

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs  
2017 Meeting Minutes**

## **Board Minutes**

**February 3, 2017**

**Mt. Carmel Conference Center**

**Ziccardi Room 911**

**Robinson Ave., Trinidad, CO 81082**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0900 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

### **Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests**

#### Board Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary-Not Present Robert McLaughlin, Member

Pat Hammon, Member

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:

Al Trujillo, Las Animas County Service Officer Cheryl and David Rogers, American Legion Post #16 Brian Chicket, American Legion Post #16

David Walker, Commander of American Legion Post #11 Ed Wolahan, American Legion Post #16

Joe Martinez, Korean War Veteran Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife

Kim Zimmerman, American Legion Post #11 Willie Bay, American Legion Post #11

Ivan Brooks, VFW and VTF Administrator Clayton McIndry, American Legion Post #11 Steve Block, newspaper reporter

Charles Martorano, American Legion Post #11

Wayne and John Medina, VFW Doug Brown, Vietnam Veteran James Schatzman, former Marine

Dona Seay, Secretary for the Las Animas County Veterans Council Nick Vigil, CVSO Huerfano

Chris Crow Orlando Blanco Bill Knowles, VFW Ignacio Gutierrez

Jake Hyte, District 8

Tim and Ellen Swartz of Custer County Doug Brown

Charles Grego, Colorado Dept. of Labor Workforce Center Jess Gibson, Retired Army

### **Approval of Minutes from December**

Approved

Jack Rudder: Currently there are around 500 people living off the grid in the Alamosa area. Mr. Rudder is not sure how many of those people are veterans. There is nearly a one-year wait for Federal VA response to aide and assistance funding requests for veterans who wish to move into the domiciliary at Homelake Community Living Center. Most of the requests are being denied.

Robby Robinson: Bids have been received for the expansion at Fitzimmons Community Living Center. Part of the expansion will service homeless veterans.

Rene Simard: The Stuer Family Clinic in Aurora has recently opened to provide mental health care for veterans and their families at their day facility.

Pat Hammon: The two biggest issues in the Eagle County area are affordable housing and mental health.

Robert McLaughlin: Mr. McLaughlin thanked Felix Lopez, Chief Operating Officer for Mt. Carmel, for hosting today's meeting. Mt. Carmel in Colorado Springs is dealing with veteran transition issues such as job placement, mentoring and internships. They also offer a free behavioral health clinic on campus.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey thanked Mr. Trujillo for his organizing of today's meeting. Both Mr.'s Robinson and Dailey recently attended the Sunset Board Review with the Colorado Legislature. If the Bill passes (likely) the Board will continue their work for another ten years.

Guests then introduced themselves and briefly described how they are related to and involved with the veteran community. It is hoped that the Fort Wooten Community Square, located in Trinidad, can get the financing needed to operate the facility and that all of the veterans organizations come back.

Mr. Dailey explained the function of the Board and how it is different from the Federal VA. He also explained that the five Veterans Community Living Centers are run by Colorado Health and Human Services, not the Board. Mr. Hunt briefly explained the Department's hierarchy as well as the grant programs.

Al Trujillo: Currently there are no homeless shelters in Las Animas County. Mr. Trujillo thanked those in the community who donated funds for the local soup kitchen. Mr. Robinson added that the Federal VA Outreach Program could visit the community and perhaps give answers to the many Federal VA questions brought up at the meeting. Mr. Trujillo stated that many of the area veterans are seen by doctors in Raton and Albuquerque, NM.

Ivan Brooks: Mr. Brooks explained the Veterans Trust Fund and how easy it is to work with Ms. Hoagland. With the \$40k awarded, Mr. Brooks was able to service about 118 veterans. While partnering with Custer County VSO Tim Swartz, 330 veterans have enrolled in less than two years. Mr. Brooks offered to answer any

questions regarding how to apply for grant funding.

A brief discussion followed regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and incompetency.

An inquiry was made about grant funding and homeless shelters in Pueblo. Mr. Dailey and Mr. Robinson briefly explained the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless located in Ft. Lyon.

A reporter from the World Journal asked exactly what the Board will report to the Adjutant General this year. Mr. Hunt explained that through its travels, the Board is able to better understand the needs of that particular area's veteran's community. Last year, for example, the Board proposed a funding increase for County Veterans Service Officers, which was approved by the Governor.

Currently there is a bill on the floor of the Capitol to eliminate taxes on veteran's pensions. The Board recessed at 10:20 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:31 a.m.

