

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
2014 Board Meeting Minutes

Board Minutes January 16, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters 7465 E. 1st Avenue #D
Denver, Colorado 80230

Robby Robison, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

- William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Secretary – Not Present Kathleen Dunemn, Member – Not Present Rene Simard, Member
- Jason Crow, Member Chris Holden, Member Marvin Meyers, Emeritus
- DMVA Staff Present:
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- Reuben “Ben” Mestas, CDVA Assistant Director Tamara Edmond, CDVA Administration

Guests Present:

- Richard Sandrock, Governor’s Office
- Capt. Brock Peters, Fort Carson Representative JoAnne Cohen, Rocky Mountain Human Services Shawn Young, Bootstraps, Financial Health Institute Geneva Templeton, Project Sanctuary
- Jason Strickland, Project Sanctuary

Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2013

Unanimously accepted with amendments.

Board Comments:

Chris Holden: He and Capt. Peters have been working hard to set up the agenda for February meeting held in Colorado Springs.

Marvin Meyers: UVC 42nd Award Banquet, March 30th, 2014 at the Renaissance Denver Hotel, 3801 Quebec Street, Denver, Colorado, with possibly Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson (19th Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy) as speaker.

Robby Robinson: He spoke with Mindy Gates about update on the audit for Veterans' Trust Fund and he would email the confidential update with instructions for follow through.

There were no other comments.

Public Comments Non-agenda Items (limit 3 minutes)

No Comments

Guest Presentations (Shawn Young, Bootstraps – Financial Health Institute and JoAnne Cohen, Rocky Mountain Human Services)

Shawn Young: Bootstraps

Bootstraps focuses on asset building education with emphasis on 3 life skills: civic education, workforce education, and financial education. As an educator, teaching how to do budgets surfaced. Other financial curriculum were developed with basic assumptions that individuals would have an income, be willing to do a budget so they could save and invest to retire. He found that working with individuals in homeless shelters they did not have the resources available. Bootstraps offer training to empower individuals to have the tools to make new choices around money, health, and stress. He works with Rocky Mountain Human Services, and JoAnne Cohen. Their goal is to break down paradigms about resources available and how to control and reduce financial stress. When people are under stress they sometimes have maladaptive coping techniques particularly with financial stress. 75% of individuals surveyed said their stress was due to money, and 80% of medical issues were attributed to stress.

Medical debt is the number one cause of bankruptcy. He presented an informational brochure on the "Asset Building Continuum" and said they were trying to break down the paradigms to help homeless veterans understand that they do have resources available and how to control or reduce financial stress.

JoAnne Cohen: Rocky Mountain Human Services

They get their clientele through referral agencies such as OTF, CTAP, and Rocky Mountain Human Services. They have a collective vision to get the program into military installations. They presented written testimonials from clients who experienced transformation and “ah-ha” moments when they realized they do have resources available and can learn behaviors to control or change their financial realities. She emphasized they are not financial planners but are educators. The classes they offer are facilitative where they create a safe environment to be open and learn from each other’s experiences. They may ask a soldier to tell them what their benefits are and then through discussion connect the benefits to resources. They help individuals identify their values and goals. Then, help them get these in alignment to help individuals understand what money/assets they do have. Once a quarter, they hold classes.

She said they have a class from 1pm to 5pm on 17 January, 2014 and another class next Friday, 24 January, 2014. The classes will be held at Rocky Mountain Human Services, 9900 East Iliff Avenue, Denver, CO 80231. Their vision is to help individuals have choices, gain confidence, and control over their lives. This can be life changing, transformational.

There were questions and answers from the Board. Shawn Young stated they received their funding by selling the program. They were a new venture and did not have results as of yet – just testimonials from participants. The term “bootstraps” was not originally intended for veterans but from the expression “pick yourself up by the bootstraps.”

Robby Robinson: We appreciate the information and thank you for coming.

Standing Reports Governor’s Office

Richard Sandrock: No new data on Fort Lyons.

1:00-2:00PM South High School January 16, 2014 Dedication and Plaque Ceremony honoring Maj. Gen. Keith Ware.

January 27th-31st, 2014 Metro Denver Homeless will be conducting the “Point in Time Survey” as a requirement from HUD. Metro Denver Homeless used grant money to hire formerly homeless veterans to find and note homeless veterans in Denver. Anyone interested in

volunteering for a shift, please contact Richard Sandrock.

Division of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)

No Report

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z Dissinger: Executing the VTF and getting new applications. We are going into a new Colorado Operations Accounting System.

Strategic Plan-priorities for handling the VTF

Provide money for immediate needs

1st grant requests- 1 out of 5 did not have all the required documents so he is emailing or calling them to complete the application. They need to have W-9 and Statement of Good Standing Certificate.

Under the new system, the W-9's need to be reentered and electronic funds transfer set up.

Grantees will have to register in the system to get any contract with the State and it can be difficult to get them registered.

The deadline for grant applications is 1 March 2014.

Review of grant packets will be in April and recommendations will be voted on in May.

Veteran's Assistant Grant

Ben Mestas: \$600K still needed to be spent – Les Kennedy is contacting them. The largest concern is \$150K requested by the Governor's Office for Homeless Outreach facility with only about \$30K expended.

Division of Veteran Affairs Report

Ben Mestas:

New Hires: Carissa Snyder started January 7th, we are now fully manned.

Report

Walk-ins: 272 (265)

Phone Calls: 1676 (1039)

New POA's: 371 (365)

New Claims: 746 (723)

Cemetery: Total as of this date: 2,725 (2,031 veterans, 689 spouses, 5 dependent children).

Governor Vanderhoff interment- resident of Glenwood Springs, he owned a sporting goods business there. The frost line remains at 6 inches.

VA Bill Kane retired 01/10/14 anticipate 7 months to fill the slot. Melanie (Renee) Murphy is acting Director.

Training Conference

Invited speakers include State Community Living Centers, Delta Dental, VA Mental Health/TBI Counselors, as well as other speakers from the Division and VA Staff

State Veterans Nursing Home (SVNH) Update

Jay Bobick: Following Veterans Assistance fund authorization bill- the Long Bill Addition, discussion with legislature to make this a statute, sponsor- Su Ryden (Arapahoe) working with co-sponsors. If the statute passes then it will be a good move forward, there would be not dollars on the bill.

The State Veteran's Nursing Homes official name change will be to State Veterans Community Living Centers. There will be a bill going before State Legislature to have this official name change.

Annual Report has been submitted. We are now operating 8-9 months in the black. Every Colorado State Home is solvent.

Eden Alternative is to make a home as homelike as possible and tailor services to individual residents. Nationwide, 8 nursing homes are Eden Alternative certified and in Colorado, 4 of our

state nursing homes are Eden Alternative certified.

Discussion/Action Strategic Plan

There was consensus on CBVA that there is a need for a strategic plan and the development of the strategic plan is a valuable process. Also, there was consensus that an outside entity would be beneficial for development of strategic plan, setting goals and objectives.

Veterans Survey

Robby Robinson: He shared email from Kathleen Dunemn voicing concerns with validity of the Veterans Survey, electronic access to the survey, and representative population.

Points to consider:

Assessment of needs – data is either readily available or it is not relevant.

Identifying data gaps and how to connect these needs with the Veterans Trust Fund Grant

Challenge of reaching a wider audience since the responses came from a narrow sector even though the results were statistically valid

Getting a true random sample of veterans is a huge challenge

Future Meetings

0930 AM on 20 February 2014 to be held at **Exelis**, 655 Space Center Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80915

VA Regional Office Update on March 13, 2014 or March 20, 2014 (TBA) Motion to adjourn by Jay Bobick, seconded by Rene Simard and Chris Holden. Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

Board Minutes February 20, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
Exelis Headquarters 655 Space Center Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80915

Robby Robison, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1010 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

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- Kathleen Dunemn, Member – Not Present Rene Simard, Member-Not Present
- Jason Crow, Member Chris Holden, Member
- Marvin Meyers, Emeritus – Not Present DMVA Staff Present:
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator William “Bill” Conroy, CDVA Director Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Guests Present:

- Richard Sandrock, Governor’s Office
- LtCol (Ret.) Hal Bidlack, Representative, Senator Bennet’s Office, Colorado Springs Bill Gray, Exelis, Deputy Director
- Aaron Hunt, Photographer, Exelis
- Rick Lynch, Communication Director, Exelis LTC Russell Morton, Fort Carson
- MAJ Brock Peters, Fort Carson Representative
- Mike Webb, Transitions University, Director of Human Relations, Ft. Carson Shelly Anderson, Transition University
- Leeann Wheeler, Veterans Advocate, Wheeler Advisory Group

Robby Robison: We appreciate the opportunity to come to Colorado Springs and have the meeting here at Exelis. Thank you for hosting us and I am turning it over to Chris Holden for the first part of the meeting.

Chris Holden: Thank you. First, I have some positive news, last month Captain Brock Peters attended this session and now Major Brock Peters is here today. Congratulations on your promotion, Major Peters.

Guest Presentations

Exelis Action Corps – Mr. Bill Gray, Deputy Director, Exelis Corp.

Bill Gray: Good Morning and thank you for the compliments. I am very proud to host the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs here. We take great pride that many of our activities are collaborated with DOD, shoulder to shoulder with our fighting men and women. Exelis is a proud contributor to the environment.

Out of approximately 6,800 employees Exelis employs there are over 1/3rd of these veterans. That is very dear to our hearts. Many of these veterans are part of the Action Corp that contributes back to helping the community.

A quick overview of what we do:

Mission Systems Operations

Facilities Management: We maintain buildings like this and make sure they are up and running.

Logistics: We supply and manage transportation and do installation set-up with the Army around the world.

Information Technology and Network Communication: We have some great bragging rights here and manage state of the art information technology and communication networks for some high profile facilities.

Action Corp is Exelis's charity/philanthropic organization giving back to the community. This is something we take very seriously because we realize giving back to the community is critically important. Action Corp is an employee volunteerism program committed to making a difference for our nation's returning military service members, veterans, their families, and their communities. We do it in a variety of ways:

As either individuals or group projects

Partner with local organization

Collaborating with the community and service members

As of yesterday, Exelis has contributed approximately \$5M toward Action Corp efforts. A couple of snapshots of Action Corp projects are:

Wounded Warrior Divers: SUDS Soldiers Undertaking Underwater Scuba, Veterans who were Scuba certified helping take disabled veterans SCUBA diving. Some of these disabled veterans had never been SCUBA diving before and they loved it. It is a very successful activity.

Battle of the Bulbs, Colorado Springs, CO: This Christmas we contributed to a community effort to help hang Christmas lights for community members who needed help. Your own, Chris Holden got so engaged in this process that when he got home and his wife asked him to put up the Christmas lights, he had to call someone else to hang his lights.

Rebuild Veterans Home, Maxwell AFB, AL: At Maxwell AFB, we do construction work as well as other things. We have a lot of tradesmen with the skill set in the trades such as plumbing and carpentry. They collaborated with “Homes for Heroes” to build this house for a veteran in need of a home. It was a really rewarding experience and they plan to continue this effort.

Veterans’ Day, Fort Benning, GA: Sometimes an individual can make all the difference in the world. At Fort Benning, GA, there is a young lady named Valencia Pease, with her pink boxing gloves, she is so full of life and serves her community. She has coordinated significant events with Action Corps and other organizations with events planned almost every other month. She has done such a phenomenal job that President Obama recognized her with the “Point of Lights” award for her service to the community. A two-time cancer survivor, Pease started the Pink Peaches Cancer Foundation in 2011 to bring financial and educational aid and comfort to people suffering from cancer and Lou Gehrig’s disease. This is the caliber of people we have.

Warrior Games, Mission Systems HQ, Colorado Springs: This is one I love and have a passion for, so you can understand if I get a little emotional. This is about a young man who lost his arm in the war; I had the honor of shooting with a young man who won the Gold Medal. He

stepped up to the line, he pulled his bow. You may ask yourself how he learned to shoot, learn to walk after that disastrous event, but he did. He taught himself how to pull the bow with his good left arm and how to shoot steady with his prosthetic arm and a special attachment.

As he went up to the line to shoot his final round, the entire auditorium was dead silent. He shot a perfect round. This was an amazing example of fortitude and drive. Quite honestly, this is reflected in our company and in everything we do.

Transition Seminar

We held the first Transition Seminar in 2013 and had 60 participants. It was held at Mission Systems HQ. This was offered to those service members in transition in the process of retiring or already retired. They wanted the opportunity to sit down face-to-face with corporate leadership to find out how they had managed the transition from active duty military to the civilian world. They wanted to know what the differences and what do they have to do to prepare? It was a wonderful opportunity for us to have some candid conversations. We had a really solid mix of veterans in the crowd from our organization that had been there and done that. There are always lessons learned and things you shouldn't do or should have done. The input we received from Mike was the seminar was very well received.

Robby Robinson: Where do the ideas come from for the service projects for Action Corps?

Bill Gray: We have an entire communications set up to filter these ideas in. George Rhinedance facilitates Action Corps and most of the ideas generate directly from the employees. They have a process where they come up with an idea and we will capitalize on it.

Chris Holden: More like Shelly who gives ideas for programs to Mike.

Robby Robinson: To put up Christmas lights, where did that idea come from?

Chris Holden: Team Red, White, and Blue

Robby Robinson: So, are you tied in with other veteran organizations and groups in the community?

Jay Bobick: Do all of your locations have similar programs?

Bill Gray: Yes

Jay Bobick: How many employees are involved in Action Corps?

Chris Holden: There are around 230 employees who volunteer here.

Bill Gray: We have 6,800 employees for Exelis and around 7,000 contractors.

Robby Robinson: Where are your headquarters?

Chris Holden: The headquarters is located in McLean, VA. What you probably did not know is we are going to spin off this summer and create a new company here in Colorado Springs, Newco. We will be a separate service entity. Newco will be the largest headquarters corporation publically traded here in Colorado Springs.

Jay Bobick: What specifically does Exelis do?

Bill Gray: Exelis has facilities management which maintains installation grounds, air conditioning, heating, electric, and runway support. We provide a full spectrum of services to keep facilities up and running from standby generators, air conditioning, housing, to taking out the trash, where there is grass we cut it. We are committed to ensuring the welfare of the troops. We manage logistics, Fort Benning and Fort Bragg for example with transportation to providing office supplies. Also, we have the information technology/network communication section.

Chris Holden: We take care of the entire communications network at Central Command at MacDill AFB. We provide service, infrastructure, to the whole communications network for both classified and declassified networks. We do everything the Army doesn't want to do on that base.

General discussion about Exelis and how much they do to support the military.

Ray Z: You don't own all this, you provide the infrastructure and draw together the contractors, in-country contractors, sub-contractors, is that what you do?

Bill Gray: Right, our product is our people.

Shelly Anderson: Were you able to hire any of the troops from the Transition Seminar?

Bill Gray: I don't know the statistics on how that all worked out. We did hire Katie, an Air Force Staff Sergeant that got out and got her English degree. She has exquisite experience. She had been in Afghanistan for two tours. Many of the challenges we have with veterans is they are not just aware of how much they bring to the table. They don't want to talk about it, they don't want to brag about it. She was a veteran with extensive experience particularly with combat, security experience, facilities maintenance, and human services. She had a one-on-one understanding of what the customers want and was the ideal candidate.

Dana Niemela: My day job is helping veterans find employment. What I have found is that there are plenty of jobs. The issue is preparing the veterans to nail the interview. What would you say from your experience is the biggest challenge you see when hiring veterans?

Bill Gray: Some veterans do oversell themselves. Mike and I had a discussion about this subject this morning. The veteran comes in with their rank on their shoulder and thinks that is going to get them the job. It is important for them to focus on their skill set and not on what rank they were. Helping them prepare the resume, most of them come in with three pages of military experience and it does not translate into actual skills required to do the job. I would ask them, "What skill set did you use in your command job?" The degree that veterans can put their "skill set" into practical terms for what the client's needs are the better they will be able to compete in the job market.

Mike Webb: When we put on Transition University, we consulted corporate leaders like Bill and asked what they were looking for to hire veterans. Many corporation leaders responded that they were finding soldiers, who could not write résumés, and they did not interview very well and they did not know how to sell themselves. It is very hard for them to make the transition to be able to sell self from the team mentality of the military to the "I" can attitude needed.

Transition University not only teaches them the basics. We develop relationships with corporations to identify the needs of the corporation, i.e. Bill and others.

Bill Gray: To give a real world example: At Exelis, it is a policy companywide not to forward résumés to Human Resources. HR specialist screens the résumés, and those that meet all the

criteria, specific flag words, and skill set are filtered through to the hiring department.

Chris Holden: I get the post-screened résumés. If they don't put "flag words" then the résumés does not get seen by the specialist. It is a tough transition learning how to write a résumé.

Dana Niemela: I appreciate your feedback. As a former hiring manager, I wanted to make sure my perception was not out of date. You need to distinguish "you" from "we", and it is a tough burden for soldiers to make for self-recognition. You need an in-house specialist to be able to do military résumés.

Jay Bobick: You mentioned you do runway maintenance. Do you have an operation plan in the event we went to all-out war?

Bill Gray: Operation plans are specific to each site. We have the in-house capability to assess the need for upcoming contracts where we can have a turn-around in one month.

Chris Holden: We received an award fee to train Afghanistan national to do public works, i.e. security, trash, water, electricity, sewer, etc. We are helping to train them to replace us.

Almost every one of these contractors is a veteran- then they normally sign up to work for these kinds of programs.

LTC Morton:

Present and Future of 4th Infantry Division Present

4th Infantry Division: trains, deploys, sustains units and teams for combat

What we learned in Afghanistan, offensive and defensive operations specific to the terrain. We are training young soldiers to plan and execute basic functions

We will be spending more time out in the field and down at Pinion Canyon. We are training young soldiers to be leaders and taking care of their families.

Current focus: Sexual Harassment

It is about taking care of the individual, taking care of what we have, preparing the soldier to go

in harm's way.

Chris Holden: Why is sexual harassment so important?

LTC Morton: It is important to take care of the soldier that is our number one priority.

When sexual harassment occurs it is not taking care of the individual and this works its way up through the organization. Sexual harassment undermines trust. We are beginning to understand where and how it happens, how to identify it and prevent it from happening.

Regional Command South

We are providing support to Regional Command South (RC-S) Headquarters

Transition to take care of South

Focus on Soldiers and their families strengths

Operation Spartan Shield- providing support for Kuwait and Qatar.

Global Response Force (GFR) - pre 9/11 type of force that maintains specific readiness forces to respond with capability quickly.

Robby Robinson: Please explain some of the acronyms from the PowerPoint slide such as C2CRE.

LTC Morton: The 82nd provides capabilities such as "command and control responsibilities" (C2CRE).

Next, the Fort Carson Unit Laydown:

There are a few units in the states

Balkans- 71 OG

Winter Olympics- Fort Carson is the home of the World Class Athletes Program.

Global Response Force – 3 BCT, 43 SB

Afghanistan – There are a number of organizations: 4th ID, 41 BCT, 43d

We also have teams paired up with National Guard Brigades for joint training. These teams are incorporated in planning and execution of training exercises.

Hal Bidlack: Are these National Guard units deploying with the 4th ID?

Dana Niemela: Didn't some of your guys' medal in the Bobsled event?

LTC Morton: \$2.5B is funneled into the Colorado area by Ft. Carson. \$260M is expended annually toward construction and contracts. Fort Carson has a significant financial impact to the community. There are a number of elementary schools located directly on Fort Carson. We operate on a net zero plans to be energy efficient through recycling, solar energy, and water.

We have actively provided community response. We were proud to respond with support to the Waldo Canyon Fire 2012 and the Black Forest Fire 2013 as well as support during the recent flooding in Boulder and Lyons areas. We have learned to respond with greater capability.

The Brigade breakdown is 4 Combat Brigades to include: 3 Mechanized (Armored) Brigades and 1 Light Infantry Brigade. Even though we are going through a period of downsizing, there will not be a huge reduction in overall numbers just a restructuring of the forces. We are transitioning the Brigade from Armored to Strykers (4,200 to increase to 4,400). The 2nd Column of Mechanized Brigade will go away. Overall, some of these troops will transfer to other Brigades. The 3rd Column, there will be no changes and it will grow a couple of Battalions. The 4th Column will stay the same with the Light Infantry. The Aviation Brigade will be activated with 75%-80% strength. The Artillery Brigade currently at Fort Sill, OK is scheduled to transition from Oklahoma to Colorado by FY2016.

Richard Sandrock: How are the new Strykers different from the armored tanks?

LTC Morton: Joint Lewis/McCord, WA will receive the old Strykers and we will transition to the newer model. The Stryker family description (main battle system) the hull can be altered, but it has the same engine, same tires, and can do anything like a tank, i.e. shoot mortars, and it can also carry troops in the back.

Jay Bobick: So what is the combat weight of the Strykers?

LTC Morton: 3,000 lbs more than the C-130 will carry.

Hal Biblack: Why is the Stryker better than the tank?

LTC Morton: They have excellent mobility, operate on different types of terrain, are quieter, and use less fuel. In general, other than having a main tank, it can also carry troops on the back.

Chris Holden: They are better for fighting, good to have.

LTC Morton: The Warrior Transition Brigade (WTB) will transition. They are not operating at capacity but will see an increase as the other programs transition or downsize. Fort Carson will not downsize the WTB.

Jason Crow: Most of the Army has seen nothing but war and as we transition away from Afghanistan, what kind of challenges are you expecting for soldiers as they reacclimatize to a garrison environment?

LTC Morton: We will be getting back to the standard and focus on training. Many of the junior leaders and soldiers do not know how to think about planning and executing for a training event. Because we are transitioning so fast from soldiers operating in a structured environment where we tell them what to do, where to be, and what equipment to bring, and the contractors were executing the details of planning and executing training events. The changing culture will be where everyone does the training events from planning to execution.

Dana Niemela: A couple of organizations such as Team Red, White, and Blue and Team Rubicon are a great ways to get soldiers involved. There is a chapter here in Colorado Springs looking for service members and veterans to contribute to the community. Also, Team Rubicon does disaster relief, such as Longmont, Lyons, and even helped with the flood recovery efforts in Manitou Springs, CO. They are a national organization.

Shelly Anderson: How do we find out information about Team Red, White, and Blue?

Dana Niemela: There will be a Meet and Greet next Friday, so if you email me, I will send you

the information.

Transition University, Mike Webb, Director of Human Resources, Ft. Carson

Mike Webb: For transition services, we are the best! I solicited feedback from other organizations: Veterans Offer to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act 2011, Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and Department of Labor (DOL). From talking to these other programs, we found that TAP was only giving the soldiers the basic skills. I want my soldiers to transition to a career not just a job. When we first started Transition University, we started with 100 soldiers a month and now we are up to 500 soldiers a month. Soldiers who are transitioning to retirement or to chapters spend 5 days in Transition University. Soldiers who are not receiving Honorable Discharge spend one day because they really do not qualify for any other benefits.

We collaborate with Department of Labor (DOL) to build employer connections and transition groups. From Transition University alumni, over 50% of known soldiers are getting jobs. 80% who go off to college remain in college. And 20% are staying in Colorado. We are mandated that every soldier has a résumé or must have an application for college. At Transition University, we go one step further. We are linked in with Veterans Offices at every college.

The success factor involves community leaders giving back to the veterans, for example: Men's Warehouse on North Academy, offers a "Dress for Success" class as well as Joseph A. Banks. We had a soldier that had a call on a Thursday night that he had an interview on Monday. He went to Men's Warehouse on Friday and she stayed to make sure had had a fantastic suit and the soldier ended up getting the job.

We have soldiers come back at intervals in the university concept. Transition University at Fort Carson is the only installation doing a second week of training. Also it is the only installation with joint services: Military/Veterans, Employment Exposition had 5,000 participants and now 1,500 veterans now have jobs.

From 13-15 May 2014 we will have preliminary training at Pikes Peak Workforce Center, a refresher to help veterans redo their résumés. There are 190 businesses participating and when they participate they have to have 25 jobs available to hire for veterans and be ready to interview and hire on the spot. We have 2 of these events a year and one specific to Fort Carson soldiers.

The Union Association- Veterans to Piping (VIP) with the Local 58 Welders Union have reached out to support veterans by sponsoring training and apprenticeships. There are slots for 9 soldiers in the program and participation in this opportunity serves as their place of duty, where they are trained and certified how to be welders. It takes \$25, 000 to train a soldier but the Union is picking up the bill and these soldiers will be certified on 10 certification levels. The first class will graduate on 7 March 2014. These welders start out at \$35,000 per year and they are guaranteed a job for 6 years. The soldiers are screened and go through a rigorous selection process. They have to be recommended by their Sergeant Major.

Shelly Anderson came over from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). There are 3 initiatives in the Joint Services Transitional Training (to combine resources, seeking a centralized facility with Colorado Springs Area.) Other programs that have been highly successful are Career Skills Development Program with internships, Wounded Warriors, and “Operation Warfight.” The Department of Defense has a focus on transition planning for service members to civilian life. An example of engagement in this transition was Mercedes who works for Senator Bennet’s Office. She was interested in politics and served in a civilian internship.

This was an excellent opportunity for her to experience working in politics and determine if this was the direction she wanted to pursue. There are also Virtual Hiring Events targeting deployed transitioning service members. There is a need for providing transition for soldiers/members deployed overseas.

Jay Bobick: Have any other services queried you about collaborating through joint services ventures?

Mike Webb: Peterson AFB, USAFA, and some outreach.

Dana Niemela: My assumption is that on some level you are tracking outcomes.

Mike Webb: Absolutely. Also, we are working with the Chamber of Commerce, other Army installations we do a digital conference once a month. We asked ourselves, how are we going to measure success? Are we being a burden to the community because a soldier cannot find a job? DOD has started to see unemployment for veterans decline. We want to help the state of Colorado, help with the transition, even if they are coming from Korea. When a soldier reaches

out whom are they going to? If they are transitioning from Colorado to Florida, who are they going to?

We try to keep tabs on every soldier that transition, to call us with updates. We are only as good as the information that we put out. We ask ourselves, how to stay relevant to employers. What are the buzz words, negotiating words? This is a win-win; we are giving you a better product.

Jay Bobick: Can Transition University be adapted to share with other services?

Robby Robinson: The old attitude of the soldier getting out was they needed to collect unemployment and go to college.

Mike Webb: We emphasize the fact that you cannot live on the 9/11 G.I. Bill. During the 2nd week of Transition University, we go through choices to emphasize the specific route the soldier is choosing, such as education. Military Child Coalition recognizes that the need is not just for the soldier, but for the wife, and the kids.

We've changed from 14 months ago until now. We get feedback from businesses and soldiers in order to reinvent the classes, to get a better product. We have added coursework focused on extra life skills such as budgeting and finance.

Shelly Anderson: Employer Connection: what we hear from employers is that we cannot find vets to hire and when we do find veterans, we can't understand them. In December 2013, the Denver Mint was hiring 16 positions and through collaboration between the DOL, VA, and sister services, the Mint was authorized to hire these 16 veterans. DOL has a mandated portion of the program that has to be taught at Transition University.

Mike Webb: We maintain a high level of instruction, DOL covers the basics. There are those that are not motivated and we are targeting these soldiers because it helps teach them more specific skills.

Jason Crow: One of the struggles I have noticed with mentoring young Afghanistan/Iraqi veterans is that there is a lot of back slapping when they return telling them great job and thank you for your service. Then, some of them think that they are going to be handed a job.

Mike Webb: Shelly and I identify those who are struggling. We have those conversations with these service members about how tough the job market is and what they can do to be better prepared. We offer alumni outreach or reach back to help when they are struggling. We want them to keep us informed and let us know how we can help them. I tell them to call me and my people and we will do what we can to help you.

An excellent program that we support is Prep Connect 360° Transition. It is a workshop collaborated with Pikes Peak Workforce Center and it will begin next week, Thursday, 21 February. This is a 5-day event, sponsored by the Colorado MVS Employment Coalition, is a community-based effort with service contributions from multiple sources. The Prep Connect 360° staff takes an all-inclusive method to military-to-civilian transition by focusing on life transition with specific emphasis on career transition. Through a combination of expert briefings and hands-on experiences, participants learn from facilitators and from each how to navigate their own transition experience. The Prep Connect 360° facilitators are Veterans who have "been there, done that" themselves, enthusiastic to share their own experiences and lessons learned.

Chris Holden: Thank you for the great information and for your passion for helping veterans.

Robby Robinson: Let's take a 5-minute break.

Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2014 Unanimously accepted with amendments.

Board Member Comments

Dana Niemela: She attended the national conference for the "National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans." There were a number of reports where people could not stop raving about the customer care at Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. She asked them, If there was one thing you wanted your community to know, the comments went along the lines that the Doctors and

Nurses were amazing. She gave an example of an OIF veteran's wife response: The information the VA provides was limited and confusing. She said the Wounded Warrior Project helped them be aware of resources. She said outside of being designated a "caretaker" it was difficult to navigate the VA Medical system. Once she was the caretaker, then she was given more information and she said she was really pleased with the level of care. I think it is really important for the Board to hear the positive feedback out there. I was very proud. Even though

there were 3 guys recovering in a room designated for 1 person but they said they were well cared for. So, go to the VA Hospital.

Jay Bobick: The trouble with the VA if you have a cold or a cut finger, it will take you forever. For minor care the VA Medical Centers are overwhelmed and you have to sit there for hours and hours but if you have a heart attack, the VA is excellent.

Bill Conroy: There is just a huge volume of people needing care. Dealing with the VA as a Service Officer he has seen many changes but it is definitely getting better. What Dana just said, you never used to hear. Back in the day, people were screaming on the phone to me about the quality of care at the VA, but now it is great to hear that they have improved and are getting compliments.

Jay Bobick: A lot of people don't realize that they also have an agreement with the University Hospital so they swap resources depending on the need. You could go to the VA and have an intern from the University working on you and vice versa, you could go to the University Hospital and see a VA doctor you have seen for years at the VA.

Jason Crow: No comments.

Chris Holden: No comments.

Public Comments

Leeann Wheeler: She was heading over to Fort Lyon. She wanted to extend an invitation on behalf of Clayton Chidester, Commander from Las Animas VFW, Post #2411 at Fort Lyon in Bent County offered to host the CBVA for a monthly meeting. She said they were planning to submit a grant for the Tobacco Trust Fund for some work they were doing down there for homeless veterans. She would make sure they made contact with Ray Z Dissinger, phone number, 720- 732-4957, and the deadline was March 1, 2014.

Richard Sandrock: Friday, the Colorado Army National Guard had a detachment deploying to Afghanistan. They are a special operations detachment. The Lt. Governor, Joseph Garcia will be speaking at the event since he has a son-in-law who has deployed to Afghanistan several times in the past 2/12 year, he is very honored to have the opportunity to speak to these troops. It will be

at Wings Over the Rockies at 1:45 pm. Lacy Bianca will be deploying with this unit.

Additionally, he attended the Fort Lyon planning meeting for local affairs, where they said they wanted 12% of the number of residents at Fort Lyons to be homeless veterans. There are currently 18% of the number of residents' they are serving are homeless veterans. Roxanne White, Governor Hickenlooper's Chief of Staff, sent an email to say they wanted to make the percentage of homeless veterans they were serving at Fort Lyons even higher. He already spoke with UVC but would be contacting Bill about better educating VSO to reach out to the homeless.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z Dissinger: First, 12/13 are a little behind. He said they have about \$400K, and he will get with VFW Post1 to follow-up. They are not all that far behind. Second, for FY 14-15 the goal is to have the website active for applicants. The company hired to do the state website had a glitch that has to do with the way the department has their website set up, some people can access it, but some grant applicants are not able to access it. I gave you my phone number. I sent out an email to all the grantees. There have been 15 grant applications so far and we are coming up on the deadline of 1 March 2014. I usually get at least 50 applications by now. Many of the individuals wait to the last minute to apply. If an application is lacking, he will contact them to help get the grant polished. I want to base the award on the need for a grant not on an individual's ability to write a grant. He also talked to Information Technology and basically, it is a problem. Third, each applicant has to have a W-9 and a "Certificate of Good Standing" from Colorado. I have about 30% doing that, but I get with them and let them know what they need. If any veterans service organization needs help with a grant, have them call at 720-732-4957.

The last and I feel a very important item. I have been working with Mr. Conroy and Mr. Gilotti. The Cemetery hires part-time personnel to help with the grounds keeping and this year they are coming up short. If we don't help them out with it, then the services will deteriorate. Next year they are getting an additional FTE which should help alleviate the pain, but this year they need help. There is \$1,894.83 left over in the VTF. However, we have a grantee that has still not gotten the statement of good standing therefore they never got a contract for \$5,000. This would

free up approximately \$7,000. If the Board, and this is the motion if the Board will accept it, I looked it up and I believe it says, “care and maintenance” for the cemetery, if we provide a letter and not as a grant. If the Board takes and rescinds the grant approval then it will provide enough money to not have a degradation of services for the cemetery. The second part of that motion is to allow the \$7K to be used by the cemetery to fund the hire of part-time services for upkeep.

There was discussion among Board Members about the statute wording whether this would be legal to do and the need for a letter on file from Bill Conroy requesting this action.

Jason Crow: He has to leave for a meeting. He gave Chris his proxy for the vote. He said if there is any ambiguity as to the appropriate use of grant funds he would feel more comfortable if legal would review the statute. Being under scrutiny, since we are under audit, he stated that we need to have legal review it and have a letter or opinion from the person who does the legal analysis.

Discussion about whether getting legal to look at the proposition would be necessary or not.

Robby Robinson: To restate what you want to do, remove money from an underperforming grant then reallocate it to the cemetery. Can we take the money from under an existing contract and use it to fund the cemetery seasonal hires?

Ray Z: It is not an existing contract, there was never a contract, and we are just rescinding the approval so the money would just be utilized for the cemetery. We have done this before, it is not something new.

Jason Crow: Number one, just because we have done it in the past does not make it right. Number two, regardless of whether or not there is not a written contract, we have obligated funds to somebody. My opinion is that I am uncomfortable with making that decision with the limited information that we have.

Dana Niemela: I concur with Jason on that one considering we are following up on audit recommendations.

Robby Robinson: Where is the money, is it in the trust fund?

Ray Z Dissinger: The money is in the trust fund. We awarded a grant and no contract was done

because the organization does not have a “Certificate of Good Standing” with the state.

Therefore, the money never has been contracted. Robby Robinson: So it is sitting in the trust fund?

