant
Dee Debor, Administrative Assistant
Drew Stem, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer
Jessica Quackenbush, CDVA Administrative Assistant
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

Guests Present

Destry DeWolf, Huerfano County Veterans Service Officer
John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Raymond Taylor, Archuleta County Veterans Service Officer
Ralph Charlip, Chairperson of the Aurora Veteran Affairs Commission
Adam Sutton, Boulder County Veteran Service Officer
Karen Townsend, Boulder County Veteran Service Officer
James
Roxie Smith
JonPaul DeLisi

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Scanlon requested a change to include "Colorado Women Marine Association" verse "Colorado Women Marine Foundation". With the correction, Ms. Scanlon motioned to approve the October Minutes. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments

Aurora Veteran Affairs Commission

Mr. Charlip stated there are two separate commissions I the State, Adams County and Aurora County. They are structured different than the board but share the same goals to support and navigate the

veterans in our community. The Aurora Veteran Affairs Commission report to City Council and serve a three-year term, with a possibility to be reappointed.

This year they are working to promote military service with the youth. Along with veteran stand downs and job fairs when able to meet in large groups. The Aurora Veteran Affairs Commission are looking for commissioners as they are down three members. Please contact Mr. Charlip if you are interested in downloading an application with a possible interview. Mr. Charlip is thankful to attend the Board meeting and would like to see if it is possible to work with the AVAC in the future.

Ms. Hammon recommended Mr. Charlip to speak with the Aurora Veteran Service Officer, to announce to veterans in the community. Mr. Charlip stated his plans to speak with the Aurora VSO as well as the American Legion and VFW posts.

Old Business

Restoration of Honor Act

Mr. Callahan stated this Act will be effective 11 November, Veteran's Day. This Act will allow the Board to enable Board to approve veterans for certain state benefits, by granting them LGBT discharge. The Veteran will file with the VA for Federal and State Benefits. If the Veteran chooses to just file with the Board, the board will consider a veteran's petition to be discharged as an LGBT Veteran. The veteran will have to supply the board with their DD214, a personal affidavit and supplement information to the board. If the board grants the petition, then the veteran will be eligible for certain state benefits, License Plates, burial and internments at Home Lake, tuition assistance, certificates of Graduation and so forth. The DMVA staff will present the board with the applicants information at either a special session or during a board meeting. Mr. Callahan recommended the board to review and vote on the applications during a board meeting for transparency, understanding the veteran's personal identifying information would remain confidential. To do this the board would be reviewing applicate A, Applicante B Applicante C etc.

Mr. Callahan clarified the board will be the Board of Veteran Affairs

Ms. Hammon requested Mr. Callahan to add the applicants to the Board's agenda as needed.

Ms. Hammon requested the applicants to be numbered with the year they apply i.e., applicante 2021-1, applicante 2021-2, applicant 2021-3 etc. This would allow for each applicante to have a name associated with a number for a blind review process.

Ms. Hammon agreed transparency would be better through public board meetings.

Mr. Callahan would like to post this information through an announcement through veteran service organizations, press release, all the CVSOs, UVC, community partners and through the Adams and Aurora Veteran Affairs Commission, per the request of Mr. Charlip. Ms. Hammon requested each organization to continue spreading the information out through their distribution list.

Mr. Gonzalez requested to ensure there is a notation on the Act to be "following federal guidance. "This is to clarify this is a federal regulation. Mr. Callahan stated this is a part of "Don't ask don't Tell," which is at its tenth anniversary.

Mr. Callahan clarified this Act is not to change DD214s at a federal level, this is at a state level to allow the board to review the packets and determine if the veteran is LGBT discharged or not. This is a state item that will possibly allow a veteran to receive state benefits they do not qualify for previously.

Ms. Scanlon questioned the paperwork required for the applicante such as the reenlist code and what program they were discharged. Mr. Callahan confirmed the personal affidavit to help with extenuating circumstances for the discharge. Mr. Gonzalez stated this sounds different from last month's discussion on the topic. Mr. Dorman explained the preferred route is going through the VA and how a veteran can

go through the process just with the state and avoid the VA. Mr. Dorman recommended the board to include a question on the application of “Did attempt to go through to the VA process? If so what was the outcome?” The board will need to review what this is or isn't so there is transparency.

Ms. Hammon and Mr. Dorman confirmed the preference is for the veteran to go through the VA. And then go through the board if they, the veteran, are denied or if they prefer going through the Board for the LBGT discharge and not through the VA.