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt is working on a proposal to allow veterans to ride RTD transportation for free. The Veterans One-Stop in Grand Junction will remain unfunded in 2017. The Adjutant General will be retiring at the end of March. Mr. Hunt is in discussions with the Department of Human Services to allow more eligible veterans' spouses into the Community Living Centers by getting a waiver to the 75% veteran occupancy rule. Robert McLaughlin will try to get representatives from the Federal VA to hold a discussion in the Trinidad area.

Duane Dailey on behalf of Greg Dorman: Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Dailey attended the Sunset Review Hearing where it will be recommended that the CBVA continue. The General Assembly will have to approve the bill.

Reuben Mestas: Mr. Mestas stated that there are several counties that have not turned in their monthly reports and therefore will not get paid. The 2017 Conference agenda was attached to his report. Cemetery Director Joanne Iglesias spearheaded the effort to allow veterans to preregister for the State Cemetery in Grand Junction or the National Cemetery.

Mr. Trujillo asked for an update on the future State Cemetery in Colorado Springs. So far, the plot of land has been secured, and a design has been approved but no one knew if the VA has started construction.

A brief discussion followed as to where veterans can get ID cards.

Gail Hoagland: It is projected that the Veterans Trust Fund will be reduced this cycle by as much as \$200,000. This reduction in funds next fiscal year will make it even more competitive. The deadline for this year's grant applications is March 1. Two webinars will be held in February. All documents can be downloaded from the State website: [vets.dmva.state.co.us](http://vets.dmva.state.co.us) and click on the Grants tab. Ms. Hoagland proceeded to discuss some of the

State guidelines for the grants. She advised organizations that collaborative relationships with County Veterans Service Officers and other organizations will help to ensure a broader, fuller coverage for the community.

**Future Meetings**

A Strategic Planning discussion will be held during the next CBVA meeting on March 3 at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce located at 14305 E. Alameda, Suite 300, Aurora, CO.

**Old Business**

It's been some time since Board members have visited Ft. Lyons. Mr. Hunt will plan a future visit and offer the Board the opportunity to accompany him.

**New Business**

Meeting adjourned 10:58am

**March 3, 2017**

**Aurora Chamber of Commerce 14305 E. Alameda**

**Aurora, CO 81082**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0902 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:**

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Robert McLaughlin, Member Pat Hammon, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder, Member

**DMVA Staff Present:**

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Dave Callahan, DMVA, Strategic Planner Claire Dean, CDVA  
Administrative Assistant

**Guests Present:**

Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife

**Approval of Minutes from February**

Several changes made, then approved.

Pat Hammon: At the quarterly forum of area County VSOs was held at the VA Hospital in Grand Junction it was reported that they are still in the search for a new Director. The Prosthetic and Physical Therapy addition to the hospital is set to open in August. The new full time chief of staff and a full time general surgeon have been hired and the neurologist has been moved to full time. Four new transportation vans were purchased for the VA Hospital.

Jack Rudder: The San Luis Valley is still in need of a doctor. The Choice card is receiving mixed reviews. There have been ten military funerals in the Alamosa area so far this year.

Duane Dailey: Twelve World War II veterans live in the Grand County area. Mr. Dailey asked for clarification on the census issue discussed at last month's meeting. Mr. Mestas explained that the VA report is to now include anyone who served, which will change the total veterans on the GDX Report. Mr. Dailey wondered how to get an exact veteran population count in his county.

Rene Simard: The Sturm Clinic is partnering with Buckley Air Force Base to provide mental health field placements. The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon will be held on May 5, 2017 at the

DoubleTree in Denver. The keynote speaker will be Lt. General (retired) Mike Hamel.

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Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell will attend the Homes for Heroes non-profit event in March.

Robert McLaughlin: While working with My VA Pikes Peak Initiative, Mr. McLaughlin addressed where Health Net is falling short. The Mount Carmel Center in Colorado Springs celebrated their one year anniversary. Around 10,000 veterans and their families have been served. The University of Colorado Health and Cohen Veterans Network will partner to form a behavioral health center. It will serve an estimated 83,000 individuals in the community. Mr. McLaughlin will accompany Mr. Hunt and representatives of the Federal VA to a town hall meeting in Trinidad in late spring.

Ms. Hammon asked about Health Net. Mr. McLaughlin will work with Ms. Hammon to get her connected to the right people.

Mickey Hunt: A new TAG will begin in April and Mr. Hunt will help with the transition. Both Mr. Hunt and Mr. McLaughlin will tour Fort Wooten in Trinidad on March 10. Mr. Hunt recently attended a recognition ceremony, hosted by US Representative Ed Pearlmuter, for a 99 year- old veteran. The current TAG will oversee the Veterans Trust Fund, but the new TAG will have to decide on the Veterans Assistance Grants. Greg Dorman will schedule Senate confirmations for the newest Board members: Robert McLaughlin and Pat Hammon. It has been proposed that the Homelake Cemetery be transferred from the Department of Human Services to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Should the transfer occur, all previous reservations would be null and void, angering the community.