Ray Z: The money was not given to the organization because they did not meet the guidelines even though it was initially awarded.

Robby Robinson: You could ask the lawyers, but they are military lawyers and can read the law. If you ask the Attorney General, then it will take much longer, like Ray said and then there would be no money available.

Jay Bobick: We are charged with administration of the Trust Fund grant. The money we are talking about is still in the Trust Fund they have never been put into any grant. Yes, there was a grant but when we had all the grants lined up, that one lined up. The money was never issued the money is still in the Trust Fund. That takes care of that issue. That money is there to do with what we wish under the guidelines or policies. Now we have a situation where money is needed out at the cemetery. Dick Gilotti has asked for it. Then we look to see what our guidelines say and it is just a simple statement which then would cover maintenance. So, reading that, the money can be allocated for that purpose. My problem is I want something in writing. We have already solved that problem because Bill is going to write a letter requesting those funds and submit it to Ray Z. That fills that square. Therefore, I am going to make a motion that we approve that funding. I would feel a lot better if that letter was already in Ray’s hands but that letter can be there this afternoon or tomorrow and I can live with that.

So with that in mind, I move that we approve what Ray has presented to us. Are there any seconds?

Robby Robinson: I second that. Is there any further discussions?

Robby Robison: So what we are voting on is subject to a letter submitted by Bill to Ray.

The motion is to rescind grant approval for the organization that did not meet the guidelines. Jay Bobick: Move

Chris Holden: Second

Jay Bobick: Excuse me: does Chris understand what we are voting on? We will have to restate the motion so everybody understands.

Robby Robinson: The motion is to approve \$6,894.93 from the Veterans Trust Fund to be transferred to the cemetery for the costs incurred for maintenance subject to a written request submitted by Bill Conroy.

Ray Z: We also need to rescind the grant approval. I don't know if we have ever had the Board vote on rescinding the approval of a grant that has never been contracted and it won't be. But the Board did approve.

Jay Bobick: That is a separate issue. Dick Gilotti doesn't have the money so you are sending it to him.

Robby Robinson: I think we will need to have a motion on that.

Dana Niemela: The third motion would be then to rescind the grant approval.

Robby Robinson: That would have to be. Do I have the motion? All in favor of rescinding the grant approval, say "Aye."

Robby Robinson: Aye

Jay Bobick: Aye

Chris Holden: Aye

Dana Niemela: Aye

Robby Robinson: So, that carries. Any further discussion on the second motion which was to take the money that was freed up and give it to Dick Gilotti? So we will have to have the second motion.

Chris Holden: The second motion has to do with what Jason was concerned about with the legality of giving the money to the Cemetery.

Robby Robinson: Yes, Jason wants a legal opinion on the legality of doing what we are proposing to do. So, all in favor of the second motion say, “Aye.”

Robby Robinson: Aye

Jay Bobick: Aye

Chris Holden: Nay

Chris Holden: (Vote Proxy for Jason Crow) Nay

Dana Niemela: Nay

Robby Robinson: Okay, so that fails 3-2. So, let’s move on to the next one.

Dana Niemela: Okay, so if we get the letter from Bill requesting the funds and it goes to the Board and then what we would do is take it to the designated legal counsel to say we have this that was not expended in the Trust Fund and we would be asking if it is okay to allocate this money that we have in the Trust Fund.

Jay Bobick: We can’t take everything we do to some legal counsel. We are charged as the Board to administer these funds. That is our job. We need to do that. If we start taking everything we do to ask some legal, will never do anything.

Robby Robinson: We have discussed it, we voted on it and the decision 3-2 was to do it. We will get a legal opinion and we can vote again. I will put the motion in writing and send it by e- mail and we can vote by e-mail.

We are asking if this money that was allocated to an organization that is not eligible to move forward can be rescinded. We voted to rescind that. We want to take that money that we rescinded from the grant and can we send it to the Cemetery? We need to have relevant pieces of the statute applied. Are we acting within the law?

Veteran’s Assistance Grant

Bill Conroy: Mr. Kennedy did not give me any problems, everything is moving along. I think he

is still negotiating with the Governor's Office.

I know most of you are aware that Chris Skzela passed away three weeks ago, and I have a card for you to sign for Beverly. It was pretty sudden, she retired in October and in the first part of February, we got the news that she passed away. She fell and broke her hip, infection set in. It just went downhill from there. Also, there is a celebration of her life and we are passing around the invitation for anyone who wants to attend.

VA Appeals are backed up. They are kicking our butts with the number of requests for hearings. We are having appeal hearings every month and they have additional staff helping out. It is no problem. It is working out well. I might add Angie and Carissa, staff at the Regional Office (RO) have been very helpful.

We are seeing more business and getting busier every week.

State Veteran's Nursing Home

Jay Bobick: The deputy position at Human Services has been filled. The person filling Vickie's position, C.J. is an asset, she knows the system. Brad Honnell quickly left as Administrator at Fitzsimmons due to another job offer. There were some significant issues. We are very happy with the new fellow. He knows how to deal with the geriatric population with sensitivity and respect.

Discussion/Action Strategic Plan

Robby Robinson: We will put the strategic plan in abeyance.

For Grant criteria, we are considering the point system to identify top priority with points on how we categorize grants, i.e. homeless prevention.

State Veterans Nursing Homes will be taken out of the applicants for Grants and will make their requests individually.

There was discussion among the Board Members about the merits of the point system when using grants.

Future Meetings

13 March 2014, VA Regional Office, 155 Van Gordon, Lakewood, CO 80228, at 9:30am

Old Business

Jay Bobick: Question. Where would you put the State Veteran Nursing Homes? Based on past performance...

Motion to adjourn at 12:15pm by Robby Robinson. Seconded by Jay Bobick and Chris Holden.

Board Minutes March 13, 2014, 0930 Hrs.

Denver VA Regional Office

155 Van Gordon, Lakewood, CO 80228

Robby Robison, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman

- Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Secretary – Not Present
- Kathleen Dunem, Member
- Rene Simard, Member
- Jason Crow, Member – Not Present
- Chris Holden, Member
- Marvin Meyers, Emeritus – Not Present DMVA Staff Present:
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- Gregg Parker, DMVA
- William “Bill” Conroy, CDVA Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
- Angela Jones, CDVA Colorado SVSO

Guests Present:

- Richard Sandrock, Governor’s Office
- Rebecca Sawyer-Smith, VARO
- Renaye Murphy, VARO, Acting Director
- Jason LeBlanc, State Auditor, Colorado State Audit Committee
- Mindy Gates, State Auditor, Colorado State Audit Committee

- Leanne Wheeler, Veterans Advocate, Wheeler Advisory Group

Robby Robinson: There were two issues up for discussion in the last meeting. There were two motions. One was to withdraw recommendation for approval for a grant. We passed that motion. The second one was to take that money released by that motion and take the money to provide it to the cemetery. That motion failed. The second motion is on the agenda for reconsideration.

Approval of Minutes from February 20, 2014

Unanimously accepted

Board Member Comments

Rene Simard: I have a new job at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce as the Executive Vice President and Chief, Military Affairs, which is a replacement for George Peck, if you remember him. I will be shadowing him through the transition as his replacement. I will also run the Leadership Aurora program.

Kathleen Dunemn: No comment.

Jay Bobick: No comment

Chris Holden: Last week, I had an introductory office call with Col. Grasso; he is the installation Commander at Fort Carson and Mike Webb who briefed us on the Transitions University last month. Mike Webb and LTC Morton both said to say thank you to the Board for allowing them to be part of the Board and make their presentations last month.

Jay Bobick: Chris, it was very enjoyable, a great presentation and time to meet everyone. It was great to see your business and all that you do. It is also scary that so much is being transferred to civilian care.

Public Comments

Mindy Gates: We are here for the Audit to observe and if the Board wants to go into Executive Session afterwards to discuss some procedural issues that would be fine. I would like to remind the Board that the information discussed during the Audit is confidential and not to be discussed during the open Board meeting.

Guests Presentations

Renaye Murphy, VARO, Acting Director

Robby Robinson: I would like to introduce Renaye Murphy, VARO, Acting Director, replacing Bill Kane. Thank you to Renaye for allowing us to come to meet here and share in what is going on with the VA. We usually have one meeting here a year and we like to come here. We appreciate what the CDVA does, but know that the bulk of the responsibility to veterans come from the big VA. It is good to know what they are doing and what their issues are, so I asked her to talk to us. Renaye, thanks for letting us meet here today.

Renaye Murphy: You are welcome and we look forward to having you come every year. As you know Bill Kane retired in January, our area director was out here yesterday and he notified us that a name has been forwarded for the official director position. We are hoping that 30-45 days for now we will know who the official director will be. I served in this position back in 2010 when Janice Jacobs left I was here for seven months.

Here at the Denver VA Regional Office, in the service center, we serve Denver veterans and Colorado claims but we also work on claims from around the county. The new workload model of the VA is to provide service to the veterans who have waited the longest. Our working model is to work the buckets, where we work on the 2 year old claims and we have cleared the majority of that out, then we work on 1 year old claims. We are working hard to reach our 2015 promise of no claim more than 125 days old. Our pending inventory is approximately 13,000 cases but as you can see a lot of those cases are from other Regional Offices (RO's). We currently have the quality at 97.4% which is up. We have provided over 9,236 decisions since October 1, 2013. We are providing about 2,000 decisions this month alone.

We have conducted interviews with active National Guard, active duty, and Reserve members who are participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) program at Fort Carson. With transitioning service members, the IDES program has been very successful. There is a backlog that we are working hard to address.

Jay Bobick: What is happening at the five different locations?

Renaye Murphy: There are a few reasons for backlog. Winston Salem is an IDES rating activity

and a pre-discharge rating activity as is Seattle. We get surges from the military of people getting out of the military and they cause the backlog. Then the pre-discharge cases tend to go up very quickly. Then, we divert resources from those offices to take care of pre-discharge of seriously injured members. Then when this happens, your average claim can languish as those surges occur. Albuquerque prioritizes their capacity depending on the type of case. For example, there are people who develop cases, get them ready for decision and there are people who actually rate the cases and make a decision. Whether it is attrition, retirement, or special missions coming and going from stations, all of these impact the work we are doing.

Some stations have the capacity to rate claims and they don't have the capacity to develop. Some stations have the capacity to develop claims, and they don't have the capacity to rate. Some stations have both capacities.

We are looking at cases nationally now. We are going to a national work queue in several months. We are going paperless. Here at Denver we are 90.3% paperless and in Cheyenne they are 89% paperless. Once all of our work is paperless, then the national work queue will automatically put the oldest cases at the top of the queue. Then that case will be assigned. The system will look for offices with local capacity first. When a claim is filed, we will check for local capacity and if there is no local capacity, then it will be sent to the closest location with the capacity to meet the needs of the case.

Jay Bobick: Is Washington now considering this in their hiring practices?

Renaye Murphy: There will be some hiring. Of course, a lot of hiring depends on the budget. We also are improving processes and technologies that we have are going to allow us to do more with fewer people.

Rebecca Sawyer-Smith: We are talking about outreach. In October, we conducted 57 events. At the Golden Clinic where they also do compensation and pension examinations. We were there for the opening and it is a beautiful facility. Chuck Bruin is at Golden every Wednesday to conduct outreach for veterans. He goes around to the other clinics as well. We are meeting with a wide variety of veterans, especially the OEF/OIF veterans who are going to shelters and/or the stand-downs. At the Community Resource and Referral Center in Denver, we have a specialist

who works with these clients who are homeless. We are focusing on the Homeless as a high priority as well as over cases. 421 interviews were conducted but the days pending for the homeless claims vary and this is also due to the weather. We are working with Denver's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the physicians that are there. The physicians are giving us about 40 hours a week to have the opportunity to ask questions and get their medical opinions. The medical aspect is important with the Doctor's reports. We are also involved in employment expos and job fairs. We believe it is important to helping veterans gain employment. VSR's are working on other events, if they can't come here; we go there such as the event in Conifer, and other Yellow Ribbon events.

Jay Bobick: VA Secretary Shinsecki made the statement that he will push to eliminate veteran homelessness in 5 years and the last figure I saw a year ago from the VA was an 18% reduction. What is the current VA reduction number?

Rebecca Sawyer-Smith: Actually, there was a report but it was not a VA report that said it had gone down more than that.

Renaye Murphy: The standard is if we address the housing first, then treat second, we have a better chance of helping veteran if they can get stabilized first with housing and then working to treat second.

Jay Bobick: Are you aware of the individual who is a veteran, in Aurora, who is buying buildings and fixing them up and then giving them for homeless veterans housing?

Leanne Wheeler: He has been working in Aurora for a long time.

Jay Bobick: His name is Rick Spoor. UVC recognized him for his work.

-General discussion about Rick and the work he is doing.

Renaye Murphy: The purpose of the Loan Guaranty program is working to assist veterans and surviving spouses to become home owners. We provide housing benefits in eight states. The Denver Regional Loan Center (RLC) has provided 82 loans in state and 11 that are out of state since last December.

Loan production and loan administration currently have closed over 85,000 loans in FYI 2013. They are providing oversight and training for lenders and realtors. They have also been involved with the Native American population with Native American Direct Loan (NADL). We have been trying to get the word out that we are involved with that program. We have a relationship with the tribes, but often times a Native American can get a better deal if they go through the traditional mortgage process. We just closed one NADL so we are trying to get the word out about these programs. This is not really utilized as much in Denver as in other regions.

We are having the lowest foreclosure rates of all the products out there both prime and sub-prime. We actively are involved with outreach to prevent foreclosures and we really do a good job with preventing foreclosures. Construction and Valuation (C&V) are working to provide specially adapted home programs. We are in compliance with the new law for ALS patients to have their homes adapted especially for veterans who may only have 1-5 years to live. We are currently meeting all of our performance goals.

Vocational Rehabilitation/Employment has serve 111 veterans this year. These veterans had an average pre-rehabilitation income of \$760/month and then after vocational rehabilitation had an average post-rehabilitation income of \$3,000/month. We work with service members who are transitioning out of the service and those who are out of the workforce. This is separate from the education program.

Human Resources. 50% of the employees at the Denver Regional Office are veterans.

Bill Conroy: How many veterans can you still hire?

Renaye Murphy: I think twenty.

Bill Conroy: I thought you had that in your ceiling when it was lowered?

Renaye Murphy: We did but we are hoping we will get 20-30 people.

Bill Conroy: Seattle used to be the “go-to” place. Those RO’s that met all of their goals were rewarded with more staff. In this new alignment, the way they are doing this, is that still true?

Renaye Murphy: Yes and no. There are different criteria such as veteran population, need, and

the number of incoming claims and this is more the model we are working on. The model is more based on veteran population and veteran need. In certain parts of the country, they want more pension benefits and in other parts of the country, they want compensation claims. In certain parts of the country, even though there is a large veteran population, there are not many claims coming in.

Bill Conroy: So in theory, with a large military state such as Colorado, then the VA Central office would cater to the needs of the population? We do the TAP program at Buckley and when I asked how many are staying in Colorado, it is something like 70% that say they are staying.

Renaye Murphy: We are doing well as a station. The reward for doing well is getting more work.

Chris Holden: Is there any chance that we can get a copy of the slides either paper or electronic?

Renaye Murphy: I will make sure you get a similar set of slides.

Reports

DMVA

Gregg Parker: The only thing I thought I would bring up, I talked to Mickey yesterday and the budgets should be signed by mid to late April.

Robby Robinson: Have they done the figure setting yet?

Gregg Parker: The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) has done figure setting with the department. We asked for an additional FTE on the general fund side. We asked for increases especially for the cemetery for an additional groundskeeper. Capital Construction requested approximately \$4.6 M to build up the grounds and the cemetery asked for \$2,300 to buy new equipment. That request was under development with the Capital Gains Committee and it passed through. We are just waiting for the Governor's signature. Once they pass the Long Bill, it will be a positive year for DMVR. There could be some adjustments, but I am not anticipating any at this time.

Governor's Office

Richard Sandrock: Recently we had Home Front Cares up at the capital. Home Front Cares used \$500,000 with Red Cross type of help for veterans. Since the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan they have been helping veterans who have run into housing trouble and helping veterans with families more. Of all of our surveys across the state, approximately 99% of them have been disabled veterans. Our office is getting Home Front Cares together with 1 Congregation1Family who have been helping the homeless have mentoring programs all over the state such as , Colorado Springs, Durango, and Pagosa Springs. These programs are with congregations across the communities, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, etc., and they mentor the homeless in a non-evangelical manner. We are finding that this organization has roots in helping veterans and their families. We are attempting to adapt this program to help homeless veterans. Home Front Cares along with Springs Rescue Mission are looking to expand to other parts of Colorado.

From the last statistics, I have seen, 21 of those served at Fort. Lyon is homeless veterans. The goal is somewhere around 12.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: FYI 13/14 executing, \$5,000 out for the cemetery. FYI 14/15 received the applications and rolled most of them into a spreadsheet. The request has been for \$1,345, 324 from the 41 grant applications. Based on my best guess, \$836,000 to disperse in the Grant where last year the amount was \$843,938. So I have been administering last year's grants and I am working on the application for next year. I received data form the auditor that I need to reply to. I met with the auditors on March 6th and have to get back with them with the answers to this questionnaire.

Robby Robinson: I have several questions. When do we need the Grant Sub-Committee appointed and when do we go over the grant applications?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I will have them ready to go before the start of April. I would like to have us meet before April CBVA meeting so that I can do the spreadsheet before the April Board Meeting? I will try to have it put together. I have at this point some of them completed. I have been working with applicants to correct errors in the applications.

Robby Robinson: The next CBVA Board meeting is April 10th at the American Legion

Headquarters. It takes a good day to do the sub-committee work on reviewing the grants.

Between now and April 8th, do we have any Board members who want to volunteer to be on the Sub-committee.

Rene Simard and Kathleen Dunemn both raised their hands to volunteer.

Chris Holden: If Jason or Dana cannot, then I will volunteer to be a substitute if you need one.

Rene Simard: Do we get together for this beforehand?

Robby Robinson: No, we will meet on that day to discuss them all and try to spread the money fairly among the applicants.

Jay Bobick: We line up the grants and go through them one by one.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I recommend that the Grant Sub-committee meet on April 8th.

Robby Robinson: We like to have new and experienced members on that sub-committee so that everybody who is familiar with the grant process can share their knowledge.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Bill Conroy: There was nothing abnormal out of Mr. Kennedy. He said things are going on fairly well.

Jay Bobick: So, who will it be next year?

Bill Conroy: Very good question. We are trying to work a few things out that I think would help the program on a short basis.

The Veterans Trust Fund was previously on a year by year basis and now it seems it will continue for the next 10 years. The DMVA is looking to have one person oversee both of the grants. Mr. Dissinger, Ray Z., is planning on staying for one more year. I am happy to have him for another year.

State Veteran Nursing Homes (Community Living Centers)

Jay Bobick: There have been a lot of changes. C.J. Rocke will be taking the division over and we are very pleased. She knows the system. At Fitzsimmons, the replacement administrator, Thomas Marks has a solid background in nursing homes and in long-term care

We are still in all black and have been for almost 10 months. As you know we had a three year

period of red and it is good to have it in the positive now. You have heard me talk about the New Eden Alternatives. In the State Bill on the Governor's desk, all the names of all nursing homes and independent living centers will have their names officially changed to "Community Living Center." This term "Community Living Center" will be shared by both short and long term centers. In the VA the term "Community Living Center" had denoted a short term facility.

We did get a sponsor to take the Veterans Assistance Program to make it permanent and is now on the Governor's desk for signature to change it to a statutory program. There was no money attached to the bill. For future legislations, this will indicate that there is a place where you can put funds which is in statute and it will be a quicker process than previously. WE are quite pleased with that legislation.

There is also a bill concerning the Homestead Exemption Grant which will allow the spouse to continue receiving the grant if the person who qualified for the grant passes away. We have a bill that is coming up now which will extend that grant to the spouse.

Robby Robinson: Is that Referendum E?

Bill Conroy: In the statute, the language is the same but it will extend the grant for both Senior Homestead Exemption Grant and Disable Veteran Property Tax. Representative Crowder introduced the bill.

Robby Robinson: When the person to whom the entitlement is awarded passes away, then if this passes to the spouse, the spouse will be able to keep it.

Jay Bobick: Also, the twin tunnels on I-70 will be renamed, "The Veterans Memorial Tunnels."

Discussion/Action

Robby Robinson: Jason Crow was ill today and was unable to attend in person but he wanted to phone conference about the reconsideration of the VTF Grant change, so we will switch the order of the agenda around to discuss the Grant Award Criteria first.

Grant Award Criteria

After group discussion, the final list determined by the members for the 2014-2015 VTF Grant Priorities is as follows:

2014-15 VTF Grant Priorities

Emergency Assistance (e.g. utilities, rent, food or vouchers, medical, clothing, other necessary requirements)

Job Training/Education/Assistance (e.g. direct training, tools, text books, clothes)

Homeless Shelter Operations (e.g. housing, food, clothing, medical, utilities, etc.)

Mental Health and Hygiene (e.g. counseling, retreats, animal therapy)

Medical Transportation (e.g. vouchers and reimbursements)

Vehicle Purchase, maintenance & operation

Veterans Stand Downs

Special Programs

Division of Veterans Affairs, State Community Living Centers, Cemetery

Reconsideration of VTF Grant Change

Jason Crow joined the meeting for phone conference to participate in this part of the discussion.

Robby Robinson: Briefly, during the last meeting there was a request for funds at the cemetery. There is money in the Trust Fund that will not be spent. Concerns were brought up by Jason Crow about proprieties. Legally, there is no question that the Board has authority to spend the money.

Jason Crow: My point is can you reallocate money that was obligated to someone?

Robby Robinson: Just briefly at the last meeting there was a request from the cemetery for a part-time employee. There was money in the trust fund that will not be spent because the Board

granted it to an organization that subsequently did not qualify. There were some concerns expressed primarily by Jason about the propriety of doing that and the procedures involved in doing that. The unexpended grant money is essentially awarded for another purpose and Jason asked for a legal opinion. From the legal opinion there is no question that the Board has the legal authority to give the money to the cemetery. It was basically clear.

Dana sent an email that said you missed the point. The point was if you have unexpended or unallocated grant money available, can you then take the money and reallocate it to somebody else? We did not have a legal opinion on that but what we did get was an opinion from the Controller and the Purchasing Office at the Department of Military and

Veteran's Affairs (DMVA). We, the Board, have the authority based on the statute to decide what the money is used for and then we prioritize how that is spent. It is not allocated however until there is a contract with somebody and we say give them a grant. It sits there until a State contract is done. If the contract cannot be done then it is never allocated. Once a contract is executed then the money is then allocated. In this case the grantee was not eligible because they could not make themselves eligible so the grant money was never allocated and it is still sitting there in the Veteran's Trust Fund (VTF). We made the decision by unanimous vote at the last meeting that it is okay to revoke the allocation of the grant given to that organization, the money from a grantee who did not meet the qualification guidelines.

The motion that failed was to take that money that was now freed and give it to the cemetery. So, that is what is on the agenda for reconsideration. Jason, that's the background for you because I know two of you were not there for the last meeting. Dana is not here and of course, Jason's not here but on the phone.

So, do you want to state your concerns?

Jason Crow: That was a pretty good overview, Robby, and my concern was not whether or not we could give money to the cemetery. Clearly, we are authorized to give them money. Of the four categories we are authorized as you stated to take the funds from the grantee, this is regarding grantees and the obligation to the grantee, our obligation with regard to those funds.

You mentioned in your explanation that you got with the contract office and it is not the case of

whether we have the authority to spend the money but the obligation to the grantees. Pre-contract there is some responsibility when you dedicate funds. I know there are different levels of allocation and there is a dedication level when you dedicate funds. If you grant money to a grantee even before it is a contract then that creates an obligation with regard to due process with regard to removing that dedication of funds even pre-contract. Maybe a residual question, if that is able to get resolved, then my third concern which Dana brought up in her e-mail, which I thought was well written. It addressed a concern about in-grant cycle and out-of-grant cycle funding. If we give money to folk's outside-of-grant cycle then we need to make sure that under a process or policy that not only do we let out-of-cycle grant fund requesters know but in-cycle grantees know that those funds are now available. There should be some kind of process that we give them the opportunity to request those funds.

Robby Robinson: Do you have any more comments on that?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The law provides for several ways for the money to be dispersed all year long. It can be dispersed to the cemetery, the State Veterans Nursing Homes, and to the Division.

The criteria established underneath the Veterans Trust Fund policy is that grants are considered in the next cycle. The other three do not. So when money is released it can only go to those three purposes.

Jason Crow: For those three, you mean, the Division, the cemetery, and the State Veterans Nursing Homes, correct?

Ray Z. Dissinger: Correct. So, when money is freed up it does not come open for everybody at the correct time because we don't have any other out-of cycle grant approval for any other agency to ask for.

Jason Crow: But when money is freed up it can go to any of those three.

Robby Robinson: Correct. If I hear you right, Jason, what we are talking about is what Dana brought up in her email and her concern was that it just so happens there is money that is freed up and we don't know if the Division over here needs money or not? When the money came available were all of the grantees requesting money made aware the money was available? We

need to establish a procedure so that in the future anybody who needs funding all goes through the same request process to ask for the funds. What about grants that need funding through out-of-cycle funding? We haven't talked about that. Legally, there is no question that the Board has the authority to spend the money.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That is up to the Board. The Board determines the criteria for the way we do out of cycle funding. You will need a full-time grant administrator if you decide to do that.

Jason Crow: To clarify, the VSO can only get it in cycle and the other three can get it through the year either in-cycle or out-of-cycle. Ray, when you said, "out-of-cycle", what did you mean by that?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I said the Board could establish the criteria so it could set it up could set it up so the grant could fund out-of-cycle, and then allow exceptions for out of cycle. I strongly, since I am allowed to advise the Board, recommend against that. There is no reason to do that.

Robby Robinson: We are not going to do that- it's just confusing. What we are talking about is establishing a simple procedure for the other three categories for expending remaining funds at some point during the year.

Jason Crow: That sounds about right.

Robby Robinson: That should meet Dana's concern, so now the issue becomes we do not have a procedure in place for funds that we have freed up at the last meeting and we have a request from the cemetery for funds for a part-time employee. Last month that was voted down. I am asking for a motion to reconsider that.

Jay Bobick: Under what you have said you have consulted two of the three, which would be the Division and the cemetery. If you want to consult with the State Veteran's Nursing Homes, you would have to meet with the commission.

Robby Robinson: We don't have a procedure right now, I am just asking for a reconsideration of the motion.

Ray Z. Dissinger: The Board should not look at changing it today but look at implementing it

next year because we are getting to a point where if we tried to do it now we would not get anything done. And it would be a disservice to our veterans and it would degrade the services at the cemetery for our veterans and their families.

Robby Robinson: Well, that is my point. I wasn't asking that a new procedure go in place but I am asking to reconsider the motion that we did not pass last month which we have funds available and the motion was to allocate those funds to the cemetery.

Jay Bobick: Motion

Rene Simard: Second the motion.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It says \$6,894.93 for the purpose of hiring a part-time employee for the cemetery.

Jason Crow: I have a comment. I don't see how we can possibly do that in light of the fact that we just discussed the implementation of a policy for allocating the funds among the three outside grant out-of-cycle grant requesters. I seriously oppose. I recommend the Board not do that until we have a written policy in place.

Robby Robinson: And I would counter saying if we wait for a written policy the opportunity to use those funds for the cemetery is gone.

Jason Crow: That would be fine with me. I would rather not spend the money than do that.

Jay Bobick: Under current policy, we have the authority to do it and it needs to be done. In the past we did it and if in the future we think that our policy isn't as it should be then we need to correct that. At this moment, under our current policy we have the authority to do it.

Jason Crow: That is not the point, Jay, whether we have the authority to do it or not. The point is that we have identified at least two Board members, myself and Dana that are uncomfortable with the manner in which we do it. And we need to have a more formal system than that. And whether or not the authority is there is kind of irrelevant.

Jay Bobick: Those that represent the other two who can compete for these funds are sitting at the

table. Both of them are in agreement. Both are in agreement who would compete for this money.

Rene Simard: You are talking about the Division of Veteran's Affairs and the Colorado State Nursing Home.

Ray Z. Dissinger: So when money is freed up it does not come open for anybody at the correct time because we don't have any out-of-cycle grant approvals for the other agencies to ask for it.

Jason Crow: But the money freed up can go to any of those three?

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes.

Robby Robinson: Actually what we are talking about was what Dana brought up in her email. Her concern is that when money is freed up and the cemetery needs money then, the other grant applicants do not have the chance to request that money. We don't know if the Division needs money because we don't have a procedure set up to let them know the money is available. We have not gone out to the nursing homes and said, "There is \$5,000 available or to Bill."

Robby Robinson: The motion is to give the remaining funds to the cemetery

Robby Robinson: Aye

Jay Bobick: Aye

Kathleen Dunemn: Aye

Chris Holden: Aye

Jason Crow: No

Robby Robinson: That motion carries.

Jay Bobick: I propose a motion that we establish a procedure for the next cycle to give a specific rational on when money becomes available out-of-cycle on how that is allocated.

Chris Holden: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? Okay, all in favor?

Robby Robinson: Aye

Rene Simard: Aye

Kathleen Dunemn: Aye

Chris Holden: Aye

Jay Bobick: Aye

Jason Crow: Aye

Robby Robinson: That was unanimous. Who knows we may get that down by the next meeting? It shouldn't be that hard to draft a simple procedure. Thank you, Jason for calling in to participate in the discussion.

Future Meetings

8 April 2014, VTF Grant Committee Meeting, DMVA, 6848 South Revere Parkway Centennial, CO 80112 at 8:00am

10 April 2014, American Legion Headquarters, 7465 E. 1st Avenue #D, Denver, Colorado 80230, at 9:30am

8 May 2014, TBA

Motion to adjourn by Robby Robinson. Seconded by Rene Simard. Meeting adjourned at 11:18am

There was a vote to go into Executive Session with the auditors and the Board went into Executive Session.

Board Minutes April 10, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters 7465 E. 1st Avenue, #D,
Denver, CO 80230

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0940 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

- William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman
- Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Secretary
- Kathleen Dunemn, Member
- Rene Simard, Member
- Jason Crow, Member – Not Present
- Chris Holden, Member
- Marvin Meyers, Emeritus – Not Present

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- William “Bill” Conroy, CDVA Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Guests Present:

- Richard Sandrock, Governor’s Office
- Brian VanDriel, Senator Udall’s Office
- Samuel Aaron Torres, Senator Bennet’s Office
- Jason LeBlanc, State Auditor’s Office, Colorado State Audit Committee (Present for Audit Committee Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting)
- Andy Knauer, State Auditor’s Office, Colorado State Audit Committee (Present for Audit

Committee Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting)

- Monica Bowers, State Auditor's Office, Colorado State Audit Committee (Present for Audit Committee Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting)
- Will Thompson, DMVA, Controller (Present for first half of Audit Committee Meeting)
Steve Rylant, UVC
- Ken Melcher, UVC
- Bernie Rogoff, Aurora Veterans Commission
- Leanne Wheeler, Veterans Advocate, Wheeler Advisory Group

Approval of Minutes from March 13, 2014

Unanimously accepted

Board Member Comments

Robby Robinson: There is an audit of the Veterans Trust Fund ongoing as most of you are aware and Board Members and anyone who was present for the Audit Committee meeting may not discuss that until the report is released. We were late starting because of the Executive Session where we discussed the ongoing audit by the State. Tentatively, there will be a Legislative Audit Committee meeting either 2 June or 3 June at 9:00 o'clock largely dependent on General Edwards' schedule.

Chris Holden: Through the contacts that were made during the February CBVA meeting down in Colorado Springs, I have been invited to be a guest speaker at the Colorado Military Veterans and Spouses Employment Coalition for veterans and their spouses next week. This is a good opportunity to educate them a little bit about the Board and connect with veterans.

Kathleen Dunum: No Comment

Rene Simard: No Comment

Dana Niemela: No Comment

Jay Bobick: As a Board Member, I would like to say thank you to everyone who supported the Annual UVC Banquet and awards. We really need all organizational support. We had it at the

highest rank and many of you were there and thank you for being there.

Public Comments Non-agenda Items

Steve Rylant: On behalf of UVC, I also want to say thank you to everyone for support of the UVC banquet. UVC appreciates all the support from the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs.

Reports

Governor's Office

Richard Sandrock: Today, I wanted to let you know there will be a wounded veteran's art exhibition. The realities of war documented in *The Joe Bonham Project: Drawing Stories of Wounded American Veterans*, the free art exhibit will begin at Anschutz Medical Center and run through June 12, 2014. I have been invited to make a speech and it will be open from 4:00pm through 7:00pm. On Monday, Katherine Wirkus from Senator Perlmutter's office will be presenting a POW Medal to Sergeant Frank Dechant of Arvada, CO, a WWII veteran who was captured during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. He was held in Germany for a year or so and he will be getting his medal next Monday, April 14, 2014.

Colorado Serves will hold their meeting next week in Alamosa. I want to say thank you to Bill Conroy who has done an excellent job of helping us reach out to County Veteran Service Officers and get their buy in. I don't think without your buy-in it would have been possible to accomplish very much.

The Governor's Office will start a new "Student Veteran Mentoring" statewide initiative that kicks off next week. It is specifically based on the "Boots to Suits" program initiated by Izzy Abbass. These mentors will all be Colorado CEO's, CIO's, and Executives. It is designed to help student veterans to take advantage of opportunities with CEO and corporations networks statewide. This is a very pilot group that we are starting out. Veterans need to be as polished as possible. The intent is to take these guys getting out of Buckley and Fort Carson. Initially to get the buy in with the CEOs, we have to have a polished products and I have been working heavily with Izzy. We will be kicking that off next Thursday, April 17, 2014.

The only other thing is, I used to be the over the homeless veterans issues, and now my priorities will cover all veterans issues. I have been elevated to Deputy Director and veterans' issues will be my priority as well as grant writing and fund raising. Al Salazar and the Governor have decided they would like to push veterans' issues more seriously and surprise they have a veteran working for them, so that will be my focus.

There are 29 veterans at Fort Lyon out of 121 folks present. That puts the number of veterans just under 25%.

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: The Department has several important bills going on in the legislature right now. The Military Relief Fund will expand the usage to include CO National Guard soldiers or airmen serving on State Active Duty. That passed out of committee. The Veterans Assistance Grant is out of committee and it is in the House. It is moving forward and is at Senate Appropriations today.

