

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

2016 Meeting Minutes

Board Minutes January 8, 2016

**Pueblo County Housing and Human Services 2631 E. 4th
Street, Pueblo, CO 81001**

Dana Niemela, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0818 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present:

Dana Niemela, Chair

Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair

Rene Simard, Secretary-Not Present Hollie Caldwell,
Member Christopher Holden, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director Reuben Mestas,
CDVA Director

Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant Guests Present:

Rudy Sabedra, Pueblo County Veterans Service Officer

Virginia Jimenez, Director, Pueblo County Housing and Human Services

Pam DiFatta, of Pueblo County Commissioner Liane "Buffie" McFadyen's Office Joy Jenkins, Peer
Navigator for Mt. Carmel Center for Excellence

Terry Lake, Director of Marketing and Outreach for Parkview Behavioral Health Dietrich Edwards,
Program Director for Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition Ann Staffelman, Posada

Approval of Minutes from December

Ms. Niemela corrected the misspelling of the Sturm family. Mr. Robinson handed his corrections to Ms. Dean. The minutes were then approved as corrected.

Jack Rudder: Alamosa did not have a homeless Stand-down this year. An interim position is available for Clinic Physician. Dave Duvall has been hired on as the PA for the clinic. No issues with the Choice Card have been reported.

Duane Dailey: The holiday season was very difficult for many of Mr. Dailey's veterans. Mr. Mestas was asked to clarify why VES scheduled a veteran for identical exams at the Golden clinic and Fort Collins clinic only months apart.

Robbie Robinson: Mr. Robinson would like Dick Young with ESGR to brief the Board.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell will tour Catholic Charities in Fort Collins and Comitis sometime in February.

Chris Holden: Mr. Holden met with the 4th Infantry Commanding General to explain what CBVA does and has planned a tour of the Peterson Air Force Base transition activities in February which is different from Transition University at Fort Carson. Mr. Holden proposed that the Board meet in Colorado Springs in July or August. Heidi Ainsworth, President of the National Veterans Village Alliance in Colorado Springs, which focuses on homeless veterans, offered to take Mr. Holden on a tour of the facilities.

Dana Niemela: Ms. Niemela recently visited the Rocky Mountain Hyperbaric Institute facility located in Louisville, CO. Though not proven to the satisfaction of the VA, the hyperbaric oxygen treatment is showing signs of effectiveness for traumatic brain injury ailments. Many patients have shown decreased anxiety, a decrease in the use of medication and the elimination of tinnitus. The cost, which includes treatment, housing and food, is \$5,280 per veteran. Through private funding and donations the Institute will cover the costs of those veterans who incurred their brain injuries while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Dietrich Edwards: The Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition provides services, such as transitional housing, to veterans who are in substance abuse treatment programs.

Rudy Sabedra: Mr. Sabedra, along with Chuck Clamon and Renee Franklin, assist 3,000 active cases out of the 15,351 veterans in the Pueblo area, with the main demographic being Vietnam veterans. Pueblo County Housing and Human Services Director, Virginia Jimenez, is very supportive of everything that Veterans Services does. Awards are logged into a database with the yearly goal of reaching over \$3mil. The 17th annual Pueblo Homeless Stand-down provided 58 homeless veterans with winter gear. Mr. Sabedra thanked the Board for their support of various grant approvals. There are 50 verified homeless veterans in Pueblo, up from 20 last year. Ms. Niemela asked if there were any additional requests for service. Many of the veterans who meet with Mr. Sabedra also ask about health services and access to healthcare providers. The vagueness of VA requested exam letters was discussed. Mr. Robinson wondered why the homeless in Fort Lyons had attended the Pueblo Homeless Stand-down when they have their own program. Ms. Caldwell asked if grant

reporting requirements were difficult in which Mr. Sabedra replied that it was very easy.

Terry Lake: Parkview Medical Center is a regional provider for treatment for behavioral health, chemical dependency, psychiatric and senior cognitive disorders. The facility has 65 in-patient beds. Having adopted the Hazelden-based model for evidence-based practices, the facility provides daily programs in place to deal with behavioral issues. They assist both veterans and active duty and provide free and confidential assessments. Parkview Medical Center will hold an open-house on January 23.

Ann Staffelman: The population of Pueblo is growing due to the legalization of marijuana. Many veterans come from other states with portable vouchers. The discharge status of our homeless veteran population is an issue, since a quarter of them have a dishonorable discharge.

Joy Jenkins: Ms. Jenkins described the Mt. Carmel Center for Excellence as a veteran one-stop which will be open to the public February 1. Mr. Edwards stated that it's important for counties to support one another and work together to help the veteran. Ms. DiFatta added that while she works in the center of town, she gives out bus passes and refers veterans to Mr. Sabedra and Posada. There is no housing available to female veterans at Parkview Medical Center.

Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 9:55am, and resumed to labor at 10am.

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt toured permanent, supportive housing for homeless veterans located near 26th and Federal Blvd. That type of housing may not be compatible with State Veteran Living Centers like Fitzsimmons. Mr. Hunt will work with DOLA to acquire more suitable land. Both Ms. Niemela and Mr. Hunt toured the new Stout Street clinic that provides dentistry for both veterans and children. Medicaid now covers certain dental procedures up to \$1,000.

Providers Clearing House, who works closely with the Volunteers of America, provide rents and vouchers for home furnishings.

Ben Mestas: Service Officer candidate Jake Porter accepted a counter offer with DAV. Another candidate is waiting to pass a background check. Mr. Mestas requested \$5,000 from the Veterans Trust Fund for training of the new Cemetery Director, Joanne Iglesias. It was so moved. Mr. Robinson spoke very highly of former Director Dick Gigliotti and has confidence in Joanne's ability to fill the position. Motion to transfer \$5,000 from the VTF for training was unanimously carried. Mr. Dailey asked how the State Service Officer position was advertised.

Robby Robinson: Former Board member Kathleen Dunemn is chairing the State Veterans Community Living Center Commission. The Commission mainly reviews reports, but more meetings will be held at

actual homes. The February meeting will be held at Fitzsimmons.

Dana Niemela on behalf of Greg Dorman: January 29 is Military Appreciation Day at the State Capitol.

Mr. Robinson asked that the Grant Administrator include the Expended to Date column in her reports. Both Gail Hoagland and Mr. Sabedra are great resources and are able to help others that may struggle with the required documentation for grants.

The Board was asked to provide input on recommendations for unused Veterans Assistance Grant funds. Suggestions include giving additional funds to the top three grantees that show compliance and have already expended their funds. The Board asked Ms. Hoagland to distribute a written synopsis for review. Ms. Caldwell and Mr. Dailey volunteered to be on the Grant Review Committee. Either Mr. Robinson or Ms. Niemela will sit on the committee. Mr. Robinson recommended Mr. Simard to be on the committee as well, though only two Board members are required for the Grant Review Committee. Ms. Caldwell expressed interest in the Community Living Centers Committee. Mr. Rudder will chair the Training Program Committee and will work with training officer Diane Ricci on the training conference development. United Veterans Committee of Colorado has commented on Ms. Niemela's lack of involvement. Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Mestas attend their meetings.

Future Meetings

05 Feb – Sterling

04 Mar – Conifer

01 Apr – Aurora

06 May – Grand Junction

03 June – San Luis Valley

05 Aug – Colorado Springs

Old Business New

Business

Mr. Dailey requested a list of all Board members cell phone numbers be distributed. Meeting adjourned
10:56am

Board Minutes February 5, 2016

Sterling Library

420 N. 5th Street, Sterling, CO 80751

Dana Niemela, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0935 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present:

Dana Niemela, Chair

Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair

Rene Simard, Secretary Hollie Caldwell, Member

Christopher Holden, Member-Not Present William "Robby"

Robinson, Member

Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director Reuben Mestas,
CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Claire Dean,
CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Dan Torres, Mayor of Sterling

Jerry Vonpoks, Parkview Medical Jim McBride,
Sterling VFW

Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife Lynne Ciancio

Approval of Minutes from January

Unanimously accepted

Mayor Dan Torres: Mayor Torres enlisted in the service in 1966 and served in Korea for 13 months. He was a foreign language instructor for 28 years before getting into politics.

Ms. Niemela asked what types of service is offered for veterans in the area and which services work. Mayor Torres replied that many of the physically challenged veterans travel to Cheyenne, Wyoming for medical treatment rather than going to Denver. Most healthcare benefits are adequate for the area. He added that he is currently not utilizing VA Healthcare. Ms. Niemela asked if they have access to a telehealth clinic. Mr.

McBride responded that there is one at the junior college. Mr. Dailey inquired about specialty doctors in the area. Mr. McBride stated that most are primary care doctors. There are many OEF/OIF veterans in the region, but they are reluctant to join the local VFW. They find support through social media. Veterans organizations in the area are struggling to raise money. Currently only two female veterans are members of the local VFW.

Ms. Niemela indicated that a lot of people who join the military come from rural areas and many who get out often return to their hometowns.