The 14,000 square-foot Western Slope One-Stop will be funded next fiscal year with a current cost of \$3.5M. Board members are encouraged to attend a press conference in Grand Junction sometime in May.

Mr. Robinson inquired about the possibility of Homelake Cemetery being run by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The issue is that the Department of Human Services needs to correctly fund cemetery groundkeepers.

Reuben Mestas: Mr. Mestas clarified to the Board that all veterans living in Las Animas County are directed to the VA Hospital in Albuquerque, or the clinic in Raton, New Mexico. UCCS in Colorado Springs has begun a pilot program for veterans to help them transition into engineering careers.

Gail Hoagland: Many applications were hand-delivered to Gail's office in Centennial. Forty- seven applications were received for the Veterans Assistance Grant, with \$2M in requests. There were many new organizations offering different programs this year. Twenty-six applications were received for the Veterans Trust Fund, with five being new applicants and two former applicants. There were many requests from

Community Living Centers. Greg Dorman is currently working with Legislature to find out how much money will be available for the Veterans Trust Fund. It is expected that funds will be considerably less than last year. Decisions on grant applications will need to be fully justified and due by the end of April. Surveys will be used to collect data from applicants to find out if the application was easy and if the webinar and staff were helpful.

Mr. Robinson wanted to know who decides the amount of money for the Veterans Trust Fund. The Joint Budget Committee decides the appropriations.

Mr. Simard recommended the Board sign a Certificate of Recognition for Ivan Brooks, the Grant Administrator in Trinidad, for his outstanding work. Ms. Hoagland will produce the certificate.

Dave Callahan: A Strategic Planning presentation was presented to the Board along with an exercise exploring the Board's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The Board was then instructed to work on Mission and Vision Statements.

The Board recessed at 10:25 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:39 a.m.

Ms. Hoagland reminded the Board that they need to be mindful of identified conflicts of interest, and that if they cannot score grant applicants without bias, they can recuse themselves. Only the information provided in the application should be used in scoring. Handouts were given and a quick scoring exercise followed. Mr. Simard requested to add a letter on the rubric that corresponds with the spreadsheet. Next week, grant applications will be sent to the Board electronically. Decisions will be made at April's Board meeting.

### **Future Meetings**

April 7 Board Meeting, Centennial Public Works, 7272 S. Eagle St. May 12 Board Meeting, Durango, 8am

June 2 Board Meeting, Community Living Center in Rifle

### **Old Business New Business**

The Board has been invited to attend a one hour presentation on aerial firefighting at an airport four miles away from the Community Living Center in Rifle. The optional presentation will be set up through Ms. Hammon to follow the June Board meeting.

The Strategic Planning Committee will meet on April 6 at 4pm at 6848 S. Revere Parkway in Centennial. It was suggested that they meet directly after each Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned 12:16pm



## **Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes**

**07 April 2017**

**Centennial Public Works 7272 South Eagle Street  
Centennial, CO 80112**

### **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:**

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director Ben Mestas, CDVA Director

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

#### **Guests Present:**

Steve Ryland, United Veterans Committee, VFW Post #41

Theresa Rudder, President Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, Jack's wife

### **Opening**

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**

The minutes from the meeting held on 03 March 2017 were approved as submitted.

### **Board Member Comments**

Ms. Hammon said May is a busy month for veterans' events in Eagle County, with active color guards participating in graduation ceremonies and Memorial Day commemorations. The coalition participated in the Winter Sports Clinics on both Grand Junction and Snowmass.

Mr. McLaughlin said in follow-up to the meeting held in Trinidad in February, a VA town hall will be held there on 25 July.

Mr. Dailey said he attended the retirement ceremonies for Adjutant General H. Michael Edwards on 02 April. He remarked on the connection forged between the Department and the SVCLC's during the tenure of General Edwards, including the annual Blackhawk visits.

Mr. Robinson expressed his regard for General Edwards and said the state will miss his contribution. The SVCLC commission will be travelling to Florence in April. An RFP has been issued for building out the southern five acres at Fitzsimons. It will include permanent supportive housing a shelter for homeless veterans and low income veterans housing. On the north side, the commission has recommended skilled nursing care and /or a rehabilitation facility. He said he and Mr. Rylant both toured the new VAMC at the end of March and offered to set up a tour for the Board. The hospital is more than 90% complete and should be ready for full occupancy by March 2018.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Rylant said it was a pleasure to attend the Board meeting. Representative Coffman asked UVC to name the new hospital. The name chosen by the UVC committee is Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center. This name was selected because it is so inclusive. The name will be official once it has been approved by Congress. The UVC Banquet will be held on 10 April 2017 with the acting deputy secretary Scott Blackburn as the keynote speaker. VA plans continue to relocate the Greeley CBOC to Loveland to expand its capacity.