There is another requirement to do an economic impact study, an FTE to provide a contractor to do the study and it will provide us \$300,000. The economic impact study is used to educate legislatures and elected officials on the impact of military in the state of Colorado. Also, this provides information should there be a BRAC Commission (Base Realignment and Closure) in the future. Lastly, the fallen hero's license plate was expanded. Right now you can only get the fallen heroes license plate if a family member was killed while in theater and it will be expanded out if the veteran was killed while in training status.

\$4.6 M will be added on to the cemetery as part of the Long Bill. \$277,000 is in the Long Bill to add back into our O & M (Operations & Maintenance) the amount that was cut back in 2009 when we had to take a 2% cut. Also, there is an additional 1.5 FTE for additional help for the cemetery.

There is testimony in the Senate in Washington D.C. about the cuts coming to the Army.

Active Army units will be coming down to between 420-450 thousand. Army National Guard Units will be cut to 320 to 350 thousand. That is around a 25,000 cut. Army Reserves will be

coming down from 200 thousand to 190 thousand.

The Military Ball will be 26 April 2014 and tickets will still be available for anyone who wants to attend. Colorado Serves held their meeting at Las Animas 2 weeks ago at Fort Lyon and the meeting will be in Alamosa next week. We will be meeting this afternoon. Our goal was to have a statewide summit but with the feedback we received from the regions, they would benefit more from holding regional meetings.

Jay Bobick: Mickey, we have been trying to get that fiscal note on the Veterans Assistance Grant removed. What is the latest on that?

Mickey Hunt: I don't know. They are in Senate Appropriations today. It should not be difficult to remove because the money is already in the Long Bill.

Are there any more questions?

There was discussion among Board Members about updating their CBVA Member Roster information. There was also a reminder to the Board members whose terms are expiring this year that their applications are due to reapply.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: FY 2013-2014 \$800,000 with approximately \$500,000 accounted for, and \$100,000 out there and \$200,000 need to be used before the end of the fiscal year. I handed out a list of all the grant applications to the Board Members. The review committee meeting went through of all grant applications being considered and we are following guidelines provided in comments from the Audit Committee. If you would look at the grants during the upcoming month to see if you agree with what the grant review committee says. Also, if you have any questions or want a copy then send me an email: ray.dissinger@dmva.state.co.us. At the next meeting in May, you will be voting on the grant awards. If you need to be recused from the vote due to conflict of interest please let me know.

Robby Robinson: Is it possible to post it to the website because we have it all electronically? You sent me your spreadsheet.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Sure it will get posted to the website. Give me a call if you have any questions about the grants at (720) 250-1521.

Robby Robinson: The committee met and made recommendations on each grant. Now, individual Board Members acting as individuals will vote on the awards for each grant. They all have copies of the grants, there were forty of them. We will come back next meeting and we will vote for each grant. We have to be careful about conflict of interest. The next meeting then is on May 15th and it is open to the public.

Bernie Rogoff: Where is it stated that there are established criteria for submitting the grant applications?

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is on the website. Once again, give me a call if you have any questions at (720) 250-1521 or on my cell at (720) 732-4937. Does anyone have any questions?

Veterans Assistance Grant

Bill Conroy: We have one problem, but Richard has guaranteed that the money will be spent. We have our annual CVSIO Training Conference coming up on April 22nd – April 25th. Dana and Kathleen both are going to attend and observe the conference.

Dana Niemela: I will be staying for the duration of the conference.

Bill Conroy: I would be remiss if I did not mention this. Thank you for the long over-due award from UVC. It was an honor to be recognized.

Jay Bobick: It was well-deserved.

Steve Rylant: I second that, it was well-deserved.

State Veteran Nursing Homes (State Veterans Community Living Centers) General discussion about Community Living Centers

Jay Bobick: Pretty much all I was going to report was about the name change to Community Living Centers, so other than that are there any questions for me?

Discussion/Action

VTF Grant Discussion

Robby Robinson: Any questions about the VTF Grants?

Ray Z. Dissinger: In the past, when they looked at the grants they went over each grant individually. If we group together like grants, then we can move through them a little quicker. If you have general questions then please ask me but if you have a specific question, then highlight the grant and we will address it as a group at the next meeting.

Dana Niemela: Was there consideration to Veteran's Assistant Grant available to non-profit organizations knowing some of the organizations may be making an impact request for the Veterans Trust Fund?

Ray Z. Dissinger: That was taken into consideration.

Robby Robinson: For example on grant #17 there was a request for gazebos and locks, this was not considered.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I contacted them to let them know.

Mickey Hunt: It is very important that Veteran's Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant money are not going to the same organizations. I testified at the House Committee that the money did not go to the same organizations. I testified that money from one grant is not given to the same organizations from the other grant.

VTF Committee Report

Robby Robinson: Rene or Kathleen, do you want to talk about the priorities used in consideration of grant recommendations? There was \$1.6M requested and 40 applicants and only approximately \$800,000 available.

Kathleen Dunumn: The process was similar to past years; I have served on the grant recommendation committee previously. Each proposal was reviewed individually because of not having enough money. We were not able to fully fund many of the proposals. Some of the

people asked for twice as much as they had asked in previous years. As they were not yet spending that money, we took that into account. We also took into account the priority list and we talked through each of those priorities as a group for each and every proposal.

Robby Robinson: We also had to remove some things from some of the proposals because they did not fit the guidelines on the instructions of the grant application or specify what the money would be used for in the grant.

Rene Simard: I don't have that much to add, it was my first time to sit in on the grant review committee. I want to acknowledge Ray for putting all of that together. He made it very easy for us to go through each one of the proposals. The only other thing I would add is about those two new ones I had mentioned. We did not fully fund them because we did not have a lot of data. They were not real specific. A lot of times they wanted \$20K and they just listed that but did not list the details of how they would use it. Some met the criteria and it was the right thing to do to fund them. It was fair when they were asking for more. I think we were consistent in how we did that.

Robby Robinson: Just to restate, the past performance of the grant played a pretty big role in our decisions. What did you get last year? How much were you asking for this year? How was the performance and if you were underperforming? If the year is three-quarters gone and you have more than half of the money not spent – it is not good. If it is a year program, then they were not utilizing their money. That kind of gives us a sense of (a) how it is administered and (b) the severity of the need. If you have three-quarters of your money and half the year is up, then the need must not be that great. I know that it is a bit subjective but with a lot of these organizations, we have 7 years or more of a track record to use for basing those decisions.

Bernie Rogoff: Do the organizations we fund or donate to, are they required to file an evaluation report or acknowledgement of what they have done?

Ray A. Dissinger: They are required to file four quarterly reports; however, we know what they are doing because I process the reimbursement and it specifically shows what they are spending the funds on. We do get data because we get reports generally back from them every two weeks.

Bernie Rogoff: They don't get all the money at once?

Ray Z. Dissinger: No, the maximum they can get is a quarter of the award. So every 90 days they must expend that. We review what they are spending and have them on a rolling account system so they are not without money.

Bernie Rogoff: May I ask then how they spend it in their program and how they are going to improve, and then do we review that improvement?

Ray Z. Dissinger: In subsequent years, those who were dependent on the grant to continue on, then we would ask them to let us know. But generally, the posts are depending on it, and that is something we need to look at and I will need to talk to the Board about it. One post used Bingo to raise money and they actually paid us back the grant money.

Rene Simard: I just want to add to it, in many cases where they asked for additional funds, they did not really say why they needed additional funds specifically. For example, they may have asked for \$20K increase but did not say why or even how they would use the money if awarded.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We had a couple of posts that were exemplary, they looked at their program and asked for less this year because in their area they would not be spending it and the Board looked at that very positively.

Steve Rylant: In the VFW Colorado case they normally requested \$75K because they expect it to take them through the year for veterans in dire straits. Last couple of years, you awarded them \$40K and they run out of that money in February about half-way through the year that is what I am told.

Ray Z. Dissinger: VFW Colorado, I will look it up for you, just give me a few minutes.

Leanne Wheeler: As for full disclosure, this is probably a question for Bill or Richard. I am working with the VFW and American Legion in Fort Lyon. They are going to be applying for the Veterans Assistance Grant. I want to make sure I am not in conflict for what is already in the area. When is the end date for the submission for the Veterans Assistance Grant?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The deadline for applying for the Veterans Assistance Grant is 20 May.

Leanne Wheeler: There is support for veterans for when they come out of the black box and choose to stay in Las Animas. The VFW is looking to do job fairs and some other support.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have the answer. The VFW Colorado up to a week ago, they had \$23,841.64 left out of the \$40,000 they were awarded. That is over half.

VTF Out of Cycle Procedure

Robby Robinson: We had a discussion last meeting about VTF out-of cycle procedures. The question was, “what if funds form VTF become available because they are not executed or if they have not signed the contract, or if they were not able to fulfill the contract. Jason suggested we have some sort of policy written down. For the Trust Fund Policy, I had a couple of suggestions as far as language.

“During the year should additional funds become available or should funds not drawn from or executed by recipient, the Board may at the written request of the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, the cemetery, or the Colorado State Community Living Centers (SNH) reallocates these funds to one or more of these organizations.”

Dana Niemela: “At the written request of CDVA, the cemetery, or Community Living Centers,” are we targeting specifically those three?

Robby Robinson: Yes. We are leaving out other service organizations and the reason for that is that if funds are identified in March, then there would not be time to execute another contract for other service organizations. In other words, I will work with Ray and I will run it by the Board.

Ray Z. Dissinger: When we work with other veterans service organizations we would have to abrogate the current contract so it makes it less and then we would have to execute another contract and it would be extremely short to be executed. We have to enter it into the system by the state.

Report from Senator Udall’s Office

Brian VanDial: At Senator Udall’s Office, we have been very concerned about the process for obtaining VA identification cards. Primarily because it was like it was designed to keep people

out of the system rather than let them in. We have two concerns. First, homeless vets do not have to have photo identification now because the VA can do knowledge-based authentication with questions about a veterans DD214. Second, the original plan called for two visits to the VA. The first visit the veteran would have to apply to be authenticated and on the second visit they would have their photo taken two weeks later. That is a huge concern for rural veterans.

Report from Senator Bennet's Office

Samuel Aaron Torres: I was looking at the Army Tattoo Policy and how that will impact us. Has anybody seen a PowerPoint on that or a factsheet, because I was looking at Army regulations and it would be helpful to have a free-flowing PowerPoint to summarize the policy? Our office is looking at the VA backlog.

Senator Bennet in recent hearing at the Senate spoke movingly about being a part of the Fort Carson Naturalization Ceremony. He wants to recognize soldiers that have served our country and want their citizenship.

Bill Conroy: If you are talking to the VA, can you ask them how long it will take to get a claim scanned in?

Samuel Aaron Torres: From a recent report, the VA is now 82% paperless.

Bill Conroy: Let me clarify what I am asking. For example, I come in to file a claim. It is paperless. It is sent to Kentucky to be scanned in. They are saying the claim will be back in a couple of weeks, it is taking months before it pops up in virtual where people can work it.

Therefore, the timeline it takes to complete a claim does not start until it shows up in virtual, adding months to the claim processing time.

Samuel Aaron Torres: Okay, I will check.

Leanne Wheeler: The Senator hosted a Women's Leadership Forum last fall. There was supposed to be a work product that came out of that and I am the only one who did not see it. A couple of weeks ago there was an invitation to attend the Patent Office seminar and are they hiring veterans for that office?

Samuel Aaron Torres: I know the Patent Office is hiring and they are giving preference to veterans.

Ken Melcher: I am working with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on rural transportation needs. I know how many of the DAV vans they have but I want to know how many vans the Veterans Trust Fund has bought? I have no idea on how many vans VTF bought and where they are located. There is a grant but it only applies to counties with less than 7 people per square miles. Any authorized VSO could apply but it has to be in the low density counties.

Robby Robinson: Do you need to know the location and the number of vans?

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is feasible for me to ask current grantees what they have; however, it would be misleading to say how many we are providing because we may buy one then several years later buy another one to replace it and the first one may have disappeared. I will ask how many vans are in service and where. I will send an email.

Ken Melcher: I know where the DAV vans are and how many there are but I don't know where the other vans are?

Future Meetings

8 May 2014, American Legion Headquarters, 9:30am

11-12 June, Las Animas and tour of Fort Lyon facility, time and place TBA Motion to Adjourn by Robby Robinson, seconded by Dana Niemela at 11:10am

Board Minutes May 8, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters 7465 E. 1st Avenue, #D,
Denver, CO 80230

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

- William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman
- Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Secretary
- Kathleen Dunemmn, Member
- Rene Simard, Member – Not Present
- Chris Holden, Member
- Marvin Meyers, Emeritus – Not Present

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- Rueben Mestas, CDVA Deputy Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Guests Present:

- Steve Rylant, UVC
- Leanne Wheeler, Veterans Advocate, Wheeler Advisory Group

Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2014

Unanimously accepted

Board Member Comments

Jay Bobick: No comment.

Chris Holden: No comment.

Kathleen Dunemn: No comment.

Dana Niemela: Kathleen Dunumn and I attended the CVSO conference the last week of April. I was impressed with the passion and the heart displayed by the County Veteran Service Officers many of whom get little or no compensation. It was really great for me. I have assumed the position of VSO Liaison for the Board and have been unable to travel as I had hoped because of work commitment with my day job. To be able to be there and meet many of the CVSO's face to face, to be a part of the dialogue for the week was important for me. I was impressed by the engagement of the audience and the questions asked by the facilitators and the trainers. It made me proud of the work they are doing.

Robby Robinson: I will piggyback on that. I went to the CVSO conference part of the day on Wednesday. An observation is the number of new faces that you could see at the conference – there were maybe a third of them that were new faces. I have always thought of that as a problem. You get trained VSO's and trying to keep them proficient is difficult. Back in an earlier time, we used to conduct conferences 2-3 times per year. Secondly, we would send someone out in the field to visit the outlying counties but due to money and personnel issues we were forced to move away from that. I think the point for consideration is how to decrease the turnover with the CVSO's. Anyone can see that how experienced you are, the better you are at dealing with a complicated system.

The simple solution, I always thought would be to pay them more, but the state does that; they pay the counties \$200 a month for a part/time VSO. The counties hire a VSO for

\$200 a month and expect them to stay. That dollar amount has not significantly changed. I think the broader question is what we can do to decrease turnover because we think it is a problem.

During the next year we need to look at this as an action item.

-Leanne Wheeler came in the room at 9:38am.

Dana Niemela: One other comment, now that Leanne Wheeler walked in. I wanted to recognize the fact that Leanne Wheeler has been a supporter and frequenter of our meetings and very

engaged in the veterans' community. She has been selected to attend the Clinton Global Initiative on behalf of veteran employment opportunities. It is an honor to be recognized on that level. It is by invitation only to be with the Clintons to discuss veterans' initiatives. She was selected for that participation based on her intense work in the veteran community, engaged in veterans from employment issues to homelessness. I think it is great to have her for such a fierce advocate for the veteran community.

Steve Rylant: What an honor!

Public Comments Non-agenda Items

Leanne Wheeler: Thank you, Dana. I am speechless after that. I have 2 grants I am working on with the veterans in Fort Lyon. So I want to connect with Ray to go over expectations. I will go back and make sure things are moving.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I appreciate that and I will do the best of my ability. I think you probably mean talk to Les Kennedy who is the administrator of the Veterans Assistance Grant.

Leanne Wheeler: Things are moving right along. There was a report that came out from the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and they said some very positive things about Fort Lyon. There will be a graduate of the program who went through from being homeless. We have small businesses interested in mentoring and offering jobs to the people coming out of the program. I also wanted to say thank you to Dana for all of your support.

Steve Rylant: The Legislative Session is finally over and there were something like 30 different Bills that were pushed through. We go the vast majority of them passed. It can't have been more than 2 or 3 that did not pass. Leanne Wheeler and I and Jay testified to the committee. It was definitely a good year for veterans.

Guest Presentations

Robby Robinson: There are no guest presentations today.

Reports

Governor's Report

Robby Robinson: Richard Sandrock is out doing a speech for the Governor and could not make

it.

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: We did get \$4.6 million for the cemetery in Grand Junction so we will be building that up. The Bill for the Military Relief Fund, the Governor signed and this will allow National Guard members to apply for that in addition to the military who have had overseas service. Given the fact that we had over 1,800 soldiers called to active duty for the floods last year alone that makes it is a really important bill. The Fallen Hero License plate will be signed next week by the Governor in Colorado Springs. Also, for the state of Colorado, \$300,000 was allocated for a military economic impact study and to help with anti-BRAC data.

We also had a female soldier who committed suicide on Monday in Colorado Springs. As part of Colorado Serves, I will be doing a town meeting. I will also be doing a town meeting in Grand Junction on Tuesday and will be in Montrose for a town meeting on Wednesday.

Bill Conroy's job announcement has been posted. I have asked Robby Robinson and Vicky Manley to serve on the hiring committee with General Edwards and myself, with the four of us doing interviews.

Regarding the CVSO funding, I have asked Bill to take a stab at that so we can put together a decision to go before the Governor in August so we can ask for additional funding.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: We are in the normal process and will be going through the grants today.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Ben Mestas: Les Kennedy spent \$643,000 and that leaves a balance of \$356,000. So far the Governor's office has spent only \$46,000 of the money they were allocated. Catholic Charities still needs to spend \$30,000. Crawford House still needs to spend \$33,000 and the Samaritan House still needs to spend \$37,000.

Robby Robinson: As part of the money allocated from the Governor's Office

Ben Mestas: The Governor's Office still needs to spend the money.

Robby Robinson: Here we are at the 10th month of expenditure and they still have that much to spend?

Dana Niemela: Do you know if they have a plan to execute the rest of the money?

Ben Mestas: Les Kennedy has informed me that they all have plans to spend the money by the 15th of June except for the Governor's Office and that is his major concern.

State Veteran Nursing Homes (State Veterans Community Living Centers) Jay Bobick: All is well in the world of veterans care.

Discussion/Action

Robby Robinson passed out the By-laws handout.

Robby Robinson: For purposes of discussion, the By-laws amendments turn to section 7, page 3. Annually, we do conflict of interest statements. Each of the Board members signs a statement of what organizations we belong to where there might be a conflict of interest so we disclose that to the public. There are organizations of which I am a member that are applying for grants. I need to publically declare that, and I need to recuse myself and go out of the room so I don't vote and recuse myself from the discussion.

What I have tried to do is add that language under conflict of interests. The fact that you have membership is not necessarily a conflict of interest but a position of influence or leadership position would be perceived as a conflict of interest. Board members will update these conflicts of interests' statements whenever there is a change in the status in membership in an outside organization. The Board members will do it annually for the conflict of interest discussion in July. Having said that it seemed to be appropriate to make this a public proposal and make some changes to the By-laws. This is the basis for disclosing any conflicts of interests before we go into the voting for the grants.

Let me start by reviewing mine:

I am a lifetime member of the following organizations that I think are applying for grants.

The American Legion

The Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Disabled Veterans of America

Having said that, I am a lifetime member of those three organizations, I am assigned to a post but I have never been elected to a position of leadership nor have I attended a meeting of any of those organizations in the state of Colorado other than an annual state meeting where I accompanied the Adjutant General while I was in the position of Deputy Director and he spoke at the meeting.

Jay Bobick: I belong as a member to:

The American Legion

There is one organization that could be construed as a conflict of interest. I am the Chairman of the State Veterans Community Living Center Committee. So when it comes to those nursing homes as Chairman, I should recuse myself.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have those annotated here.

Chris Holden: I am an annual member of:

The American Legion

The Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Disabled Veterans of America

I think on two of them I might be a little overdue. I don't go to any of the Board meetings and I do not have any conflict. I did have a very inexpensive beer at the American Legion a few weeks ago.

Kathleen Dunemn: I have pretty much the same memberships:

The American Legion

The Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Disabled Veterans of America

Also, I am a member of the Women's Veterans of Colorado; I am no longer an officer and no longer go to meetings. I am a member of the Board of Commissions for Veterans Affairs Nursing Homes.

Robby Robinson: Do you feel you should recuse yourself? Why don't we talk about that? If she does recuse herself then we will not have a quorum for that particular issue with Jay out of the room as well.

Dana Niemela: For the Board members who can't vote, then we could ask for a written vote from Rene.

Jay Bobick: Kathleen could sit in; she is just a member.

Robby Robinson: Why don't we ask the public here for their knowledge? We don't want a conflict of interest. What do you think Steve?

Steve Rylant: That word, "perceived" is kind of tricky. Having it in the By-laws is kind of like asking the difference between *may* and *shall*. I wonder about it. From the standpoint that you are talking about whether having Kathleen vote on the nursing home issues, I don't see why there would be a problem with Kathleen.

Leanne Wheeler: I don't agree with your definition of perception. If there is an alternative to push it and stay within the bounds of the By-laws, I would be very careful about who votes.

With public perception, I would be very careful.

Robby Robinson: The By-laws as currently written don't allow for proxy votes. Here are the options and all meeting must be public. So, if I went out to get a written vote form Rene and discussed it with him that would constitute a meeting with 2 Board members present. I could send an email and just put in the vote so he could respond.

Steve Rylant: What is the difference between him sending an email with his vote and a proxy?

Jay Bobick: A proxy is actually giving your vote to someone else to vote for you and the email

would be the actual party sending his own vote.

Kathleen Dunemn: What is the date Jason Crow is no longer a member of this Board?

Mickey Hunt: He is no longer a member as of 2 weeks ago.

Ray Z. Dissinger: What is the quorum since the members have changed from 7 to 6 is it now 3 or still 4?

Jay Bobick: Unfortunately, it is still 4. It stays the same.

Ray Z. Dissinger: If we do this, I would like to hold the process in abeyance.

Robby Robinson: I don't think we should hold up the whole process.

Dana Niemela: I would expect to get a confirmation from Rene by the end of the week.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Is there anything other than the By-laws that say we cannot have a proxy? Is there a state law that say not to have a proxy?

Jay Bobick: The problem is well as being right you have to look right.

Chris Holden: I understand Jay's conflict. Kathleen, do you have a position of leadership or a position of influence?

Kathleen Dunemn: No.

Chris Holden: I mean it is written right here.

Robby Robinson: That is kind of the way I see it too. She shouldn't recuse herself from that since she is just a member. Is there any problem with her voting?

Dana Niemela: I have a conflict of interest. I belong to VFW Post 1 and I am not only a member but I hold a position of leadership and definitely a position of influence. I shall recuse myself from that vote.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Robby, on the grants, can I make a suggestion on the conflicts of interest?

Find out what the conflicts of interest are and recuse people then vote on these first and vote on the others later.

Robby Robinson: You want to start with those that have a conflict?

Mickey Hunt: Remember you have to actually leave the room.

Robby Robinson: So that completes the report section.

Discussion/Action

Conflicts of Interest

Robby Robinson: I just did the conflicts of interests.

VTF Committee Report

Robby Robinson: The VTF Committee report was passed out at the last meeting, with recommendations and the spreadsheet showing the specific amount recommended. Are there any questions?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have one on the By-laws, page 2, where it says “should” shouldn’t it be “will” in there?

Robby Robinson: If you can get your comments on the By-laws to me, then I will put it together so it can be voted on at the next meeting.

Discussion about changing the By-laws.

Robby Robinson: They are not out publically yet because we need to vote on the changes. We will post the changes to the website.

VTF Grants Discussion

Ray Z. Dissinger: First, I wanted to let you know for #17, they have withdrawn their grant application so that changes the balance to \$26,169.12.

Robby Robinson: So for the first conflict of interest, for #15 A, B, C, D, E, VFW Post #1.

Dana Niemela recused herself and left the room for this discussion and vote

Ray Z. Dissinger: I want to explain that the grants for #15 it is no longer A-E because for D and E they are gone. For #15 E, they are not eligible and it was not a valid request.

Robby Robinson: All we are considering is #15 A, B, and C. For #15 A VFW Post 1 veterans' assistance, this was at last year's level of award, and do I have a motion.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Is there any discussion?

Jay Bobick: The request is for \$40,000.

Discussion about ledger from last year and ledger from this year, not everyone had the same grant recommendation ledger.

Robby Robinson: Are we ready to vote on that, \$40,000 recommended out of \$65,000 requested? All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, that is **unanimous**. For #15 B that is the stand down support? I put a motion to vote.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Is there any discussion?

Jay Bobick: On all of these that are stand downs, I have only worked with the homeless. I am concerned because a lot of these are repetitious. There are a lot of repeat participants that get the same equipment year after year. Are we concerned about the money that goes out to homeless veterans? At the last stand down in Denver for example there were these sleeping bags on a table and I saw veterans grab 3 sleeping bags or they will come back three times.

Whatever is on the table, for example, one year they were blankets and I saw a veteran grab 3- 4 blankets, rather than one per veteran. Is there any concern that we have about that?

Robby Robinson: Do you want to talk about that Ben?

Ben Mestas: Right now there is no control over how many they can take at the Denver stand down. If they needed three, then they could obtain three sleeping bags. Jay is absolutely correct.

Jay Bobick: It concerns me. Remember last year or two years ago, there were these brand new Swiss sleeping bags about 300 were given for free and I watched people walking out with 2-3 each.

Robby Robinson: Colorado Springs is a little different. They assign somebody to walk through.

Ben Mestas: Pueblo is actually different too, but Denver is not.

Steve Rylant: The one in Fort Collins, I did not see anybody saying you could only take one. At the stand down they only have a certain amount of equipment and then 2 hours later it is all gone.

Jay Bobick: You could go down to the Army/Navy Store 6 hours later and there are all these sleeping bags for sale. They go down there and they get ten cents on the dollar.

Robby Robinson: So are you suggesting that we do not approve this \$7,000 grant?

Jay Bobick: No, I am asking what specifically is the \$7,000 going to be spent on?

Robby Robinson: In the budget narrative, it specifies gift cards for \$50.00 each, Wal-Mart gift cards, hair cut gift cards, yarn for...

Jay Bobick: I have no problem with that.

Robby Robinson: Okay, then let us vote on **15B** for \$7,000 for the stand downs.

Ray Z. Dissinger: If you read that closely it specifically states that all the stand downs throughout the state, Women's Veterans provide specific veterans assistance.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to Approve.

Jay Bobick: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, that was **unanimous**.

Robby Robinson: For #15 C, they originally requested \$60,000 but the recommended amount is \$42,000.

Kathleen Dunemn: Just so that it is said to the forum, when we were going through the process of reviewing all these proposals, there was only so much money. It was not that we did not think they could use the full amount but there was only so much money and it had to be considered across all of the grant applications and programs.

Robby Robinson: Alright, so is there a motion on the Comitis #15 C?

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to Approve.

Chris Holden: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any other discussion? Alright, we will call the question, all those in favor. Okay, that was **unanimous**.

-Mickey Hunt left the room to get Dana Niemela back in. Dana Niemela and Mickey Hunt back in at 10:10am.

Ray Z. Dissinger: You know Jay needs to leave, for 29-32.

Robby Robinson: Okay, The Nursing Homes we can hold to the last. Are there any other conflict of interest items? Okay, let's go to #1, the American Legion Post #25, the recommendation amount is \$15,000. Do I have a motion on grant #1?

Jay Bobick: Is the \$15,000 based on last year's award?

Dana Niemela: From what I understood from reading it, it was based on last year's award.

Kathleen Dunemn: And the usage. I recommend a motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any further discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, so #1 was **unanimous**.

Dana Niemela: I am not going to argue with any of the recommendations that were made by the committee but what I would ask is when the award is given to the organization that it explicitly says even though the award was at last year's level that we indicate what it is funding? Some of them made it very obvious, for example, rental assistance if it is at last year's funding needs to be explained. In line with the priorities, you have been granted this amount of money. If the categories are not explicit, then that needs to be explained.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We identified that and noted that type of thing was impacting the grant. It was specific in the spreadsheet.

Dana Niemela: Okay, so it was not always explicit in the spreadsheet that we got. I want to make sure it is that way when it goes to the grant.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We would have to have the review committee meet again. Because I can't make decision based on the information that we have, if there was a cut, then who would decide what the priority internal to that was.

Dana Niemela: I don't necessarily think that. I just want it to say...maybe when we get to it I will give an example so that way we could correct our way through it. Because otherwise it seems arbitrary as to why we are only funding to a certain level. So, I want it to be explicit for the grantee so that they understand that yes we are funding the \$1,500 for gas cards, food vouchers, and rental assistance and this is not changing the categories. It needs to be explicitly communicated to the grantees why they are getting less than they requested.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I am not sure when you say it is not changing the categories. What do you want to be explicit? If I have to go through all of the grants, get with the review committee, and then get with the Board for re-approval.

Robby Robinson: Okay we have had the motion. So the vote now is on #2. Okay, so Dana, if I understand you correctly you saying: if it is the electric bill, propane, water, work clothing,

transportation, mortgage, you are saying they want 6 we are recommending 5 and you want us to tell them which category?

Dana Niemela: If we cut a category, then I want to tell them what category we cut.

Robby Robinson: If we cut a category, but you are okay with us saying to them, you asked for 6 we are giving you 5, spread it along those things anyway you want? You are okay with us saying to them due to last year's amount, we are granting this amount? Can we do that?

Ray Z. Dissinger: As far as I know we can.

Robby Robinson: So, Dana if you come to one that needs a specific category, then point it out and we will discuss it. Will that work for everyone?

Jay Bobick: No, I have the same concern as Dana has. All the way through, when we cut the amount because it appears again and we need to look right. We cut a grant by \$1,000, you have somebody in the public is looking at this and saying what is the justification for cutting this grant? Why are we making the cut? What specifically are they going to spend it on?

Ray Z. Dissinger: We have allowed the grantee to decide what they are going to do with that. If we are going to prescribe how it should be spent after the cut then we need to specify that in the contract. We have allowed the grantee to decide where they are going to take the cut not us deciding. If we are going to do that then we need a better system and we need to start looking at them in October and November.

Robby Robinson: If I am submitting a grant and every category that I am requesting is authorized, then how I spend it if there is a cut would be on an authorized category? If you are going to cut the requested amount by \$1,000, then let me put it where I decide. Here's the problem: the committee may recommend cutting \$1,000. The whole committee may recommend cutting \$2,000. Every time you do that we now have to go back to the grantee and we have to say, "Here is where we plan to cut that, are you alright with it? He comes back and says, No, I am not. So you renegotiate.

Ray Z. Dissinger: This is a plan. When they submit a budget narrative, then it is a plan for spending the money, for example, \$200 for food and \$1,800 for clothing, I have been allowing

that. That is basically what we have done. So in their shoes with \$1,000 less then I would adjust my plan.

Jay Bobick: All I am saying is we have to look good in the public eye. If someone is coming to say why you are taking the \$1,000, what is the rational, then?

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is the 1.6 Million that was requested and there was only \$846,000 of funds available to put in grants.

Jay Bobick: We can say we systematically went through each of the grants. But when they come back and say, why a \$1,000 from that one, what is our answer to that?

Robby Robinson: Here is the consideration. When the Board cuts the grants, we don't specify where in that grant those cuts are coming from. That is deliberate on our part to allow the grant administrators to decide where to apply the cuts. The only time that we will change a specific category is when that category is not allowed based on the priority or the statutes, etc. We will identify them as we go through.

Dana Niemela: I would also add that across the board, the grantees from last year, we funded at last year's level because none of the grantees really justified in their narrative a reason for a significant increase. None of them to my satisfaction said this is why I need \$1,000 more with any specifications in their proposal. That may be a way to capture some particular issues that we have not funded additional request and have awarded at last years level because the grantees did not provide significant or sufficient justification for the increase. Because that is what I saw and so I agree with last year's funding level, they did not give me a good argument as to why they needed more.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That surprises me because we did put in there that any grant requesting an increase, specifies very specifically as to why they believe they need more.

Robby Robinson: They need to justify what they will be spending the money on and justify why they deserve an increase.

Steve Rylant: Some may have asked for \$75,000 last year but they were only given \$40,000. So this year they ask for \$75,000 again. They are thinking there need is not any less. I think you

need to make it clear to the ones applying that if they need more than they received the year before then they need to tell us why. If they need more than the amount, they requested then they need to justify why. They already told you when they asked for \$75,000 last year, and they don't see it as an increase. They only know you gave them part of what they needed. You have not made it clear to the grantee why they were cut to \$40,000 in the first place so they think they better make it stretch rather than go back and ask for \$75,000.

Robby Robinson: They still need to justify why they are asking for an increase. For grant #2, the American Legion Post #44 in Steamboat Springs, they requested \$5,600 and the committee recommended \$5,600. Do I have a motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor say aye. Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**.

Chris Holden: Just a reminder, I have to leave at 11:30am.

Robby Robinson: Okay, so on to #3, the AL Post #115 in Rye for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor of \$5,000 for AL Post #115? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Okay, now for #4, the request was for \$5,000, the recommendation was for \$3,500. This is for the transportation program, AL Post #66 in Akron. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now for #5,

the VFW Post #3621 in Lamar, for transportation and veterans' assistance, \$12,000 requested, \$10,000 recommended. Is there a motion? Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion?

Dana Niemela: The budget narrative does not match the description in the application, so I wonder if there was some other conversation that was had that was not explicitly described here. The narrative says it will be to provide medical transportation to homeless and indigent veterans to the VA facility in Prowers, also to provide gift cards to veterans on an as needed basis for basic needs, and funds to pay stipend to the drivers. All of that I am comfortable with. The breakdown says that it will be used to pay for the driver's cellphones for passenger contact and emergency contact for \$500 and volunteer drivers' stipends for \$11,000. The description does not match what the narrative says.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is listed as volunteer drivers' stipends and gift cards. It is not in the narrative but from the plan. The volunteer stipend from what I understood is that they were requesting funds for the stipends to cover meals. The gift cards are as needed but were not listed in the main plan as expenditures. During the year it is possible that they may have somebody come in that they need to assist.

Dana Niemela: I need them to say that then in the grant breakdown they are a previous grantee, correct? We have recommended \$10,000 out of the \$12,000 requested. This is one in particular where we need to be explicit about what they can spend the \$10,000 on and say in the contract that it is not appropriate to use the funds for driver's cellphones. I would not approve the driver's cellphones and that would be a line item that I think is not appropriate for this grant. The drivers' stipend, we have been doing that and I don't have a problem with the transportation to and from the medical facility. If you want to fund gift cards then that needs to be explicit in their narrative of what they want to do.