Mr. Mestas stated that 83% of Colorado's veterans live along the I-25 and I-70 corridor, leaving only 17% of veteran population in the rural areas. Ms. Niemela would like to make sure that those who don't have immediate access to the big services found in larger cities get the assistance they deserve. Ms. Hoagland then described both grants. A discussion about auto purchase versus auto repair ensued. Mr. Dailey reiterated that rural area posts should collaborate for grant money and help many veterans rather than solely helping out one individual.

Jim McBride: Mr. McBride was encouraged by the Board to refile his tinnitus claim that was previously denied. He then asked why the VA Hospital located in Aurora is over budget. As the Board is not in a position to answer, Mr. McBride was urged to contact his local legislators.

Jerry Vonpoks: Parkview Medical provides resources for those who served in the military and are chemical-dependent. Mr. Vonpoks wanted to share the news of a residential treatment facility called Veterans Village in San Diego, CA that is free to veterans with an honorable discharge.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell will attend the Community Living Center meeting in Florence as well as the Federal VA meeting on February 10 and tour the Catholic Charities in Fort Collins on February 12.

Duane Dailey: A local nonprofit that hosts fishing trips for veterans is being charged by the USDA Forest

Service for use on Lake Granby. Duane was told to contact his local legislator on the matter.

Jack Rudder: The San Louis Valley Coalition was well attended by providers, but no new veterans were in attendance. Both Mickey Hunt and Richard Sandrock were present as well as seven area County Veteran Service Officers. Transportation to Denver has been an issue but the Choice Card is beginning to help.

Robby Robinson: No comment

Rene Simard: Legislation could be introduced to address the issue of a per diem gap for homeless family members, previously discussed by James Gillespie of Comitis. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce supports the initiative and has sent letters to both Senator Bennet and Congressman Coffman.

Dana Niemela: Ms. Niemela met with Rachel Sheparo of Veterans Economic Communities Initiative in Colorado Springs. Their focus will be on apprenticeships.

Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 11:09am, and resumed to labor at 11:25am.

Mickey Hunt: Peak Military Care, an in-patient substance abuse facility located in Pueblo has closed its doors. The State of Colorado Human Services and Federal VA will meet on February 10 at 3pm to discuss waiving the 75/25 rule which is the VA regulation requiring nursing homes to have 75% of their residents be veterans. Currently there are 28 spouses on the waiting list at Homelake. Colorado is not the only state having issues with the regulation.

Ben Mestas: The selection committee has chosen the newest State Service Officer, who is waiting to pass the background check. Both Program Assistant and Groundskeeper positions at the Grand Junction Cemetery remain unfilled.

Robby Robinson: The next State Veterans Community Living Centers meeting will be held at the Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center in Florence on 12 Feb. They will hold their meetings at each Community Living Center in the state.

Gail Hoagland: Questions and feedback regarding grant scoring will be due by February 16. Mr. Robinson requested clarification on the Monument VFW Post grant. He will reach out to Homelake to discuss their grant. Many grant recipients are having issues retaining volunteer drivers. It was suggested that they reach out to student groups as well as provide volunteer training recognition. Only two Board members are required to sit on the Veterans Assistance Grant Committee. Mr. Dailey met the State Commander of the American Legion to discuss the Veterans Trust Fund. Many Posts have not kept up their 501(c)19 status and therefore have not applied for the VTF. Ms. Hoagland stated that they could still apply as long as they have

proof of good standing. Washington County Veterans Service Officer Jim McCracken has expressed his dislike for the required grant evaluation.

Rene Simard: The Colorado Veteran's Memorial Preservation Trust Committee consists of four members and one is designated from the CBVA. Rene currently serves as the member representing the Board. Tim Drago, who has been the veteran representative, is stepping down and recommended that the CBVA be the point of contact for current and future trust committee members plus Department of Personnel/Administration disbursement approval. It was agreed by the Board that the CBVA's role should not change. The Board is not required by statute to oversee the committee and therefore the designated representative should continue to service as a committee member only.

Future Meetings

04 Mar – Conifer

01 Apr – Aurora Chamber of Commerce 06 May –
Grand Junction

03 June – San Luis Valley, Homelake 05 Aug –
Colorado Springs

Old Business

New Business

Mr. Dailey inquired about burial preparation assistance for indigents in rural areas. Mr. Mestas will follow up on the matter.

Mr. Hunt asked that the Chair contact one of the Board members on their absenteeism. Meeting adjourned
12:04pm

Board Minutes March 4, 2016

Mountain Resource Center

11030 Kitty Drive, Conifer, CO 80433

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

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present: Dana Niemela,

Chair

Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair Rene Simard, Secretary

Hollie Caldwell, Member-Not Present Christopher Holden,
Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member-Not Present Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Claire Dean,
CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Lauren Ferguson, Integrated Services Manager, Mountain Resource Center Wes Carter, National
Chairman, C-123 Veterans

George Clark, Vice Chair, Mountain Resource Center

Sharon Smith, Executive Director, Evergreen Christian Outreach "ECHO" Janice Kaup, Client
Services Manager, ECHO

Lindy Goeller, Veteran's Advocate, Mountain Resource Center Lorye McLeod, CEO,
Mountain Resource Center

David Mason, Veteran's Advocate, Mountain Resource Center John Powell, Veteran

Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife Bruce Thoms, ECHO

Approval of Minutes from February

Unanimously accepted

Lauren Ferguson: Developed in 1990, Mountain Resource Center began by helping the community become more self-sufficient and offered emergency assistance. Over time, more veterans moved into the area and its purpose shifted to provide aid to a wider list of unique needs. The saturation rate of veterans in Jefferson and Park Counties is well-above the state average. In collaboration with Jefferson Center for Mental Health and ECHO, a series of roundtable discussions were set up for community input. The biggest challenge has been to communicate with isolated veterans, who are further away from resources. Monthly events are held at the Center on Fridays to resolve socialization issues. Other challenges include transportation, employment and emergency assistance. The two part-time Veteran's Advocates have served 70 Veterans so far, most being from the Vietnam era. After meeting with the veteran one on one, a service plan is developed based on their needs. Some of the services they provide include financial coaching to help with budget implementation as well as employment assistance. The Community Veterans Coalition was recognized for starting the Rendezvous Resource Fair and the next Rendezvous Resource Fair, which will team up with the 9News Health Fair, will be held at the Mountain Resource Center in Conifer on May 21.

A brief discussion regarding homelessness in communities followed.

Mr. Dailey asked for more information on the Veterans Coalition Group, specifically if the VFW and/or American Legion are involved. The group was formed in order to bring VA Services typically found Denver to the mountain community. Mr. Dailey asked if the two Veteran's Advocates are accredited to process claims. Those veterans who wish to file a claim for benefits are directed to the VA Regional Office in Lakewood. Neighboring Park County is currently without a Service Officer.

Mr. Carter mentioned that Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald has established EMT house calls to veterans in Arizona and that it might be a possible solution to those veterans who require healthcare in rural communities. Ms. Niemela explained that the Board has very limited influence on the Federal level.

A discussion ensued about the lack of foster care in the Clear Creek area. There is a definite gap between independent living and community living centers. Ms. Niemela stated that the Denver University has partnered with the Sturm Family Foundation to help fill gaps in veteran's mental health coverage. Therapists who provide

mental health care for veterans at the Mountain Resource Center are paid through grant funding and do not have to pay monthly office rent.

Mr. Rudder added that the San Luis Valley has a lot of the same issues with transportation, homelessness and medical care as the Conifer area.

Wes Carter: Mr. Carter asked for clarification on Referendum E, the Property Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans. Mr. Mestas explained that in order for those veterans who are rated with Individual Unemployability to qualify for the Property Tax Exemption, the law would have to be changed by Colorado Legislature.

John Powell: Mr. Powell expressed his gratitude for the Mountain Resource Center, which he found by word of mouth. Ms. Niemela asked what could be done to reach out to other veterans. Mr. Powell suggested USO involvement or anything else that would generate comradery. Ms. Smith added that many veterans have a basic distrust, but with positive veteran endorsements, they usually follow suit. Ms. Niemela added that communication between community partnerships and coalitions is essential.

Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 10:56am, and resumed to labor at 11:35am.

Ben Mestas: There is not enough time for the Board to review the grants. Possible solutions would be to adjust the cutoff date, move the March Board meetings to the second Friday of the month and/or move all grant information electronically. Ms. Niemela stated that she would not like to see the cutoff date changed. The solution will be voted on by all Board members with change(s) made in July 2016.

Jack Rudder: Mr. Rudder recommended that small group interactions with State Service Officers be implemented at the annual training conference. He also stated Regional Training last fall was a success in part by meeting in smaller groups and tailoring the training towards what each region was dealing with.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey mentioned that some of the CVA 6 forms that are returned to him are very confusing. Mr. Mestas said that the Division uses the CVA 6 forms to track recurring problems that can later be addressed in training and to keep every county consistent and uniform.

Gail Hoagland: Contractually, there is nothing that says grantees cannot wait until the last minute to use funds. Mr. Simard suggested flagging those grantees who are supposed to use funding on a monthly basis if they have not. Ms. Niemela will contact American Legion Post 1. Ms. Hoagland will send the scoring sheet to all Board members electronically. The Grant Review Committee will need to turn in their grant scores by March 10. All scoring from the entire Board are due by noon March 24. A map was provided detailing where funds are being spent and on what. In some instances, new grantees are taking over the existing grantees and some of those who apply for funding are not the same person(s) spending the funds.