Mr. Hunt said that General Edwards is succeeded by Major General Michael A. Loh of the Air Force. General Loh is a graduate of the Air Force Academy, as is his son, and his father is a retired four-star general. He most recently served as the National Guard Assistant to the Commander of Air

Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base. As senior National Guard officer to the commander his experience includes training, equipping, and maintaining Air National Guard Forces for rapid response. He will assume command on 11 April. Regarding the state budget, the Long Bill is in the House and the current version includes \$300,000 to increase state compensation available to for county veteran service officers. The Grand Junction One Stop is still in the budget since veterans' access to care is a priority for the CDC. Discussion continues regarding acquiring a waiver of 75/25 rule, with the current proposal being to flex to 65/35 as long as veteran beds are still available. The Durango board meeting in May should include the CVSO and the active college veteran's community.

Mr. Mestas said the Division is prepared for changes in county payments if the funding in the current budget is approved.

### **Reports**

Ms. Hoagland referred the Board to her submitted report. She said there is no need for concern of SVCLC's that have not yet spend their VTF funds, since they have the entire grant cycle to expend and often do so near the end. Mr. Robinson said he would encourage the SVCLC's that have not yet our expended their fund to do so. Mr. Rudder said that Homelake has ordered the new dining room furniture.

### **Veterans Trust Fund Allocation**

Ms. Hoagland thanked the Board members for submitting their application scores. The grants office staff also scored the applications. Although those scores do not count, the deviations between those and the Board's scores could offer insight for process improvements. She thanked Mr. Dailey for the large maps which were displayed in the room for reference. The maps were of the counties in Colorado and were plotted with the applications in each county, with one map displaying the Veterans Trust Fund applicants and one displaying the Veterans Assistance Grant applicants. The maps showed that approximately 60% of the Veterans Trust Fund applicants are located in rural areas, approximately 60% of Veteran Assistance Grants applicants are in urban areas.

Mr. Dailey reminded the Board that the Veterans Trust Fund applications are for the most part prepared by volunteers who are not trained grant writers. The Veterans Trust Fund awards help fund "boots on the ground" programs that help veterans in need throughout the state.

Ms. Hoagland said that since the Long Bill has not been signed, the amount available to the Veterans Trust Fund is only an estimate. The current available estimate is \$740,633.00. She recommended beginning the proceedings by removing from consideration any applications whose score from both the grant subcommittee and the full Board fell below the established minimum of 60. There were no objections. Only application 18-21 from DAV Post #25 in Denver had a score below 60 and was removed. Next the Board considered applications which the subcommittee scored at 60 or higher but were scored lower than 60 by the full Board.

**VFW Post 5231, Mancos:** This is a current grantee with slow spending. The Board discussed the submitted budget, particularly the gas vouchers since some veterans can have their mileage paid by the VA for service-connected medical visits. Ms. Hoagland said that if a veteran is eligible for VA mileage they are ineligible for VTF mileage, and that the gas vouchers provided by post are designed as general economic support. The subcommittee recommendation was to fund this application in less than the recommended amount without targeting any specific budget items, and allow the grantee to decide how to allocate the funds across the budget line items. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

### **Fund at \$7,000.00**

**American Legion Post 22, Northglenn:** This organization is a former grantee with a history of being difficult to work with. The representative is not computer literate and struggles to follow instructions. The subcommittee recommended funding this application in part to increase the services available in the area. Mr. Rudder moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simard and carried.

**Fund at \$20,000.00**

The Board then considered the remaining applications in numerical order, as all of them had scores of 60 or higher from both the subcommittee and the Board. The results are enumerated below:

**DAV Chapter 48, Durango:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requests an increase in funding. Due to the financial constraints on the Veterans Trust Fund, the subcommittee recommended funding this grantee in a lower amount than requested. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and carried.

**Fund at \$80,270.00**

**VFW Post 8661, Shawnee:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requested funding in the same amount as the previous year. The subcommittee recommended funding the application in that amount. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Fund at \$8,400.00**

**American Legion Post 25, Florence:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requested funding in the same amount as the previous year. The subcommittee recommended funding in that amount. Mr. Simard moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

**Fund at \$20,000.00**

**American Legion Post 32, Longmont:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requested an increase in funding. Due to the financial constraints on the Veterans Trust Fund, the subcommittee recommended funding this grantee in the same amount as the previous year. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and carried.