Robby Robinson: The budget narrative and the program description do not match.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Well, the only place they do not match is the cellphone to drivers. A lot of the

programs they provide cellphones to the drivers because they need it to contact when they are on the road, if there is an emergency or to contact the veteran.

Chris Holden: We are not criticizing the intent, but we are criticizing the administrator's error because the description does not match the narrative.

Kathleen Dunem: In order to not penalize the applicant, can we take one of those out?

Jay Bobick: Let get it resolved. Can we state that \$10,000 is allocated for the purpose of providing for the volunteer drivers stipends only? I would suggest that we approve the \$10,000 for volunteer drivers' stipends only.

Dana Niemela: I second that.

Robby Robinson: So we are voting on the original amendment?

Jay Bobick: What about a friendly amendment?

Chris Holden: Leave my motion on the floor but amend it accordingly.

Robby Robinson: We are voting on the \$10,000 that will be specified in the contract to be used for the volunteer driver's stipend only. There is a motion. All in favor say aye. That vote was **unanimous**.

Leanne Wheeler: Is that a reimbursable stipend? So they will be submitting for reimbursement of the stipend. Based on the contract language, they will know not to submit a reimbursement for cell phones or it will be rejected.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes it is reimbursable and there is an advance. But it will be in the contract that it is only for volunteer drivers' stipends. When the documentation comes in for reimbursement against the advance, then it will either be approved or disapproved based on what is specified.

Robby Robinson: For #6, VFW Post #8661, in Conifer, transportation and veterans' assistance. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Robby Robinson: For #7, AL Post #103, for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #8, VFW Post#899 in Alamosa for veterans' assistance and transportation. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunumn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: I just have one question. 650 trips is the estimate in the narrative and that is a lot.

Jay Bobick: They make a lot of trips.

Robby Robinson: Any other discussion. All in favor say aye? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #9, AL Post #108, Pagoda Springs, \$57,000 was requested and \$50,000 is the recommendation for vehicle, transportation program, and for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #10, VFW Post#7829 Monument, request was for \$17,500 and the recommendation is for \$15,000. This is for the stand down and veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Jay Bobick: I have a problem with this one. The description says for clothing and shoes \$14,000 for the stand down. I don't want to see someone pick up three pairs of shoes and go down and sell them. How do we ensure that the shoes are not being sold?

Steve Rylant: There are places where that is possible and there are places where it is not. Monument is a small community. In Denver, you may see the stuff at the pawn shop, but in Monument you can't go six blocks down and even find a pawn shop.

Mickey Hunt: They actually support the Colorado Springs stand down. However, it is definitely more controlled. They have Schriever AFB airmen who are assigned to escort each of the homeless veterans in the process and walk them through the different booths. The abuse is minimal because that one is very well controlled. That one is attended by about 150 homeless veterans and I have been to several in the last few years.

Dana Niemela: It is extremely difficult to have any influence over what the recipients do with what they get, particularly with the stand downs.

The committee recommended \$15,000, what I would like to see on all of the stand downs in general is a recommendation that they should get donations and that there is more of a community effort to get donations for the items provided. The El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalitions probably has the clout in the community pull. I am not going to have the one line item excluded from this but if there is a general statement to them it will help me

Chris Holden: I want to make sure we have solid review Board procedures.

Robby Robinson: The Board is concerned about that. We could do a letter that states our concern for the stand downs: we would like to see a mechanism in place to eliminate someone taking 3 sleeping bags and also, we ask that they maximize our dollars by making an effort to get these things from the community. This grant approval process is not the mechanism by which we communicate that and so let's vote with what we've got. We can't change the rules during the year in which it is in effect. What is the vote on #10 with a note to ourselves that we need to do a

letter expressing our concerns about the stand downs?

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? That is unanimous. Okay, now for #11, VFW Post #5231 in Mancos for transportation in a rural community and veteran's assistance. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now, for #12

AL Post # 113 is for transportation program in Alamosa. Motion? Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #13 AL Post #23 is for veterans' assistance in Aurora, requested \$20,000 and recommended \$10,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. And for #14 AL Post #2, is for a vehicle, transportation, and veterans' assistance in Pueblo. \$57,000 was requested and the recommendation is \$42,000. The note was of those funds they are required to purchase the vehicle. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: My question is on the narrative. The item says Veterans Trust Fund \$12,000. Is

that a line item or is it for separate support. My assumption is that VTF includes rent, childcare, and utilities. This needs to be explicit when it goes back to the grantee. They have \$42,000 to purchase a van when on the line item; it states that \$22,000 is the costs of the van. This is not itemized correctly. We need to be explicit as to what we are allowing the additional \$20,000 dollars for. Per Diem for drivers, \$22,000 that seems like a lot. They are not itemized so I don't know.

Robby Robinson: For #14, I am assuming that \$22,000 is for the van.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is split among the difference. The contract will say specifically that the \$22,000 is to purchase a new van then the remainder will be used for the transportation program and for veteran's assistance.

Dana Niemela: I would like this to read differently. Can I amend the motion? We can approve the recommended \$42,000 so long as it specifies explicitly that the \$22,000 is for the van, and then \$20,000 to be used for per diem for drivers, rent, food, and childcare facilities.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That is what I said and I will make sure it says that in the contract.

Robby Robinson: Is there any other discussion? So, the motion has been amended. All in favor? All opposed? That is **unanimous**. Moving on to #16 since we already voted for #15, for veterans' assistance. For #16, AL Post #1, requested \$50,000 and the recommendation is for \$15,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Ray Z. Dissinger: For #17, it was zeroed out so we will skip that one.

Robby Robinson: For #18, DAV #16 in Longmont, recommendation is \$17,500 for veterans' assistance, they requested \$35,000. This is a new grant. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Dana Niemela: Second that motion. I have to say that is a great example of a well-written grant proposal.

Steve Rylant: From what the public is going to see is this, a brand new one, and you had certain reasons only to give part of it. Now how would they know why it is only partially granted?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I send them a letter and then they call me. I explain in detail why they received what they did. The reason we have not had a problem is that I am available all the time and if any grantee has any problem they can call me.

Ben Mestas: It is also in the minutes as to what the changes were.

Robby Robinson: Let me point to this public document, the Memorandum from the Board of Veterans Affairs: The committee does not recommend any funding increase for existing grants and we also consider past performance. We also recommend funding for new grants at half the requested amount. The committee treated everybody equally. We had \$1.6 M requested and we had only \$846,000 available. The decisions were based on a list of priorities. We will post this to the website. So, for #18, all in favor? Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**. So, the next one is #19, for veterans' assistance with NABVETS, Chapter 24 in Aurora, with \$25,000 requested and \$20,000 recommended. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Dana Niemela: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now, for #20, DAV Post #25 in Grand Junction for the stand down and veterans' assistance, the requested amount \$12,000 and the recommended was \$12,000. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Jay Bobick: It think Ray, in the future, this is too specific. They say in their narrative City Market food vouchers, it would be better to just say food vouchers. We don't want some member of the public saying, well, they could get a loaf of bread cheaper at another store.

Ray Z. Dissinger: As long as I am the grant administrator, I am glad when we have somebody who knows what they want. I basically looked at this as a plan by the organization. We don't have accountants.

Jay Bobick: I think it is just too much detail.

Dana Niemela: I have a question about this one. When the line item is for \$4,000 for the stand down, then what is the \$4,000 for? That line item is not explicit enough.

Ray Z. Dissinger: When the reimbursements happen, they get the \$4,000 and then they will return to me the vouchers and statements that were used for the stand downs. There are innumerable things that could be used for.

Dana Niemela: The reason I want it to be explicit is because a lot of organizations put a lot of resources into the stand down. Denver, locally, you have the Department of Defense donating materials, the VA, DAV, and other community participants putting things in. We want to make sure we are covering all the bases and not duplicating all the efforts that are already being made. I am not going to disapprove but when it comes to the stand downs in particular, I want to make sure there is a note to the grantees. When the money requested if for providing assistance to the stand downs, I want to know what for? I want it to be explicit.

Robby Robinson: These organizations are submitting the grant application in January for an event that is held in November. Sometimes organizations back out of support so it is hard to know what specific need they will be supporting. These grants are being written at least 9 months in advance. I can't give you a detailed answer, if that is what you want, I can tell you I need about \$4,000 but guess what, I can't tell you specifically because the Red Cross can't provide meals this year but thank goodness I have this money so there will be meals.

Remember, these grants are being written in January and December, I am not sure they know that specifically.

Steve Rylant: It is a plan, a budget. They only know so much. They have to submit receipts and such to Ray. Any of these can come to Ray and we can say show me what you spent your money on. The Board looks at where that money has been spent.

Robby Robinson: Okay so is there any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

On to #21, AL Post #32 for Longmont stand down, transportation, and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$37,800 and the recommendation is for \$20,000. This one will say specifically that there will be no clinical support. Do I have a motion?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The Committee said no on clinical support that will be in the contract, no money will be spent on clinical support.

Dana Niemela: I also questioned that, who would be doing the clinical support. How do we know who or what their

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I will make sure that the letter specifies that there will be no clinical support.

Robby Robinson: For #22, for Loveland VFW Post 41 asking for veterans' assistance. The request was for \$84,000 and the recommendation was for \$40,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunem: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: What is the \$5,000 for homeless veterans?

Chris Holden: There are 2 places they ask for \$5,000 for that.

Dana Niemela: They will have \$40,000 to utilize if we agree.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say aye? Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**. Next will be #23, the Durango DAV Chapter 48 is requesting \$62, 128 and the recommendation is for \$36,000 which would go towards last year's level in addition to the stand down support. Do I have a motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. On to #24, AL Post # 88, Hot Sulphur Springs. The request was for \$15,000 and the recommendation was for \$7,000. This is a new grantee. The committee recommended that use for snow removal was a no go. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. #25 Windsor AL Post #109 stand down and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$80,000 and the recommendation is for \$40,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

For #26, the Westcliff AL Post #170 asking for transportation program and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$60,000 and the recommendation is for \$40,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now #27, Craig VFW 4265 asking for veterans' assistance and the transportation program. The request was for \$10,000 and the recommendation was for \$10,000. Do we have a motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: The assumption on the budget narrative is that veterans' assistance is what – emergency assistance?

Robby Robinson: That is what we are assuming for all of the veterans' assistance. All in favor? Any opposed? That makes the vote on #27 **unanimous**. For #28, Meeker VFW asking for transportation program and veterans' assistance, requested \$8,000 and the recommendation was \$6,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunumn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Okay we will skip to #33 and come back to the nursing homes at the end so Jay can recuse himself. So, for #33, AL for Colorado, \$30,000 requested and \$20,000 recommended for veterans' assistance. Do I have a motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now, #34, DAV Region with recommendation of \$18,000 for stand down support. Motion?

Dana Nielmela: Move to approve

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: That is how you write a grant proposal for the stand down. That is your model.

Robby Robinson: I have an issue with the narrative. As far as being a model, we can provide a sample of a well-written grant for next year's applicants. All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Okay, so we are at #35. Motion?

Chris Holden: Is this one missing something? How would we go about placing a motion to them

Dana Niemela: The program will provide a one-time grant to individual posts to provide resources to meet critical needs. I think it is in the narrative but not in the budget narrative.

Steve Rylant: What would you want in a budget narrative?

Kathleen Dunemn: The thing of it is when they run out of money, and then they are out.

Jay Bobick: This will be covered when we send out a sample of a good grant.

Dana Niemela: Amend it pending the receipt of a more detailed budget narrative.

Chris Holden: I don't understand who will be getting the \$500?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They verify the need at a committee level.

Robby Robinson: The grant is from the Department and this is at the State level where posts can request up to \$500 to provide resources to meet critical needs.

Chris Holden: Does this organization get audited like we are being audited? How do we know where the money is spent? How does it fit in the priorities? Can we delay it and get more information?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They won't get any more information.

11:00am Ben Mestas left the room and came back at 11:05am.

-Discussion about how state level organizations are held accountable and whether or not this vote

should be delayed for more specific information.

Steve Rylant: Not all of these \$500 disbursements are cash grants.

Chris Holden: Is it on a first come basis?

Kathleen Dunemn: Yes. It is based on the moment of emergent need.

Robby Robinson: Any further discussion?

Dana Niemela: Can we approve with receipt of a detailed budget narrative?

Ray Z. Dissinger: If it is approved then the grant administrator will make sure there is a request for a detailed budget narrative.

Robby Robinson: All in favor. That is **unanimous**. For #36, for Dolores DAV for transportation program and veterans' assistance, requested \$ 55,000 and recommended \$40,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion?

Dana Niemela: What do they do with the recreation center day passes?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They use these passes for therapeutic purposes.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. #37 is VFW Post#4171 in Golden, original request was for \$30,000 and the recommendation was \$20,000 for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. #38 AL Post # 29 Northglenn for veterans' assistance, requested \$11, 156 and the recommended was

\$6,000. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Chris Holden: Are the initial union dues allowed?

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes, it is very important when someone is unemployed and they have a skill set to belong to a union to be able to pay their initial union dues.

Dana Niemela: There is also a stipend for mileage, clothing for interviews, and funds will be provided for employment development for veterans. The narrative does not match the budget description. I don't have a problem with the budget description.

Chris Holden: It really does not state that funds will be used for these services.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Those are semantics that is like saying an individual should be corrected for the way they say something. I said it was adequate to move forward. I don't think they should be penalized for the wording.

Dana Niemela: We are not being stewards of public funds if we don't know explicitly and specifically how the money will be spent. They are asking for \$10,000 for transportation for volunteer drivers. The only thing in the description is driving for employment.

Chris Holden: We could have them specify if it is a legitimate medical appointment.

Dana Niemela: That is a lot of mileage in Aurora.

Discussion about Aurora, access to the RTD, and spending that much to reimburse drivers.

Robby Robinson: In the budget description, this is for jobs for veterans.

Dana Niemela: If there is to be \$6K approved, then we need to tell them what it is approved for.

Robby Robinson: Their original budget request was for \$11,156 and only the transportation

would be for driving veterans to job interviews.

Dana Niemela: I don't have a problem with the clothing for job interviews. I don't know what kind of stipend we are paying drivers in Aurora.

Kathleen Dunemn: Could we put a stipulation in the contract?

Discussion of how to amend this and put it in the contract.

Robby Robinson: Can we come back to this, Chris is going to have to leave and we want to be able to vote on the Nursing home. So let's table this vote.

So on to #39 for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now for #40, VVA Chapter #1071, requested \$25,000 and recommended \$12,500 for veterans' services. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: I approve within the budget narrative but I have an issue with, "in addition we will provide counseling and psychiatric services."

Kathleen Dunemn: I believe we said no on the psychiatric services.

Robby Robinson: None of this money should be used for psychiatric services.

Discussion of not allowing psychiatric services for any of the grant applications and the problems that could arise with that aspect of providing funding.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say aye. So, that is unanimous with the explicit understanding that none of the funds may be used for psychiatric services.

Jay Bobick recused himself from voting on #29, #30, #31, and #32 which all were requests from Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers.

Robby Robinson: #29 for wall mounted televisions for Homelake SVNH. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #30, for residential furniture for Florence SVNH Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #31, for beds with mattresses for Rifle SVNH. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #32, for security cameras for Walsenburg SVNH. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Chris Holden: Are the security cameras the norm at these locations?

Kathleen Dunemn: Security cameras are mainly for the individual residents to ensure patient

safety, not so much to keep the outside criminal elements out, but specifically for patient care. This is particularly useful with Alzheimer's and patients with dementia, to make sure someone does not try to leave the facility. At Walsenburg, these are necessary for health and safety of the patients.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? That is **unanimous**. Okay can someone go and get Jay back in the room so we can finish these votes.

Chris Holden left the room to go and bring Jay Bobick back.

Steve Rylant: When you have him leave the room or recuse himself, it is sort of a disservice because he could add a lot of value to the discussion on the State Veterans Nursing Homes.

Robby Robinson: We have to consider what the public perception is and avoid any perception of a conflict of interest. Thank you for that comment, as a member of the public, it is good to get the input.

Leanne Wheeler: The public does have the opportunity to send in a representative body to have a voice before the Board if they want to add to the discussion. I don't see many of the public here today. It is better that he leave the room, to keep the voting clean.

Ray Z. Dissinger: of Executive Order 009 on the By-laws.

Jay Bobick and Chris Holden back in the room at 11:30am

Robby Robinson: **#38** was tabled and now we are back to it.

Dama Niemela: I approve of the \$9,100 being spent on clothing for interviews, for employment education for veterans to get jobs, and for transportation for medical appointment.

Leanne Wheeler: I live in Aurora and there are two facilities in Aurora which are both on the bus lines.

Ray Z. Wheeler: It says for job interviews.

Dana Niemela: If it is for transportation and gas cards that would be okay but I can't see

reimbursing volunteer drivers for that amount

Kathleen Dunemn: Can we move forward and then in the contract state exactly what it is for?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The argument is we have cut it too much.

Dana Niemela: I am okay with \$4,000 but I want to know how it is paid. At .50 cents a mile, that is a lot of mileage in Aurora. Are the veterans getting to appointments for medical needs or for job interviews? This looks like we are paying the employees of some member's private business.

Leanne Wheeler: Are we subsidizing someone's private bus service? It sounds sketchy to me. I like the idea of stipulating that the \$4,000 can go toward an individual veteran's own gumption to use a bus token and then ride the bus to his or her job interview.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I think we are making a lot of assumptions here.

Dana Niemela: So what exactly is transportation for veterans? I don't support extensive stipends and reimbursement.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We can say, "The Board does not wish to provide transportation through drivers but through bus tokens and gas cards."

Robby Robinson: Do we have a motion on the question? Okay all in favor say aye. [It was a 3-2 vote with Kathleen Dunemn and Dana Niemela dissenting.]

Robby Robinson: Okay, well that passes.

Kathleen Dunemn: So would the motion be amended with a friendly amendment?

Robby Robinson: We ask them for information on how it will be spent and we will need more information.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We should request an explanation.

Jay Bobick: We approve \$1,500 for the purpose of clothing and for union dues, and then \$4,500 will be held in abeyance until a proper explanation of how it will be used for transportation is

supplied.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I think you should delay the entire award. We have to do a contract but they are local. We should wait because...

Steve Rylant: If I was a requester, I would ask why I submitted it in March and then no one asked me these questions until now.

Kathleen Dunemn: I move to delay for more information or for additional justification.

Dana Niemela: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor of delaying until we receive more information? That is unanimous to delay the vote until further justification can be provided.

Ray Z. Dissinger: So that leaves \$26,169.12 in the balance and we still have the cemetery, CDVA, and SVCLC who may need that in the coming year.

Robby Robinson: Are there any objections?

Future Meetings

11-12 June, Las Animas and tour of Fort Lyon facility on Wednesday, 11th of June and 9:30am meeting on 12th June, place tentatively at Fort Bent's Inn, 10950 U.S. 50, Las Animas, CO 81054
Motion to Adjourn by Robby Robinson, seconded by Dana Niemela at 12:15pm. Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

Board Minutes June 12, 2014, 0900 Hrs.

VFW Post 2411, 318 West 3rd St.,

Las Animas, Colorado 81054

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0900 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

- William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman
- Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Secretary
- Kathleen Dunemn, Member
- Rene Simard, Member
- Christopher Holden, Member – Not Present

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA,
- Deputy Director Ray Z. Dissinger,
- VTF Administrator William “Bill” Conroy
- CDVA Director Tamara Edmond,
- CDVA Admin. Asst.

Guests Present:

- Clayton Chidester, VFW Post 2411,
- Commander Bill Deatherage, VFW Post 2411,
- Vice Commander Jeremy Miller, VSO Prowers County
- Ed Casby, VFW Post 2411
- Leanne Wheeler, Veterans Advocate,
- Wheeler Advisory Group

Robby Robinson: Thank you to Clayton and the VFW for your hospitality in hosting this Board

meeting.

Approval of Minutes from May 8, 2014 Unanimously accepted with amendments **Board**

Member Comments

Jay Bobick: No comment.

Dana Niemela: I attended the National Coalition for the Homeless Conference in Washington, D.C. in May.

It is important for Colorado to know how it is doing on a national level. I am really proud of the work we are doing especially this CBVA visit to Las Animas, the visits to the Western Slope, and supporting veterans with the work that Colorado Serves is doing. On a national scale, we are ahead of the game. Thank you for making the efforts and for building bridges with the community.

Robby Robinson: Clayton Chidester went with us out to Fort Lyon and it was great to hear that there is veterans' community support for Fort Lyon. It is important that everybody in the community knows what everyone else can provide.

Jay and I attended the Bill Signing on Memorial Day in Aurora. One of the Bills we were most concerned with established legislation for the Veterans' Assistance Grant. The Board is charged with advising the Department with the administration of that grant. This is an important step forcing legislature to consider this grant as a line item in the budget annually.

The other thing I wanted to mention is Jay Bobick has been with the Board for the past 6 years. He has served this Board and the veterans of Colorado admirably. I will miss Jay and he has been an invaluable contributor to this Board and fierce advocate for veterans. We will miss his expertise and contributions.

With Jay leaving, that will leave two vacancies on the Board and I will let Mickey address that.

Mickey Hunt: I spoke with the Director of the State Boards. Robby was reappointed for the next term and he will serve through July 2015. There have been two other Board Members selected, one from Grand County and one from Colorado Springs. It will be great to have the diversity and the other side of experience on the Board.

Public Comments

Clayton Chidester: Thank you to everybody for allowing us to host this meeting.

From this Post, as you go into considering the rules and regulations for the application for grant funds, I want to ask for the Board's consideration. Currently, your rules say there will be no money awarded for Color Guards. I ask the Board to reconsider this rule. We support the National Cemetery here at Fort Lyon, we do about 4-5 funerals a month. Our color guard uniforms are pieced together and we look like a raggedy group. Some members of the color guard do not have a full uniform and some don't have anything. We would like to have a better representation with the color guard. The purpose of the veterans' organizations is to support the veterans both living and dead. We need help in getting the uniforms.

Robby Robinson: We will have to look at the rules. If the rules are statutory, then there is an issue, but if the rules are determined by the Board, then it is something we will take a look at. We had a conversation earlier about how confusing the grant application process has been. You applied for a Veterans' Assistance Grant and submitted it on a Veterans Trust Fund grant application form. This is something we need to fix because if the Veterans' Assistance Grant is not a fillable form, then we need to correct that problem. Also, we need to do something to distinguish between the two forms so it is not so confusing for applicants. It does not help you until next year, but we are aware that it needs to be corrected.

Dana Niemela: Clayton, following up on the question you had about access to VA healthcare yesterday, did you say the doctor is in Colorado Springs and the nearest CBOC is in La Junta? Could you mind discussing that a little bit for clarity and to illuminate for those who were not in our conversation yesterday?

Clayton Chidester: The services available to veterans here is the TV doctor. When a veteran goes to the clinic, they talk to the TV doctor and then the TV doctor gives a diagnosis. I think when you go to see the doctor, you should be able to talk in person, to touch and feel to determine an issue. There are two nurses that are at the clinic. I can't give a figure for how many veterans they see. I did have a conversation with the doctor and she commented that she had about 1,000 patients. The doctors they have are over-extended.

It may just be this location, but having a doctor in person would be much more beneficial. I

would like to see a doctor at the Fort Lyon facility who sees the patients there and who would also be available for veterans in the area.

Robby Robinson: Conceivably, I suppose you could have a doctor out there, I don't know. I don't think the population at Fort Lyon alone would ever justify a doctor out here.

Clayton Chidester: With whatever influence you have, if you could pass that on to the Governor or to the ones who make that decision, I would appreciate it.

General Discussion about healthcare available through the VA in Southeastern Colorado.

Jay Bobick: Clayton, I want to thank you for an excellent trip and for hosting the Board. It has been very informative and great seeing the positive support for Fort Lyon. I appreciate the opportunity to see how you are supporting veterans and the VFW supporting the community and Fort Lyon. It is not a need, it is a requirement. So, I really appreciate what you have done here in Las Animas and at Fort Lyon.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Based on a quick perusal of the laws, the Board decides what program is operated by non-profit organizations and if they meet the criteria decided by the Board and selected by the Board, then, the Board awards it and they set up the criteria for selecting appropriate veterans' programs. Therefore, the Board has the authority to grant assistance to veterans.

Robby Robinson: That is something we will have to put to discussion at the next Board meeting. Are there any other guest comments?

Jeremy Miller: I am Jeremy Miller the Veterans' Service Officer for Prowers County. I also run the DAV van program to help transport veterans to medical appointments and medical facilities.

I want to thank the Board for the recent grant approval. We are in need and this will help the veterans in Southeastern Colorado. We are the furthest out van that we know of. We drive the most miles through open country. We pick up veterans in Rocky Ford and transport them to Denver. What I requested this last time on the grant application was for money for cell phones to be used in the vans for the drivers. We were denied the money for cell phones for the drivers. We are asking that money be made available for cell phones for drivers. We want you to realize

that this would be used for emergency situations and currently the drivers are using their personal cell phones. This is a long drive over open country and the veterans are ill when traveling.

I request that the Board would consider this to make money available for cell phones when looking at the money for next year's operations. I am not giving a veteran a cell phone directly but for help during transportation. With the clinic opening in Golden, a lot of the van drivers are not looking to go the extra miles to Boulder. They are driving over 12 hours a day and this puts them at risk for safety. Is there any possibility of transportation from the Denver VA Hospital to the Golden Clinic?

Bill Conroy: The Golden Clinic is primarily for Compensation and Pension examinations (C&P exams). It will be further to the new VA Hospital when it is completed. But, Jeremy, the Golden Clinic is not really that much further than the VA Hospital.

General Discussion of mileage to the Golden Clinic and transportation for veterans.

Jeremy Miller: I have not been to the one in Golden, so I am not familiar with that one. I just hear what the drivers are saying they need to do. It may be that my drivers need more information, but it is also something to consider.

Dana Niemela: Are they going to the VA Medical Center and to Golden for the C&P exams?

Jeremy Miller: They have to go to Golden for the C&P exams.

Robby Robinson: Are there any other public comments?

Leanne Wheeler: Thank you, Clayton, for hosting the event. My heart is full that the Board elected to meet out here and visit Fort Lyon. It has been great to see you all. It would be my hope that you make this part of your annual meeting schedule to come and see what is going on with veterans in the Southeastern corner of Colorado. It is also my hope that we become partners on location to advocate for veterans and meet statewide objectives. Thank you, Robby and the Board for all you are doing.

Dana Niemela: To the other gentlemen, is there anything you think we should know as people

who have some influence in the veterans' community on behalf of veterans here?

Ed Casby: My concern is primarily with the VA. When I first went to get healthcare, they asked me, "Why did I wait so long to get care?" I told them I put it off through the years. They asked, "Why didn't you come in directly after your service?" I told them it is bothering me now. The VA needs to know that older veterans are as important as new veterans.

Robby Robinson: One thing they are doing now with active duty is they are getting the service members to go to the VA straight after their service and not to wait until it does bother them. It is so hard to get the documentation after waiting years to go in to be seen.

Reports

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: I will be touring on the 2nd of July with Project Sanctuary Retreat up at Granby as part of Colorado Serves. The 8th of July, I will be in Pueblo doing a veterans' town meeting. On July 9th I will be in Alamosa as a recap with providers reaching out to do a town meeting. As part of Colorado Serves, I am trying to go two times a month to rural areas to identify needs and so we can advocate for the veterans in rural communities. I did one at Fort Lyon about 3 months ago. I have been out to Durango, Montrose, Grand Junction, and Windsor reaching out to veterans to find out what the needs are so we can advocate for you. I am doing what the VA calls Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) meetings to get providers to sign up. It is fee-based and pays 10% less than Medicare. We are advocating, the Department, the Board, to help meet the needs of veterans. I have a meeting with Lynette Roffd to make steps to advocating and I continue to have interaction with the VA. We are making small steps and our voice is being heard. If they don't reply to you at least they are listening to me and I will take your message to them. I am facilitating veterans meetings and I could do a town meeting here if you need our help but you need to ask me to come. Fort Lyon could be a place to do it or we could have a meeting here at the VFW Post, but you need to let me know that you want a meeting. If you need our help and you want an advocate, then I will be willing to show up and help.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: 13/14 right now we are executing but we have over \$100,000 left in the fund. There are a lot of reasons for that because we have become more accountable and the advances

have to be taken care of by the 15th of June. The contract is very specific. A lot of organizations would wait to spend their money until right at the end, and we can't do that anymore. Next year the emphasis will be on making sure applicants know they have to spend the money by a drop dead date. Some organizations applied for both grants and the Department is very strict on that so there is no overlap. A couple of organizations have had a turn-over in the administrator (due to illness or passing away) so this has created a delay in spending all the money.

For 14/15 there was the one organization held in abeyance. I sent it out to everybody and we will have an update today.

Robby Robinson: The grant applicant in question was the transportation compensation for the American Legion Post #29 in Aurora. There was a question about the amount of money we wanted to spend for transportation because of the public transportation available in the Aurora area.

Ray Z. Dissinger: They responded to the question and they said they believe the public transportation is not adequate because they were transporting 4-5 veterans to multiple employers per day for interviews. They said they were able to place 64% of the veterans they work with in their community with jobs so far.

Dana Niemela: They said there was 64%.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Are we going to just fund part of the \$10,080 for mileage as well as gas cards?

Jay Bobick: I personally feel \$10,000 is a bit excessive. What that amount really should be, I really don't know but the expressed requirement is for veterans. I am concerned with the amount.

Robby Robinson: Does someone want to move on that so we can discuss it? The proper motion would be whether to fund the \$10,080 or not or come up with another amount.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Last year, we provided them with \$6,000.00.

Discussion of last year's grant amount and was it expended.

Jay Bobick: I move to fund at last year's level rather than the requested amount.

Kathleen Dunemn: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: The motion is to fund the grant at last year's level of \$6,000. Are there any questions about that or any further discussion?

Dana Niemela: My question as I read this is from the back-up narrative and the justification. It indicates that the American Legion in Aurora is running an extensive employment program.

They indicate that they get referrals and community recommendations from the Community Resource and Referral Center and by networking. They mentioned four general pick-up points for transportation to the VA Hospital. I reached out because I wanted to make sure that referring organizations and participating organizations were aware of this valuable service and the Community Resource and Referral Center and they said they did not make referrals to the American Legion Post in Aurora. I talked to one of the work force center reps and he said he was the vet rep and he was unaware of this service. My comment is that if they are partnering with these organizations, I don't know that there is enough communication going on.

The partner organizations should be made better aware of the partnership before they are listed in an application for a grant. I run an employment program in Denver, and I was not aware of these services. I think there needs to be better collaboration. I will be happy to talk to the American Legion Commander. At this moment, I am okay with funding at last year's amount.

Rene Simard: Is there any indication of turning people away or of people not being able to get to job interviews based on the information provided?

Dana Niemela: Ray? What is the breakdown of the actual budget being used for drivers?

Ray Z. Dissinger: \$8,280 was designated to be used for drivers, mileage, \$1,800 for clothing for interviews and miscellaneous (i.e., initial union dues.)

Dana Niemela: I would rather see it go for bus tokens for public transportation, clothing for interviews and union dues rather than for funding a transportation program. Also, what is the follow-up, if they can't get there for an interview, then how are they going to get there for work?

General discussion of transportation needs and employment services for Aurora.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have a suggestion for the Board to move on the grant and then I will get an email out to the grantee so the Board could talk to the organization about the specific concerns about the transportation and how the money will be spent.

Kathleen Dunemn: Linkage would be really good so we know the specific outcomes and what metrics they are using.

Robby Robinson: The motion is for the total grant to be \$6,000 granted at last year's level. All in favor say aye. Any opposed? So that vote was **unanimous**.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Bill Conroy: We have been made aware that the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) grant application and the Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG) are not fillable and need to be corrected. There has also been trouble with identifying which form is which. The applications are not easy to find. Many people still call the VAG the Tobacco Grant. We will clean up the website and take a look at the grants to make them fillable and easier to identify.

Mr. Les Kennedy is going to formally retire at the end of the month. We have a new hire to replace Les, Gail Hoagland and we hope to have her start on June 18th, next Thursday.

General discussion of the roll-over capability of the Veterans' Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant. (See Colorado HB Bill 14-1205.)

Mickey Hunt: We were fortunate last year that we spent about 97% of the fund. This year one grantee struggled so it has been a learning curve for him. Those that execute by year end year after year, show that there is a real need.

Robby Robinson: How much money was available in the VTF this year?

Ray Z. Dissinger: \$843,938.

Robby Robinson: And we had \$ 1.6 million in request, so we had requests for two times that amount in money available. Bill, how many grants were requested for the VAG?

Bill Conroy: 29 grants and over a million available. I also wanted to say thank you to Clayton Chidester for hosting this body and for a great tour yesterday. I think all of us enjoyed it and learned a lot. This has been an excellent trip and a great opportunity to hear what is going on with the veterans. Thank you.

State Veterans Community Living Centers (SVCLC) Update

Jay Bobick: Things are going fine at the State Veterans Community Living Centers.

General discussion about Fitzsimmons and moving forward.

Dana Niemela: I have noticed that there have been a lot of openings at the Rifle Community Living Center; is that because of turnover or new FTE's?

Jay Bobick: There are new opportunities out there but there is also a turnover. A lot of it is due to the location. There are a lot of families not willing to make the drive to Rifle. The families that put them in there do not want to make the drive. It is an issue to keep the numbers up because of the location. We are making the best of the situation. The Eden Alternative is to make it more homelike. They ask the new veterans coming in about their lifestyle, if they like to sleep late, what their normal routine is like, and the emphasis is on how they live their lives.

General discussion about Eden Alternative certification and how Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers have earned their certifications.

Discussion/Action

Audit Results

Robby Robinson: On June 3rd, the State Legislature Audit Committee reviewed the results of the performance audit. Those of us from the Board that were there were Mickey Hunt, Ray Z. Dissinger, Bill Conroy, and me. I thought it would be useful for those of you not there to hear the findings, and the recommendations for the Department and the Board. Senator King, Senator Balmer, Senator Guzman, Representative Sonnenberg, and Representative Ryden were in attendance. It went according to expectations and I would like to hear what the other members thought of the audit review.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I believe that the Legislative Audit Committee when they were done, they realize that the Department understands that there are things that need improvement. The Department provides a valuable service to veterans. I would like to thank the service organizations for their hard work in getting the grant money to the veterans.