New Member Update

Mr. Dorman spoke with Board and commission department regarding the additions to the board. The delay could be due to the bandwidth of the board and commission department.

Annual Board Training / Retreat

Ms. Hammon will schedule in a few months in hope of a new board member as well as including the new state employees.

New Business

Grants

Mr. Callahan reported DMVA is in the process of interviewing for the grants position and hopes to selection early next week, in the interim Ms. Snyder will be helping with grants. Ms. Snyder reported on the application for the Veteran Trust Fund Application and Instructions for 2022-2023 were updated by Ms. Hoagland before her departure. The only changes were updating the dates on the application from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023. There are not any changes to the Federal changes such as, CFR200 or the Uniform Grant Guidance.

Ms. Hammon asked for the deadline Ms. Snyder stated application cycle starts 1 December needs to be published on the website on 1 December, due to this deadline the Board reviews the application to be published at the November Board meeting. Ms. Hammon asked when the applications are in by, Ms. Snyder replied applications have a hard deadline of 1 March as this is an electronic submission and electronic time stamp.

Ms. Snyder stated the Webinars have been helpful in the past and would like to schedule the webinars for this year as well, starting in December through February. Ms. Hoagland has made the grants office available to advise on grant applications, Ms. Snyder would like to continue this practice and phone number will be continued. Ms. Hammon stated there has been some changes due to COVID in the grants program and is waiting changes with the Grants program. Ms. Snyder agreed there has been turnover.

Ms. Hammon asked about broadband issues for applicant in rural areas. Ms. Snyder recited the electronic submission began in the 2020-2021 grant year. This being said the grants program has not experienced broadband with the one test year, if there is a situation that arises then adjustments would be considered. Ms. Snyder stated some applicate would need to separate attachments and not submit the full package at one time. The primary questions the grant program receives are content based questions such as “demonstration of need.” Ms. Hammon stated her major concern for the rural areas and less technical savvy applicants. Ms. Snyder agreed it should be noted on the website to call the grants program for technical assistance.

Ms. Scanlon commented that some of questions on the grants application are complicated and redundant. Ms. Scanlon presented a possible solution of reducing the redundancies of question such as “How many veterans are in the area? How many veterans receive duplicate services?” To a simple fill in the blank Question. Ms. Hammon agreed and suggested “Provide the number of veterans and unduplicated veteran” Ms. Scanlon pointed out a third number question of “how many duplicate veterans do you plan to serve?” Ms. Scanlon suggested just having the numbers in one area without the sentences and Ms. Hammon agreed as long as a data source was sited. Ms. Hammon resolved question 2, 5, and 9 to be changed to a plotter where numbers are filled in with an area for the applicate to insert their data source. Mr. Gonzalez agreed the data source, in a sentence, is needed for clear understanding of the application. Ms. Scanlon questioned which data sources would be used, such as the organization? Ms. Snyder confirmed the data would come from the organization’s collected data; however, a new organization will not have historical data to use.

Mr. Gonzalez asked for a definition of a duplicated and unduplicated veteran. Ms. Snyder defined a duplicated veteran to be a veteran who received the services more than once in a fiscal year. Ms. Snyder further explained it is to capture the “repeat customers” verses original customers.

Ms. Hammon requested Ms. Snyder to combine the three questions into boxes and room for a really good data source to be reviewed by board via email, upon its completion. Ms. Snyder agreed fewer questions would be less intimidating for the applicants. Ms. Scanlon agreed this is a response to concerns voiced by the veterans.

Mr. Maday is looking forward to reviewing and watching the grants process. Ms. Snyder invited Mr. Maday to review any and all Webinars to understand the questions and concerns of the grantees. Ms. Hammon ask for the information to be shared with our organizations of the application being published on 1 December.

Reports

Brigadier General Laura Clellan updated the Board on the approval of a Women Veteran Service Officer in the 2022 State Budget, plan to hire for this position in the summer of 2022. DMVA has requested a pay raise for the State Veteran Service Officers to bring them up to equality with the County Veteran Service Officers. Mr. Dorman and the Governor are working to get the 7th board member on board.

Mr. Dorman state the Department is filling positions and has been in several interviews this weeks. The budget has been released which has been the current focus. Mr. Dorman has a temporary Legislative Liaison (LL) to attend sessions when Mr. Dorman is not able to attend. There is a meeting on 19 November for the Capital Building Advisory Committee. This committee will be discussing the Civil War Monument new location, hopefully at Joint Force Head Quarters. This would be a win-win as the statue is a monument for the Nation Guard members who fought in the Civil War as well as providing a space for a new memorial the legation would like to create and place in the previous area.