**Fund at \$60,000.00**

**American Legion Post 09, La Junta:** This is a current grantee, semicompliant and with very slow spending. The compliance issue is the slow rate of spending. This is reflected in this application, which requested a lower amount of funding than was awarded last year. The subcommittee recommended funding in the requested amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was

seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Fund at \$6,080.00**

**American Legion Post 44, Steamboat Springs:** This is a current grantee that is semicompliant. The application requests an increase in funding. The compliance issues have been documentation and consistent argument from the grantee. The subcommittee considered the need for the program in the area as well as the performance difficulties with the grantee. The recommendation was to fund this application at the current level, due to both funding constraints and performance issues. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

**Fund at \$6,550.00**

**VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with an excellent rate of spending. The application requests an increase in funding. Mr. Robinson said it seemed to be a lot of money for an area with few veterans. Ms. Hoagland said a lot of the need is for supplies to see veterans through the winter, which as propane and firewood. Mr. Rudder agreed that many veterans who live off the grid have to seek assistance in the colder months. Due to the financial constraints on the Veterans Trust Fund, the subcommittee recommended funding this grantee in the same amount as the previous year. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simard and carried.

**Fund at \$40,000.00**

**VFW Post 41, Loveland:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with an excellent rate of spending. The application requests an increase in funding. Due to the financial constraints on the Veterans Trust Fund, the subcommittee recommended funding this grantee in the same amount as the previous year. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Fund at \$59,000.00**

**VFW Dept. of Colorado, Lakewood:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with an excellent rate of spending. This grantee has modified their program and is requesting a smaller amount that was awarded last year. The subcommittee recommended funding in the requested amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$30,000.00**

**American Legion Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs:** Mr. Dailey recused himself from the discussion and the vote. This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requested funding in the same amount as the previous year. The subcommittee recommended funding in that amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson and carried.

**Fund at \$20,000.00**

The Board here moved to recess at 10:28 a.m. Mr. Rylant said he was unable to remain for rest of the meeting due to another engagement. He asked if he could get a copy of the decisions after the close of the meeting. The Board resumed labor at 10:36 a.m.

**VFW Post 5843, Meeker:** This organization is a former grantee. Due to the lack of resources in the area, the subcommittee recommended funding in the requested amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

**Fund at \$7,500.00**

**American Legion Post 1980, Woodland Park:** This organization is a new applicant. Due to the lack of resources in the area, the subcommittee recommended funding in the requested amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Fund at \$25,000.00**

**American Legion Post 108, Pagosa Springs:** This is a current grantee that is out of compliance. The application requests an increase in funding. The compliance issues include contract performance and documentation. The grantee has not yet completed a vehicle purchase that is part of the current contract, despite repeated direction from the grant administrator. Reimbursements are not timely and include incorrect documentation, also despite repeated instruction. The Board considered these concerns as well as the great need for these services in the area, and the subcommittee's recommendation, which was to continue funding at last year's level on the provision that the grant administrator make a site visit. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$30,000.00**

**American Legion Post 62, Craig:** This is a current grantee, semicompliant and with very slow spending. The compliance issue is the rate of spending. This is reflected in a reduced amount requested this year. Since the current spending rate of this grantee was only 13% at the time of the meeting, the subcommittee discussed

whether the grantee would be able to spend even the amount of the new request. Based on this year's spending, the subcommittee recommended funding this application at less than the requested amount. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson and carried.

**Fund at \$7,000.00**

**VFW Post 7829, Monument:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requests funding in a lower amount than the previous year. The subcommittee recommended funding this application in the amount requested. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$40,450.00**

**DAV Chapter 44, Cortez:** This is a current grantee in compliance and with satisfactory spending. The application requests an increase in funding. Due to the financial constraints on the Veterans Trust Fund, the subcommittee recommended funding this grantee in the same amount as the previous year. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simard and carried.

**Fund at \$63,200.00**

**American Legion Post 38, Fountain:** This organization is a new applicant. The subcommittee discussed a possible saturation of services in the area and the fact that this is a new program. Due to these concerns the subcommittee recommended funding this application in part. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

**Fund at \$25,000.00**

**American Legion Post 4, Fort Collins:** This organization is a new applicant. The subcommittee noted that other than the Windsor Stand Down supported in this application, many of the services overlap with those provided by the VFW post in Loveland. Due to this duplication and the fact the organization is a new grantee, the subcommittee recommend funding this application in part. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and carried.