Bill Conroy: I think where it started poorly it ended very well.

Mickey Hunt: The comments at the end were all positive. We will not use the Veterans' Trust Fund money for outside agencies. One comment applauded the volunteer organization that can operate and manage the fund so well. We are putting more money out to veterans. We want to push all money out to the veterans in need. Most of the audit recommendations have already been addressed and have been fixed. This is a volunteer organizations and the grant gives money to volunteer organizations. We spent 2-3% on administrative costs and there was a comment that applauded any organization that spent that kind of money and operated on 2.5% administrative costs and helped the number of veterans we help. We take hits occasionally but we are putting more money out to veterans' and we are going to continue to do that.

Robby Robinson: The committee now understands that the volunteers start at the Board level and it goes down to the service organizations applying for the grants. They understand now that there are volunteers all the way down to the local level. The other issue this audit brought up is that the priorities are not necessarily clearly established for the grant. We recognize that we list priorities but then we don't exclude anything or say this is the order of priorities. Every year we will make that more transparent. I told them and I think it struck a note particularly with those rural areas, these priorities reflect the view of Denver differently than the view of Durango. The first thing on that list is veterans' homelessness, which may not be the number one issue in Durango. It is in Denver. So why would we, a board sitting in Denver, have the right to cram down your throat a list of priorities? We don't. This program was created by VFW's and American Legions and then they got the funds allocated out of the Tobacco Fund money. In other words, it is a local effort so plug it back into the local community. I think Denver should not establish what the whole state should do with the money. We should look at what the people say who are coming for grants and they say this is what I can do with the money.

General discussion of the result presented to the Legislative Audit Committee.

Bylaws Revisions

Robby Robinson: You all have a copy of the proposed revisions to the Bylaws, I sent you an electronic version before the last Board meeting and you have a paper copy today. We need to determine how or if we want amend the Bylaws.

Jay Bobick: I move that the revised Bylaws be accepted as written.

Dana Niemela: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: I will go through each of the changes just to make sure they are accepted. Each Board member is entitled to one vote. Currently voting by proxy is not allowed. Is there any discussion about the voting by proxy not being allowed? Is that what we really want?

Jay Bobick: It has always been that way.

Robby Robinson: Can we have someone vote by email or by phone if not by proxy?

Jay Bobick: I am opposed to that.

General discussion of proxy vote.

Robby Robinson: Next, what about member approval? The Board is created in statute and statute does not say we can have emeritus members. Also, on conflict of interest, we have to publicly disclose any memberships. If you are a member it is not a conflict of interest unless you have a position of leadership. Is there any discussion on that? Okay, I also put in that when we vote and decisions are not unanimous then the votes need to be publicly recorded in the minutes. We now have three standing committees since we added a committee. We also need to look at when we can make amendments to the bylaws.

General discussion of the amendments to bylaws.

Robby Robinson: There is a motion on the table to approve the amendments to the Bylaws. It sounds like we are ready to vote on the amendments. All in favor? Is there any opposed?

Okay, that was **unanimous**.

Future Meetings

10 July 2014, 9:30am, American Legion HQ, 7465 E. 1st Avenue, #D, Denver, CO 80230 There is no scheduled meeting for August 2014.

11 September 2014, 9:30am, American Legion HQ, 7465 E. 1st Avenue, #D, Denver, CO 80230

Old Business

Mickey Hunt: The Director of Boards and Commissions wants to set up training for the Board Members in July.

Robby Robinson: July would be a good time to do that training.

Mickey Hunt: The General's visit the State Veterans Community Living Centers is tentatively scheduled for 5-6th September. If any of the Board Members would like to go on that trip, please let me know.

Jay Bobick: As chairman, I would like to go.

Discussion of SVCLC visit.

Mickey Hunt: We will follow up on Audit concerns and there will be a review in 6 months to make sure recommendations are being followed.

Discussion of integrating the Audit Committee recommendations. Robby Robinson: Motion to adjourn.

Dana Niemela: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say aye. Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**.

The Board adjourned at 10:26am.

Board Minutes July 10, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters, 7465 E. 1st Avenue #D,
Denver, Colorado 80230

Dana Niemela, Secretary, called the meeting to order at 0940 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

- William “Robby” Robinson, Chairman -late
- Dana Niemela, Secretary
- Kathleen Dunemn, Member – Not Present
- Rene Simard, Member
- Christopher Holden, Member
- Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member
- Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director-late
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- William “Bill” Conroy, CDVA Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
- Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

- Richard Sandrock, Governor’s Office
- Brian Van Driel, Senator Udall’s Office
- Frank McCurdy, American Legion National Executive Committee, 1st Vice President
United Veterans Committee

Dana Niemela: Thank you all for being here in spite of our traffic delays. We will go ahead of approval of the minutes from the last meeting. All Board members should have a copy of the

minutes from the last meeting in your folders. Does anybody have any revisions or corrections to the minutes?

Approval of Minutes from June 12, 2014

Unanimously accepted.

Robby Robinson arrived 9:42am.

Dana Niemela: I will turn the meeting over to our Chairman, Robby Robinson.

Robby Robinson: Have the new Board members had a chance to introduce themselves? We wanted to welcome you to the Board. It is great to see some new faces and to get your perspective on this Board. We will have you introduce yourselves as we will go around and introduce everybody in the room. So, Duane is a new Board member as is Wendy, and I was reappointed so I guess we will have to face this challenge of the Senate confirmation during the next session.

Board Member Comments

Duane Dailey: Hi, I am Duane Dailey from Grand County. I am a fifth generation military. My grandfather served in World War I, and my father served in the Merchant Marines/Navy man in World War II, he had three brothers in the service. My brother was in the Army. I have been a member of the American Legion for 44 years and serve as the Grand County VSO. I am a past Grand County Commissioner. It is a great honor to be a part of this Board. I had a letter from Dick Lamb when I wrote a letter of recommendation in 1974 for a man named Leo Nater to be on this Board. He was one of the first representatives to be a part of this Board from the Western Slope. I am honored to be a part of this very important group.

Robby Robinson: Duane, it is great to have you here. We were in Las Animas last month. The view from the rural area is a different perspective which at times can be quite different from the view from Denver. I think since Jim Stanko left, we have not had any representatives from the rural areas. We are delighted to have you here and he is also a Veteran Service Officer so it will be good to get that perspective as well.

Wendy Sue Chiado: I live in Colorado Springs, but I am originally from the Bronx so you can guess which baseball team I root for. I retired as a Naval Officer and I am very proud to be a Naval Officer in a bastion of the Air Force Community. I work for Aerospace Corporation. I was

Navy all my life, my husband is Navy, and my son is serving on a Virginia Class submarine deployed overseas and he will be returning home in about a month. I am very happy to be representing veterans from Colorado Springs.

When I mentioned that I was being appointed to this Board, I had several comments that veterans wanted to get help with the VA. I am proud of the opportunity to advocate for veterans, for healthcare issues and particularly for women's issues. The women's issues are a little different from men's issues. I am very happy to be on Board.

Robby Robinson: Welcome Wendy to the Board.

Chris Holden: I have been a Board member for just over one year. I am honored to serve on this Board. I have 25 ½ years in the Army. Wendy, I will agree with you 364 days of the year but when the Army/Navy game comes around then I will have to disagree. I enjoy living in Colorado Springs. I also have 2 daughters that also live in Colorado Springs. I work for Exelis Corporation, a defense contractor, in business development. I will get the opportunity to travel next week to Germany, Italy, Qatar, and Egypt, so I am looking forward to that trip.

Robby Robinson: Chris, did you have the opportunity to go with Governor Hickenlooper to the ceremony yesterday? Would you comment on that?

Chris Holden: It was a true honor watching a whole dozen of our veterans participate and receive their apprenticeship certificates. Governor Hickenlooper attended the Veterans in Piping graduation ceremony. It was an honor to see 14 veterans graduate from the apprenticeship program. The Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union No. 58 works in partnership to help see these veterans successfully complete their apprenticeship and get placed for jobs to transition to after being in the military. Members of the veterans' families were all there and it was very moving. There were representatives there from Fort Carson were also in attendance, Mike Webb and Shelly Anderson. There were some nice comments from the Governor. It was very well done and I am proud of these veterans.

Dana Niemela: Hi, I am Dana Niemela. I am a Navy veteran since 2005. I currently run a veterans employment program for the city of Denver to help veterans get back to work and hopefully stay there. This is my third year on the Board and I am really happy to be here.

Because of what I do in the city, I am also on the planning committee for the VA Community Mental Health Summit. This is a good opportunity to bring in community partners with the VA. It is my hope that what we have done on the Board and with the Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant, we will be able to draw some of the grantees into that conversation. I think that at our last Board meeting or just before that, Mayor Hancock signed on to the Mayor's Challenge to end veterans' homelessness. I have been working on veterans' homeless issues with the city and county of Denver with a variety of partners: the VFW, city of Denver, the VA, the Department of Human Services, and a bunch of non-profit partners that are working to end veterans' homelessness. This serves well for Denver and Colorado on a national map in addition to, being part of the *25 Cities Initiative*, which is the national program to create coordinated entry. This means getting a lot of the people who work in homelessness to work together and on the same page.

Thank you.

Robby Robinson: Thank you Dana. I am Robby Robinson. I am a 28 year Infantryman and I am the Board Chairman.

Rene Simard: I think I am the only Air Force guy. I served 28 years in the Air Force and was Command Chief at Buckley. I currently work at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and serve as vice president there. I live in Aurora, but I am from New England originally, sorry Wendy, so I am a Red Sox fan. Like Chris, I have served just over one year on the Board. It is an honor to be here.

Bill Conroy: Bill Conroy, Vietnam Veteran, 11B10 and am a combat disabled veteran. I knocked around a few years with different organizations. I have been the State Director for 6 years; my old boss Robby hired me. This will be my last Board Meeting because I am retiring. This month it will be 39 ½ years serving veterans in the State of Colorado.

Dana Niemela: Congratulations!

Ray Z. Dissinger: I am Ray Z. I am the administrator for the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund Grant. I spent 40 years and 5 days for pay in the military. Altogether, I have spent 44 years serving either in the Military or for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. I feel my

job is to make certain that the money that comes from the grant goes to the veteran in need with the least difficulty or barriers possible. Like I told the Legislative Audit Committee, they asked me to tighten up the way we are looking at things and I told them, I will tighten them as loose as I can. If it is not fraud, waste, or abuse, then I will try my best to make sure the money gets to the very, very proud, patriotic, hard-working volunteer individuals out there administering the Veterans Trust Fund. Thank you. It has been a privilege to serve.

Gail Hoagland: I am the Veterans Assistant Grant Administrator and this is my 2nd week. I am very humbled and honored to be here and to serve Veterans.

Richard Sandrock: Richard Sandrock, Governor's Office. I served with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard for 6 years. I served 4 years active duty field artillery in the Army. I spent a year in Korea and a year in Iraq. I am happy to be at the Governor's Office getting focused, where I spend at least 40% of my time on veterans' issues.

Brian Van Driel: I am not a veteran but my father was in World War II. He landed at Normandy and he was at the Battle of the Bulge. He also helped to liberate Buchenwald. When he came home, he never spoke a word about it. Because of that I have had not just a curiosity but also a soft spot for veterans. I am thrilled to be in this position where I can assist veterans every day.

Frank McCurdy: I spent 22 years as an Air Force Fighter Pilot and representing UVC.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have a quick alibi, for those of you who have to deal with my eccentricities; 20 years in service was spent in special ops.

Robby Robinson: I want to take a minute on behalf of the Board, and certainly myself, to honor Bill Conroy's service. I happen to know that 6 ½ years ago, the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs had some serious problems, personnel problems, processing problems, I won't go into detail. When the previous director of the DMVA retired and we went out and did a search for a new director. A lot of people applied, thankfully, we selected Bill Conroy. Bill Conroy had the respect of most of the Veterans Service Organizations and most of the Veterans Service Officers from around the state. He was known as one of the best that there are and when he took over that Division within 6 months, he had completely turned it around. All the people had faith in his knowledge, his expertise, and his leadership. The Division of Veterans Affairs, in my humble

view, has emerged as premier organization in the state to file veterans' claims. That is in total part due to Bill Conroy's leadership and we are seriously going to miss him. In hope that from his mountain home, he will still remember us and involve himself in veterans' affairs and not completely rest on his laurels, which are well deserved. I think the Board needs to be on record as expressing our deep appreciation for the service that Bill has rendered. Not only as the Division Director but for the 40 plus years he has served Veterans. Universally accepted, he is probably the best in the state

Bill Conroy: Thank you.

Applause all around.

Reports

Governor's Office

Richard Sandrock: Let me just expand a bit on the event Chris talked about attending yesterday. The Governor and I had the opportunity to go the Veterans in Piping graduation. I talked to the union guys, the local pipefitter guys and also the union leadership of the Local 58. One of the things of great importance was they were specifically going after combat arms guys. If a guy joins the military and becomes a medic then he gets out and becomes an EMT or if he goes in engineering, then they get out and go into the engineering fields. But what happens to the combat arms guys, when they get out, like me I had to get a Master's Degree. They are targeting these combat arms guys, specifically infantry, artillery, and armor; who do wonderful things in Iraq or Afghanistan but when they get out and come home, some HR person looks at their resume and says I don't know what this person is, so they have a hard time finding employment. I thought that was an outstanding thing, which the union knows about that, and they are specifically targeting the combat arms guys when they were looking for veterans to be in the apprenticeship program with the help of the folks from the Post.

At first the Senior NCO leadership at Ft. Carson was very skeptical. When you have 20 to 30 guys who are doing a grass cutting detail, 10 guys at the range, or on some other detail like picking up cigarette butts then two of the guys are going to go off to a training class and not help out the company, it made them think this would not work. Even though they were skeptical,

through education and the backing from the head Command Sergeant Major at Fort Carson behind this program, then that started to filter down to senior NCO's; they have been educated and are now supportive of this program. They were able to put together this pipefitter class. I wanted to let you know that I ensured that the Governor knows that during the last 3-4 months this class has been their duty station. They are getting paid by the Army or the Marine Corps to go to training. So instead of cutting grass or picking up rocks they can go to this class. When they exit the Army, they have their certificate and are on their way to a job. It is not a fancy program where it says you are trained to do something now good luck. They leave with their DD214 and their certificate and the next week start working. So, the Governor understands the importance of that. The Governor is on his way to the National Governor's Association Conference and he has the names of the soldiers who will be going to other states. I think 14 graduated, 3 are staying here in Colorado, and the other 11 are going to other states. He has the lists and any other Governor's knows in the other states, he will let them know that in Colorado we have young men who have been trained and they are returning to their states ready to work as pipefitters. He will pass their information on to the Governors of the states where these soldiers are moving and hopefully send some guys our way. That is all that I have, any questions?

Robby Robinson: What goes around comes around. When I was one of those frustrated First Lieutenants in the Army I had eight guys who were assigned to my platoon who were not in my platoon because they were in Project Transition being paid by the Army for their last 6-8 weeks. They were being paid to train in local civilian industry so that way when they went from the Army they would have a trade. This was during the Vietnam War. This is in some ways a reinvention of that, so what goes around comes around. It only took about 45 years or so. It was a great program, and hopefully this program now will catch on. So it has come back around full circle.

Richard Sandrock: The Governor is very much behind it. I think it is a great program and if there is anything the Board can do to help sustain it, to help their efforts so that we don't have to wait 40 years again, I would advise that.

Dana Niemela: I work in employing veterans and many of the veterans I work with have

backgrounds in construction and trade. But they are older and they don't want to do that kind of work anymore. What we see is a real gap; there is a lack of interest with veterans of current conflicts of going into construction industries. These are lucrative opportunities and they are good pay. How do we connect that, is there a way that we can help to spread the word to get more of the people who are currently separating from the military to consider this as an option?

Richard Sandrock: I would say yes. As far as I know in Colorado, the only place that this is happening is at Fort Carson. There is nothing at all at Buckley AFB, nothing at Peterson AFB, or the National Guard, or any of the other bases; this could be useful to them. If you look at Fort Carson, of the 14 that graduated, 3 stayed in Colorado. What I see at Fort Carson is an actually small percentage of these guys are getting out and staying in Colorado. So any of the other points of contact that you guys have, Buckley AFB, the National Guard, the Air National Guard, or any of the other smaller military bases, if you could spread the word to, that would help.

You need the buy-in of the posts. It is all going to come down to the unit paperwork, is the union going to pay for it, is the instructor available, and is the E-8 or E-9 at that unit going to allow 2 or 3 guys to leave his unit to go train and get paid for that?

Robby Robinson: The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, do they have the authority to let someone go to training on a day-to-day basis while they are on duty? That may require something higher than a local commander to make that decision.

Richard Sandrock: The Department of Labor made individual MOAS's (Memorandums of Agreement) with these individual posts to make this happen. They are doing this at Fort Carson, Joint Base Lewis-McCord, and Camp Pendleton are the three bases where they are doing this type of program. The Department of Labor and the International Union came in and spoke with the commanders. The commanders said, "Roger, this is a good ideal; make it happen, this is allowed on our posts."

Robby Robinson: I know this was a nationwide program back when Project Transition happened.

Wendy Chiado: The Air Force is going through a big Reduction in Force (RIF) right now. That is going to impact a significant amount of the population down in Colorado Springs. It is not just the young kids who enlisted, but a lot of the officers, it is just all of the sudden, you know?

Bill Conroy: Richard, did you say only 3 were going to stay in Colorado?

Richard Sandrock: Yes, the way it works is it is almost like the military, these service members get to choose their duty station after the program. Out of the 14 who graduated from the program last night, 3 are from Colorado. The other 11 are mostly staff sergeants, one is a Chief Warrant Officer, and these 11 are not from Colorado so they decided to return home to work in their home communities.

Bill Conroy: When I give the TAP briefings out at Buckley, I always ask if they will be staying in Colorado. Of a class of about 40-50 there are usually 70% to 80% who raise their hands to say they are staying in Colorado. I just find it odd that only 3 out of the 11 are staying in Colorado, but jobs probably drive those numbers.

Richard Sandrock: Right, it is a guaranteed job, so these guys may have their union sponsor them from South Carolina and it is a guaranteed job with their certified apprenticeship when they go home to South Carolina. So if they can get a job in say Milwaukee, then they take it so they will have work.

Rene Simard: The Aurora Defense Counsel meets once a month we get representatives all of their senior officers, and Buckley, too. So this may be a good place to provide some education about the program to representatives of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard leadership in that forum. So, that may be an opportunity to try and get that word out.

Richard Sandrock: Chris, what do you think? Do you think that would be something that Mike or his supervisor would want to participate in?

Chris Holden: They are expanding the program to Fort Riley, at some other posts and looking for other places to expand. Wendy and I talked about holding a meeting in Colorado Springs. Mike Webb is the point of contact on that.

Rene Simard: We hold a meeting in August, so I will send a poster to you.

Dana Niemela: Do you think that the state AFL/CIO director or teamsters would be a good person to talk to expand beyond singular trades? So it is not just local pipefitters in Colorado Springs doing it but you've got pipefitters, electricians, carpenters, and other trades.

Chris Holden: We were contacted by the Local Pipefitters Union #58, but if the AFL/CIO director knows of other unions that would be willing to sponsor training, it would be worth considering.

Richard Sandrock: The organizers have self-identified the bottleneck with having only a pipefitters program. Because it is just the UA, the pipefitters, they only have only so much money to provide for these classes so they can only do a class of 16 here and at two other bases every eighteen weeks and then they go back through the cycle. If other trades were brought in, then it would provide more opportunity. One thing you have to look out for, is the reason this program is so successful is they know there is a nationwide shortage of pipefitters so that is why this union is making this investment now so they have more trained pipefitters down the line. If there is a union that is good on membership they may not be so interested in this, but if it is to their benefit to spend that 2% now then it will be a big investment down the line.

DMVA- Mickey Hunt called to say he would be late due to traffic. Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: For July, the discussion of Conflict of Interest statement is on the list. You should have all received and signed a Conflict of Interest statement. After talking with some people, I am going to implement a new procedure. I will scan everything, send it out, and have you email it back with your signature. I will revise the form so the form can be signed as reviewed and explain it in the email. That way, I will know exactly what I have each time, if anybody wants a copy, I can send them one and they can update it as changes occur.

Last year, we are closing out a couple of accounts. We are looking at the possibility that we will have to do collection letter on one of the Post. I am hoping that they are just really behind resolving everything. I have sent emails, voice mails, letters, and we still need to collect \$3,750. I am looking to wrap things up.

Robby Robinson: Roughly, how much has not been spent?

Ray Z. Dissinger: There was approximately \$80K-\$100K. Some of that, a couple of the posts had 2 grants and they had more money than they were able to expend. I told them to expend the one year money first.

Robby Robinson: About 10% did not get expended?

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes, approximately about 10% did not get expended. But it rolls back in.

Discussion about remaining amount and circumstances that caused grantees not to be able to expend the money.

Ray Z. Dissinger: One thing, I like to make sure everyone has my email address, my phone number, and my personal cell phone number. If a question comes up about a grant, then please give me a call so I can look at it and provide an answer.

For 14/15, for the first time that I know, we have some grants have been authorized as of 1 July to have money expended against. For next year, if it is possible to move the May meeting up, then as soon as the Long Bill is signed, we can get the authorization process moving. So theoretically we would have more of the grant money available by 1 July instead of like in the past at the end of August, September, even October. Although it would be mid-July before money can move. Advances may take a while, but if we can cut down the turnover time, it would help them out. The one thing I would have to make clear is that although they would have authority to spend, it would probably still be the middle of July or so, because no matter what, it has to be entered into the accounting system before the money can actually move. So reimbursement would be authorized to be expended but advances would still take a while. But we have really cut down over time from one year to the next, in the amount of time it takes to have the contract out there. Are there any questions?

Veterans Assistance Grant

Bill Conroy: The Veterans Assistance Grant Committee met in June. Robby Robinson, Dana Niemela, Myself, Mr. Kennedy, and Gail was able to attend. We are very excited to have Gail and her introduction was modest. She teaches grant writing at Regis College so she where she is new to us, she is certainly no new to the process. Ray is training her, but she is a fast learner. She just has to learn the business side and she is doing a great job.

Of the \$2,140,186 funds requested, we have recommended \$970,000 in grants. I think it was a good meeting. The Adjutant General approved our recommendations. I did receive a couple of

phone calls. We had to deny four grants. One was at the VFW Post in Las Animas, a request for a vehicle and there was some question as to who would provide insurance and maintenance of the vehicle, so we felt it needed to be rewritten and sent back to the Veterans Trust Fund. The other three grants that were denied should not have come to us but should have gone to the Veterans Trust Fund originally. Gail has sent the letters out explaining why they were denied and Ray is helping her with that. They are going to both be on the same piece of paper, so to speak. I think this will be a smoother transition. Do you have any questions?

Robby Robinson: Let me address that issue. For the Veterans Trust Fund if the recipient does not use the money then it rolls back into the Veterans Trust Fund itself. We are appropriated money every year out of the new money and the interest that is in the Trust Fund itself, (about \$4.7M), but we also get the interest on the principal in the fund. While the new money may not all get spent that year, say 10% of the money that doesn't get expended it, it goes back to the Trust Fund and gets re-appropriated. The question is this new money, the Veterans Assistance Grant, is it the same based on the law that they passed?

The statute reads, "Hereby created veterans assistance grant program cash fund referred to in this section as the "fund." Monies are appropriated to the fund by the general assembly. Those monies are subject to annual appropriation and direct costs can be pulled out up to 5%. The State Treasurer shall credit any interests and income derived from the deposit and investment of the monies into the fund. Any unexpended and unencumbered monies at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund and shall not be credited to any other fund. Except that any money remaining in the year 2024 shall revert to the general fund."

Gregg Parker is the person to talk to find out if that is the case, but that language is the same as the language that authorized yours. The money won't be lost if somebody does not expend it. The reference on that is Colorado Revised Statute Section 28-5-712.

Discussion about money intended for one VSO (Veteran Service Organization) if they did not need it could it be spent to help another VSO.

Ray Z. Dissinger: For the Veteran Service Organization, it does not matter where the money is spent as long as it is spent for the same purpose to meet the requirements of the contract. If they

don't use it all, then it rolls back in for next year and it comes back out as grants. You don't transfer the money to Haxtun or any other parties.

Robby Robinson: The issue there, and we deal with it every year, is it looks like someone is not able to spend the money. The question is that if in April that we have money unexpended, can we take it back and give it to someone else? The answer to that is in theory, yes it could happen but practically no, because it is a contract with that agency. The current contract has to be abrogated and then we would have to write a new contract. You are not going to get that done because it is the end of the fiscal year. Also, the other place we can use unexpended money is it can used straight for Division of Veterans Affairs operations, for the State Veterans Community Living Centers, and for the State Cemetery which we have used on numerous occasions.

Duane Dailey: Is the Veterans Assistance Grant synonymous with the One Year Grant?

Robby Robinson: Yes, and we have discussed that we need to change it somehow to avoid confusion, by changing color of the forms and with a consistent title. Okay, Kathleen is not here so we won't have an update on the State Veterans Community Living Centers.

Discussion/Action

Conflict of Interest and Ethics

Robby Robinson: First, we need to discuss Conflict of Interest and Ethics. I do not know if the new board members had an opportunity to review the results of the Audit, but they had a lot of suggestions on things we were doing right and doing wrong. One of the things we are involved with is the fact that we have nearly \$2M in grants to give out every year. We do not give out the money on the Veterans Assistance Grant. We are asked to sit on the committee but the Adjutant General decides and authorizes the money primarily on the recommendation of the Deputy and Bill. But we sit in and one reason we sit in is so we don't duplicate the money between the two grants. For the Veterans Trust Fund, we do make the decision on the grants. From the review of the audit, it is important that we have full disclosure and sign the Conflict of Interest Statement every year and their point was that things change, so we need to report any changes in membership during the year. All of us tend to be members of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legions, or Disabled Veterans Association (DAV), and looking at grants and who

approves them it appears to be a conflict of interest. In the revised By-laws, it is not necessarily a conflict of interest to be associated with an organization, but if you are in a position of leadership or a person of influence active in the chapter that is asking for money, then it would be a conflict of interest. When that organization comes up for grant consideration in the discussion, then you must recuse yourself and let those remaining decide on the grant request. If you are just a member but not actively in leadership or a position of influence then it would not be a conflict of interest. This happened once, but the Auditors wanted it tightened up. The revised by-laws tightened up the reporting and accountability. We were supposed to have someone from the Governor's Office to training on Conflict of Interest and Ethics, but she is not going to be here. But I think we can cover it today so everyone has an understanding of what is required. What was discussed before I arrived is that Ray is going to send out the form and whenever it changes. If you get elected as president of some post, or if you join another organization, then you have to disclose that.

Duane Dailey: Do we need to have an alternate when that conflict happens; say when I am on the Governor's Grant Sub-committee do we need to have an alternate to fill in for us?

Robby Robinson: No, you just recuse yourself, and leave the room. Do I detect that you are interested for the Grant Committee when that comes around?

Dana Niemela: A good example of conflict of interest is that of our involvement in VFW Post #1. Both Robby and I are both members of that Post. Most people don't know that Robby is even a member, and I on the other hand have done an extraordinary amount of outreach on behalf of Post 1. I serve on several committees, and have chaired a committee and most in the organization would consider me in a position of influence or leadership regardless of the title. So whenever VFW Post #1 applies for funds, I stay out of the conversation, I recuse myself and leave the room. Robby does not have that much involvement in the organization compared to the perception of my involvement. With one of us leaving, that way a quorum still exists for the voting to take place, so there is not a need to have an alternate be involved in that discussion.

Robby Robinson: The other thing is ethics and government. I know that new appointees we all received one of these in our packet, Amendment 41. Amendment 41: The Standards of Conduct in Government. Basically, it says we can't gifts, grants, or donations to exceed \$50.00 a year. I

think what they are saying, however, and I am not a lawyer, is conduct yourselves in accordance with this to ensure propriety and don't accept gifts, grants, or donations. I would offer this we are being public officers in accordance with this particular act. We ought to conduct ourselves as required of public officers. However, the technicality here is that public officers do not include: a member of the general assembly, a member of the judiciary, or local public official, or any member of a board, counsel, or committee who received no compensation other than per diem, or reimbursement for reasonable expenses, which tells me we are not covered by this, so I am curious as to why I received it. As I read that, it says I am not a public officer. However, I think the intent is that we conduct ourselves.

as if we were public officers. I think that is what the Governor's Office or Romaine's intent is that we conduct ourselves as if we were public officers, even though the law says as I read it that we are not public officers. I will get some clarification on that before our next meeting.

Ray Z. Dissinger: In the past that is the way it was addressed. It said that you would act in accordance of the executive order.

Robby Robinson: That is not the executive order. This is Amendment 41 from the State Constitution. That may be what we are missing, the executive order, even though you are not a public officer, I want you to be honest. The next one is, Open Meeting Requirements of the Sunshine Law. We have to be aware of that it is primarily for the Division and whoever does the agenda. Every meeting has to be announced on the website and there must be 24 hours' notice for a meeting. The difficult thing is that everything has to be announced. The meeting is also announced through the distribution list. The old by-laws said we could call a meeting anytime we wanted to, but we can't now we have to give notice. It also states the requirements for executive session. The requirements for an executive session are we have to state what we are going to do, the reason for the executive session i.e., privacy, embarrassment, etc. and take a vote. It takes a two-thirds majority to call an Executive Session and there must be an electronic record of it.

The other thing is if we have electronic voting. If we have a discussion on the internet, then it brings up another issue. Any meeting between two Board members constitutes a public meeting. This also applies to any discussion on the internet where two members are exchanging

information; whoever initiates that would have to give 24 hour notice of a meeting so we can put it on the internet. So as you can imagine, there will not be much voting in that format. You probably won't see very much discussion by email because carrying that out under the Sunshine law makes it very, very complicated. We haven't advertised when that took place so people did not know when we were meeting and also we would need to do that with the Grant Committee Meeting. We never have any people at those. They said we need to make people aware that it is open to the public. If you go through what I call the condensed form of the Audit Results, the recommendations and our response to it, we will be tracking that as we go along because we have some deadlines to meet in November. Are there any questions?

Grants for Funeral Detail Purchase (VFW 2411)

Robby Robinson: We need to discuss the grants for purchase for funeral detail purposes for VFW 2411. The VFW 2411 asked that grant money be allowed to be used to purchase funeral detail uniforms. There was a question as to why we did not allow the purchase of the uniforms for the funeral detail for honor guards. They have asked that we allow it and perhaps restrict requests for posts that perform ceremonies at the Veteran Cemeteries in Fort Logan and Fort Lyon. Right now, we say no, that the grants should not be used to purchase the uniforms. Is there any discussion?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I believe we should continue to say no. This is my reason. We have well-over twice the requests for veterans' health and well-being needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and basic needs than funds available. I think it is a very important function that they do. I think using the money to support veterans for food, clothing, shelter, and their needs should take precedence over a funeral detail. Right now, they are being supported, not by us, but they are being supported. I think we could put it there as a priority but I don't think it would ever make it to the top of the list. Another thing is what if they come in and say; now we are going to do tributes. So, as a grant administrator and looking at the amount of money we have and where it is going, and the priorities of the Board, I do not think that we should allow it. That is my opinion.

Dana Niemela: I concur with you, Ray. I see the Veterans' Trust Fund as a direct service to veterans. I don't see this as a direct service to veterans. I do understand the need for I see the

ceremonial detail in any regard of the individual posts should be the responsibility of that individual post to manage.

Rene Simard: I don't know how you could restrict it. They could say it is for the National Cemetery for now but what would be next?

Discussion of uniforms for ceremonial details, the changing of members of honor guards, and prioritizing the needs of veterans.

Bill Conroy: Another thing it brings up is what is considered part of the honor guard uniform funeral detail is a rifle. I don't think we really want to be a part of that, do we? I don't think we want to get into that for any reason.

Robby Robinson: Should we officially vote on it? Do I have a motion?

Duane Dailey: I would make a motion to the Chair to deny that request for funding for uniforms for honor guards.

Dana Niemela: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I know I am not part of the Board, but I think part of the motion should say that the Board's guidance remains the same – where we specifically say none of those will be included.

Robby Robinson: Would you accept an amendment to the motion to state, current guidance remain in effect that we do not allow the purchase of uniforms for honor guards?

Duane Dailey: I would agree with that amendment.

Robby Robinson: So the restated motion that we will vote on is “There is no change in current policy. We will not fund uniforms for funeral details.”

All in favor say aye? Are there any opposed? Okay, that makes it pass **unanimously**.

Grants for purchase of cell phones for drivers (DAV- Jeremy Miller, VSO Prowers County)

Robby Robinson: As a matter of policy, we do not purchase cell phones. We had a request for the purchase of cell phones for the drivers and we have not allowed them to purchase cell phones with grant money.

Ray Z. Dissinger: In the past, in some cases we have allowed it for safety. They are volunteers and there is a lot of coordination when you have to run your transportation program. I have allowed it because of safety.

Bill Conroy: I am curious about the rural area, if Duane has any thoughts on that. We are talking about drivers in rural areas wanting cell phones to use for their transportation to the VA Hospitals.

Duane Dailey: I would agree that they need communication in rural areas, though much of mountain Colorado you don't have service. I would be a little more interested if we could present a stipend if there are any additional charges on their phones? Aren't most services now almost unlimited?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I think we could put out guidance that we are not going to provide that service anymore unless you come in with a letter stating that as an exception to policy that shows that there is a need. I think they need to clarify the need in a grant of exactly what the stipend would be used for like we did with employment transportation in Aurora.

Robby Robinson: It gets to be fairly expensive for individual drivers I would think. For example, if you are in say, Pumpkin Corner, then you will not necessarily get reliable cell phone coverage. How do you control that? I understand the need for safety but that does not necessarily provide it in eastern Colorado.

Dana Niemela: The Veterans Trust Fund has to do with direct services for veterans. I don't see this as a direct service to veterans. I do understand the need for the communication also coming from the rural area going to the VA hospital. It doesn't mean that the drivers should not have a cell phone. On the flip side, I see your point, that individual cell phones cost a lot more, I pay \$99 every month with unlimited minutes, unlimited text. I use it for my volunteer services for the organizations I am serving. I don't ask for reimbursement for my cell phone.