Ms. Hammon asked for clarification of the meeting, “If the meeting was just to move the statue to Head Quarters?” Mr. Dorman stated he did not review the entire agenda, but stated DMVA was attending to discuss the statue.

Ms. Scanlon asked who would be paying for the move of the statue. Mr. Dorman responded determining the scale of cost to move the statue will be discussed as well as determining this cost could be added to the department’s budget or would it be possible to fundraise for the cost of the move. Mr.

Dorman stated there are pending questions of the restoration and risk management being in the risk management portfolio, since this is an insurance type of event.

Ms. Hammon asked when the JBC hearing on the budget will take place and would the department like the board to assist or to attend. Mr. Dorman replied the staff briefing will be 2 December at 1:00 pm, Mr. Dorman will view it remotely. The Hearing will be on 14 December at 9:00 am, Mr. Dorman will advise the Board once a preference has been made from The Adjunct General.

Ms. Scanlon asked how Mr. Dorman is able to show support from the UVC for the VSOs and the Veteran Woman Coordinator. Mr. Dorman replied this can be done through multiple ways, a letter to the committee, speaking with senators, or through the UVC speaking of the importance of this compensation increase to the JBC, as this is stakeholder driven. The Board can support by drafting a letter. Ms. Hammon stated the Board will draft a letter to be sent after the staff hearing on 2 December to be sent out when it is appropriate. Ms. Hammon stated she would like to attend as the Women Veteran Coordinator position is of interest to her and other on the Board. Ms. Hammon asked Mr. Dorman to brief the General that some of the Board member would like to be present at the hearing, if possible.

Mr. Callahan the Division is moving forward with the reorganization. Recently Hired Eric Moncibias the Field Service Office VSO for Pueblo and Drew Stem the Field Service Office VSO for Aurora started on 1 November and to be accredited within 90 days, January 2022. Selected Kristy Cunningham Field Service Office VSO for Durango who will come onboard on 15 November. The Appeals Specialist position closes today will review the appropriate list and have interviews in the coming weeks.

Ms. Hammon requested clarification of the titles given to the State Veteran Service Officers as Field Representatives or Field Service Officer or Field Veteran Service Officers or Regional Veteran Service Officer or State Veteran Service Officer? Mr. Callahan stated a VSO is a VSO they can be called a State VSO they will be working in one of the five regional offices. Clarifying further there will be a State VSO in a Field Service Office, to expand assistance to the rural communities.

Ms. Hammon requested a review of the current State Field Offices and their counties. A map of Colorado was displayed with the 64 counties divided into five regions with the GDX number of Veterans in each county in the VA system as of 2019. The Gold Stars represent accredited VSOs and the Blue stars represent the Field Service Offices.

Greeley - The North East Region will be operating out of the Windsor Readiness Center through a partnership with the National Guard. This center is approximately 15 minute drive northwest of Greeley. DVA will have use of the space for a year, while we look for a permanent location. Aurora – The Denver Metro Area. Pueblo – South East region. Durango – South West region. Grand Junction – North West region.

Ms. Hammon confirmed there is permanent space for the VSOs in the other locations. Mr. Callahan confirmed the Greeley location is for a year, while the VSO establishes the area. The Aurora VSO is located at the VA Hospital. The Pueblo VSO will be in a county facility, at no charge the Durango VSO is a nominal lease with the Volunteers of America in the Commons and the Grand Junction VSO will continue to be at the WROS. Mr. Callahan reminded the Board the division was paying \$56,000 annually on the lease for the Colorado Boulevard location. So there will be cost savings with the new locations.

Mr. Charlip would like to understand the differences of the County Veteran Service officer and the Regional Veteran Service Officer. Mr. Callahan stated the State Veteran Service Officers will collaborate with the County Veteran Service Officers in their Region. The State Veteran Service officers will continue in the training to the Veteran service Offices as per the CRS, assist with the accreditation of the county service Officers. They will also take claims and assist when they need to. Thus leading to 50% of Training/Outreach and 50% of working claims. The State VSOs are community member who live in the area and can assist the countries with resources specific to the region.

Mr. Callahan stated this is draft four or five of the regional divisions. The regions are divided by terrain, mountain passes and relationship through the counties. Through the years the regions can change as needed to assist our counties.