Dana Niemela: Following a discussion with Greg Dorman, there will be potential changes to the Board's Annual Report to the Governor making it more valuable and cohesive. It is the opportunity to promote the Board and have a dynamic presence. Issues, goals and actions should be clearly stated. Mr. Simard wondered if the number of homeless in rural areas has been brought to the Governor's attention and if there is any involvement. Mr. Rudder added that there are 400 homeless in the San Luis Valley. Ms. Niemela will meet with Mickey to discuss changes to the Board Annual Report to the Governor.

Future Meetings

01 Apr – Aurora Chamber of Commerce 06 May –
Grand Junction

03 June – San Luis Valley, Homelake

Old Business

Mr. Dailey felt that the Board meeting in Sterling failed in outreach of that region. Proactive outreach is difficult, but the Board will do their best to follow up with Sterling and the area.

New Business

Ms. Niemela announced that she will be stepping down from the Board at the end of June. Meeting adjourned
12:40pm

Board Minutes 3 April 2016

3Department of Military and Veterans Affairs 6848 S.

Revere Pkwy, 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, troops in battle or harm's way and all family members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff

Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman

Rene Simard, Secretary

Kathleen Dunemmn, Member –Not Present Christopher Holden, Member

Duane Dailey, Member Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director Greg Dorman, DMVA Legislative Liaison Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Claire Dean, CDVA Admin. Assistant

Gail Hoagland, DMVA VAG Administrator

Guests Present:

Richard Sandrock, Governor's Office

Guest Presentations

None.

Approval of Minutes from March

Accepted.

Board Member Comments

Dana Niemela: Visited Lockheed Martin with Richard Sandrock. Black Fox, located in Longmont, provides electronics manufacturing training and is considered a pipeline to Lockheed Martin. The Workforce Investment Act Fund or the GI Bill will cover training costs. These opportunities are through area Workforce Centers. Veterans who complete the training will have the opportunity for a lucrative career at Lockheed Martin, including on the job training leading to a NASA certification, and will be provided livable wages. We are looking at ways to provide housing and transportation for those who are either homeless or do not live in the Longmont area. Both Dana and Richard will be meeting with Richard Toya and the HR Director of Lockheed to discuss setting up similar training programs in El Paso County.

Robby Robinson: Since there are no guest presentations, Mr. Robinson would like to use the time to discuss the grants. Twenty-eight requests have been submitted.

Richard Sandrock: Next Tuesday Mr. Sandrock will be speaking to the Board of the Western Dairy Association in Phoenix, Arizona. Later that week, he will be at the Space Symposium in Colorado Springs to introduce the idea of hiring veterans. Veteran-owned Red Lake Brewery in Colorado Springs has had great success in uniting veterans from many different eras and walks of life. They will be teaming up with other veteran-owned microbreweries nationwide to increase distribution.

Mr. Robinson was intrigued by the diversity that Mr. Sandrock mentioned. It is something that many organizations like the American Legion and VFW have been having difficulty in bringing in a diverse group of veterans. Team Red, White and Blue holds many socials there, but most of the customers are word of mouth. Colorado Department of Labor and Employment is working on a pilot program with Marriot Hotels to give veterans extra points through a workforce center, allowing veterans to stay at the hotel for free while attending job interviews. The Governor's office will try to work out a similar program with Southwest Airlines. The annual Pedal the Plains, an agricultural bike tour through the eastern plains and Colorado farming communities, is expecting nearly 1,500 riders this year. A State-wide multi-day Clergy Counsel to address mental health and suicide will be held in Denver this summer.

A brief discussion ensued about the VA hospital.

Mickey Hunt: TAG is currently visiting Jordan and Romania and will be in South Korea next week. General Edwards, Mickey and Greg Dorman will travel to Washington, D.C. to speak with CODEL. Colorado Serves

has been invited to the San Luis Valley Veterans Coalition on May 6.

On May 12, Mickey will be attending a week-long Welcome Home Montrose event, which will host a white water rafting trip with several patients from Walter Reed. Last week Mickey toured the Pikes Peak Workforce Center in Colorado Springs and was impressed with the program. A Veterans Breakfast will be held at the Wings over the Rockies on April 18. May 23 is the 2nd anniversary of the Freedom Memorial in Aurora. On the second of May, Mickey will be in Walsenburg for the unveiling of a new temporary housing facility for family members of veterans staying at either the hospital or the Walsenburg Nursing Home. The facility was constructed by disadvantaged youth.

A brief discussion followed with regards to the Board meetings being open to the public and guest presenters lobbying for grant money

The F-16s are currently in South Korea and Chinook Helicopters going to Kuwait. This summer the State-owned vacant armory in Grand Junction will be proposed for a future Veteran One- Stop. If approved, a State Service Officer and building maintenance person will need to be hired for the location. The State-owned Las Animas Armory could eventually be turned into a Veteran One-Stop.

Greg Dorman: The Grand Junction Armory was appraised at \$750,000. House Bill 1315 was recently introduced to raise the State reimbursement funds to Counties and meet minimum wage. If passed, Counties will not have to match those funds dollar for dollar. The General Assembly currently sets the rate, but if the bill is passed, the Division will set the rate. Ben Mestas, UVC and CCI testified before the house last week. The long bill has moved from the Senate and will be presented to the House in the coming weeks. Military Family Relief Fund Bill 1052 has been signed by the Governor. House Bill 15-1114, which talks about the indefinite detention of US citizens, did not pass.

A brief discussion followed about the GI Bill and in-state tuition.

Ben Mestas: Cemetery construction is ahead of schedule. There are concerns about the upper pond liner being able to hold up. Two new Service Officers have started work on their caseloads. Ben recommended Duane Dailey as the Board Representative and Reviewer for the annual training conference. Mr. Dailey graciously accepted.

Gail Hoagland: Due to staffing issues in the accounting department, many of the grantees have been slow to get paid. Some will not fully expend their award this fiscal year. The money will roll over to next year's trust fund. Veterans Assistance Grant Committee members Ben, Gail, Dana and Duane met to plan for next year's expenditures. Gail visited the Crawford House in Colorado Springs. The nonprofit provides transitional housing and offers rehabilitation. Most importantly, it trains veterans to become peers. We did a budget

adjustment to their contract to allow the training program and hope to use them as a model elsewhere.

Robby Robinson, on behalf of Kathleen Dunemn: Everything is running smoothly at the State Veterans Community Living Centers.

Robby Robinson, Dana Niemela, Ben Mestas, Duane Dailey and Gail Hoagland: This year Board members will grade each trust fund applicant with an objective scoring tool prior to discussion and consensus. The applications will be sent electronically to Board members to grade next week. Focus should be on both the narrative and the budget. Any great variances will be discussed at the May Board meeting. Partial funding can and will be awarded. Board members should contact Gail with their grades and recommendations in the next couple of weeks.

Discussion followed as to veteran population served by county. Gail will include that information along with the applications. After conducting a couple of webinars about the grant application process, more realistic requests and budgets have been turned in. Grading consistency was stressed.

Understanding geographical areas and hospital migration routes are also important. Dana added that it would be wise to review all the applications and then score them. Gail would be willing to bring hard copies of the applications to the next Board meeting if needed. The process will need to be modified throughout the years.

Public Comments

None.

Future Meetings

May 1st, American Legion Headquarters June 5th, Grand County, Board Elections

Duane Dailey: The Board meeting in June will be at Mountain Parks Electric in Granby. A light luncheon will follow with a meet and greet of the newly appointed Hospital Commander and Colorado State Veterans Community Living Center Representative Debby Blanc. For those attending the June Board meeting, the Granby Chamber of Commerce is offering reduced hotel rates.

The Board was instructed to turn in their travel vouchers to either Ben or Claire.

No meeting in July

Old Business

Veterans License Plate issues were discussed. No changes have been made as to what the Department of

Motor Vehicles requires.

New Business

Rene mentioned that his wife is ill and that he will do his best to make future board meetings but may not be able to attend all of them.

Meeting adjourned 11:03am

Board Minutes May 6, 2016

National Guard Readiness Center

2820 Riverside Pkwy, Grand Junction, CO 81501

Dana Niemela, Chair, 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 or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present: Dana Niemela,

Chair

Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair

Rene Simard, Secretary-Not Present Hollie

Caldwell, Member Christopher Holden, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member-Not Present Jack Rudder, Member-
Not Present

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director Reuben Mestas,
CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Claire Dean,
CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Susan Holappa, Sen. Bennet's Office

Joanne Iglesias, Director of Grand Junction Cemetery Wendy Hoffman,
Operation Revamp

Danielle Hindson, National Guard Family Programs

Diane Rino, Western Slope Project Manager for Volunteers of America Alison Brinkley, First

Light Home Care

Pamela Schultz, Women Veterans Project Manager at Grand Junction VA Paul Sweeney, Grand Junction VA

Approval of Minutes from April

Amended and approved

Ms. Niemela explained the role of the Board and then introduced Danielle Hindson with the National Guard Family Programs. Currently the Joint Community Forces have 49 participating local organizations, some of which help veterans. One area of need is legal advice and representation for veterans. Mr. Dailey asked what makes up the geographic area of the Western Slope Joint Community Forces. It stretches as far east as Silverthorne and west to Moab, Utah.