**Fund at \$50,000.00**

**American Legion Post 16, Walsenburg:** This organization is a new applicant. The subcommittee noted the

lack of services in the area and recommended funding this application in the amount requested. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$10,000.00**

**American Legion Post 103, Littleton:** This is a current grantee that is semicompliant. The application requests an increase in funding. Compliance issues include documentation and follow-through, and due to these as well as funding constraints the subcommittee recommended continuing funding at the current level. Mr. Robinson moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

**Fund at \$30,000.00**

**DAV Dept. of Colorado, Lakewood:** This is a current grantee that is semicompliant. The application requests an increase in funding. The compliance issue has been documentation. Considering this as well as funding constraints, the subcommittee recommended continuing funding at the current level. Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$19,300.00**

**DAV Chapter 25, Grand Junction:** This is a current grantee that is semicompliant with slow spending. The application requests decreased funding. Compliance issues include documentation and abiding by the 90-day documentation requirement on advanced funds. The subcommittee recommended that the application be funded in the amount requested, with the grant administrator receiving a caution on compliance. Ms. Hammon moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Fund at \$11,000.00**

**VFW Post 1, Denver:** This organization is a former grantee. The application included a funding request for gift cards for individuals who are not veterans. The subcommittee recommended funding this application in the amount requested for veterans only. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried.

**Fund at \$4,000.00**

**Total awarded to veterans organizations: \$680,450.00**



The Board next considered the applications submitted by SVCLC's. Ms. Hoagland explained that while DHS provided a priority list for most of the CLC's Spanish Peaks was not included because it is administered by the county. She explained that during the subcommittee's deliberations, the funds not allocated to veterans organizations were divided into recommendations for the CLCs according to the CLCs' established priority list and the amount of funds available. Providing partial funding to each application did not work because most of the requests are project funding and a partial grant would not be useful. The board considered the subcommittee's recommendations:

**Spanish Peaks Application A:** \$12,016.00, full funding. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hammon and carried with one vote of dissent.

**Fitzsimons Application A:** \$30,182.00, full funding. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and carried.

**Florence Application A:** \$16,000.00, full funding. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson and carried.

**HomeLake Application B:** \$1,985.00, partial funding. Ms. Caldwell moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rudder and carried.

**Total awarded to CLCs: \$60,183.00**

With the decisions made, Mr. Dailey thanked the Board members for their time and work and asked if any had suggestions for the process for the upcoming year. Ms. Hammon suggested having the applications on a zip file. Mr. Robinson suggested listing the amount of the current request on the spreadsheet. Mr. McLaughlin commended the subcommittee process and the work done by the subcommittee.

Mr. Simard asked if the Department could accommodate Mr. Rylant's request to see the results. Ms. Hoagland said she could provide him with the names and locations of all the applicants receiving awards, but not until after the Long Bill has been signed.

**New Business – None**

**Upcoming Meetings**

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

May 12, 2017, Durango – the Department will complete and communicate travel arrangements.

June 02, 2017, Rifle

*July, Dark*

August 04, 2017, Fort Lyon

The Board considered the possibility of another August retreat and will discuss it at the May meeting.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Simard. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

**May 12, 2017**

**Doubletree Hotel 501 Camino Del Rio**

**Durango, CO 81301**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1014 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:

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Robert McLaughlin, Member Pat Hammon, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

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

Guests Present:

Rick Schleeter, La Plata County Service Officer Raymond Taylor, Archuleta County Service Officer Donald Wilson, Veterans for Veterans

Larry Jelinek, Veterans for Veterans Dave Williamson, DAV

Misty Weiser, VOA Ken Rogers, DAV

Chuck Jordan, Veterans for Veterans John Moshec, Veterans for Veterans Talya Fieselman, VOA

J. King, VOA

W. Tom Zilchaver, Veterans for Veterans Charlotte Ann Jones, Veterans for Veterans Alvin Harvey, Fort Lewis College Veterans Club

Darla Sanders, DAV #44 Cortez Kenneth Craig, Veterans for Veterans John Albright, Axis Health System

George Usinowicz, FLC Vets Club Mike Hooker, volunteer

John Reschke, DAV

Mark Sanderson, Veterans for Veterans Butch Crim, DAV #48

**Approval of Minutes from April**

Approved.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell has been assisting nursing students at Platte College in Aurora in their outreach to homeless veterans in their community.

Pat Hammon: May is a busy time in Eagle County. Memorial flags are being placed in cemeteries, scholarships are being awarded and color guards present for area graduations.

Robert McLaughlin: Mr. McLaughlin spoke about the Mt. Carmel Center in Colorado Springs. He is also working on the Choice Program.

Rene Simard: The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon was held on May 5, 2017 at the Doubletree in Denver. Hundreds were in attendance.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey attended the Adjutant General of Colorado Change of Command Ceremony on May 5, 2017 at Buckley Air Force Base. A veterans' town hall meeting was held in Grand Lake last week. The VA Regional Office in Lakewood will send representatives down to the southwest corner of Colorado for a discussion by late summer.