With that said, as a volunteer for the organization, they incur an undue charge for their volunteer duties, for example, if they are getting roaming charges. I would think they could go to the organizations, like DAV has direct services and ask for reimbursement for additional charges.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I do not take and count the individual hours that a driver makes. They get \$46 per day reimbursement.

I think we could deny cell phone period and the individuals who are providing the volunteer driving, get plenty of money to cover a cell phone.

Robby Robinson: Earlier, you said if they give full justification you would consider it.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Only on an exceptional basis and then you would need to do a full write up to show justification or need. They would need to tell me exactly what you need, why you need it, and those that really, really do need it will do that exception.

Robby Robinson: Does anybody have a motion to that effect?

Dana Niemela: I move that we do not allow the funds to go toward the purchase of cell phones for drivers.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion

Duane Dailey: Where I am at we are in Verizon county and there are roaming charges but not necessarily good coverage. Once you leave Routt County then you don't get any service until you get to Steamboat. If we were to do an exception, then I would want more details.

Robby Robinson: Any further discussion? The vote is on no money allowed for the purchase of cell phones for drivers. All in favor say aye? Any opposed? That was unanimous.

Mickey Hunt arrived at 10:14am.

Election of Vice Chairman to replace Bobick

Robby Robinson: Jay Bobick had served two terms on the Board and he was the Vice Chairman

so now we need to fill this position. By the by-laws, we elect officers for the Board every two years. I am not saying this is how it is, but the precedent is that the Vice Chairman typically becomes the Chairman. So I would like to open the floor for any nominations for the position of Vice Chairman to serve the remainder of Jay's term which is until next June?

Rene Simard: I nominate Dana Niemela to be Vice Chairman.

Chris Holden: I second that nomination.

Robby Robinson: Any other nominations for Vice Chair? All in favor of Dana for Vice Chairman say aye. Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Now that leaves a vacancy for the position of Secretary. Now we need to nominate someone for Secretary. I had heard a rumor that Rene wanted to be the Secretary.

Rene Simard: Someone asked me if I were offered a nomination then would I accept it, and I said I would.

Robby Robinson: Will you accept the nomination of Board Secretary, Rene?

Rene Simard: Yes.

Robby Robinson: Okay, so Rene is nominated for Secretary. Are there any other nominations? All in favor say aye? Are there any opposed? So, that is a **unanimous** vote and Rene is the new Board secretary.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I would like to say, "thank you," to the Board for allowing me to provide input and listening to it. I know I don't have a decision or vote but I really appreciate having the opportunity to provide my opinion.

Discussion

Robby Robinson: I think you have met Duane Dailey and Wendy Chiado. Mickey is the Deputy Directory of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. He works for General Edwards who is the Executive Director of the Department. Part of that Department is the Division of Veterans Affairs, with Bill, the other part is the Civil Air Patrol, with basically one person, and

the third part is the Division of the National Guard which is the Air Guard and the Army Guard in the state of Colorado. Mickey, any updates with DMVA?

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: Yesterday I was down in Alamosa with Colorado Serves a couple of months ago doing a presentation on PC3 (Patient Care Community Care) and the veterans down there asked Becca Montgomery to set up a facilitator to work with the VA. After that meeting, we met with Lynnette Roth and set up a PC3 meeting. There were PC3 Representatives there from Ohio, Texas, and from Denver to meet with the providers down there. PC3 is basically like Health One where providers have to request to sign up on their Health One benefits and then they have to be validated. This is a lengthy process to get on the list and it takes 3-6 months. Here's the bad news, if they are chosen to sign up and get on the list, then they are paid at 20% less than Medicare. There were providers in Alamosa that said they will sign up and said they would take a loss in order to serve the veterans in their community. I talked to the PC3 people and to the VA and I told them to take this message to their senior leadership that need to get this up to Medicare Standards. Urban doctors only take about 22% of the VA patients. We need to make communities more aware of this because when they outsource this care they need to pay at least the Medicare standards.

Robby Robinson: I understand that we are talking about the VA outsourcing care.

Mickey Hunt: Yes, about outsourcing care. Right now, the veterans have the pyramid where they can get health care services starting with the VA Hospital, CBOC, and then it goes down, and this is the last level the outsourced care, but due to the large volume of veterans needing care, it is still in demand.

Bill Conroy: It used to be before this came on board, it is fee-based, and then I went to the primary care doctor and asked if I have back surgery. If they want me to do physical therapy two days a week for three, then makes no sense if I pay the fee to see the private doctor and am paying Medicare rates. Under the new program, the hospital signed up for it ahead of time to participate in this program. I know Lynnette told us it would be 10% but now it has gone up to 20%. That is horrible.

Mickey Hunt: It is horrible. If they don't sign up for PC3 in Alamosa, then the veterans will have to go back to Pueblo for care. Many of the veterans are being seen for mental health, I just did that drive and if you have PTSD, you don't need to be driving over La Veta Pass in the wintertime. That is a horrible way to treat our veterans in our rural areas, and I continue to be an advocate for them. Next week I have been invited to the Grand Junction Mental Health Summit. I have been asked to speak for about 10 minutes about Colorado Serves and Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs to help them get a better understanding of what we are doing and to advocate for veterans in their city.

Discussion of budget proposals.

Mickey Hunt: I continue to travel to town meetings through the state trying to get to more rural areas. General Edwards continues to travel to Washington, D.C. looking at all the changes coming up.

Chris Holden: What are some of those changes as far as National Guard?

Mickey Hunt: A few years ago, the Army and the Army National Guard were really at odds as far as force structure change. But there have been changes and they are now trying to balance the forces, with input from the Army National Guard specifically. General Edwards and the Florida TAG are discussing force structure changes. The Air Force the Reserve components will actually come up a little bit then the Active component will go down. It will be a better balance because the Reserve components are a great value for the impact. Congress is proposing a study to propose what should be done and that will delay some of the changes. The Army has proposed some cuts that would be battalion sized, like at Fort Carson, it would potentially be about 16,000 combined military and civilian jobs. There will be cuts and we know they are coming. We want them to keep the forces balanced.

Report from Senator Udall's Office

Brian Van Driel: In the years of "Don't ask, Don't tell" there were approximately 13,000 military members discharged from Active Duty Military based on their sexual orientation. They were kind of left in little bit of a limbo because of their DD214 said they were "honorable" but their reenlistment codes said they were ineligible for reenlistment. They are eligible for a

discharge status upgrade. In most cases, it is submitted to the Board for Correction of Military Records, but it never goes through the Board it is done administratively. The only exceptions to that would be if there is a secondary reason not related to the Board decision. If they went AWOL but went AWOL because they were being harassed then it would still go to the Board and they still might get that discharge upgrade. If it is the only reason they were discharged, then it is basically rubber-stamped. This is huge because not only does it makes them all eligible for VA health care benefits but also eligible for the G.I. Bill. Under the G.I. Bill, of course, they have 15 years to use their benefits. The clock resets to the date of the updated discharge, so we need to get the word out. This is a very difficult constituency to reach because people are out there afraid to come in and they don't know they are eligible for this.

Robby Robinson: The Education Summit would be a good place to help get the word out.

Rene Simard: Have you tried the Community Colleges?

Discussion of Discharges, DD214's, and ways to find veterans to educate them that they have the right to upgrade their discharges if they were forced out of the military based on sexual orientation.

Brian Van Driel: It all goes to the Board for Correction of Military Records. These will be done administratively. Thank you for helping to get the word out. Any questions?

Mickey Hunt: The General will be doing his nursing home visits on 5-6th of August. Greg Dorman will be the point of contact on that trip if you are interested in going. General Edwards takes 2 Blackhawk helicopters to visit three nursing homes. On one day, he will visit Homelake and Florence and then the next day, he will visit Rifle and Fitzsimmons. They land the helicopters right on the property and the residents love it. We like to see interest and if any members of the Board want to go we will try to get them on.

I like to pick out one or two residents and visit with them. Last time, I found a widow of a veteran sitting off to herself and at first she told me the sad stories of how she missed her husband. After I had listened and talked to her for a while, she started telling me the happier stories and we laughed together. I don't think it was me, but it was the company that lifted her spirits. The staff tells us that the energy level is up for at least 3-4 weeks after a visit.

Thank you.

Future Meetings

No CBVA Meeting in August

September Meeting TBA (Considering either Durango or Grand Junction.)

Traditional meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the Month – Discussion of changing the meeting to Monday or Friday

Old Business

Duane Dailey: For ½ term CVSO's have you had a discussion with the CCI's (Colorado Counties, Inc.) where the Colorado County Commissioners meet for their annual meeting, I think it will be in Colorado Springs at the Four Seasons this year. They typically meet in the legislative session.

Mickey Hunt: I have not been invited.

Bill Conroy: We have been trying to get an invite for years.

Duane Dailey: May I have permission to get an in road to that meeting?

Robby Robinson: That would be good.

Discussion of rural Colorado and the need to educate on what we do.

Dana Niemela: I presented to the City of Denver last week, we are bringing in \$100M in Education benefits, in VA benefits, in VA Medical benefits, and home loans, etc. this makes a big difference in how they view what we do when they realize the impact on their communities.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Board Minutes September 19, 2014
Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs 3848 S. Revere
Parkway, Centennial, Colorado 80112

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0934 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.

There was no introduction of members as no guests were present.

Board Members Present:

- William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman
- Rene Simard, Secretary- Not Present
- Kathleen Dunem, Member
- Christopher Holden, Member
- Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member- Not Present
- Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
- Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
- Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
- Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

No Guests Present

Approval of Minutes from July 10, 2014

Unanimously accepted with amendments.

Board Member Comments

Kathleen Dunemn: No comments.

Duane Dailey: No comments.

Chris Holden: It's great to be back to the Board session. I missed you all.

Dana Niemela: This past Saturday was the Colorado Women's Veteran Annual Conference. It was the best attended ever, I think Mickey said there were 300 women veterans in attendance. I was a speaker so I did get to sit in on any of the other sessions. It was good to see everyone there very much engaged in networking with one another. I was one of the keynote speakers. I was there to motivate and inspire and based on the feedback it was right on target.

Chris Holden: Other than jobs and transition paperwork with the VA, was there anything new?

Dana Niemela: They had a seminar on financial planning and a seminar on well-being and self-care. And they also had a sponsorship from the Matthew Morris Salon. They conducted sessions on make-up, hair, and dressing for interviews. The overall theme was, "Path to Self- Sufficiency" highlighting entrepreneurship. There was quite a significant theme around entrepreneurship.

Robby Robinson: Did you have anyone there, Ben?

Reuben Mestas: We had Angela Jones representing our office there.

Robby Robinson: I have been gone for most of August. Did anyone attend the Veterans' Education Summit on August 4th? Did anybody go to that or have reports on its success? I had one thing from Izzy that was from Bill Hanna but I think it may be more directed to UVC (United Veteran's Committee). It was written to inform, students about Legislative Initiatives. I did go to a candidate's forum. The Lt. Governor spoke on behalf of the Governor and he really gave a very good account about what the administration has done for Veterans. He included the two grants that this Board is involved in and acknowledged the fact that the Veteran's Assistance Grant was put into statute. Somebody from this Department must have briefed him very well.

Mickey Hunt: Richard Sandrock writes for the Governor and he updates him on Veterans' legislation.

Robby Robinson: Richard is off in Eastern Colorado. He sent a note. They are doing some event, Ride the Plains, so he will not be here today.

Public Comments

There were no members of the public present. Guest Presentations

There were no guests present.

Robby Robinson: If you guys have guests that you want or subjects you want addressed at the meeting, let me know then we can invite a guest to present.

Reports

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)

Mickey Hunt: Next week, Major General Edwards and I and senior leadership will be taking a five day facilities tour visiting National Guard facilities. We are going across the state in Blackhaws, visiting some of our facilities. All State budget decision items are moving forward. Tomorrow morning I will be down at Fort Carson for the Land Component Commander Change of Command ceremony and tomorrow afternoon I will attend the Army Assistant Adjutant General Change of Command at Fort Carson at 1:00pm. On Sunday night, I will be at the retirement dinner for General Capazzolla. On October 19th, there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the ANG facility in North Colorado Springs. That is the last of the five readiness centers we have built and I think it is the largest. It will be 100% federally funded but it would not have been able to happen if we had not used the Veterans Trust Fund to help with the other four.

I have had two meetings with Bob McLaughlin, former Garrison Commander at Fort Carson about Mount Carmel Health, Wellness, and Community Center in Trinidad. I have an upcoming meeting with the owner of Phil Long Ford, Jay Cimino. I will be meeting with Bob McLaughlin, Jay Cimino, Randy Gradishar (Broncos) about opening a second site for Mount Carmel in Colorado Springs. It will serve veterans, military members, and their families of military members as a wellness center. It will be a gamut of resources for Veteran Service Officers and Post Service Officers. I have asked Dana Niemela to be a part of that meeting.

We did the nursing home visits. I met a 100 year old veteran at Camp Hill at the Rifle Community Living Center. I also met a 92 year old veteran at Fitzsimmons who had a B-24 hat on. He flew 38 sorties over Germany and was shot down on the 38th mission and then he was a prisoner of war (POW) for 9 months. The last 76 days as a POW, he was not allowed to change his clothes or take a shower. Sharp as a tack, though! So, that was good. Just this last week, I signed the contract to hire the contractor who is going to do the build out of the Grand Junction Cemetery. That project will be under way fairly quickly. We will be visiting the cemetery next Tuesday as part of the facilities tour.

Veterans Trust Fund (VTF)

Ray Z. Dissinger: We are moving along with normal administrative action for FY 14/15. It is still pretty early yet. Does anyone have any questions?

Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG)

Ben Mestas: Let me talk first about the Veterans Assistance Grant: all contracts have been signed and all are in the process of having the money executed. Of the original \$970,000 for the grant, \$907,000 remains and we have expended a little over \$54,000 out of the Veterans Assistance Grant. If you need a breakdown of expenditures, let me know and I will get it to you electronically.

Travel expenditures: In your packet you will find a copy of the travel expense form. Should anyone be traveling, normally, you would turn this form in to the DMVA accounting office for travel reimbursement. We used \$6,000 of CDVA budget to pay for part of the contractor's travel for the cemetery work so I have to really scrutinize the budget. If you are submitting for reimbursement of travel expenses, please give your travel expense form to Tami Edmond first and she will submit it to the accounting office. I just want to keep a better account of my budget.

On September 22nd, 2014, there will be two Town Hall meetings at the Denver VA Medical Clinic on Clermott.

8:30-10:00AM- VA representative to talk about benefits.

10:00-11:00AM- VA Healthcare

They will be discussing the some of the changes resulting from the nationwide audits. If you need more information about where we sit nationally with the health care scandal it will be addressed at that meeting.

The Grand Junction Cemetery is targeting with the initial contract ground water issues between November and April when the ground water is lower. The other priorities initially will be trying to keep the irrigation system going as to not negate the work done on the grounds, and prioritizing the columbariums. We have essentially run out of space in the columbariums. The goal is by December 30th to have at least 1 columbarium if not 2 up and running. Like Mickey was saying, the contract was signed earlier this week and they are ready to get to work.

Robby Robinson: Just from looking at Dick's report, it looks like they have run out of wall niches. 60% are electing to go to in-ground niches.

Dana Niemela: I do plan to attend the Town Hall meeting but will be there later, after 9:30am due to another meeting I have to be at. I just wanted to let you know.

SVCLC Update

Robby Robinson: Kathleen Dunemn is a member of the State Veterans Community Living Center Commission. By their statute our Board has to have a liaison to their Commission. The Governor's Office thought that our liaison should be someone other than a member of that Commission so I asked Jay Bobick if he would be willing to be the liaison. He agreed to do that.

Kathleen Dunemn: Since the SVCLC State Director is no longer there; Vickie Manley has stepped up and is managing both jobs until they can hire a new State Director. It is not an easy time of year to hire State Directors so it may take some time. For a quick update, all of the State Veterans Community Living Centers are doing an excellent job. Some of you may have had the opportunity to visit them during your travels. We are listening to an outside contracted agency that provides them with metrics such as number of falls, number of patients on certain anti-psychotic medications, etc. Overall, they are doing a good job. All of the State Veterans Community Living Centers are in the black.

Rifle SVCLC census remains down and they have trouble keeping staff. Right next door, there is

another Community Living Center that gives a lot of competition for staff because they will offer hiring bonuses. They have a lot of difficulty keeping their census up as well. The others are doing well. At Homelake SVCLC, apparently grant monies at one time funded the area between the facility and a domicile where residents sit and enjoy the outdoors. One of the domicile residents got in his truck, he had kind of a blackout spell and he drove his truck right through the gazebo. Thankfully, no one was sitting out there where there would normally have been residents sitting. Hopefully, his insurance will cover it because he did quite a bit of damage.

If anyone is interested in the medical aspects of the State Veterans Community Living Centers then they should come to one of the SVCLCC's meetings. It is a good opportunity to hear how well they are taking care of the Veterans.

Robby Robinson: Support the Troops license plates history: It was determined that DMVA would develop a request for proposal (RFP) and they would select someone to execute a program for the Support the Troops License Plate. This program generates money and the money would be spent on behalf of Veterans. The organization that bid on that RFP is American Military Families, Inc. they get 15% for overhead. Kathleen is our liaison to the Board of AMF.

Kathleen Dunemn: Support the Troops License Plates for January to June 2014, there were 652 license plates and it generated \$16,300. These funds went to 26 small individual grants that were approved and 111 were denied. Most of the grants were for PTSD, TBI sessions, marriage counseling, veterans' assistance, bills, travel, repairs, etc.

Gail Hoagland: They are a VAG grantee.

Robby Robinson: We give them money for direct veterans' assistance but this is different money. Debbie Quackenbush is the head of that. Are there any other questions about the SVCLC or the Support the Troops license plates?

Discussion/Action

Conflict of Interest Statements/Forms

Ray Z. Dissinger: Conflict of Interest Statements need to be updated annually. We have converted the form to pdf, so everyone can do them electronically. The forms have been

changed with multiple signature blocks, so when you receive the form, you just sign it. I have received a Conflict of Interest Statement back from everyone except Wendy Chiado. Once it is all electronic, everyone can fill in the forms, then it converts to an electronic signature and we will be able to renew it annually. You can sign the form, scan it, and send it back to make it easier to keep up with annually.

Review of Audit Findings/Action

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have been working with Gail on this and she has been invaluable. I will go through the recommendations, highlight them, and then respond by either the Department or the Board.

For the VAG we are going to have a policy letter, documentation, and specific grantee procedures. We are going to have a VTF policy letter, documentation and specific grantee procedures. We will also have combined procedures for VAG and VTF. There will be some minor changes, but most of the administration on procedures will be the same. I will be getting this out to the Board and email it so it can be approved and finalized into a document by the end of October since we are supposed to have it for the Board in November.

The ability to target the limited funding, specific program goals, and priorities, define grant criteria, and objective scoring: The Board of Veterans Affairs will define a process for determining specific priorities prior to the next solicitation. We are looking at this in the procedural documents based on last year's priorities and it will obviously be revised based on this year's input. That will be one of our addendums to the document. The Board in conjunction with Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) will develop the criteria for specific scoring and comparing. I have been working with Gail to develop a matrix that the Board will be able to use when they have their review committee meetings. This will assist the Board in scoring and being able to decide which grantees scoring is the highest and using an objective basis decide which grant applicants will receive funds.

The Department application form must provide applicants with a specific description: We are going to have an exhibit with our policy letters providing specific descriptions to grant applicants so we can measure them. We will define a tool (quarterly report form revised) for measurement in the contracts.

Providing clear guidance in our recommendations: Review our audit process to support expenditures, report reimbursements, or document expenditures and investigate to see if there is a problem with their documentation and the 90 day expenditure advances. The response from DMVA: We are amending the application form to require more documentation and we will have an example of the document going out to all grant applicants as guidance. We are looking at training for applicants and for grantees after they are awarded. One of the areas of particular concern is the unanticipated requirements. No matter what we require by grantees as a program we will put in a mechanism to say this is an exception, does it fall within the overall parameters, and how do we prove it?

With Veterans Assistance Grant, it is almost impossible to record everything. We have a contract to allow the grantee unanticipated requirements. We are creating the procedural documentation to support expenditures. We will require a little bit more documentation from the grantees. That was a mentioned frequently in the recommendations that the documentation we were telling them to have was not enough. We are going to define it to where hopefully, it will meet the requirements of audit procedures better in the future. Also, we will define what we are doing regarding withholding reimbursements if procedures are not followed. We are also putting in place a rolling 90 day period oversight when they get an advance.

DMVA's response is that we are working on measurable goals. There is a United Way document that is a good example of measurable outcomes and output. We are using that to help us establish measurable goals and that will be part of our procedures in the information to the grantee.

We will have the grantee input information. They will have to collect it from them. Currently, we will have the grantees measuring the number of instances of assistance, looking at the number of veterans assisted, and any duplication in the grants that are being provided. It will be very basic information to start, which will be expanded on. We are going to expand that by doing two things: we are going to modify the quarterly report and we will get better input from the grantees on how they are using the funds. It will be on the quarterly report if they have assistance: is it food, clothing, a ride to a job interview, etc.? We will be recommending that the grantee requires each veteran to provide a short form giving us some data on how much this assistance will help them at the time the assistance is provided. Hopefully, trying to quantify the help the assistance

is providing and expanding our goals and measures will provide a better focus on how we are using the funds.

Dana Niemela: Is the intent that the veteran would be required to write a request to explain how it is going to help them before they receive assistance or after they are assisted to write a narrative as to how it helped them?

Ray Z. Dissinger: After it helped them, after they have been assisted right now feedback would be provided on the spot by the recipient.

Dana Niemela: Will the organization be required to provide that in order to be reimbursed?

Ray Z. Dissinger: We are going to work on that, we haven't decided if they would be required. I don't think we are looking at it being required, however we will really emphasize how important it is to explain where the money is going then it will help the Board when they look at it and how we will recommend to the Board the next time they are awarded. We want the grantees to be able to do it without discouraging the veteran from seeking assistance and we want to do it without discouraging the grantee from giving the money out.

Dana Niemela: My expectation is that once they receive assistance in a lot of cases the veterans are gone. You don't hear back from them and you don't see them again.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Hopefully, we will get information in the form of a request and then how the assistance helped them.

Dana Niemela: Follow up is hard after they received assistance.

Gail Hoagland: We are looking at a very brief satisfaction survey that includes whether their crisis was resolved, a very simple form with blanks or boxes to check.

Discussion of short satisfaction survey potentially to be used with veterans who receive assistance from grantees.

Ray Z. Dissinger: CBVA Response for Recommendation #4 pertaining to the Open Meeting Law, we are on track with the transcript-type minutes and they are posted on the website. So this

is in place. Recommendation #5 is related to policies and procedures for Conflict of Interest Disclosure. We have discussed this and individuals will abstain from participating in a discussion where they could have a conflict of interest. This is in place. That is where we stand in regard to the Audit and are there any questions?

Dana Niemela: Are they satisfied

Ray Z. Dissinger: They have not come in yet. I think they will be more than satisfied.

Robby Robinson: The goals, objectives, and measures are probably the toughest part. Concerning everything else, we have to educate them. In rural areas, transportation may be a high priority. In urban areas, homelessness may be a priority; however, in Durango as an urban area the priority may be transportation.

Ray Z. Dissinger: There is the new Smart Government initiative where we are looking at output and outcomes. As I said before, Gail has been providing invaluable assistance. We have agreed where we are going and what we have is sufficient.

Dana Niemela: You may want to consider the availability of services in geographic areas.

Robby Robinson: We have some paperwork coming up. The VTF Report, an annual report is due that goes over to Human Services.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That is what I just discussed. There are only three areas on there that we needed to discuss.

Robby Robinson: That feeds into our annual report which is due in December. We will discuss that more the next meeting. Ben, concerning the website, the link for CBVA is not on the homepage. When I go on it, it is not intuitive that CBVA should be a state service, we are not a state service and it is hard to find.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is on the Department's page.

Ben Mestas: We can provide a link on the homepage.

Robby Robinson: Duane, do you want to talk about CCI?

Duane Dailey: Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) is made up of County Commissioners. When I was Commissioner, we had a subcommittee on military and veterans but the subcommittee went away. To me there is a tremendous disconnect between County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO's) and County Commissioners, most of the CVSO's are not full-time or they are volunteers.

In my area, Eagle and Summit County they are class 2 counties. Eagle runs an office 8 hours a month. We are on the agenda for the Annual Winter Conference in Colorado Springs. It is an opportunity to tell CCI what CVSO's do for the counties. We will be in competition with the luncheon. We need a dynamic speaker to tell them what we do.

Chris Holden: What is the date?

Ben Mestas: December 2nd, 2014

Chris Holden: I can be available.

Duane Dailey: My role is that of a facilitator.

Mickey Hunt: From my experience, counties are very frustrated because CVSO's are mandated but there was no funding with the mandate. This is an opportunity to educate the County Commissioners. Either a Department Head or a Board Member would be good. They need to be aware of the Board in an advisory capacity. It would be good to have both.

Duane Dailey: It would be good to have quite a few of us there. Rural County Commissioners are overwhelmed and they are always leery of unfunded mandates. They need to see that we are separate from the Federal VA. When we plan that one piece, we want to be on the same page.

Ben Mestas: They need to see how much money is going into their counties because of the CVSO's.

Discussion of building positive relationships with County Commissioners and the need for a dynamic speaker at the conference.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Chair, I think we should volunteer to put together the best color guard of our

group that we can to make a good showing for the veterans.

Future Meetings

10 October 2014, 09:30AM, American Legion HQ, 7465 E. 1st Ave #D, Denver, CO 80230

5 November 2014, 09:00AM, Wings Over the Rockies, 7711 E. Academy Blvd., #1, Denver, CO 80230

5 December 2014, 09:30AM, American Legion HQ, 7465 E. 1st Ave #D, Denver, CO 80230

Old Business

Duane Dailey: On August 14th, he had a meet and greet with Jim Stanko and the Grand Junction VA Administrator.

Dana Niemela: FYI, Sunday, October 12th, Nine News, VFW Post 1, and Walgreens are sponsoring the Veterans Health Fair. There will be VA representation and other community based organizations. October 14th at the Auraria Campus there will be a Welcome Back for Student Veterans. This organization does a lot around Metro Denver. Also, Volunteers of America (VOA) is hosting, "One Stop for Homeless Veterans." This is part of VOA's mission. Homeless veterans will be screened for VASH eligibility. Some veterans will be getting vouchers. This is supported by the Denver Coalition for the Homeless Veterans Providers. It will be at 14th and Santa Fe.

Reuben Mestas: Stand Downs:

October 3rd – Pueblo Stand Down

October 16th- Colorado Springs Stand Down October 31st- Grand Junction Stand Down

November 6th- Denver Stand Down November 20th- Longmont Stand Down

Mickey Hunt: We enjoyed celebrating our tenth anniversary of the relationship between Colorado ANG and Jordan. It was a very positive visit.

Robby Robinson: Congratulations to Ben on his promotion to Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs Director.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Board Minutes October 10, 2014
American Legion Headquarters
7465 East 1st Avenue #D, Denver, Colorado 80230

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 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.

There was no introduction of members as no guests were present. Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman

Rene Simard, Secretary- Not Present Kathleen Dunemn, Member Christopher Holden, Member Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator Reuben "Ben" Mestas, CDVA Director Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator Guests Present:

No Guests Present

Approval of Minutes from September 19, 2014

Unanimously accepted as written.

Board Member Comments

Chris Holden: Last year we some of you were able to attend the Board meeting hosted in Colorado Springs at Excelis Headquarters. Now that company has branched off and we are proud to have Vectrus, the largest company in Colorado Springs, traded publically on the New York Stock Exchange. I would like to open an invitation to host the Board meeting if you can give me a couple of months' notice. I will be attending the Association of U.S. Army

Convention and if there are any veteran activities you want me to address, let me know.

Kathleen Dunemn: UNC has the military friendly designator now. With the conservative atmosphere, this is really something. This designation is for universities and colleges that have to meet certain criteria and they have military friendly thinking. This is a good move for UNC. Education is purposefully moving in health care to integrate the care principles of military friendly families and joining forces with designators who are military friendly. When schools advertise online they are drawing in more military students and their families.

I have also been contacted by Sen. Udall's Office to be on the Military Academy Selection Committee.

Wendy Chiado: No comment.

Duane Dailey: I attended the Town Hall meeting held at the VA Hospital in Denver. I was disappointed in the lack of notice and the poor attendance by the military. One positive was the Benefits Manager was there from the VA Regional Office. Some of the points brought up were mileage for rural veterans and concern for lack of mental health services available for rural veterans. In my area, veterans are reimbursed for travel to the Fort Collins clinic but the trouble is that for 8 months out of the year that route is inaccessible. I am disappointed that the VA has not taken the lead on pushing for more mental health care availability.

General discussion on mental health care availability and how it is difficult for rural veterans to get mental health care.

Duane Dailey: Another frustration has to do with having a notary public available for veterans at the VA Hospital. I brought in a vet who was terminally ill and he needed some documents notarized. I called a notary public at 8:00am in the morning and he was supposed to be there at 10:00am but he did not show up until after 2:00pm. It was very frustrating for the veteran. They do not have a notary public at the VA Hospital. I brought it up with the Patient Advocate and they said when they had someone before available as a notary public then more of the VAMC employees would come down to use the notary service than veterans so they decided to do away with offering the service.

Mickey Hunt: Our Department can support you with a notary if you need it.

Ben Mestas: It cost \$35.00 for someone to become a notary public. I will talk to the patient services and see if they can work something out. I will look into it.

Dana Niemela: In response to Duane's comments on mental health, in my experience the number of combat veterans needing mental health care who are homeless is not very high. Approximately 80-90% of veterans who need mental health care are mostly due to early childhood trauma. A lot of them need grief and loss support. There are a lot of mental health professionals outside of VA Mental Health who are perfectly qualified to meet the mental health needs of these veterans. Whatever I can do to increase access to mental health care, I will do. In our Department, we use Community Health Navigator to identify resources that are available for these veterans. This aids in referral of non-VA eligible veterans for any kind of care.

Robby Robinson: To summarize, of the homeless veteran population, very few are combat vets. Most of the veterans have mental health issues due to early childhood trauma. The VA is the best when it comes to post-traumatic stress.

General discussion on veteran mental health issues attributed to early childhood trauma and the need for substantial research in this field.

Kathleen Dunem: There is some foundational work done at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, that identified more severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) linked with previous trauma in childhood.

Dana Niemela: Building resiliency goes into combating stress and mental illness. The Veteran's Treatment Court in Colorado Springs had released that they were finding more of the veterans with mental health needs had experienced early childhood trauma.

Robby Robinson: We would like Lynette to re-address VA Mental Health Care availability for veterans.

Duane Dailey: The last two guys I took to the VA, it took an explosive situation to get some help. One of them talked to me for seven hours one night and then called and threatened me because he could not get VA benefits. When they go ballistic, they need attention. When I was

part of the County Commission, I had the opportunity to take some first responder training. I would really like to have at least minimal first responder training for mental health intervention.

Dana Niemela: The objective is to get them to care as quickly as possible and this is especially relevant in rural communities.

Kathleen Dunem: Some of the visits at Cheyenne VA, they use the tele-health system to connect with veterans. People don't want to talk to a box. The notion of tele-health was for the younger generation who were more tech savvy. In the case of mental health care, this is not true.

Robby Robinson: If you are going to a psychologist, for the patient/doctor relationship to work there has to be rapport and that cannot happen with a box, it needs to be in person.

Kathleen Dunem: You don't get that with the box. There is a rapport that develops between a patient and doctor. There are also non-verbal cues, facial expressions, and body posture that cannot be detected through tele-health.

Mickey Hunt: They have that in Alamosa. In my experience working with the rural counties, the younger vets seemed okay with talking to the screen but the older veterans were not very happy about it. There are more of the older veterans in that area. One veteran reported that when they were having the tele-health conference with their doctor, the whole time the doctor was looking down writing notes and did not even make eye-contact. So it was not an effective way to use the technology. I would encourage you as a Board to get on Lynette's calendar regarding health care in rural Colorado.

In the second meeting follow-up after meeting with the folks in Alamosa, we discussed PC3 regarding outsourcing; Lynette said it was out of her hands. She said she would be okay with healthcare but not mental health care.

I spoke with Daniel Warvi and he said the VA employees felt threatened when they had the town hall down at Alamosa and all future meetings would be on VA property with VA police. I have been invited back to a meeting down there for January 15, 2015. We will see how it goes. They are very hostile down there, so we will test the waters. When I went down there a few months ago, they yelled at me for about an hour, got the anger out of their system, and then we had a

productive meeting. Rural Colorado accounts for about 42% of the veterans in Colorado and most of them are the older veterans.

Duane Dailey: With my experience on the front line, each and every veteran with a mental health challenge, they put a lot of trust in me. I think it is because we have all been there and done that. I think that is the common denominator. I need to be trained as minimally as I can be to work with these veterans.

General Discussion of training for individuals working with veterans with mental health challenges.

Wendy Chiado: Since I have been appointed to this Board, I get a lot of questions from people at Peterson AFB with different issues, such as: Why don't we have a Colorado Springs Veterans Cemetery? As a new member, I understand your frustrations in a rural area. I would really like to do some training on what this Board is supposed to focus on.

Robby Robinson: We can focus on anything we want to focus on. We are a volunteer organization. Given the number of issues that are out there, we have to pick and choose what we want to focus on. That leads me to the Annual Report, we can put into writing items that are not getting attention. We don't focus on the Big VA; we tend to focus on what Colorado is doing for Veterans, CDVA, etc. From the discussion so far, what I am hearing is mental health issues and homeless issues. If we pick only 2 or 3 issues, it can be more effective.

Chris Holden: Since our point of contact is public, I tend to get a lot of calls as well from veterans with different issues. What I have done in the past is if I can't work it myself internally, then I send them over to Robby or CDVA.

Dana Niemela: Colorado Springs Stand Down is October 16th, at the Colorado Springs Auditorium on 221 E. Kiowa Street from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

General Discussion about veterans with PTSD and how veterans are stereotyped.

Robby Robinson: I agreed to go speak at the Grand Junction Veteran's Day ceremony. Next month, we will have Volunteers of America do a presentation. Richard Sandrock could not be here today, so there is no report from the Governor's Office.

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: General Edwards and I met with the Governor to submit a Budget Request and it is in process. As soon as I know something, I will report it. I will be in Grand Junction on Monday and Tuesday over in Glenwood Springs then on down to Carbondale.