Ms. Hindson then introduced Diane Rino with Volunteers of America.

With over 42,000 veterans residing in the area, the proposal for a one-stop located in Grand Junction is expected to move forward. The Volunteers of America will begin fundraising as an alternative plan, should the State not grant funds for the one-stop. The State-owned armory has requested and will use funding through DMVA to undergo a \$2.8 million renovation. Mr. Hunt added that the Capital Development Committee will tour the armory on June 7. Local legislature is encouraged to get involved. Ms. Niemela added that a recent study from the Syracuse Institute found that the biggest barrier for veterans is knowing where to go for help. Two full-time State employees are needed for the one-stop. Ms. Hindson will be in charge of coordinating the Joint Community Forces and setting up the office. The focus will be helping younger, often unemployed, families.

Mr. Sweeney stated that veterans of the Western Slope need an alternative to Denver. An advisory board for the one-stop will begin polling the community in efforts to gauge their support. County Veteran Service Officer Dave Montoya sees about 90 veterans a week. The biggest challenge is the Choice Program which has been forced upon the community to use. Paperwork generated through the program has been riddled with errors. Providers are not getting paid in a timely manner and it is very difficult to recruit both Primary Care Providers and Hospitalists. On a positive note, Congressional hotlines have proven to be helpful. The VA Hospital has a new physical therapy building and parking garage. It has been proposed that in order to attract more Specialty Care providers, the VA Hospital will partner with residency programs.

Ms. Schultz added that the Choice Program is having female veterans travel to appointments nearly 300 miles away. Getting OB providers for the female veterans has been a challenge. A separate women's clinic within the

VA Hospital accommodates the nearly 1,000 women seeking services. The clinic is integrated with mental healthcare providers to assist those with mental health issues on the same day. Nurse practitioners have been very helpful in rural areas.

Mr. Dailey inquired as to which advocacy group the County Service Officer primarily works with. There are currently 17 identified homeless veterans living between Grand Junction and Montrose. HUD VASH is only for those with zero income and some veterans on the verge of becoming homeless do not qualify. Those veterans are then helped through VOA with emergency funding for housing. VOA is in partnership with landlords to help area veterans.

Both Mesa and Montrose Counties have been working together to identify the most vulnerable veterans. The living wage for Grand Junction is \$16.50 per hour and average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$600.

Wendy Hoffman, with Operation Revamp, discussed emergency homelessness.

The Board thanked the guests for their work with area veterans. Mr. Dailey asked where the VOA is located for Grand County. The nearest VOA for that county is located in Fort Collins. Mr. Holden stated that he was impressed with the Grand Junction Veterans Cemetery.

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt had nothing further to add to his report.

Reuben Mestas and Joanne Iglesias: Mr. Mestas introduced Joanne Iglesias with the Grand Junction Veterans Cemetery. Ms. Iglesias thanked the Board for touring the facilities and for their support. She traveled last month for training and two grounds crew were able to attend training at Fort Morgan. Ms. Iglesias discussed an addendum to the cemetery grounds. Over 4,000 people have scheduled interments, 60% of which are for columbarium's. It takes about 18 months to fill a columbarium. Many employees are temporary and it takes Human Resources over six weeks to fill the positions with permanent employees.

Gail Hoagland: Ms. Hoagland had nothing to add to her previously submitted report.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey congratulated Ms. Iglesias on her promotion to Cemetery Director. Gail was well received at the Annual Training Conference. Ms. Hoagland replied that the County Veteran Service Officers supported each other on Grant programs.

Dana Niemela: Ms. Niemela asked the present Board members if they would be interested in serving as Chair, since she will be stepping down at the end of her term. Should no one be interested, the position will be deferred to the Vice-Chair. Rene Simard has expressed interest in staying on as Board Secretary. One must apply to serve on the Board. Applications are online. Board members are not paid to serve but travel, hotel

stays and per diem is reimbursed. We are required to hold 11 meetings, with one held on the Western Slope and one held at a Veterans Community Living Center. Board Officer Elections will need to be held at the June meeting.

Future Meetings

03 June – San Luis Valley, Homelake

Old Business New

Business

Mr. Dailey requested that the Board revisit the restrictions in the VAG application, specifically body preparation costs for cremation. In order to change the VAG restrictions, language would have to be modified in the By-laws and then approved by the Board. The town hall meeting in Grand County honoring Vietnam Veterans was well attended.

Meeting adjourned 11:13am

Homelake CSVNH

3749 Sherman St., Monte Vista, CO 81144

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

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present: Dana Niemela,

Chair

Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair

Rene Simard, Secretary-present via phone conference Hollie Caldwell,
Member

Christopher Holden, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Claire Dean,
CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

John Ardre, President Democratic Council at Homelake Jayne Salisbury, Women
Veterans

Linda Joseph, Veterans Coalition of San Luis Valley Bob Galey, Veteran

Charlotte Bobicke, Senator Bennett's Office Lewis Hientz,
USMC

Frank Muniz, Alamosa County Veterans Service Officer George Wilkinson, Ex-

Lynne Ciancio, Retired US Army Veteran Jake Reynolds,
civilian supporter

Mike Atwater, Mineral County Veterans Service Officer Pam Self, CVCLC
for Homelake

Bert Dorosy, Homelake resident Theresa Rudder, Jack's
wife

Orlando Gallardo, Conejos County Veterans Service Officer Jim Sheeran,
Saguache County Veterans Service Officer Larry Crowder, State Senator

Mary Ann Sheeran, Saguache County VSO Assistant Aaron Tremain, via
phone conference

Approval of Minutes from May

Unanimously accepted

Community Discussion

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

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

film will be shown called Ground Operations that addresses training and resources for the program. The next quarterly meeting will be held June 24.

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

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

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

The Board was invited to tour the cemetery at Homelake.

Mr. Dailey asked where the money came from for the suicide prevention program. Ms. Caldwell referred Jayne Salisbury to Gail Hoagland to assist them with their grant proposals.

Frank Muniz thanked Gail for her help in obtaining a VTF grant. Currently, the area has four volunteer drivers for veterans. The Choice Program is helping some. Mr. Robinson addressed Mr. Muniz's issue of more funding for volunteer drivers stating that the State is very limited and can only offer authorized per diem.

Ms. Caldwell mentioned that utilizing the younger, tech-savvy veterans might help in getting transportation needs met.

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

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

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

Bob Galey, a pastor new to the area, said that there needs to be a ministry alliance in the region and the

churches might be able to help Mr. Muniz with volunteer drivers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conflict of Interest forms. The Greeley American Legion Post has offered to host the Board for a future²⁷ meeting.

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

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

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

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

Old Business

None

New Business

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

Future Meetings

TBD

Board Retreat Minutes 03 August 2016

Holiday Inn Denver-Cherry Creek

455 South Colorado Blvd Denver, CO 80246

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting from rest to labor at 1101 hours.

Members and Guests:

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Rene Simard,
Vice Chair

Robert “Bob” McLaughlin, Member
William
“Robby” Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder,
Member

Members Absent:

Hollie Caldwell, Member
Christopher
Holden, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director
Ben
Mestas, CDVA Director

Greg Dorman, DMVA Legislative Liaison
Diane Ricci,
CDVA Deputy Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder,
CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Theresa Rudder, Jack’s wife

Session Notes

The session was opened with Mr. Mestas, who provided an overview of CRS Title 28, which governs the

board. He reviewed the history of the inception of the Board and reminded the members that the Board is due for a sunset review in 2017.

Dr. Ricci followed with a summary of the annual report to the governor's office. Ms. Hoagland followed with a synopsis of the report provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on all Veterans Trust Fund programs. Mr. Dorman outlined the provisions of the Sunshine Law.

Dr. Ricci described the functions of the division and provided information on the responsibilities of its staff. Mr. Mestas discussed the current state of the cemetery in Grand Junction and described some of its upcoming needs. Mr. Robinson addressed the Community Living Centers and gave the other Board members some history about the Board's interaction with and connection to those facilities.

Ms. Hoagland provided details on the Veterans Trust Fund Grant program, including the formation of the grant program, the Board's role in various aspects of the grant process, and a depiction of the organizations that are program's grantees. She also reviewed the Veterans Assistance Grant and described the roles of the Division and Board in regard to that program.

The Board disassembled for a break at 02:00 p.m. and returned to labor 02:12 p.m.

Mr. Hunt addressed the Board and stated that Mr. McLaughlin will receive a senatorial confirmation of his appointment. He encouraged Mr. McLaughlin and the other members to remain active members and engage in vocal participation. He stressed that attendance at Board meetings is crucial and that members should hold each other accountable.

Ms. Hoagland led an initial planning session for the upcoming year. The Board undertook an environmental scan to assess what it as a body wants to do accomplish in the upcoming year. They assessed how other view the Board, and then how the Board members view the Board.