Richard Schleeter: The Choice card is working but provider training is needed for billing and prescriptions issues. Veterans in the four corners area are split between seeing doctors in Colorado and Albuquerque, New Mexico. There currently is not enough affordable housing for the homeless in the area. Axis Health System has been a leading provider in mental health care throughout the region, covering five counties with a staff of around 250. Both Axis Health System and Mr. Schleeter's office are conveniently located in the VA clinic. It has been three years since the Federal VA has held a town hall meeting in the area. Mr. McLaughlin will coordinate a town hall meeting with both Colorado and New Mexico VA personnel. Mr.

Schleeter would like to see a Veterans Community Living Center in the four corners area of Colorado. Mr. Mestas explained that is a major construction issue to build one and that the Living Centers are run by Colorado Human Services, but that he will share the concern with Robby Robinson who is a member of the board of Veterans Community Living Centers.

Raymond Taylor: A full time homeless shelter is located in Durango and a part time homeless shelter is available in Cortez. Mr. Taylor has noticed that the Choice program is sending area veterans all over the place. Enrollment is less than 50 percent. Medical transport is a huge issue with many veterans receiving treatment at the Pagosa Springs Hospital rather than travelling 125 miles to the nearest VA clinic.

W. Tom Zilhaver: As grant coordinator, Mr. Zilhaver helps homeless veterans in the Pagosa Springs community where the issue of eligibility comes up often. Mr. Zilhaver asked when grant –supporting documents can be destroyed. Ms. Hoagland explained that for audit purposes, grant information needs to be stored for at least five years but can be stored electronically. Mr. Mestas explained to Mr. Zilhaver that our office has access to DD214s with Colorado being their home of record and Ms. Hammon added that Veteran County Service Officers can request them through the VA office in St. Louis. Funding generated from yard sales, golf tournament and the annual Mountain Rendezvous is used for general expenses such as the Veterans for Veterans monthly breakfast. Charlotte Jones added that Veterans for Veterans also sponsors the fly-fishing

Charlie Parnell: The collaboration between the VOA, Durango DAV, Veterans for Veterans and VFW help provide local veterans with security deposits, rent, groceries and job placement. Mr. Parnell stated that there were over 300 veterans in attendance at the Durango Stand-down with 126 actual homeless vets. The DAV van takes around 900 people per year to Albuquerque for medical appointments. Half of the funding for transportation vans comes from grant money, the other half from DAV National Transportation.

Talya Fieselman: The Volunteers of America assist veterans with housing in the six surrounding counties. Ms. Fieselman stated that a database is needed to check for duplication of services, and one application for regional non-profits. The region's non-profits collaborate effectively to provide move-in kits, emergency housing and bus passes.

A discussion about treating PTSD and sleep insomnia with medical marijuana ensued. The Federal VA has not signed on to marijuana treatment plans.

Mark Anderson thanked everyone at Veterans for Veterans who helped him find temporary housing.

Ms. Hoagland explained to everyone that the grant money will be available once the Governor signs the Long Bill. This year the Tobacco Fund dipped by 15 percent.

Ms. Caldwell asked how the non-profits track housing sustainability for grant reporting. The veteran has to reapply for housing assistance each year. A brief discussion ensued about Hud Vash vouchers and affordable handicap apartments.

The Board recessed at 12:04 p.m. and resumed labor at 12:45 p.m.

Reuben Mestas: The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado is anticipating broken irrigation pipes following this year's thaw. The Governor still has not signed the Long Bill. The USS Colorado submarine grant will go through the department. Another fund increase for County Service Officers is in the works. Due to the spring thaw, irrigation pipes are breaking at the Grand Junction Cemetery.

Gail Hoagland: Ms. Hoagland thanked everyone in attendance and personally thanked Charlie Parnell for coordinating today's meeting.

### **Future Meetings**

June 2 Board Meeting, Community Living Center in Rifle, 9 a.m.

### **Old Business New Business**

The annual Board retreat will be coordinated during June's Board meeting. It was suggested that it be held the

night before the August meeting in Fort Lyons. With Mr. Simard departing, there will be a vacant slot on the Board come July.

It was suggested that the Board meets in July. Mr. Mestas stated that there is no requirement to the number of meetings the Board holds. The majority of Board members agreed to break this July.

The Board has been invited to attend a one hour presentation on aerial firefighting at an airport four miles away from the Community Living Center in Rifle. The optional presentation will be set up through Ms. Hammon to follow the June Board meeting. Ms. Hammon recommended the Hampton Inn in Rifle for any overnight stays. Mickey Hunt is working with Senator Michael Bennett to change the veteran's percentage requirement for Community Living Centers.