I will be attending the Stand Down in Colorado Springs on Thursday. I will attend the Stand Down on Friday in Fort Collins. The Stand Down in Pueblo was last Friday and we had representation there. On October 31st, I will not be able to make the Grand Junction Stand Down. The Denver Stand Down on November 6th held at the Denver Armory, also, on November 20th at the Longmont Stand Down.

General Edwards and I did the Facilities Tour a couple of weeks ago in the Blackhawks. I will be at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Colorado Springs Readiness Center on October 19th.

This facility will host 2 companies about 390 soldiers, HQ Company and Alpha Company. This is an amazing facility.

Those facilities would not have been built without the support of the Board. The first four facilities with the support of the Board were able to engineer a statute to use the VTF to assist with that project. The VTF money has been repaid with interest. This was a win-win to save the VTF and the National Guard Facilities.

On the Army side, Brig. General Laucirica is the new Assistant Adjutant General for the Army. Does anyone have any questions?

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: Wendy, do you have a signed Conflict of Interests Statement? Thank you. We are trying to roll into a form with the multiple signature blocks so we can automate the form.

We are working on the Audit response. For FY 14/15, \$17,500 for Longmont DAV has been turned down due to unstable membership issues and they would not have been able to execute the grant. I will need a motion from the Board to abrogate the \$17,500 which would have been taken out of this year's grant. The remaining \$35,975.53 could be used by the cemetery or by the

nursing homes.

Another issue for the new grantees is implementing Direct Deposits; they will have to be issued underneath the CORE system. They would go to electronic processing. There has been difficulty with the processing. I have to go back with all of those electronic transfers and review them manually. Also, under the Smart Government initiative, there is going to be a different format for the VTF Annual Report. I have submitted the format to the team. We are on top of it and working together.

Duane Dailey: When do you know when next year's funds become available?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The Long Bill is signed in May. Usually February or March, we know the amount. It should not affect what the grantees want to request. Based on past history, we fund at approximately 50% if approved. I recommend that they show increments in how the money will be implemented.

Robby Robinson: \$830,000 for the Veterans Trust Fund and \$970,000 for the Veterans Assistance Grant.

Ray Z. Dissinger: They can only apply for one of the grants, not for both.

Kathleen Dunemmn: Can't they apply as early as January?

Ray Z. Dissinger: 1 December for initiating for both with 1 March as the Deadline for applications. In theory, we would like to have them signed by 1 July. Gail will be administering both grants. Does that answer your question?

Duane Dailey: Yes, thank you.

Dana Niemela: I move that the money from the Longmont DAV to be abrogated.

Robby Robinson: The motion is for DAV Post#16 to allow the money to be abrogated based on the request of the Post.

Dana Niemela: So moved.

Duane Dailey: Second that motion

Robby Robinson: All in favor say, “Aye.” Any opposed? That passed **unanimously**.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Gail Hoagland: Things are moving along. It was a slow start due to the lateness in most of programs getting contacts. Another aside, Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal entity that oversees AmeriCorps, Retired Senior Volunteer Corp (RSVP) and other programs made changes to the grant requirements for RSVP and is now requiring that veterans and their families are part of the RSVP effort. The RSVP grant administrators have found that no one knows quite what to do with this requirement once the awards are made and published. Each county/region will likely have an RSVP program that is funded under these new guidelines. If you have any thoughts or ideas on helping them implement this requirement it would be a good opportunity. I will let you know the RSVP providers in your area once funding announcements are made.

Dana Niemela: What would you say is the major hold up with the Veterans Assistance Grant?

Gail Hoagland: The contracts went to the grantees fairly quickly. Some of the delay was in returning the paperwork or in returning only partial paperwork. Also there is CORE. All of the information entered in to CORE and the whole process has been delayed.

Ben Mestas: Cemetery construction has been approved. I signed the contract two days ago. This will go to repairing the irrigation system and to one columbarium by December.

It is the same contracting firm that was used in 2001 so they are familiar with the process. Kurt Hester is the new hire at the cemetery.

New numbers of the veterans in Colorado are out from the VA. They are down because of the WWII Veterans and the Korean Veterans. Based on the U.S. Census, we are hitting 60,000 veterans. My goal for this office is to increase outreach, particularly to homeless and rural veterans.

General Discussion of VA Census numbers and the accuracy of veterans reported in counties.

The fact that a large number of the veteran population may not require VA Benefits was brought up along with outreach, enrollment, and long term projections for community impact.

Ben Mestas: The goal of my office is that if you have a need and the VA can fill that need, then we want to make sure you are aware of VA benefits.

Mickey Hunt: We are now on social media, on Facebook.

Ben Mestas: We are constantly looking at ways to reach Post 9-11 veterans. We now have Facebook and we are working on upgrading the website.

Dana Niemela: A lot of people for Cold War and Gulf War veterans, many who have been told they are not eligible for VA benefits we are referring them to VSO's. Again, the lack of time in service and characterization of service are making them ineligible. There is a huge population of in-betweeners.

Ben Mestas: There is the Means Test for Eligibility for Health Care. They may not have been employed but now they have employment.

Discussion/Action: Annual Report of the Board

Robby Robinson: The Annual Report of the Board is required by law. There is a copy in your folders. Input will be required from some of you.

VTF- Ray Z. Dissinger VAG- Gail Hoagland

Division of Veterans Affairs- Ben Mestas Veterans Cemetery- Dick Gigliotti

VSO's- Ben Mestas

We will also be redoing policies in accordance with the findings of the Audit. We have requested letters from other departments and I will put them in the report when I receive them. We need to get this done by the end of November.

In the cover letter, we address several issues:

Big VA particularly the length of claims and the processing time.

VSO's – improving/raising payment for CVSO's

Homeless- still a priority for the Governor with Fort Lyon.

Audit outcomes

Access to care for rural veterans

Greg Dorman helps me with the formatting and some of the language. He wants it by the end of November.

Future Meetings

5 November 2014, 9:00am at Wings Over the Rockies, “Salute to Veterans” 7711 E. Academy Blvd., #1, Denver, CO 80230

5 December 2014, 09:30AM, American Legion HQ, 7465 E. 1st Ave #D, Denver, CO 80230
January 2015, TBA

Old Business

Duane Dailey: Is there a current publication of the Strategic Plan?

Mickey Hunt: The Strategic Plan is a requirement of the Smart Act and it will have to be put into CORE.

General discussion of developing a new Strategic Plan and the amount of money it cost for the development. It was agreed to be addressed in the future.

New Business

Chris Holden: I would like to host a session of the Board in Colorado Springs. If I can have several months' notice to plan, it would be helpful. We would like to have representatives from each of the Services Transition Assistance Teams. It would be great to host you at the new company, Vectrus.

Wendy Chiado: The Virginia Class Submarine has been re-commissioned the *USS Colorado*. It might be nice to have some of the members there.

Chris Holden: Most of the 4th Infantry Division and its 4th Brigade Combat team have redeployed, with only a small fraction remaining in Afghanistan.

Mickey Hunt: There will be a departure ceremony on 21st October at the County Fairgrounds for Colorado ANG troops to Guantanamo Bay.

Meeting adjourned at 11:06am.

Board Minutes November 5, 2014

Wings over the Rockies Museum 7711 E. Academy Blvd.

Denver, Colorado 80230

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0900 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:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman

Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman

Rene Simard, Secretary

Kathleen Dunem, Member

Christopher Holden, Member

Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member – Not Present

Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Major Gen. H. Michael Edwards, The Adjutant General

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director

Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator

Reuben "Ben" Mestas, CDVA Director

Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator Guests Present:

Jay Bobick, Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers Liaison Steve Rylant, UVC

Marvin Meyers, CBVA Emeritus, UVC Brenton Hutson, Volunteers of America Ian Fletcher,
Volunteers of America Daleena Scott, Volunteers of America Michael Shapiro, UVC

Frank McCurdy, UVC Ken Melcher, UVC

Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2014

Unanimously accepted as written

Board Member Comments

Rene Simard: No Comment

Kathleen Dunemn: No Comment

Duane Dailey: No Comment

Chris Holden: No Comment

Dana Niemela: I wanted to draw attention to a project in Colorado Springs that is in development. The Mount Carmel project is similar to the Volunteers of America one stop for services concept. It is based on the Mount Carmel Community Wellness Center in Trinidad. It will serve veterans and their families with emphasis on employment, education, and counseling services. This project will help meet the needs of veterans and their families, specifically addressing the gap in services. I have been working to help develop the project and have been providing advice.

Robby Robinson: Wendy Chiado is not here, but she did attend the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new National Guard Armory in Colorado Springs. I will be in Grand Junction on Monday and Tuesday to be the keynote speaker for a Veteran's Day event in Grand Junction.

Public Comment

Marvin Meyers: I am pleased to announce that UVC now has a 501C-3 to focus on helping Veterans and their families, active duty military, Guard and Reserve to put an emphasis on

unmet needs. This is a non-profit corporation. We received a certificate from the Secretary of State and from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This has been over three and a half years in the works. There have been a number of people who have contributed to making this happen. We started about seven to eight years ago and then again about three and a half years ago

Guest Presentations

Dana Niemela: I asked Volunteers of America to present to you all since they are doing fantastic work in Colorado helping Veterans. I think it is important for you to know where they are located and the types of services they provide. I wanted you to see the breadth and scope of their services. Please welcome, Brenton Hutson from Volunteers of America.

Brenton Hutson: Volunteers of America (VOA) is a national organization that has made providing services to Veterans a number one priority. We focus on Veterans in crisis especially the homeless. I have brought Ian Fletcher and Daleena Scott, focus on female veterans to talk about what they do in their programs.

Daleena Scott: Thank you, Brenton and thank you for having us today. I am a project manager for the Grant per Diem Program through VOA for female veterans. What we do is help women veterans identify with being veterans and other females. Our transitional housing program is for female veterans and their children. We take referrals from the VA Walk-in Clinic or from the Community Resource Center (CRC). We have an entry site, the Brandon Center that has 112 beds and it serves homeless veterans and their children. We meet with Veterans to give them advice and help them navigate through services available such as employment services, benefits, counseling, and connect with substance abuse providers. We provide wrap-around services for a lot of services. We connect them with SSVF for rapid rehousing. Some veterans need extra help. Most of the VOA staff are veterans. We also have rooms available at the Family Motel in Claremont Commons. There are three single family houses that are beautifully decorated available. Veterans have to pay for their own groceries and they have to pay program fees. These program fees are 30% of their income, which we put into savings and when they move out and on, then they can have the savings. We coordinate and work with SSVF.

One issue I see is there is a lack of coordination of care. Many of the female veterans are not huge fans of going to the VA. There are mostly males there, and many of the female veterans have been traumatized by military sexual trauma so they think others think that is the only reason they are there at the VA. It is more difficult to connect and many need to use the substance abuse programs. The Santa Fe project that Brenton will talk about will explain more about offering a one-stop place for veterans to go and receive different services that they need.

Steve Rylant: Do you make referrals to Fort Lyon?

Daleena Scott: We do make referrals to many different programs.

Robby Robinson: Comitatus also offers shelter for women and families. Are we meeting the need for female veterans?

Daleena Scott: We are making progress. We served almost double as we did last year. There is more room for progress to provide wrap-around services.

Brenton Hutson: As a Marine, we love to focus on missions. The VA's mission to end homelessness by 2015 is a mission we latched on to. We provide supportive services to Veterans and their families. Housing is one of the most basic human rights. There have been studies that link mental health stability to housing. Metro Denver was identified as an area that was most in need for housing. We were awarded a grant from the VA to help meet this need.

Ian Fletcher: Denver Metro, I am the project manager for Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families Grant (SSVFG). This grant serves 7 counties including Denver. This surge of money in the grant is to help meet the need of the most critically at risk veterans. We coordinated with VA Staff and the Homeless Initiative to help reach these at risk Veterans.

This is a unique grant in that it is the only VA grant that serves veterans and their families, i.e. child care, employment assistance for spouse, etc. We provide wrap-around case management, community connections for veterans and their families, and a holistic approach to helping veterans in crisis. We identify areas in surrounding counties through VSO and County resources to assist in the referral process for those veterans in crisis. These veterans are the ones who are not connected with resources or the ones living on the streets. This surge money is to help end Veteran homelessness.

Daleena Scott: Many of the veterans in these categories are referred to us. We make referrals to the most appropriate resources. We have sub-contracted with Colorado Legal Services; they are particularly helpful for veterans being evicted or if they have a criminal record they may be denied housing.

Ian Fletcher: Denver County has a 1% vacancy rate. This is a huge barrier for veterans with a criminal record. It is vitally important to house the veterans in need first. The case management we provide for veterans is ongoing. During the first 90 days when we provide assistance, housing is the number one priority. There is a saying, "Homelessness is a bad tax option."

We are very excited to work with folks like you, to help us target the needs in Denver and focus the money that is not a priority one grant.

Robby Robinson: In order to receive your services, what are the VA eligibility requirements to qualify?

Ian Fletcher: For homeless veterans, the veterans have to be other than dishonorable discharged from the military. They have to be below the 50% area median income. The target population is 30% below the area median income. As far as veteran status, they need to have at least one day on active duty service so just Basic Training would not count. If they were Guard or Reserve, then if they were called up on active duty orders, it would qualify.

Steve Rylant: If someone is about to become homeless, then will that be okay to call?

Ian Fletcher: Yes, if we can prevent them from becoming homeless, that is the goal. In our Rapid Rehousing Program, we work toward homeless prevention, so if they lose their housing and have no other resources.

Robby Robinson: Do veterans have to be eligible for VA Healthcare in order to qualify for your services?

Ian Fletcher: Absolutely not! If they are eligible for VA Healthcare then they are automatically eligible; but, that is not one of the criteria.

Brenton Hutson: We have offices in Wheat Ridge, Fort Collins, Grand Junction, and Durango. Our intent is to move where the need is. During our 2nd year, we served around 600 households. We have an 86% successful housing rate of that number, 85% have remained in housing long-term. If it doesn't work, then we keep trying to identify ways to focus on the needs of the veterans in crisis.

VOA has been awarded the AmeriCorps Vista Grant. We are working with other stakeholder groups to document the services needed, to identify service providers, and to develop coordinated networks in order to serve Veterans.

We have found that one of the greatest barriers to success is not the lack of resources it is the lack of coordination between resources. An example of this is recently one of our project managers looked at the Denver Metro area and identified the resources a veteran in crisis would need to have access to benefits and they would have to walk over 40 miles in order to access the

resources. We think 40 miles to walk is too much for a veteran in crisis. Our hope as we partner with Rocky Mountain Human Services is to be seen as a model of Veteran Services. Our Santa Fe Service Center will be located on 13th and Santa Fe. We hope to house up to 12- 15 veterans organizations designed to meet the needs of veterans in crisis for basic survival.

There will be 3 tiers. Tier 1 will be for basics of survival: shelter, food, employment. Tier 2 will help the veterans in need move towards self-sufficiency. Tier 3 will help the veterans grow, reconnect with the community, and include peer mentorship. Our goal is to see a decrease in the number of veterans in crisis. We also hope to partner with Mt. Carmel.

Marvin Meyers: Do you have contact information?

Brenton Hutson: Sure, it is on the pamphlet and I will write it on the board.

Chris Holden: Is there a VOA office in Colorado Springs?

Brenton Hutson: At this time, we do not have an office there because Rocky Mountain Human Services does an excellent job serving veterans in crisis there in Colorado Springs. I have had a few meetings with Colorado Springs stakeholders, but at this time there is not anything in the works.

Dana Niemela: What partner services do you have planned to be co-located with you at the Santa Fe Service Center?

Brenton Hutson: Currently, we have DHS, RMHS, VOA, VISTA, Homes for all Vets, employment support, and the Office of Economic Development will be there with an entrepreneurship focus. The VA has expressed an interest in locating staff there. We have held two stakeholders meetings. We are projected for opening by March 2015. If you know of organizations that would be a good fit, then please let us know. We want to get the right partners at the table.

Marvin Meyers: What unmet needs have you identified?

Brenton Hutson: One big need is funding for homeless veterans.

Dana Niemela: There is a major housing crisis here in Denver. Access to affordable housing can be a huge barrier especially with veterans who have been previously evicted or if they have bad credit.

Robby Robinson: Brenton, are you looking at expanding your services statewide?

Brenton Hutson: VOA meets the needs of the most vulnerable. We go into a community when we see a need demonstrated. We connect with community stake holders to access needs. We do site visits. Here in Denver, we often do site visits to the homeless shelters. We proceed ahead in a community when there is evidence to demonstrate a need for our services.

Jay Bobick: I know a private individual providing housing for veterans, if you want to contact him his name is Rick Spoor.

Brenton Hutson: We do know Rick Spoor; we send a lot of veterans his way. We are always looking to identify landlords in support of our mission. Are there any other questions?

My contact information is: Brenton Hutson, bhutson@voacolorado.org, (303) 548-2550.

Dana Niemela: I want to say thank you for coming today, it was very informative.

Reports

No report from the Governor's Office as this is the day after the election. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Mickey Hunt: I will be in Durango next week with Colorado Serves accompanied by Becca Montgomery from Senator Bennett's office.

The Governor's Budget is out and part of that budget is a request for an increase for County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO's) for funding at \$8.00 per hour. This is an increase request from \$100,000 to \$500,000 by statute. This would be for part-time and full-time CVSO's. I count this as a positive in the right direction.

Robby Robinson: Is it okay to speak to Colorado County Commissioners Incorporated (CCI) about this?

Mickey Hunt: It should be fine. It is in the budget for consideration.

General discussion about increasing pay for Colorado County Veterans Service Officers.

Ben Mestas: We are paying \$88,000 to the counties now for the CVSO's. So this would be almost an 8 fold increase from what they are getting now.

Robby Robinson: They are getting \$100 for part-time and \$200 for full-time.

Ben Mestas: The pilot program paid the Department \$192,000 since 2008. \$88,000 of that has gone to the counties to pay \$100 a month for part-time CVSO's and \$200 a month for full-time CVSO's. The \$192,000 is allocated every year but it is not in statute.

Robby Robinson: So for a part-time CVSO who works 3 days a week for 8 hours a day, they will get 24 hours, at \$8.00 per hour that would be \$192.00 where they are getting \$100 now.

Ben Mestas: There is only one per county. The proposal does say the state will support one full-time person per county at \$8.00 per hour.

Mickey Hunt: This will benefit rural counties by raising it up to minimum wage.

Ben Mestas: Some counties are not even using the \$100 to pay the CVSO's. There is one county that is using it for snow removal.

Mickey Hunt: The Denver Stand Down will be on November 6th. The Grand Junction Stand Down had at least 140 veterans in attendance. It was noted that there was an increase in younger female veterans and family members.

On my last visit to the Grand Junction VOA, they requested that the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs should have their meeting out there at the Veterans Resource Center.

Joint Budget Committee (JBC) Briefing will be held on December 18th at 0900 hours. They will require testimony from General Edwards and me.

The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) Hearing will be held December 10th at 0900 hours. This is where the analysts speak and we listen to what is being reviewed. Ken Lambert will be the JBC

Chairman.

Special Forces Operations Detachment K will be redeploying the first week in December. We will have one person from that group that is already eligible for a purple heart.

I will be in Durango next week. Are there any other questions?

Robby Robinson: We have a required meeting with the State Board of Human Services. Marvin has been to these meetings and Jay serves a representative for Colorado State Veterans Community Living Center Commission (CSVCLCC). This meeting will be at the Department of Human Services on Sherman Street.

Division of Veterans Affairs

Ben Mestas: As requested by the CBVA, to follow up with the concern that the VAMC does not provide a notary public. There will be a notary public available through the patient advocate and in the Director's office every Tuesday. I will also have some of my staff become notary publics.

Robby Robinson: Let's push that further. Who did you talk to?

Ben Mestas: I spoke with the VAMC Director, Lynette Roth.

Duane Dailey: I brought it up at the Town Hall meeting. The Executive Secretary explained because of staff coming forward, they chose not to have a notary public available anymore. She said she would approach the credit union in the basement to see if they could accommodate anyone with a notary public. I am going to get my own notary public so I will not be in that situation again.

Kathleen Dunemmn: Why isn't that part of someone's job description? The need for a notary public is a very common need in healthcare.

Robby Robinson: This is a minor problem we can solve.

General discussion about need for notary publics.

Ben Mestas: The cemetery is closing on 3000 internments by the end of December. The

construction is continuing on the columbarium. The winterizing of the sprinkler system has been completed.

Mickey Hunt is covering the Denver Stand Down. The Longmont Stand Down will be November 20th and someone from my staff will cover it.

On November 11th, my staff will be throughout the state at various events, i.e. U.S. History Project, USO at DIA, a clothing drive, at Golden Corral standing in line, at various school events – one covering a poetry contest as a judge. I will have staff in Grand County, Pueblo County, Douglas County, and in El Paso County.

Jay Bobick: Has there been any movement to put up additional staging area locations at Fort Logan cemetery?

Ben Mestas: I will follow up with Fort Logan and then Tami will send out any information to the Board.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: Did everyone receive the website location for the Veterans National Statistic Center? This information lists statistics by county through 2039 demographics.

I redid the first paragraph on the Governor's Report. I am processing working with Gail on the daily functions which she will be taking over.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Gail Hoagland: We are moving along. There are a couple of new grantees that are requiring education about the purposes of the grant. I would like to emphasize the need to do further training for grantees and potential applicants about what the grants can be used for. It is important to get everyone on the same page. We are trying to move forward.

Dana Niemela: When we apply for federal grants there is an on-line tech assist webinar. Is that what you have in mind?

Gail Hoagland: An online webinar is very costly such as WebEx. We are trying to find cheap

alternatives.

Ben Mestas: Gail wants to have a seminar to help educate grantees.

Dana Niemela: My primary concern with a seminar would be how would rural applicants have access to a seminar?

Steve Rylant: The American Legion Mid-year Conference has breakout sessions. Would you be willing to do that? It will be January 23rd on a Saturday. The American Legion can send a blast out to all the posts.

Duane Dailey: Gail, would it be possible to do this at the CCI Conference, to have a narrative prepared to explain what the grants are used for and how to apply?

*Major General H. Michael Edwards entered the room at 10:10am.

Ben Mestas: It is a two day conference, Gail. The Veterans Assistance Grant and CCVSO program could incorporate it with about 15 minutes allocated to present.

Rene Simard: How about a video?

Ray Z. Dissinger: To speak up in Gail's defense, having a video on the website would be ideal because Gail will be picking up both of the grants and it would be good to have a central place where you can train everyone.

Gail Hoagland: Frequently, funding sources do have a webinar that says here's what you need to know to help potential grantees to be successful in the application process, especially where they are lacking services.

On December 1st, I will be moving offices to CDVA over with Ben on Colorado Boulevard.

Robby Robinson: We want to say welcome to MAJ GEN Edwards. Thank you for coming today.

MAJ GEN H. Michael Edwards: Good Morning. It was a long night last night. I don't think Governor Hickenlooper slept at all. In Colorado Springs, the general mood was it was even-

keeled on both of the candidates and they would pay attention to military issues. I am not political but I like to watch the election process. Today is a good day for thanksgiving that we get to observe the amazing process. I woke up refreshed, knowing that the process works and as military members we can appreciate the freedom to hold elections.

Thank you for all you do for working so hard to take care of veterans. Thank you for all you do to make sure the issues are forefront and in administering the grant.

It looks like you have done some good work. We are answerable to the tax-payers of Colorado. As far as the budget type stuff, there are not too many issues. The Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant are basically supported by the Governor. Even though we don't know all the election results, I see no major changes as far as Veterans issues. I need to know that you are engaged with Veterans issues and what needs to be brought toward the Legislature. Governor Ritter once said to me that Veterans in this state are numerous and they are powerful. I want you to be aware that the economic impact study will be mostly to active duty and their economic impact to Colorado. This is an effort to reach out to Coloradans to show them what Veterans mean to this state.

We need to be prepared for force structure changes and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiatives. Colorado is well-positioned as far as facilities and structures if the US Army is about to take the proposed cuts. There are those in Washington D.C. that believe we are well-positioned for the coming changes. We need the power of the veterans. We need the voice of Veterans reinforcing the story.

It is a great day to be an American. Do you have any issues? It is a great day. You are in for a treat with Kelly Sullivan as the guest speaker. What a passionate speaker and it is a privilege to hear her speak.

Chris Holden: Are there any pending deployments to West Africa to support the Ebola crisis?

MAJ GEN H. Michael Edwards: So far, no. Based on the latest news we will not be asked for medical personnel but there is a need for security and for engineers. If the need arises in the future, we may see a request for engineers but not for the next 6 months.

For Veteran's Day, I will be the Grand Marshall of the Denver Parade this Saturday. Then, in the evening I will be downtown for the Laser Show. I will also be in Greeley and at O'Connell Middle School for Veteran's Day.

I will be taking a trip to Germany with the 70th Anniversary of Liberation of Dachau. I will also be reaching out to the Oklahoma the Home of the Thunderbirds.

I would ask you to encourage you to Senator-elect Gardner to go after the seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee and also the Senate Intel Committee. Thank you. Are there any other questions?

Robby Robinson: Gen. Edwards, thank you for coming today.

The Annual Governor's Report:

Legislative Issues and Actions: Jay Bobick with State Veterans Community Living Centers.

VSO Training- draft from Ben, Dana and Kathleen still pending.

Vets in Higher Education

Division of Veterans Affairs- Ben

Veterans Trust Fund – Ray Z. Dissinger, pending.

Veterans Assistance Grant – Summary

Colorado Veterans' Monument

Colorado Parks and Wildlife- send to Chris Holden to summarize.

Colorado Revenue

Colorado Local Affairs

Colorado Labor and Employment (have not yet received)

I am taking the Executive Summary and the issues we have identified are veterans' homelessness

and VA claims – how long it is taking to process claims and appeals (a perpetual problem). What other major issues should we look at?

Dana Niemela: Access to care is a big issue, particularly to rural communities, and lack of access to mental health care in particular.

*Ralph Bozella entered the room at 10:30am.

Rene Simard: What about higher education needs?

Chris Holden: Another issue would be Colorado State Benefits available to veterans. I hear many veterans ask about tuition relief. Do we have a comparison study of Colorado State Benefits compared to other state benefits to attract veterans to our state?

Discussion about Colorado State Benefits compared to other state benefits. Ray Z. Dissinger did a comparison study of several states and the benefits they offer to veterans a few years ago.

Chris Holden: What about the number of veterans that don't retire here but decide to retire in other states with more benefits like Florida, Texas, and California? Could Ray provide me with the comparison of the Colorado State Benefits?

Mickey Hunt: Part of the issue is that other departments don't breakout their statistics by number of veterans served.

Robby Robinson: The National Governors Association used to gather information on Veteran's Benefits by state that may be of some use.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I will get the most current data and send it to you.

Mickey Hunt: Governor Hickenlooper's office let me know that Roxanne White, Chief of Staff resigned. There will be a new Chief of Staff for Colorado and there will also be new Cabinet level members. There will also be a number of freshmen legislators, so our primary goal will be to educate them on what we do. Education is the primary mission to not lose any benefits. We need to protect Veterans.

VTF Grant Award Criteria and Guidelines

Ray Z. Dissinger: I am working with Gail on the guidelines. I will come in to help focus the guidelines.

Robby Robinson: I am referencing the Audit which requires us to identify specific goals and guidelines for the VTF Grant Award Criteria and VTF Grant guidelines.

Kathleen Dunemn: Can you send the information out so we could have a look at it and contribute to it?

Robby Robinson: To be in compliance with the laws, the Sunshine Act, all of our meetings have to be open and public so resolving it through email would not be an open meeting.

Duane Dailey: The purpose is so the grantees know what the scale is when they apply for the grant and so they know what they need to provide.

Discussion of the VTF Grant Award Criteria and what needs to be done to make sure the guidelines are fully developed.

Robby Robinson: The morning of the 24th of November would be a good time to meet for a special CBVA meeting to vote on the guidelines. We still need a location so it is to be announced.

Steve Rylant: UVC has the Executive Committee Meeting at the American Legion on November 25th.

Future Meetings

5 December 2014, 0930, American Legion HQ

9 January 2015, 0930, TBA

6 February 2015, 0930, Colorado Springs (Location TBA) Old Business

Jay Bobick: The Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers (CSVCLC) are sailing along. The Colorado State Veteran Community Living Center Commission (CSVCLCC) has a meeting this Friday. There are no major changes. They have not hired a new director. Vicky

Manley is filling both positions.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50am

Board Minutes November 24, 2014
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
6848 S. Revere Parkway, Centennial, CO 80112

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, soldiers, sailors, and airmen in battle or harm's way and all service members.

There was no Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff as there were no guests present.

Board Members Present:

- William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
- Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman
- Rene Simard, Secretary
- Kathleen Dunemmn, Member- Not Present
- Christopher Holden, Member
- Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member. Joined through Teleconference at 09:34am.
- Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
- Reuben "Ben" Mestas, CDVA Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
- Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

There were no guests present.

Discussion/Action: Changes to Procedures to Veterans Trust Fund

Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) versus Veterans Assistance Grant (VAG)- difference in programs

Robby Robinson: We need to discuss the changes in procedures to the Veterans Trust Fund. The first consideration; the Veterans Trust Fund is administered by the Colorado Board of Veterans

Affairs (CBVA) and the Veterans Assistance Grant is administered by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. VTF is established through Colorado Legislation and there is now statutory language which establishes the VAG. Ray Z. Dissinger had the view to make these grants both sort of the same. In my view, the Legislature had a different view in that these grants serve a different purpose. Applicants can not apply to both grants at the same time. They can either apply for the VTF or the VAG. If they are a Veterans Service Organization they can apply for the VTF and if they are a non-profit 501C-3 they can apply for the VAG.

Gail Hoagland: Previously, that may be the way it was written, but with the new rules it is not the same. If a VFW Post is a 501C-3 then they can apply for the VAG.

Robby Robinson: The Department says that there can be no duplication. Should the two grants be totally separate in terms of what they fund?

09:34 Wendy Chiado joined the meeting through teleconference.

Robby Robinson: Considering the example of mental hygiene, a VFW post could contract to have 40 hours of counseling for a veteran in need for VTF grant or a 501C-3 provides direct mental health services to veterans under a VAG grant. Another possibility, Project Sanctuary could pay for a counselor to go to a retreat that would go to VAG.

Ben Mestas: As far as administering the grant a clear directive would be helpful as far as short-term versus long-term.

Robby Robinson: For short-term, a homeless shelter program provides a bed for a veteran for a night; for long-term a 501C-3 would provide rental assistance for three months of rent.

Ben Mestas: If a Veteran Service Organizations gave money to a veteran for boots or a coat, this would be emergency services.

Robby Robinson: A long-term example would be if VOA gave a veterans organization money for a pipe-welding course that lasted 6 months in a program to help the veteran get an education. In my mind, there is a difference between the two grants.

Dana Niemela: In general, VSO's are more appropriate for applying one-time emergency grant

needs. The American Legion or VFW is more appropriate for getting connected to the veteran. I would not be opposed, for example, if Idaho Springs requested money for a veteran to get counseling for 6 sessions with a provider the veteran has a relationship with in the community. So there is a place for the mental health and hygiene. If that was taken out it would be eliminating an opportunity for rural communities. If non-profit organizations want to provide counseling and a VFW wants to provide counseling, then I would rather award to the non-profit through the VAG.

Gail Hoagland: We have a lot of grantees who do both.

Dana Niemela: In that case, the community needs to say, here are the needs in our community and here are the resources we need to meet.

Duane Dailey: It is on CDVA to integrate where these grants are going and have the County Veterans Service Officers identifying the needs. I envision a whole group of Veterans Service Organizations trying to meet the criteria of the grants with the needs of their veterans.

Ben Mestas: A lot of these grants are where both the County Veterans Service Officers and the Veterans Service Organizations work together to collaborate.

Duane Dailey: From my experience, many of the CVSO's and the Veterans' Service Organizations are not even aware of each other.

Ben Mestas: By the time the County Veteran Service Officer becomes a CVSO, and then the Veterans Service Organizations have to sign-off on who the CVSO is, so there is awareness as well as a relationship.

Duane Dailey: I service several counties. There is a disconnect between the Veteran Service Organizations and what the CVSO's do to help Veterans is very apparent.

Robby Robinson: There is an opportunity to strengthen the position of the CVSO by writing in that it has to go through the CVSO.

Dana Niemela: When foundations are awarding grants, they give the organizations additional points for working with another organization. For example, if VFW is collaborating with other

organizations in the community, they would get higher points than those who don't demonstrate partnerships with other organizations.

Chris Holden: If you add in another layer of vetting an organization before it comes to us, then you would have to add in an appeals process for the grant applicants to keep the process fair.

Dana Niemela: It would not be a vetting of the applicants per se, just the applications would have to go through the CVSO so they were aware of what the Service Organizations were applying for, and to see what needs were going to be addressed. It would be building a foundation for a partnership to develop through the years.

Duane Dailey: I agree with Dana, we have to build it in over several years.

Chris Holden: My concern is in some counties that could be construed as favoritism or playing politics and not benefit the veterans in need.

Wendy Chiado: In a place like Colorado Springs, there are so many Veterans Service Organizations; I would not even know who to go to.

Robby Robinson: What I hear you saying is that we need to involve the County Veterans Service Officers in some way?

Chris Holden: Why do that? I never see any County Commissioner coming here to say there is a problem.

Duane Dailey: I would say there is not a problem everywhere. It is not to say you have to be working together. Involving the County Veterans Service Officers would raise their level of awareness of who the CVSO is and what they are doing.

Mickey Hunt: There are County Veterans Service Officers who work with the Service Organizations and other County Veterans Service Officers who do not. In one county the CVSO did not have a good relationship with the VFW, so they did not work together. In another county, the County Veterans Service Officer does not have a good relationship with the student veteran community so he is missing out on serving those younger veterans.

There's Jim Tackett in El Paso County, who works with many of the Veterans Service Organizations.

Wendy Chiado: I don't even know who that is.

Mickey Hunt: There needs to be more coordination with the County Veterans Service Officers

Dana Niemela: Any Federal grants or foundation grants require the applicants to show coordination with service delivery. Who is involved with that is less important but we can encourage it to building partnerships in the community. We could require the applicants to have a Memorandum of Understanding to show who they are working with. Perhaps this could be assigned one point to show they are building partnerships.

Rene Simard: This brings up the scoring guide, would this be in the other participants category?