Suggestions on how others view the Board were as follows: resource providers, grant approvers, bureaucracy navigators, red tape, VA, VA influencers, old white guys, Denver-centric, and guys in suits.

Suggestions on how the Board views the Board were: veterans advocates, providers for veterans in need, standard bearers, irrelevant except for grants, interested and caring with limitations, and well- intentioned.

The discussion then shifted to how the Board would like be regarded. Suggestions were: empowered relevant, potent, important, and a bridge between VA and DVA. Mr. McLaughlin asked if the Board has a mission statement. The consensus was that the mission is contained in Title 28 but not separately written. Discussion involved articulating a relevant and attainable mission.

The members discussed methods to reach the goal of how they would like to be regarded. The first impressions were to improve communication with the veteran community and to increase the Board's visibility. Mr. Dailey said he would welcome attendance at the meetings from members of the various veterans service organizations as well as grantees. The consensus was the Board's desire to provide a useful contribution outside of grants.

The members concluded that this should be an ongoing conversation and should coincide with strategic planning. It was suggested to make sure the web site is accessible and up to date.

Future Meetings

September 09, 2016 – Colorado Springs

October 07, 2016 - TBD

November 09, 2016 – Wings Over the Rockies

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Dailey adjourned the session at 1520 hours.

Board Minutes 09 September 2016

Mount Carmel Center for Excellence 530 Communication Circle

Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Rene Simard,
Vice Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary
Christopher Holden,
Member
Robert “Bob” McLaughlin, Member
William “Robby” Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director
David Caldwell, DMVA Strategic Planner
Ben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Tim Anthon, Pikes Peak Community Workforce
Terry Culler, Family Care Center

Amy Cutler, The Home Front Cares, Inc.
Kate Hatten, Peak Military Care Network
Corby Meyer, Family Care Center LLC

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0900 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room, followed by comments.

Comments

Ms. Caldwell said she was excited to have opportunity to learn about Mount Carmel Center, as roughly 15 percent of the students at her institution are veterans, many of whom live in Colorado Springs.

Mr. Simard asked the board members to let him know how many tickets are needed for the upcoming Veterans Salute. He said that the Aurora Defense Council has been concentrating on homeless veterans, holding monthly drives to collect items that this population needs.

Mr. Dailey said the upcoming week would be the 5th annual Grand Lake Constitution Week celebration. The last day will feature a veterans parade. The keynote speaker will be Sherriff David Clark from Milwaukee County.

Mr. Rudder said the VA held a forum in the San Luis Valley that was attended by approximately 25 veterans. It was disappointing that the VS representatives were unable to answer most of the veterans' questions or address their concerns. He said at the least the VA was able to get a feel for the concern of San Luis residents. The VA representatives toured La Puente. Mr. Rudder spoke with Renee Murphy, director of Denver Regional Office of the VA, and told her that the main concerns in the valley are medical care and transportation.

Mr. McLaughlin said that he and Ms. Hatten met the VA chief of staff and that the meeting was productive, underscoring the importance of communication between VA and the other agencies serving veterans in local communities. In connection with Patriots Day, Mount Carmel was able to offer means to 40 military-connected families in need. He recently attended a VOA meeting with the Cohen group, which expressed interest in establishing two free behavioral health clinics for veterans on Colorado's Front Range.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dailey announced that the board would take a break from comments to review the minutes of the meeting and retreat held on 03 August 2016. Mr. Robinson provided one correction to the meeting minutes and they were approved as corrected. The retreat minutes were approved as presented.

Comments then resumed.

Comments

Mr. Holden said he traveled to Fort Carson in mid-August and met the new leadership, and in the near future will become acquainted with the Air Force Academy and Peterson Air Force Base transition teams.

Ms. Cutler said the The Home Front Cares would like the opportunity to connect with veterans service officers to provide services and referrals. Mr. Dailey agreed that in his capacity as a VSO, partner agencies have been valuable in helping to serve veterans in rural areas. Mr. Rudder said that El Paso County has one VSO stationed at Mount Carmel and that he should be able to provide contact info for the rest of the team. Ms. Hatten stated that referrals are especially helpful in cases where veteran need emergency financial assistance. Ms. Caldwell asked what the prevailing causes to be of veterans financial problems, whether it was a lack of preparation when leaving the military or mismanagement of funds. Ms. Hatten said both are big contributing factors and that the causes run the gamut, with another leading one being the high cost of living in both Colorado Springs and Denver.

Ms. Hatten stated the Peak Military Network addresses these problems through both partner agencies and case management, to keep veterans and their families out of crisis.

Mr. Anthon agreed that employment assistance and emergency assistance are both prevalent needs, particular when wages are not equivalent to the cost of living in metro areas. He said many of the clients of Pikes Peak Community Workforce have deficits in long-term planning, but expensive housing can be an even greater difficulty. Ms. Caldwell agreed, stating that necessary wage to live in Denver now has risen to \$20.21 per hour. Ms. Hatten also agreed that affordable housing is a problem.

Mr. Meyer stated that the Family Care Center also offers case management, and while this program is new they are observing similar patterns, although behavioral health is also a factor. Ms. Caldwell inquired what the leading mental health issue are among their clientele. Terry said she did not have that data with her and did not have an estimate to provide, as she has only been with the agency for a few months. She said she came to the agency from Crawford House, where the most frequently presenting diagnosis was PTSD.

Reports

Mr. Hunt prefaced his report with a comment that if Ms. Cutler needs assistance or information in regard to connecting with VSOs, she should contact Mr. Mestas, and might also consider being placed on the agenda of the division's annual training conference in April. He began his report with the announcement that Richard Sandrock is no longer with the governor's office and thus will not be in attendance at future board meetings. Mr. Sandrock is now on active duty with Colorado National Guard. He reintroduced Mr. Callahan to the group, stating that Mr. Callahan retired from the army after 30 years of service and expressing his anticipation for Mr. Callahan's contribution to the team. He said that strategic planning has always been a weakness for the department and Mr. Callahan's contributions are intended to rectify that. He said the single item submitted by the Department to the Joint Budget Committee this year is the proposal for the veterans' one-stop in Grand Junction. The state has requested two FTEs, a director and a state veterans service officer, to supply that one-

stop along with various partner agencies. VOA has already expressed its interest in being included. The location is already selected and is proximate to the VA hospital. Another issue is Amendment 72, a proposed tax on tobacco products with proceeds to benefit veterans programs. UVC has strongly supported this measure without the concurrence of the American Legion, which has withdrawn entirely from UVC in disagreement over the matter. Mr. Hunt stated that the department is neutral and will remain so unless and until the measure passes in November.

Mr. Callahan reported that while his is a new position the current priorities area departmental strategic planning, improvements to the LEAN process, and safety. There is a strong initiative to aid underserved veterans in Colorado and it is a priority to help the board develop a responsive plan. Mr. Hunt added that it will include translating planning from military speak into plain language.

Mr. Mestas said he has submitted his report and his addition is that the Grand Junction cemetery will be audited by the National Cemetery Association the week of 12 September. He will have the results of that audit at the next board meeting, but the audit is expected to have positive results. The division is currently providing regional trainings as indicated in his report. He inquired whether the Board received copies of the cemetery report and asked the members to please contact him if they need a copy.

Ms. Hoagland provided an update to her submitted report, stating that the reimbursements increased since the report was generated. She estimated that the amount of available funds remaining could be reduced by \$50,000 per grant program.

Mr. Robinson reported that a commission was supposed to meet this day at Homelake, but the event was cancelled. Homelake itself recently celebrated an anniversary celebrating its inception in 1889. Mr. Robinson also reported that the state still owns 15 acres of land adjacent to the Anschutz medical campus and the intent is to use to provide for care for veterans other than skilled nursing. The Colorado Department of Human Services is preparing a proposal and intends to break ground on the project in 2018. Mr. Robinson is serving on an advisory group that is seeking veteran's input regarding the purpose of the property. Possibilities to date include support for single mothered Suggestions need to be sent to Mr. Robinson prior to October 31.

Mr. Hunt reported that the Colorado Department of Local Affairs wanted to use the new Fitzsimons property and transitional housing for homeless veterans. There is some opposition to that proposal since the building would be in close proximity to the Fitzsimons CLC. Mr. Simard added that space nearer to the new VA hospital is also being considered for that project.

Election

The next item of business was the confirmation of the election of the secretary. Ms. Caldwell accepted the

nomination made at the previous meeting and her election is confirmed.