Ms. Hammon requested Mr. Callahan to invite the new VSOs to the December Board Meeting. Mr. Callahan stated Mr. Stem was in attendance and asked for Mr. Stem to introduce himself.

Ms. Scanlon stated this is a great map to have and requested the map to be sent to all the board members, bearing in mind the number of veterans on the map are only the number of veterans registered with the VA. Mr. Taylor requested the map to be sent to the County VSOs.

Mr. Callahan presented a color coded chart of the field office, contact information for the VSO and counties in the field office region. Used as another tracker for the Division. Ms. Snyder reported this tracker is already out of date, as of yesterday, as Alamosa just hire a new VSO.

- Blue - for accredited and non-accredited VSOs
- Green - Accredited
- Amber – Non Accredited
- Red – Vacant

Ms. Hammon requested this chart to be sent out. Mr. Callahan agreed and stated this tracker will be updated monthly.

Ms. Hammon Requested a report on the Cemetery and One Source. Mr. Callahan replied the Cemetery hired a .5 FTE to assist with the Admin of the cemetery and to work on the stipend. Mr. Dominic E was working at both the Cemetery and oversight of the stipend. He is now working at the Cemetery managing the program, working through the Act to receive the funds and making payments through accounting. This stipend is up to \$75 for an honor guard to attend a funeral. If there is a second or supplicant service is up to the division to decide the amount received. This would also cover mileage an per diem to the honor guard. The Act is for \$20,000 or 266.6 services. Some Honor guard can attend upwards of a six services in a day. Due to this, we will offer \$75 for the first service and up to \$50 for a second and \$25 for a third Honor Guard Service for a maximum of \$150. To allow for Honor Guards to receive the funds as some Honor Guards attend six to eight services while others attend one service in a day. This is will be socialized to determine how the Act will play out.

Ms. Hammon requested how Mr. E is working Temporary at .5 FTE how will this work for this program? Mr. Callahan stated Mr. E is .5 FT for nine months state temporary. The position is allow .3 FTE through the Act, Mr. Callahan is working with a friend in budget and found a .2 for Mr. E with the long term of bring this position to a 1 FTE plus other items at the Cemetery.

Ms. Hammon Requested a regular report on this stipend to be in old business on the future meeting agendas. Mr. Callahan confirmed with an effective date of 15 January.

Mr. Callahan reported the Western Region One Source, has a vacancy for the DEERs operator. The current number of applicants from the Human Resource office showed 17 applicants. There was a discrepancy of the testing so it was opened for a final time last week to be complete this weekend. DVA should be given the names of the top six candidates to be interviewed. It will take about a month to fill this position.

Ms. Hammon asked if hiring a temp would be effected due to the backlog. Mr. Callahan confirmed the discussion of hiring a temporary employee resulted in not being a good use of the department's energy as some of the candidate already possess the clearance required for the position. Mr. Callahan is also working with the Army side to help with training. This training will have the new DEERs Operator train at Join Force Head Quarters then return to Grand Junction to reduce the learning curve.

Ms. Hammon reported on the United Veteran Council, appointed Bob Mc Glocklen, from Mt. Carmel, as the first Vice President as the UVC to see about enlarging the scope of the UVC to State wide with Vice Presidents in different regions. UVC is mostly Legislative work for Colorado veterans and spreading the word about resources for veterans. Admiral Young met with Mr. Callahan and the TAG. Admiral Young stated "it was a very nice meeting". The UVC is collecting information on resources and outreach for their website. New member are on the Federal Level and the banquet committee. The federal level submits letters to the Federal legislations. The banquet committee works on banquets as the primary fundraisers for the UVC. The Award banquets are separate.

Ms. Scanlon, would like to think the Adjunct General and Legislative Liaison for adding the Women Veteran Coordinator to the budgets. Than you Mr. Callahan for your update on the reorganization. Ms. Scanlon asked Mr. Callahan where the location of his office is and if he received a nice office with the new position. Mr. Callahan confirmed he is located at Join Force Head Quarters in the same location.

Ms. Scanlon stated the Women Marin Association is working on the Marine birthday 10 November there will be a celebration tomorrow at 13:45 at the Marine Memorial. The Key note Speaker will be Staff Sargent Major Warner. The Women Marine Association will have Breakfast at Buckley they are not sure what the breakfast will look like this year on 8 December. The Association has depleted their grant monies for this year and will be using donations to assist Veterans for the remainder of this year. Ms. Scanlon was the key note speaker, in uniform, at the Young Marines Ball. The uniform for the female marines will be changing to same uniform the males wear. Ms. Scanlon is authorized to wear the old uniform but would like to have a updated uniform as well.