Robby Robinson: If I heard that right there is a consensus that we need to involve the County Veteran Service Officers to tell the County Veteran Service Officers that the Veterans Service Organization is applying for a grant to meet a specific need in their community?

Ben Mestas: The County Veterans Service Officers are appointed by the County Board of Commissioners.

Chris Holden: We could put that in the evaluation criteria, "Did the applicant send a copy to notify the County Veterans Service Officer?"

Robby Robinson: As far as the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs is involved, I am comfortable with the grant applicants sending a copy to the County Veterans Service Officer. The other thing that I heard is that we need to have some organizational differences between the two grants. A 501C-3 cannot use the VTF money.

VTF Letter/Criteria

Robby Robinson: We need to take a look at the Policy Letter. We meet back with the Audit Committee in January. On 1 B – Grant Programs to be funded: Short Term Emergency Assistance, Job Training/Education/Assistance, Homeless Prevention/Shelter Operations, Mental

Health and Hygiene, Medical Transportation, Veterans Stand Downs, and Special Programs.

It is important to look at the unique requirements of a particular community. Are there any comments on the list of priorities?

Dana Niemela: I agree with the list of priorities. On number 7, instead of requirements, it should read unique to the identified needs of a particular community. On number 3, I would say, “temporary housing assistance.”

Robby Robinson: If we add the assistance to 3, then let’s take temporary rent out of number 1 so it is not duplicated.

Dana Niemela: With a comment about mental health and hygiene funding through VSO’s with emphasis on a rural community. If there is not a service provider in a rural community, then I would like to leave it in the VTF for emergency assistance.

I also think we should use bullets instead of numbers because it looks like we are prioritizing the criteria.

Gail Hoagland: I have a question. When the Auditors wrote their report, did they want the criteria put into a list of priorities?

Robby Robinson: It did say prioritize but for rural communities, I will take the hit for that.

Dana Niemela: I would say, Gail, there is probably more of a need in a rural community like Las Animas for particular services than in a metro area.

Chris Holden: It would be helpful for me to have a list of the Veterans Assistance Grant priorities.

(Gail passed out several copies of the Veterans Assistance Grant priorities to CBVA members.)

Robby Robinson: To differentiate between the different types of organizations that apply for the grants, should we say VTF is more short-term and VAG is more long-term? For example, Crawford House has been getting money from VFW or AL through VTF. Now that Crawford House is a 501C-3, it should apply directly to the VAG grant and not for the money dispensed

through VTF.

Mickey Hunt: Crawford House is a rehabilitation facility that is for veterans with addictions. I toured the facility several years ago and thought they were doing a great job. The veterans are admitted to the program and have to go through rehabilitation and stay clean and sober to be in the program. After the first, three and a half weeks they graduate to a facility with a shared room, and then get integrated into a program where they are sharing a room and they start sharing the work load. Then they graduate up to a house and work. The program lasts a total of 2 years.

Duane Dailey: A Step 13 program for veterans.

Mickey Hunt: They can also house females.

Duane Dailey: Bartol from Teller County wanted to integrate community services to bring in veterans. Is that something that can qualify for the VAG?

Mickey Hunt: Any of the funds requested for either the VAG or the VTF have to go to veterans.

Dana Niemela: If a community service organization requests funds they have to show that they serve veterans and the funds are only going to go to the veterans in their program.

Discussion of community service organizations serving veterans and the proof required to document number of veterans served.

Dana Niemela: I do have a question about the difference between short and long term services on the application and the on-going outcomes. There are difference immediate needs that can be met with the short-term grant. For the counties, VSO's sometimes the output is okay to put such as, "Did you solve homelessness for this veteran? Or did you help this veteran find a bed to sleep in a shelter for the night?" I know there are some cases that benefit from on-going case management but not every case requires it. The VTF and the VAG can help meet a need by providing one-time assistance. For example, if you can't pay there is usually an issue with money management and if Denver County is providing rental assistance then they would also provide a referral to the Financial Empowerment Center.

Gail Hoagland: How can we look to the outputs? The applicants could say here are the types of differences we are making for veterans and give a list.

Robby Robinson: It is important to maintain the difference between the VTF and the VAG.

Wendy Chiado: On #1, the part with “necessary requirements” can we take that out, it is too nebulous?

Gail Hoagland: We may not anticipate every type of need that may exist but we might provide a way to meet the needs that we have not thought about.

Chris Holden: I remember one where the women in the program needed feminine hygiene products and the “necessary requirements” descriptor fit this appropriately.

Discussion about other situations or examples where “necessary requirements” fit an emergent need that one would not usually anticipate.

Robby Robinson: Does anyone have any other comments about the criteria? On page 2, of the Policy Letter, the bold print is not new is has been reordered and underlined for emphasis. On page 3, the bold print, is more of the Ray Z language, bolded for emphasis. Any comments on page 4. Gail, are you okay with this document?

Gail Hoagland: Do there need to be some review of criteria in ways grants are reviewed?

Discussion about the scorecard used to weigh the criteria in awarding grants.

Dana Niemela: Each one should have a scoring criteria assigned to it or a scoring mechanism attached to each one of the criteria.

Gail Hoagland: We also need to add to this list CVSO notification.

Robby Robinson: On 1B, it was not clear to me in #5 qualitative and quantitative.

Gail Hoagland: In the application narrative, it asks what kinds of outputs/outcomes in types of services are expected. We also have to consider the different types of performance from the grantees. It asks about previous performance and we document past performance.

Robby Robinson: We keep 5 and 8 in the document.

Dana Niemela: If someone who was a past performer and they did well, it puts them at a higher priority than a new grantee. We do look at previous performance of prior grants and use that in determining awards or award amounts. Is that the intention?

Ben Mestas: Isn't that covered in the numbers of veterans served?

Dana Niemela: What was the intent?

Gail Hoagland: I don't think necessarily that that is the real intent. The reason we look at past performance is that if a previous grantee did not perform well, then they would score lower on that one.

Rene Simard: We actually use the past performance in awarding the grants.

Gail Hoagland: The Auditors were very clear that they wanted everyone including the grantee to know clearly how they were ranked. The past performance is used in determining who to award and the next determinant would be the amount of the award. An example of this would

be if they scored 86 or below then they would not be funded. We wanted to put in specific criteria.

Dana Niemela: I would suggest that we consider previous administrative performance on grants, i.e. VOA has a strong reputation for high performance on administration of grants.

Gail Hoagland: If it is not one of our grants then how would we know what the performance record has been?

Ben Mestas: For new grantees, if they can meet the criteria of 1, 2, 3, and 4 then they are going to score higher.

Robby Robinson: For number 7, Special Programs, should it say priorities for statewide and/or regional needs?

Gail Hoagland: We can take #2 out that was an audit concern as far as a big picture of what the

needs are.

Ben Mestas: The big picture does look at the impact on that area whether the need is regional or specific to the community.

Robby Robinson: For #3 it could be rolled into #4. The number of veterans served is a measure of effectiveness.

Dana Niemela: Are we going to be able to award a VSO that is going to serve fewer veterans because of geographic proximity?

Gail Hoagland: There is a difference between outputs and outcomes. It is important that the grantees know we are looking for outcomes.

Dana Niemela: Whatever is on this list should be on the scoring tool. When we are weighing each one of these criteria, we are assigning a priority to it.

Robby Robinson: For the scoring tool, Serving Individuals, New Grant, Rural Areas will continue to be on there. Other Participants and In Kind Match, what do you think? In Kind Match is on there from back in Marvin Meyers' time when they would have matching grants from other community sources to help them meet their financial goals.

Gail Hoagland: On the application, we ask them to identify other sources of funding.

Dana Niemela: With that we are prioritizing unmet needs.

Gail Hoagland: Should it be identify other sources of funding for this project?

Dana Niemela: I would think where there are no other sources of funding it would be a higher priority.

Robby Robinson: We also look at statewide regional need.

Dana Niemela: 2-8 are criteria that we decided to keep.

Gail Hoagland: It would be 2-9 that we decided on.

Robby Robinson: Do you want to put CVSO partnership under number 2?

Dana Niemela: “In Kind” could also be a good place to put partnership.

Gail Hoagland: It might also fall under budget appropriate services.

Dana Niemela: Are there any of the categories that should be weighted more than the other categories?

Robby Robinson: Of these categories, what is the most important? Probably number 4?

Dana Niemela: I would say number 2 is pretty important.

Robby Robinson: How about 15 points for number 2 and 15 points for number 4.

Wendy Chiado: If you put more emphasis on number 3 does it penalize the rural communities?

Robby Robinson: That is a valid point and we do take that into consideration when we look at rural versus metro communities. On page 5 and 6 are there any other changes?

General discussion assigning points to prioritize the categories.

Dana Niemela: I just have an observation. Throughout the document there were dates and then the last 2 pages, the year was put in where just putting the dates would be sufficient.

Robby Robinson: It looks like with the date in then it needs to be looked at every year.

Dana Niemela: We do look at it every year. We need to look at what the funds will be based on and the available funds.

Robby Robinson: Do you want it to say, “Grant funding available based on number of applicants?”

Duane Dailey: We need to define better what funds are available.

Robby Robinson: So, it should say, total funds available, total funds requested, and total number of grantees?

Dana Niemela: We also have been known to not fully fund grantees and need to be able to explain why.

Gail Hoagland: During the application process, we try to encourage the applicants to fully justify their budget requests. This could be where we ask, is the budget appropriate for number of veterans served?

General discussion of total funds available versus funds requested and number of veterans served. This would also take into account the geographic distribution and be documented on the scoring tool and in the policy letter.

Robby Robinson: I move that the Administration Guidelines and Procedures falls in Gail's expertise and that we let her take care of that.

Gail Hoagland: Several changes still have to be made to the application, especially where it says VAG and should say VTF.

General discussion of the application checklist.

Robby Robinson: Are there any additional comments?

Gail Hoagland: I am fine with approving this with the changes we have discussed today.

Rene Simard: I move that we proceed with the changes we have discussed.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say "aye." Any opposed? That was **unanimous** to proceed with the changes. Is there any other business?

Mickey Hunt: What is the status of the Governor's Report?

Robby Robinson: We have received all requested agency letters. The report will be the main subject of the December 5th meeting. We will get any other Board input at that meeting.

Mickey Hunt: I want to know who all is attending the CCI meeting on December 2nd. Do we have to get on a list or register?

Discussion of CCI event on December 2nd in Colorado Springs. Mickey Hunt, Ben Mestas, Diane Ricci, and Duane Dailey are scheduled to attend and Mr. Dailey will check to make sure everyone is registered.

*Chris Holden left the room at 11:00am due to business commitment.

General discussion of the Veterans Choice Card, outreach from the VA Regional Office in Denver, and the VA being more proactive in rural communities.

Robby Robinson: For December, we will have the DMV from Colorado Springs to discuss the different license plates and the processes in place.

Ben Mestas: One of the problems is that each county clerk implements the processes for the DMV. It would be nice for the Department of Revenue to implement a standard.

Mickey Hunt: The Department of Revenue does have a standard in how they train their personnel for the DMV.

Discussion of DMV and special license plates for veterans.

Future Meetings

5 December 2014, 0930, American Legion HQ

9 January 2015, 0930, TBA

6 February 2015, 0930, Colorado Springs (Location TBA) Meeting adjourned at 11:43am.

Board Minutes 5 December 2014
American Legion Headquarters 7465 E. 1st Avenue #D
Denver, CO 80230

Dana Niemela, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 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:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman-Not Present
 Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman
 Rene Simard, Secretary
 Kathleen Dunemn, Member –Not Present
 Christopher Holden, Member
 Wendy Sue Chiado, Ph.D., Member – Not Present
 Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

- Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
- Greg Dorman, DMVA Legislative Liaison
- Reuben "Ben" Mestas, CDVA Director
- Diane Ricci, CDVA Deputy Director
- Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.
- Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

- Jay Bobick, CBVA Colorado State Veterans Community Living Center Liaison
- Richard Sandrock, Governor's Office
- Aaron Torres, Senator Bennet's Office
- Debby Blanc, Colorado State Veterans Community Living Center Representative
- Steve Rylant, UVC

- Ken Melcher, UVC

Approval of Minutes from November 5, 2014 and November 24, 2014

Unanimously accepted with Dana Niemela's corrections and amendments.

Board Member Comments

Duane Dailey: The Denver VA Regional Office is coming to Grand County on Tuesday. We've set up a Skype session. This meeting will be a follow up to the first Town Hall meeting. For a little of the history behind this visit, this will be the first time the Denver VA Regional Office has been to visit Grand County since 2009. We are trying to advertise and let other organizations know they are coming so we have a good turnout. In Routt County, the Denver VA Regional Office has been to visit 3 to 4 times and there was no recognition because no one knew they came for an outreach.

Chris Holden: No comment.

Rene Simard: No comment.

Dana Niemela: I attended a meeting yesterday with the Clear Creek County Veterans Coalition. This is a collaboration that is working to gain their 501C-3 status. The Clear Creek County Veterans Coalition is made up of the VFW, the American Legion, and County Veterans Service Officers, representatives from the Faith Community, the Sheriff, and Judicial System. What is unique about Clear Creek County is that they recognize their dependence in the community.

The lines get a little bit blurred but in a good way. The community members are working together to meet the needs of veterans in the area. When these organizations work together to serve the veterans, they realize that they are also helping their communities. It is a very powerful collaboration when you are on the same page as the law enforcement and the judicial system. Jefferson County Mental Health is also looking to get involved. They are looking to bring in mainstream services.

It was a good opportunity to identify an improvement plan for counties. In Idaho Springs, there is no primary care available, there are no family doctors and there are no mental health providers for these veterans. They end up using urgent care for family practice health care needs and this is

a huge expense for the counties.

This is a good opportunity to use the Veterans Coalition to advocate for the community as a whole. The Veterans Coalition is involved in engaging the business community. They went around getting the businesses to sign up for discounts for veterans and most of these businesses were already giving veterans discounts. These rural communities collaborate in unique ways compared to urban populations.

There is one story that is a testament to the collaborative efforts in rural communities. There was a veteran in Gilpin County who was arrested on a school premises with a weapon. He has a “conceal and carry” license but weapons are illegal on school grounds. The sheriff called the CVSO, Todd Kumro to see if he could get involved and help get the veteran some assistance.

Todd worked with the veterans to get VA Healthcare and get him to a counseling program. When the judge held the arraignment he specifically asked that the VSO be present which is highly unusual. They worked together with Veterans Court through probation to get connected with the CVSO. They even have allowed him to go out of state to participate in a therapeutic program. These treatment courts and trauma courts are great.

I wanted to give recognition to the Clear Creek County Coalition because they are doing a great job. They also played a key role in getting the twin tunnels officially designated as the “Veterans Memorial Tunnel.”

Jay Bobick: Jefferson County has now started their Veterans Court and it is really proceeding very well. The Chief Judge just retired and in his retirement he said he is not leaving the Veterans Court. He still wanted to work on that. He is the one that got it started. So, Jefferson County is doing well, as well.

Dana Niemela: The outgoing Chair of the Clear Creek County Coalition, George Clark, is running a peer mentor program. He has been recruiting veterans to be peer mentors. That program will be starting later on this month. Are there any other comments?

Since our guests are not present yet, I think we should table the guest presentations in case they show up later. They could be stuck in traffic or have had trouble with directions.

Reports Governor's Report

Richard Sandrock: Right now in Colorado, unemployment is down to about 4.3% and for veterans it is about 7%. Earlier this year, the Governor had the opportunity to speak at the graduation down at Fort Carson for Veterans in Piping down. The Governor has tasked me to look for employers who will directly target and train veterans in Colorado. For the last couple of weeks I have talked to different companies, and I have talked to Excel and Kiewit-Turner about positions and the need to focus on hiring veterans. They are directly talking to the Warrior Transition Center down at Fort Carson. Instead of having a workshop where the veterans attends and goes home without a job, they are training and targeting veterans for job opportunities here in Colorado. I started discussions with the Western Dairy Association about developing a program to help veterans get into farming and agriculture. There are 30,000 small farms in Colorado. The average age of people working on family farms is 58.9 years old. The average size of these farms is two people. We are working with the Western Dairy Association and hope to also be working with the Colorado Wheat Association to help develop this program. We hope to develop a job opportunity program for veterans who are leaving the military. If there are veterans who would like to return to family farming then this program will help veterans to intern on a family farm and we can provide funding to them. Later if the veterans would like to go on to University of Colorado to do a 4 year degree in agriculture, then that would be another option. I have a meeting coming up in two weeks with the Colorado Wheat Association and the Western Dairy Association to discuss this opportunity.

I have served as enlisted, as an officer, on active duty, and in the reserves. My wife recently joined the National Guard so now I am in the role of military spouse.

The Tree Lighting Ceremony was on 4 December at the Capitol. It was very well attended.

For those of you who are unaware, there was a Colorado U.S. Air Force Captain who died when an F-16 Fighting Falcon crashed in the Middle East on Nov. 30. He was a born and bred native Coloradan, educated at CU Boulder. The Governor is working with the Casualty Notification Officer to speak at the service.

Rene Simard: If the veterans are pursuing an agricultural degree, the Colorado Community College System has guaranteed transfer courses and degrees. General education courses can be

taken at any community college and then transferred to any of the State Universities. For those veterans in the intern program at family farms, if they do go ahead and take courses at the community colleges, they should be able to transfer applicable courses toward their agricultural degree.

Jay Bobick: Richard, you said 30,000 small farms in Colorado. How does that stack up with the surrounding states?

Richard Sandrock: We don't have an exact number for that but I can tell you from conversations with Gen. Edwards, who is from an agricultural farming background in the Midwest, that number is about average for the surrounding states. On average, the family farms are 10 to 49 acres. After that the larger farms go up to 250 acres. It happens in this part of the country, small farms, older mom and dad with no one else to work the farms.

Dana Niemela: When the Governor attended the Veterans in Piping Program, we asked if the State AFL-CIO would be willing to attempt to have similar programs with other trades for veterans to train.

Richard Sandrock: I talked with Bill Hanna from UVC about that.

Dana Niemela: Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce will have the National Director from Hiring Our Heroes presenting, would like to talk with you more about that program for ideas.

Rene Simard: Could you include me on that?

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: In the past when we have had a "Dignified Transfer," at Buckley AFB, the active duty personnel line the streets in their uniforms. If you want more information about that, let me know. The investigating officer, General Pete Burn, one of our own, will be investigating that accident.

December 10th will be the Joint Budget Committee Hearing. This is the one where we listen to the analyst and do not speak.

December 18th will be the Joint Budget Committee Testimony. General Edwards and I will both present testimonies.

There will be a welcome home for the Site K Special Forces Unit, the time and date to be announced.

I went to Colorado Counties Incorporated (CCI) Conference in Colorado Springs. I will leave that for Duane to talk about.

December 19th is the TAG's Holiday Party, at the Revere location.

December 16th the TAG and his wife are traveling to Grand Junction for the Annual Food and Toy Drive. General Capozella and I have done this before. General Edwards and I have done the Food and Toy Drive before and it is very rewarding. For the last five years we have participated in that event.

On December 17th, I will take the Blackhawk to Grand Junction and if any of the Board members would like to go and help out with the Annual Food and Toy Drive, let me know so I can save you a seat on the helicopter. It is a wonderful event. The kids get full boxes of toys even with bicycles. The families get a full Christmas meal with a turkey and all the trimmings. It is very heart-warming.

Dana Niemela: Do you want me to talk about the Polish Delegation? There is a delegation from Poland that is coming to Colorado. They are seeking information on wounded warriors' matters. They have been in Washington, D.C. They will be here to talk about how we educate on veterans, how we advocate for veterans, to learn about educational, medical and psychological support for veterans. The Polish Delegation wants to learn about the best practices and strategies on how to best serve the wounded veterans. I will talk about the process involved in administering and delivering the grants in our communities. The meeting with the Polish Delegation will be on December 16th and if anyone is interested let me know and I will send you the particulars.

Greg Dorman: The TAG Holiday party will be on 19th of December and it usually starts about noon.

Mickey Hunt: Gen. Edwards hosts the Holiday party and it is usually in the general purpose area on the second floor. However, there are usually several parties going on during this time and it becomes several smaller parties held in different units. The punch should be a little less octane this year with Les Kennedy not being there to spike the punch. Hopefully, there will be less of that all around.

Dana Niemela: This would be a good time to hear any legislative updates from Greg Dorman.

Greg Dorman: I want to say thank you to all the Board members for their contributions to the Annual Governor's Report. I would like to have that finalized no later than December 15th.

For the Legislature, there is a new General Assembly. Several of the Representatives with whom I have dealt have shown an interest in helping veterans. It will be a process of educating the new members. This aligns with Department of Military and Veterans Affairs mission to educate the Legislature on the needs of veterans.

Most of you know that there has been a modification to the "Military and Family Relief Fund." The modification was to strike the word, "deployed" from the statutory language. January 30th will be Military Appreciation Day at the Capitol. It will be starting earlier in the day to accommodate the Governor's schedule. I will be working with Bill Hanna on Military Appreciation Day.

Mickey Hunt: The Joint House and Senate Military Committee will meet on January 5th, 2015. I will need a Board member present. The Chairman of the Board and the Vice Chair of the Board usually address this Committee. It starts at 10:00am and I will send further details to you.

Jay Bobick: You mentioned the Military Appreciation Day will start earlier in the day, how much earlier? It is usually an all-day event.

Greg Dorman: It will be starting at 7:30am instead of 8:00am.

Rene Simard: On Thursday, the Aurora Defense Council will have a special meeting featuring congressional staffers. We have invited staffers responsible for military and veterans issues, to talk about the coming year. There will be representatives from Sen. Elect Gardner's Office, Sen. Bennet's Office, Congressman Perlmutter's Office, Congressman Coffman's Office and

Congressman Polis' office. This is a good opportunity to hear what is on their agendas for next year. The meeting will be at the Doubletree on Iliff and I-25. Let me know if you want to attend. The Aurora Defense Council's Annual Holiday Party will follow afterwards so you are all invited. Let me know if you'd like to attend one or both and I'll get you registered.

Division of Veterans Affairs

Ben Mestas: We attended CCI and Duane will cover more of that meeting. Gail will cover any updates on the grants. I will focus on updates from the Cemetery. We have almost completed construction with the first columbarium a little ahead of schedule. The last thing will be the concrete pour. If you can imagine, those three columbariums will be filled up soon. The second item, I want to cover is we are at the highest rate of veterans interred in years. This emphasizes the point that the Cemetery expansion is right on time. There is one issue in-house issue with Information Technology to work out some issues with the computers. I am working with AI to sort that issue out.

The other issue I want to bring up, there is the "Art in Public Places" proposal. When we got the amount to fund the Cemetery, 1% is required by the State in order to put public art out in the cemeteries. Of the funds available, that is \$33,861 that we are going to have to utilize for public art. I am having a conversation with Ruth Runo, who is running the program for us to purchase and maintain the Public Art. Of that \$33,861, they will take 5% off the top and then require another 5% to maintain the art in public. With both the 5% for administration an additional 5% to maintain the art, then that would only leave \$28,433 available to purchase the art. That additional 5% to maintain the art, I am still negotiating with them because if we buy a statue then it will require a foundation and some structural maintenance but if we buy a painting, then it will just hang there and not need much maintenance. Another 5% in addition to the first 5% does not make much sense to us. If both the 5% to administer purchase of the art and the 5% to maintain the art, the amount of money it only leaves is \$28,433. Dick Gigliotti is looking to get matching contributions for a life-size Army Soldier saluting in towards the Cemetery. The \$28,433 is not enough to make this purchase. One of the requirements of the "Art in Public Places" is to have a committee to review the purchase decision. I have recommended a committee to review the art to be utilized and I have recommended Dick Gigliotti as well as two other community members, either artists or business leaders, to be on this committee. Dick has submitted to me two names

and I have forwarded those to Ruth. That is pretty much what I have and I don't have anything else to add.

Dana Niemela: Is the 5% administrative cost an allowable expense by statute?

Ben Mestas: Of the money set aside for the Cemetery project, they are saying that 5% of the 1% has to be set aside for administrative costs and 5% of the 1% has to be set aside for maintenance.

Dana Niemela: It sounds like a committee would be a good idea. Ben, do you have anything else? Are there any other questions?

State Veterans Community Living Centers

Jay Bobick: December 12th will be the next meeting for the CSVCLC Commission meeting at 8:30 am in the Human Services Building. We will be reviewing the annual report and finalize the report. We will also hold the elections and nomination for the appointment of Chairman. There should be a briefing from one of the homes; I think it will be from Homelake. We have four meetings a year and one of the home presents at each meeting.

Are there any questions? You are all invited to the CSVCLC Commission meeting. Debbie

Blanc: We are all trying to get used to the new name change.

Jay Bobick: The term, nursing home, has become detrimental and with a negative connotation through the years. In Washington VA, this was a strong issue to change that connotation to Community Living Center. It is a place to go to live life, not a place of death.

It all goes with the whole Eden Alternatives philosophy where life for people at the Community Living Centers as best as they can be "homelike."

Steve Rylant: Are you planning to change the current signs because some of the homes have signs in stone?

Jay Bobick: They will have to be changed eventually but it will not be overnight due to shortage in funding. At Rifle, the stonework will be very difficult to change.

Debbie Blanc: The stone at Rifle is from the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier." There is also the

branding issue, trying to get people to accept the new name and still have the branding. We were allowed to keep the State Seal as part of our identity.

Jay Bobick: We have been very successful in the updates of all of our homes. Fitzsimmons has one third of the construction that still needs to be updated. The plan is the south side will be the domiciliary and the north side will be transition units. Originally the construction costs were approximately \$43,000,000 but have increased to approximately \$52,000,000.

The State share will be 35% (\$18-19 million), the rest funded through the VA grant system. The Commission number one priority is this construction at Fitzsimmons. No construction can be initiated until completion of the Department of Human Services ongoing study of future overall Colorado nursing home/community living center needs. This study is scheduled for initial completion in the first quarter 2015.

Dana Niemela: In Clear Creek County, the growth need for the over 65 population far exceeds the under 25 population. This is a huge problem with access to care.

Discussion about aging population needs and the expense of care. Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant

Gail Hoagland: The Grant Office has moved to the South Colorado Boulevard address. Yesterday was my official first day. The audit response is progressing along nicely. It is due by December 22 and I hope to have it out next week. In the review/revision part, it looks like all but one of the issues has been fully implemented. The one that remains outstanding has to do with the tracking of the rolling 90 day advancements. This has to be done through CORE (State Accounting System) and CORE has not been able to track these yet. We will create stop-gap procedures until they can be put back into CORE automatically.

I was present on Tuesday at the United Veterans Committee (UVC) meeting and will attend the January 24th Mid-Year Conference to discuss Grant Funding Availability. The new program policy for Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant are on the web. I hope to come up with creative ways to work with County Veterans Service Officers to get the word out about the grants.

Jay Bobick: I have one request from you. Please succinctly discuss the differences between the

Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant when you go to the UVC Mid- Year Conference. This is a very important issue.

Dana Niemela: For the VTF Policy letter, thank you for everyone who had input. This will help make this clearer as well as make it fairer for the applicants. Regarding the Audit Report, do we feel as though we have adequately addressed the grading process as far as outcomes and outputs for the grantees?

Gail Hoagland: Do you mean as far as administrative performance on previous grants or on outcome measures?

Dana Niemela: It would be expected performance for grantees outcomes.

Gail Hoagland: As far as the program letter, not necessarily. The new grantees once they are awarded the grant, a manual of expectations including measurement of outcomes, work in progress, and service delivery, will be sent to the grantee. This manual will instruct them on how to incorporate the outcomes back into the program to make improvements. Part of the grant award will include a survey where the veterans will self-report on how the grant has assisted them. The survey questions will ask the veteran: How the grant money helped them? Did this make a difference? I will ask the grantee questions that clarify if they are spending the money appropriately. Administratively, there are several points through the year where there will be a “mini-audit” process based on the numbers and dealing directly with the grantees.

Dana Niemela: When we put together the report, we worked with Gail to make sure the suspense dates were included.

Gail Hoagland: December 15th is the date I hope to have the first draft out.

Mickey Hunt: For the Legislative out brief we need to have a finalized written report.

Dana Niemela: Gail, have yours by December 12th to Robby and I. Then, Robby and I will work to have something to Mickey by either the 17th or 18th of December.

Discussion about the report and Gail's office hours.

Steve Rylant: Gail, in past years, there has been direct deposit available for the grantees. Do you think that will be available for grantees next year?

Gail Hoagland: The issue with the hold up on direct deposit has been with CORE. Some of the grantees are receiving direct deposit this year and other grantees who are not yet receiving direct deposit are being worked on individually. Hopefully, it will be rectified soon.

Dana Niemela: Are there any other questions about the Veterans Trust Fund or the Veterans Assistance Grant for Gail?

Colorado Counties Incorporated Presentation (CCI)

Duane Dailey: We were in Colorado Springs for the Colorado Counties Incorporated (CCI) conference luncheon. I was surprised that we were as well received as we were. Gini Pingenet was very enthusiastic and she is willing to work with us to incorporate CDVA into future programs. Gen. Norm Steen was the moderator. He was excited about our presentation and wants us to come back. We had ten minutes to do the presentation and from what feedback I received it went very well. There was a good response from the rural counties.

Mickey Hunt: This was a giant step for the Board. Outreach is what the Board is about and this was an excellent opportunity. Thank you to Duane for opening this door and for building bridges with CCI. Each one of you Board members brings something from your unique backgrounds. Attending CCI was a great success for the Board. That is one of the reasons why I invited you to go to Grand Junction. Dana and I have enhanced that through Colorado Serves. I spoke at CCI about the budget initiative and that was very well received. The Governor spoke and then he opened it up for questions and answers for about 30 minutes. It was very well received. They asked questions afterwards. It is what we do – education. I encourage the Board to use your background to build these relationships and make an impact on veterans' issues.

Ben Mestas: We are going to be setting up a table at every conference from now on. The feedback we got back from the questions has been invaluable. If they are aware of what the CVSO's are doing for the veterans and the impact that makes on the communities and the county economy, then we are doing our jobs. I am committed to being there with a table. It was productive.

Discussion CCI, the presentation by Duane Dailey and Mickey Hunt, the opportunity and need for education about what we do for veterans.

Ben Mestas: It was great for us and for the Board.

Diane Ricci: The inroads we made by attending were important to explain who we are and how we partner with the counties. We made a very favorable footprint with your speech, Duane and it was a good opportunity to be able to stay and talk with the Commissioners afterwards.

Mickey Hunt: These relationships are vital given the upcoming expectations we have for downsizing in the near future. As a Board, it is important to develop positive relationships with Fort Carson, Peterson, and Buckley. This will be the first generations where many of the veterans are not choosing to get out of the military and it will create a new dynamic.

Dana Niemela: Between now and then, what role specifically can the Board play for the services we have a role in providing? I think the first step would be including them in our distribution list of our meetings and ask them good places in rural counties to post information about our meetings.

Mickey Hunt: The key is to let those rural counties know that we are here to help. We are not here to tell you what to do. The message that we are here to help is what we want to get across.

Dana Niemela: In communicating with the County Commissioners, are there any contacts that we need to keep in the loop to be informed of veterans' issues?

Duane Dailey: On Fridays, there used to be a Military and Veterans Affairs Meeting. I will check to see if they still have that meeting.

Rene Simard: Bill Holen is a good guy to contact. He is a big supporter of the Aurora Defense Council and the military and also an Arapahoe County Commissioner. He is great to get energized about veterans' issues. I will get his contact information for you.

Dana Niemela: Are there any other questions about CCI?

Discussion about CCI conference and opportunities to maintain momentum from the positive

reception at the conference. Ideas for communicating with Commissioners and possibly a veterans' forum in their newsletter.

Steve Rylant: Next Tuesday, United Veterans Committee will be meeting and Gail will be there to present.

Dana Niemela: Since we have a representative from Sen. Bennet's Office, Aaron Torres, did you want to report anything? No, well thank you for coming.

Discussion/Action: Annual Report of the Board

Dana Niemela: Everyone has a copy of the Annual Report of the Board and you should have received an electronic copy if you have any changes or suggestions. What about CCI, do we want to put something in there for that or for next year? What about the Veterans in Higher Education piece that took place in August? Are there any corrections? If you have feedback, you need to let us know.

Chris Holden: I provided feedback directly to Robby.

Dana Niemela: What about the meeting with the County Commissioners?

Greg Dorman: If you want to include it, I would recommend including it in the letter but not in the report unless there is a paragraph that is on a broader outreach topic.

Dana Niemela: The topic to be covered is over the area of focus of the Board. To speak to Mickey's point earlier, we have a very real opportunity based on the focus at the table. If we have a plan to have continued outreach to the County Commissioner, it would be good to address that in the report. For the Board members, take this as an opportunity to build up our efficacy in the community. What do we want our focus to look like next year?

Greg Dorman: This is also an executive summary with the boiler plate letters from the different agencies attached on the back. The Board may want to consider this as an executive summary and put in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has focused on outreach and the needs of rural veterans. Consider this a way to formally tie those things together.

Dana Niemela: That reiterates the need for a Strategic Plan and the need to work on the

development of a Strategic Plan.

Mickey Hunt: Along those lines, if we get budget approval, then we will have an FTE for a Strategic and Lean Planner who could definitely help you with the Strategic Plan.

Dana Niemela: Being able to communicate what our priorities are is important to our effectiveness. Duane, would you mind writing up a paragraph about CCI and the presentation?

Chris Holden: Is there any way we can have the meeting in Colorado Springs in March instead of February so I can have time to arrange everything?

Future Meetings

- 9 January 2015, American Legions HQ, 09:30AM
- 6 February 2015, 0930, TBD (Check on VARO or VAMC)
- 6 March 2015, 0930, Colorado Springs

New Business

Jay Bobick: If you want to tour the Rifle facility while you are on the trip to Grand Junction, please let me know and I can arrange a tour.

Old Business

Duane Dailey: Ben we discussed the issue of a notary public. I took 6 hours of training and I have a legal question about notarizing legal papers for someone with a power of attorney. When I have the VA 21-22 would that mean I can't notarize for them?

Ben Mestas: You can't notarize for someone you have the legal power of attorney for because you are able to legally sign their name. You would not be doing that with a VA 21- 22 and I am pretty sure it would not be the same situation.

Dana Niemela: Any other business?

Meeting adjourned at 11:03am.