New Business

Dates and locations were discussed for upcoming meetings. Mr. Dailey stated that southwestern and southeastern areas of the state remain to be visited, and that the November meeting will be held on 09 November at Wings Over the Rockies for their annual event. That meeting will start at 08:00 a.m. to coordinate with the luncheon. Otherwise it was decided that meetings will start at 09:00 a.m. The schedule to date is as follows:

October 07, 2016	Longmont
November 09, 2016	Wings Over the Rockies
December 02, 2016	tbd
January 06, 2017	Fort Lyon
February 03, 2017	tbd
March 03, 2016	CDVA
April 07, 2016	CDVA
May 04, 2016	Durango

Adjournment

Mr. Dailey requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion was made by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Minutes 07 October 2016

St. Vrain Community Hub Longmont, CO 80501 Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard, Vice Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary

Robert "Bob" McLaughlin, Member William

"Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder,

Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director Ben

Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator Carissa

Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Greg McMahon, American Legion Post 32, Longmont Tom

Daschofsky, American Legion Post 32, Longmont Dennis

Sindelir, American Legion Post 32, Longmont Cindy Clark,

Boulder County Area on Aging

Sherry Leach, Boulder County Area on Aging Michael

O'Hara, Boulder County-Longmont

Karen Townsend, Boulder County Veterans Service Officer Mike

Holliday, Boulder County Veterans Service Officer Mike Apgar,

Boulder Vet Center-HUD/VASH

James Bell, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Joseph Westbrook, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Shelly

Thompson, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

M. Meyers, Community Member Judy Nogg,
Community Member

Karen Orlosky, Healing Warriors, Fort Collins Denis
Darby, HOPE of Longmont

Alice Sueltenfuss, HOPE of Longmont

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0900 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Robinson provided a correction to the meeting minutes from 09 September 2016 and they were approved as corrected.

Comments

Mr. Robinson stated that he would combine his general comments with commentary on his submitted report. He stated that he continues to serve on the Fitzsimons site advisory group and they are still seeking input from the veteran community. There is interest in providing a continuum of service on the FitzSimons campus. A needs assessment done a few years ago indicated interest in a domiciliary. An updated needs assessment is in progress but it will not be completed until after the advisory group's October 31 deadline for recommendations. Another option on the table is sustainable housing for chronically homeless veterans, though there has been some concern regarding how compatible supportive housing might be with the CLC that is already in place on the campus. Other possibilities include expanded memory care, vocational training, and support for veterans who are single parents.

Mr. McMahon suggesting examining the need for assisted living and Mr. Robinson asked what other needs stand out in the Longmont community. Ms. Townsend mentioned housing, citing the high cost of housing all along the Front Range, and this need was echoed by Mr. McMahon. Mr. Robinson thanked the community members for their suggestions.

Mr. Simard stated that the Colorado Defense Council is scheduled to meet on 27 October at the headquarters of the Colorado National Guard. The 22nd Annual Aurora Veterans Salute will be held on 09 November at Wings Over the Rockies. This year's event will honor Vietnam veterans and Mr.

Robinson will be the keynote speaker.

Ms. Caldwell stated that she, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Hunt have discussed by email the difficulty in assuring that services provided to veterans are appropriate and there is no misappropriation of funds when different types veteran population are adjacently housed in a single community. She has also been researching existing models for housing different types of veteran populations.

Mr. Rudder stated that events have been quiet in the San Luis Valley. There have been no military funerals this month. He was unable to attend the Durango stand down because the date changed from Wednesday to Thursday, so he was unable to travel to Durango for event and then back to Longmont for the Board meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that he has been in attendance at MyVA meetings and has noted a current focus on assisting veterans who are just getting out of the military with the civilian adjustment. Town hall meetings continue to hear frustration with the Choice program and HealthNet was in attendance at a recent meeting. The governor will visit the Mount Carmel Center for Excellence as they continue to build best practices to limit gaps in assistance to veterans. The Colorado Springs Stand Down is scheduled for 18 October. Mr. Simard asked if it is known how many discharging troops from Fort Carson stay in Colorado, and Mr. McLaughlin responded that is it currently about 15%.

Mr. Dailey echoed concerns regarding HealthNet and the Choice program. Distance and mileage calculations are often incorrect and veterans continue to feel frustrated. Grand County will hold a Salute to Aviation History in Granby on Veteran's Day. He announced that Christopher Holden has resigned from the Board and that Mr. Hunt will address how the vacancy will be filled.

Community Providers Presentations

Karen Townsend and Michael Holliday represented Boulder County Veterans Services. Karen is based in in Longmont and has been a veterans service officer for 34 years. Formerly located with the workforce center, she now works out of the St. Vrain Community Center under Aging Services. She assists the local American Legion Post in their execution of their VTF grant and will attend the Longmont Stand Down on 17 November. Michael Holliday works out of the Boulder office and mentioned that sees a lot cross- referral between veterans and other community services. This year's Veteran's Day celebration will include a parade and a pinning for Vietnam veterans.

Dennis Sindelir represented American Legion Post 32. He thanked the Board for the invitation to the meeting. He said the post currently has a VTF grant of \$60,000, of which \$10,000 is earmarked for education. He stated that while the post understands the statutory reasons for specificity when applying for and executing the grant,

those requirements add complexity that at times complicate execution, and it has been a learning process to find the best ways to accommodate urgent needs. He mentioned that at one point advance payments of grant funds were available and were helpful. Mr. Dailey stated that advance funds can be requested for up to 25% of the grant and not in excess of \$10,000. Ms. Hoagland said the post would have to send a request for an advance that documents what the post has done to try to raise the funds. Mr. Sindelir thanked them both for the information. Ms. Hoagland and Mr. Dailey encouraged the post to call with any questions about how to execute their grant.

Mr. Bell, Mr. Westbrook, and Ms. Thompson from CDLE represent that department's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. The program utilizes veterans' employment representatives at local workforce centers. The U.S. Department of Labor also supports intensive services for veterans who need employment assistance.

Cindy Clark and Sherry Clark represented the Area Agency on Aging. They have recently added county veterans services to their department. Boulder County veterans tend to be older and many do not actively seek assistance. Co-locating veterans services with aging services should help facilitate aid to aging veterans who qualify for various types of assistance, such as Medicare, in-home care, mental health care, respite care and caregiver support.

The Healing Warriors Program was represented by Karen Olosky. Healing Warriors provides acupuncture, craniosacral therapy and healing touch to veterans and active duty service members for assistance with pain management and PTSD symptoms. They advertise through word of mouth and attend Northern Colorado Stand Downs and are VA Choice provider.

Public Comment

Mrs. Ray Meyers addressed the assembly in regard to Veterans Helping Veterans Now, a veterans' assistance nonprofit that was founded by her husband in 2007 but which closed its doors last year. Veterans Helping Veteran Now provided a wide array of services, including acupuncture, massage therapy, group counseling, transportation, and showers and food for homeless veterans, as well as helping local police find assistance for veterans with mental health issues. Upon its dissolution many involved continued to find common ground in veterans' issues, and have since held community meetings regarding topics that affect veterans in northern Colorado.

At this point in the proceedings the meeting elected to recess, and Mr. Dailey dismissed the members at 10:32 a.m. The meeting was called from rest to labor at 10:47 a.m. and public comment resumed.

Alice Sueltenfuss from HOPE for Longmont addressed the group. HOPE addresses homelessness through services and programs focusing on dignity, empowerment and self-sufficiency. They have street outreach and

provide and drop-in center two nights a week. One gap they encounter frequently is locating mental health care for veterans that does not require veterans to travel to the VAMC in Denver. Community members concluded that it would be helpful to have contact information for the different organizations present and Mr. Dailey agreed to have the list posted on the CBVA web page within one week of the meeting.

Reports

Mr. Hunt reported that the new board member has been selected and he will provide that name to the Board one that commission has been offered. He encouraged Post 32 to continue to work the department in regard to their grant and to make their success story the standard for other grantees. He mentioned that the needs presented by Longmont's veteran community may indicate that it needs a veteran's one-stop such as the one currently being established in Grand Junction.

Mr. Mestas referred the Board to his submitted report but added detail on the cemetery audit, which showed a performance rating of 85%. The deficiency that was noted was the untimely delivery of VA gravestones, which is not within the cemetery's control. However, cemetery staff will follow up to see what can be done to expedite these deliveries.

Ms. Hoagland also referred the Board to her submitted report, her only addition that having recently had the opportunity to visit several CLCs it was good to see the difference made by VTF funds.

Discussion Items

Mr. Dailey announced the Board committee representatives: Mr. Simard for Grants, Mr. Rudder for Training, and Mr. Robinson for CLCs.

Mr. Dailey reminded the Board that the grant application process was revised and improved last year and that this we that could be expected to continue. Ms. Hoagland requested that Board members review the application and scoring rubric and send her their suggestions. The goal is to have the new applications available in November.

New Business

The Board discussed and confirmed dates and location for upcoming meetings:

November 09, 2016 Wings Over the Rockies – 08:00 a.m. start

December 02, 2016 VA Regional Office

January 06, 2017 Fort Lyon

February 03, 2017	tbd
March 03, 2016	CDVA
April 07, 2016	CDVA
May 04, 2016	Durango

Adjournment

Mr. Dailey requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion was made by Mr. Simard and seconded by Ms. Caldwell. The meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes 09 November 2016

Wings Over the Rockies Denver,

CO 80230

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard,

Vice Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Patricia "Pat"

Hammon, Member

Robert "Bob" McLaughlin, Member William

"Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder,

Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Major General H. Michael Edwards, Adjutant General for Colorado Mickey

Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director

Ben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator Carissa

Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Tammy Bellofatto, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Ralph

Bozella, American Legion National

Lynne Ciancio, Army Retiree

Bruce Dolan, Department of Colorado VFW Rita Fama,

Department of Colorado VFW David Fry, Arapahoe

County Veterans Services

John Mullin, American Legion Post #103, Littleton Cindy

Raley, Provider's Resource Clearinghouse Theresa Rudder,

Jack's wife

T.J. Westphal, Arapahoe County Veterans Services

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0803 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room. He introduced new Board member Pat Hammon, who service as the Eagle County VSO and with the Western Slope Veterans Coalition.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Rudder provided a correction to the meeting minutes from 07 October 2016 and the minutes were approved as corrected.