Mr. Gonzalez did attend a Mt. Carmel Veteran Appreciation and fundraiser on 23 October. On 28 October Mr. Gonzalez attended the Rodeo Or Bust Foundation social. They fundraise monies to be returned to organizations within the community i.e. non-profits or military bases in El Paso County. El Paso County Commissioners approved a Veterans Day Proclamation on 2 November. Will attend the Colorado Springs Veteran Day Ceremony on 11 November at Memorial Park. Mr. Gonzalez will attend the Veteran's Day Parade and Reception on 6 November in Colorado Springs. Mr. Gonzalez will attend the Hoe down for Hero's on 5 November fundraiser for local veterans. The keynote speaker will be a Sargent major.

Mr. Maday presented to the Secretary of Defense, executive fellows cohorts on 20 October. This is a corporate fellowship for 04 and 05s from all branches who spend one year in a cooperate fellowship. The 16 service members will learning from the industries and how that will transition back to the Department of Defense. Google announced 20 million dollar commitment to hiring heroes. 8,000

veteran, service members and their spouses in the career forward initiative to learn skills necessary for high demand careers in the tech industry.

Ms. Hammon requested a flyer for the program to be sent to the VSO. Mr. Maday agreed to send out the blog post with the details.

Ms. Hammon briefed the Eagle County Commissioners will present a resolution on Tuesday, 9 November, thanking the Eagle county employees who are veterans. There will be eight employees who will receive a certificate. Veterans Week the Commissioners and VFW Post has presented to the schools, this year half will be virtual and the other half will be in person. The Virtual programs are filmed by the Eagle County High School Students, after the presentation the filmed interviews are sent to the library of Congress. Eagle County has their annual Freedom Park on Veterans Day, 11 November at 16:00. The keynote speaker will be a retired Female Colonel. The One Source Advisory comity will be held this month. Eagle County will be doing Trauma healing yoga healing waters is getting ready with their fly-tying programs. Home Depot have a program to assist veterans with repairs on their homes.

Remarks

Ms. Hammon stated December is traditionally a bad weather month coupled with the rise in COVID hospital rates, she requested to hold a virtual board meeting in December. Ms. Hammon also requested to get the community vaccinated along with the children as their have now been approved for the vaccine. She also requested the audience and their friends to get vaccinated, to wear a mask, wash hand and social distance.

Mr. Gonzalez confirmed there is a surge in his county however it seems the rise in deaths and hospitalities are for the populations who are 50-60-70. Mr. Gonzalez requested to concert the effort for the older populations.

Ms. Hammon confirmed the rates hospitalization rates are on the rise, however the data is showing most of the population in the hospital are unvaccinated. Ms. Hammon stress having children and adults should receive the vaccination.

Ms. Scanlon stated her daughter had the J&J, she was able to receive a booster shot as it is not a challenge to receive the shot.

Ms. Scanlon agreed to have a virtual meeting on 3 December but would like to meet at the VA hospital on 7 January.

Ms. Hammon remarked the VA Hospitals have a few rooms large enough for a socially desistance board meeting however the rooms are currently being used for vaccine clinics. The exception is in Glendale, the Visons,. Another place to meet would be at the VARO, as the board would have an opportunity to visit the two suites the board approved the VARO meeting unanimously. Ms. Hammon asked Ms. Snyder to secure a space for the January board meeting.

Ms. Scalon requested the location of the VARO. Ms. Hammon stated it is located at the VA Regional Office, 155 Van Gordon St, Lakewood.

Ms. Hammon remarked we have been very low staffed due to vacancies and the few staff we has is working extraordinary hard with extraordinary hours. Ms. Hammon stated Mr. Poteet is interviewing for the vacant positions while running appeals and supervising the Veteran Service Officers. Mr. Oney is also

working appeals. Ms. Hammon gave a huge thank you to the staff. Ms. Hammon asked Ms. Snyder if the letter Ms. Golonka, wrote for Ms. Iglesias went out. Ms. Snyder replied she has not received it. Ms. Scanlon suggested reviewing a previous draft to be reviewed by Ms. Snyder and signed by Ms. Hammon to ensure the letter we out on 5 November.

Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Meetings

03 December	Remote via Webex
07 January	Lakewood at the Veteran Administration Regional Office (VARO)

Adjournment

Ms. Scanlon motioned to adjourn the meeting Mr. Gonzalez seconded the motion, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.