Comments

Mr. Robinson apprised the Board of the draft report provided to DHS by the Fitzsimons site advisory group. The recommendation is for the south portion of the site to provide permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless veterans and possibly those referred to the program by veterans' courts. The recommendation for the north portion is that it hold a domiciliary and expanded memory care.

Mr. Simard said that a Veterans Day Observance will be held at Buckley Air Force Base on 10 November. He has been asked to will speak at the event and will represent the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. McLaughlin said efforts in Colorado Springs and the surrounding area are drawing down on the community's capability to help troops in transition. Mount Carmel in particular is working with community partners to encourage discharging troops to stay in Colorado. The Colorado Veterans Network offer free behavioral health clinic in Colorado Springs and Denver. The MyVA program has also been boosting interest among HealthNet and Choice care providers to work on solving problems that complicate access to care.

Ms. Caldwell said she provided information to the Fitzsimons advisory committee on frequent health care needs among chronically homeless populations. Most prevalent tend to be chronic conditions, mental health, and substance abuse.

Mr. Rudder said that access to health to care is an ongoing concern in the San Luis Valley. It is approximately four hours to travel to Denver from Alamosa, but it is often necessary because there no physician at the Alamosa CBOC. Mr. Dailey asked if it is a shorter drive for veteran to go to Albuquerque. Mr. Rudder confirmed it is a little shorter, and that drive is often preferred by veterans because they don't have to go over

a mountain pass when driving to Albuquerque. He reported that VSO work has been slow probably due to several factors, including hunting season, the potato harvest, and the approaching holidays.

Ms. Hammon said the Grand Junction VAMC serves as the health care hub in her area. It is a small hospital but provides very good care and is an easier drive for veterans west of Vail. There is also a telehealth clinic in Glenwood Springs that is staffed by an NP and has an onscreen physician available. Mental health is a frequent gap and it can be difficult to find care. Recent efforts by the coalition include a modified veteran's court. Local jails can contact the VSO on behalf of incarcerated veteran to help them obtain assistance. An emergency fund is also available for veteran's assistance.

Mr. Dailey said that Grand County Veterans Day events include four school events on 10 November and a veteran's breakfast on 11 November at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby. He attended the Denver Stand Down and noted that attendance has decreased this year, possibly due to the warm weather. He said that a rededication is planned for the Aviators Memorial Park at Grand Junction Regional Airport. He noted for the benefit of Ms. Hammon and visitors that Board meetings typically start at 0900 hours, but that this one had an early start time to accommodate the Veteran's Salute event scheduled for 11:30.

Community Providers

Mr. Westphal began with an introduction to the veteran's assistance program operated jointly between American Legion Post 103 and Arapahoe County Veterans Services. This program receives funding for the Veterans Trust Fund. He explained that the veterans service office does intake and screening for assistance requests while the post operates the fiduciary agent. The program has been in place for several years and they continue efforts to streamline the process and get funds distributed quickly. They work with many clients facing homelessness and one of the problems the program has encountered is the amount of funds available versus the cost of housing in the metro area. They distribute food and gas cards in addition to housing assistance. Mr. Mullin concurred that shelter and food are the top needs seen by the post. He expressed appreciation for working relationship with the county office and said veterans have been grateful for the assistance. Mr. Robinson asked if grant requirements such as evaluation surveys and expenditure documentation have been at all problematic. Mr. Mullin and Mr.

Westphal said documentation has not been a problem and the difficulty with the survey has been how to present it to ensure both its return and the veteran's confidentiality. Mr. Dailey asked for recommendations and Mr. Mullin suggested that the post wait to present the survey until they do follow up with the client. Mr. Dailey inquired if the post or county had sufficient time to devote to a follow-up program and both Mr. Mullin and Mr. Westphal thought that they would. Ms. Caldwell asked if any of the grantee organizations had provided input on the survey. Ms. Hoagland said that they have and it has since been modified, and that

periodic webinars provide for forum for grantees to provide suggestions.

Ms. Fama then provided an explanation of the VFW Department of Colorado veterans assistance program, which also receives funding from the VTF grant. They require applications for assistance and those applications must be approved by at least three members of their board. Most applications have a one-week turnaround. The VFW also receives a lot of requests for housing assistance and they expect to have expended \$40,000 by the end of October. They are able to fund about half of their applicants and try to prioritize veterans with children. Mr. Dolan added that collaboration with Rocky Mountain Human Services has proved helpful and that Denver Human Services also helps with rental assistance through their application process.

General Edwards joined the meeting at this point and offered his comments to the Board. He expressed the support of the proposed veterans' one-stop in Grand Junction and underscored Colorado's dedication to serve all of its veterans. In regard to the CONG, he said that higher funding has been made available to units who provide balanced readiness, with active duty and National Guard aligned. The Colorado Guard has been occupied with deployment, sending much artillery overseas including two batteries and Special Forces. Mr. Robinson asked about this year's budget requests. General Edwards said the Grand Junction one-stop is below the budget cutline so it is still undetermined, and there is also a request for an increase in tuition assistance, which has the governor's support.

A recess was called at 09:36 a.m. The Board resumed labor at 09:50 a.m.

Ms. Raley addressed the Board in regard to Provider's Resource Clearinghouse, which receives funding through the Veterans Assistance Grant. Provider's Resource Clearinghouse is a division of the Aurora Mental Health Center, which provides veterans with furniture and necessities. Assistance is restricted to once per year per client, and to date they have served 173 veterans this year. Ms. Hammon asked about their service area and Ms. Raley said most have their requests have been in the metro area, but they are willing to help any Colorado veteran regardless of location. They are funded entirely through grants and get their items through donations. They also work with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide vocational and employment training.

Public Comment

Ms. Bellofatto addressed the Board of behalf of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. They assist homeless veterans with housing and employment. She will bring numbers served to a future meeting.

Mrs. Rudder said that the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs is working in support of Wreaths Across America, in which wreaths decorated by volunteers are laid at the graves of fallen soldiers. Wreaths are \$17.00 each.

Reports

Mr. Hunt said the Colorado Civil Air Patrol with help with the wreath project at the state cemetery in Grand Junction. The Peak Military Care Network advisory met last week and mental health outreach remains an area of focus. The visits to the CLCs are now complete. Census is doing well at the CLCs but they continue to struggle with staffing. The next JBC meeting will be on 29 November and DMVA will attend.

Mr. Mestas said the final report has been issued on the Grand Junction cemetery with a performance rating of 84%. Noted deficiencies were items within federal rather than state control, but the Division and cemetery director will work to accelerate those interactions as much as possible. DOLA has completed its sunset review of the Board and has recommended that it continue once this commission expires in June 2017. The next review will be in 2032. Six of the state's eight Stand Downs are complete. Longmont is scheduled for 17 November, and Windsor will be in April.

Ms. Hoagland referred the Board to her report, noting that despite some concern that the VTF grant might underutilized in rural areas, 60 percent of last year's grantees were in rural areas. These rural areas are identified according to HUD's definition of metro and rural areas, which classifies Grand Junction, Greeley, and Montrose as metro. All the current VTF grantees are currently performing. Mr. Hunt mentioned that he spoke with the CFO of RTD about possible funding free rides for veterans, and this could be a prospect for the VTF in the upcoming cycle. Ms. Hoagland had distributed copies of the proposed application packets for VTF for regular applicants and for CLCs. Mr. Robinson moved to accept the CLC VTF application packet. Ms. Caldwell seconded and the motion carried. Next Mr. Robinson moved to accept the regular VTF packet as presented. Mr. Simard seconded and the motion carried.

Discussion Items

Mr. Dailey announced the Board committee representatives: Mr. Simard for Grants, Mr. Rudder for Training, and Mr. Robinson for CLCs.

New Business

Mr. Dailey inquired as to whether in was an appropriate time for the Board to consult with the Department strategic planner. Mr. Hunt said the resource is at the Board's disposal.

The Board discussed and confirmed dates and location for upcoming meetings:

December 02, 2016 VA Regional Office, Lakewood

January 06, 2017 Trinidad – possible strategic planning session

February 03, 2017 Fort Lyon

March 03, 2016 CDVA

April 07, 2016 CDVA

May 04, 2016 Durango

Mr. Bozella addressed the Board with compliments for the grant program. He mentioned that the American Legion Post in Longmont is having trouble finding a program manager for the grant. He invited the Board to attend the Longmont Stand Down on 17 November.

Adjournment

Mr. Dailey requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion was made by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Simard. The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes 02

December 2016

**VA Regional Office
Lakewood, CO 80228**

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Rene Simard,
Vice Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary

Patricia "Pat" Hammon, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack
Rudder, Member

Members Absent:

Robert "Bob" McLaughlin, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director
Ben
Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator
Carissa
Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Tammy Bellofatto, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Anton Borchers, Denver VARO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
Crystal
Colussi, Sobriety House

Robert Kenshalo, Denver VARO Veterans Service Representative
Renaye
Murphy, Director, Denver VARO

Andrew Post, Denver VARO Loan Guaranty Officer

Theresa Rudder, president-elect of Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs and Jack's wife Catherine Wright, Denver VARO Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0900 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room. He announced that the meeting would open with presentations from the attendees from the Denver VARO as several of them had another meeting to attend that morning.

VARO Presentations

Ms. Murphy began by welcoming the Board to the regional office. She said that FY 2016 ended on 01 October, marking the seventh consecutive year with more a million claims processed. Meanwhile the claims inventory has seen a decrease, with 884,000 claims pending at the end of 2012 to 380,000 at the end of 2016. Processing takes an average of 109 days, decreased from the VA's previous processing time of 239 days. Claims are now processed electronically which has helped with speed. Dependency claims submitted electronically can be processed within 24 hours. Appeals production has increased by 11% over last year. Mr. Robinson inquired what the average processing time in for an appeal, but that information was not immediately available. Ms. Murphy also reported improvements with the VA 800 number, with the 60% blocked call rate not at less than one percent and the average wait time less than four minutes.

Mr. Post provided information from Loan Guaranty. The Denver VARO has shown 100% performance on all matrices in regard to the Native American Direct Loan program. The office works with 390 recognized tribes in the region and is required to provide outreach to all. This is the largest number of tribes encountered by any regional office. The next nearest is the Phoenix office with 160 tribes. Specially Adaptive Housing applications require contact within 30 days and the Denver VARO is 99.5 compliant with the timeline. The region's default resolution rate is 83.3%. Mr. Robinson asked what percentage of VA loans are in default. Mr. Post replied that it is 1.1% for this region, compared to a default rate of .89% for prime mortgages, 2.11% for FHA, and 6.9% for subprime. The region closed 94,000 loans in FY 2016, 28,000 of which were in Colorado. The average mortgage with a VA guaranty in Colorado was \$285,500. 411 Colorado properties were foreclosed.

Ms. Wright said that as of 13 May claims are processed through the National Work Queue, so claims can be worked at any regional office that has the availability. There is a current effort to balance the availability with geography, so while approximately 24% of the cases worked by the Denver VARO were Colorado veterans, that percentage is expected to increase to 60% in FY 2017. In FY 2016 the Denver VARO processed 20,115

original claims, 5,000 dependency claims and 1,700 appeals with a 97.1% accuracy rate. Ms. Murphy added that the Denver and the Cheyenne VAROs have the highest production rates in the country. Mr. Dailey said that veterans have complained about having VA calls cut off and inquired if there is a way for veterans to directly contact the Denver VARO. Ms. Wright said she would provide Mr. Mestas with the number for the Denver VARO front office so that it can be distributed to the Board. She also suggested that veterans who have questions for the VA try emailing their inquiries, since those must be responded to within five business days.

Mr. Borchers said that VR&E saw 478 positive outcomes in FY 2016. The census revolves since clients stay in the program from three to four years, but typically the yearly total is around 3,500. Mr. Simard asked what the current completion rate is. Mr. Borchers said that number is not tracked because goals differ, but they measure positive outcomes instead. Positive outcomes include employment, independent living, maximum rehabilitation, and continuing education. The goal for 2017 is to increase last year's positive outcome rate by 10%. The average income of veterans entering the program is \$600-\$800 a month, while the average income of those with a positive outcome is \$3,500-\$4,000 a month.

Mr. Hunt said the Colorado Joint Budget Committee meeting on 29 November evidenced a lot of interest among legislators in homeless veterans. The current estimate is that there are approximately 400,000 veterans in Colorado. Ms. Murphy agreed that homelessness is an ongoing concern and that the Denver VARO does have a homeless coordinator for the state. It is hoped that programs such as My VA and telehealth clinics help to reach those homeless populations.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dailey provided a correction to the meeting minutes from 09 November 2016 and the minutes were approved as corrected.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Robinson reported that the Veterans Community Living Center Board of Commissioners met at Homelake in November. The 75% rule continues to be an issue, with the example at Homelake of a waiting list of 17 people even though beds are available. Mr. Hint said that a teleconference was held with Senator Bennett's office on 30 November regarding this topic, and that DHS has provided the senator's office with a white paper. The next teleconference is scheduled for 26 January. The Board was willing to entertain a motion of support. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board support and pursue efforts to increase flexibility in waivers for state CLCs in regard to the 75% rule. Mr. Simard seconded and the motion carried.

Ms. Hammon reported that 20 schools in Eagle County and the surrounding area participated in Veterans Day

programs and presentations. She was featured in a TV spot for the county cable network, in which she was able to discuss the Board and her role. This was also covered in a local paper and she will supply the link to the article. Eagle County Veteran Services has been supporting training classes for police and other first responders about how to react to veterans with PTSD and/or TBI who are in crisis.

Ms. Caldwell said that the Platte College School of Nursing now has a volunteer partnership with the Comitis Crisis Center in Aurora.

Mr. Simard thanked Mr. Robinson for speaking at the annual Veterans Salute in Aurora on 09 November. He reminded the Board of the current effort at DU to create a school of military psychology through the Sturm Family Foundation, and said that the plan includes a mental health clinic in Aurora for veterans their families. In conjunction with this effort, DU is offering matching funds for students using Yellow Ribbon funding.

Mr. Rudder said that the San Luis Valley has its annual Veterans Day Parade with participants ranging from the Honor Guard to Cub Scouts.

Mr. Dailey said the Veteran Day event at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby had 370 in attendance, including CDVA Deputy Director Diane Ricci.

Community Providers

Ms. Colussi reported that Sobriety House's Veterans Assistance Grant has helped the organization extend care to veterans who expended their VA benefit or otherwise cannot access care. Sobriety House offers both residential and outpatient care for substance abuse treatment, with case management for patients to help coordinate resources. Ms. Caldwell asked how the agency measure positive outcomes. Ms. Colussi said their measurements are sobriety, employment, housing, and community involvement.

Ms. Bellofatto said that at the last Board meeting she had promised to bring statistics from the homeless veterans reintegration program provided by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, also supported by a Veterans Assistance Grant. Since July 2016, the coalition has helped 70 veterans, 39 of whom are now employed. Besides direct employment assistance the coalition helps with tools, training, licenses, and clothing. They also participated in the Denver Stand Down in November. Ms. Colussi said that there were fewer veterans than expected in attendance at the Stand Down, but that may be attributed to the fact the Project Homeless had a job fair at the convention center on the same day. She asked for the Board's assistance to facilitate communication to avoid future conflicts, and Mr. Hunt offered the Department's support as well. Mr. Robinson asked if the number of homeless veterans in Colorado has increased. Ms. Bellofatto said that is the impression gained from the increase in VASH vouchers distributed this year, but that specifics will be available once the annual Point In Time survey is conducted in January.

The Board recessed briefly at 10:35 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:43.

Reports

Mr. Hunt said the Colorado Joint Budget Committee meeting on 29 November focused largely on the issue of homeless veterans, and that legislators are interested in how to find out how many currently uncounseled veterans are in Colorado. The proposed veterans one-stop in Grand Junction is still below the funding line. UVC is expected to present legislation this session. Mr. Robinson added that he attended the UVC legislative meeting and there is interest in presenting legislation designed to make the Board a Type I board. Mr. Hunt agreed but stated it is financially not feasible. The UVC will also seek change to law to simplify the grant program. Mr. Robinson asked if a copy of the state auditor's findings has been made available to UVC members and Ms. Hoagland confirmed that it has. Mr. Hunt also informed the Board that a new FTE has been added in Grand Junction so that IDs can be made there.

Mr. Mestas said eight of the state's nine Stand Downs are complete, with the Windsor Stand Down scheduled for April. The deadline for counties to submit the data for their semi-annual state payment closes on 07 January.

Ms. Hoagland said that is compiling myths regarding the grant program to create an FAQ and asked the Board to contribute any false notions they encounter. This year there have been misconceptions in regard to transportation, gift cards, and advances, some even from current grantees. Ms. Caldwell asked when the deadline is for grantees to submit for reimbursement and Ms. Hoagland said it is June 15. Mr. Dailey said he visited the VFW Department of Colorado after the November board meeting and confirmed that their frustrations are not with the grant itself but with the nature of their program.

Mr. Dailey said that UVC meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Mr. Robinson added that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on 13 December.

Upcoming Meetings

The Board discussed and confirmed dates and location for upcoming meetings:

January 06, 2017	Trinidad
February 03, 2017	Fort Lyon
March 03, 2017	Aurora
April 07, 2017	Centennial

May 05, 2017 Durango

June 02, 2017 Rifle

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Simard made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Rudder. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.