Meeting adjourned 1:09pm

**June 2, 2017**

**State Veterans Community Living Center**

**851 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Rifle, CO 81650**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0901 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:

Duane Dailey, Chair Rene Simard, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Robert McLaughlin, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder, Member

Pat Hammon, Member DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator David Callahan, DMVA, Strategic Planner Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Barbara Grossman, Nursing Home Administrator Greg Bak, Garfield County Service Officer

Theresa Rudder, president-elect of CO Federation of Women's Clubs and Jack's wife Lynne Ciancio, retired US Army Veteran

Larry Valesquez, Resident Council President

**Approval of Minutes from May**

Approved

Board Comments

Duane Dailey: There were 375 veterans in attendance at Grand Lake's Memorial Day Luncheon that was accented by two F16 Airplane fly overs. Mr. Dailey is taking part in the inventory of Veterans Memorials throughout northwestern Colorado. An Apache gun helicopter was recently installed at the memorial in Kremmling. Mr. Dailey stated that a town hall meeting will be held on October 5<sup>th</sup> in Durango.

Hollie Caldwell: Both the unique issues in the four corners area and the meeting attendance at last month's Board meeting in Durango left quite an impression on Ms. Caldwell.

Robert McLaughlin: The Federal VA held a town hall meeting in Colorado Springs. They will also hold a town hall meeting in Trinidad on July 25.

Robby Robinson: The Board of Veterans Community Living Center Commissioners will be meeting in Rifle on Monday and Tuesday of next week. One of the topics of discussion will be permanent supportive veterans housing at Fitzsimmons.

Jack Rudder: Thirty-six resident Vietnam Veterans were honored in a ceremony at Homelake over Memorial Day weekend. Some veterans and their families are being priced out of the independent living Homelake cottages. An assisted living State-license for some of the domiciliary units may solve the pricing loophole.

Pat Hammon: Ms. Hammon introduced the new Garfield County Service Officer and Navy Veteran Greg Bak and mentioned numerous Memorial Day and graduation activities in Eagle County along with her usual issues of mental health cases and the housing shortage.

Rene Simard: With it being his last meeting, Mr. Simard thanked the Board and staff members for all of their hard work and offered meeting space at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce should the Board need it.

### **Community Presentation**

Barbara Grossman: Ms. Grossman thanked the Board for coming. The Community Living Center had serious staffing issues last summer. Surveyors visited in late October and found that several construction projects that were scheduled for completion in July were not finished.

Being down one bathhouse, the residents grew upset that their bath time was being cut short. The center received two "G deficiency" (harm) grades that included wound care/ infection control and frequent falling. Skid strips were not present in one room when the surveyors toured the facility. The Nursing Director was encouraged to step down and replaced by Irene Salbridge.

The center competes with the private nursing home wages in the area. Retention bonuses will be offered in July. A CNA course was offered through the Rifle Veterans Community Living Center. In an effort to retain students, the program offered paid training. Since receiving the deficiency grades and a \$95,000 fine, the CNA course was cancelled. Thirty-five percent of the fine was waived. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will have to approve the course before it can get reinstated. Ms. Hammon suggested that the program be run through Colorado Mountain College.

The area has been growing steadily. If a bond measure is passed this November, the adjacent nursing home, owned and operated by Grand River Health will be expanded as well as the local hospital. Ms. Caldwell suggested that the CNA course be either run through an area nonprofit or create a private company that has loyalty to the center. Ms. Hammon requested current job openings be sent to her electronically so that she can help find staff. Mr. Dailey asked how many employees are needed to be fully staffed. Ms. Grossman replied that the center is down 14 CNAs and two nurse managers. The nurse manager positions have been changed



from salaried to hourly and will be filled from within.

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Theresa Rudder: As president-elect of CO Federation of Women's Clubs, Ms. Rudder will be attending the International Convention in California to speak on Domestic Violence.

Larry Velasquez: An avid gardener, Mr. Velasquez has planted over 800 flowers on the grounds. He also enjoys building bird houses and makes potpourri for the residents. Mr. Velasquez serves as the Resident Council President.

Greg Bak: Twice a month Mr. Bak will visit veterans at the center to answer questions about VA benefits. The annual training conference was extremely helpful to Mr. Bak as he adjusts to his Garfield County Service Officer role. He will be spending half of his time at the Rifle office and other half in an office located in Glenwood Springs.

### **Staff Reports**

David Callahan: The third Strategic Planning Committee meeting was held last night. The Committee has approved mission and vision statements as well as identified core values. Communication outreach, health and wellness are some of the initiatives. The next meeting will be held on August 3 in Fort Lyon. Both the action plans and scorecards will need to be discussed. Everything should be in place by the end of the year. County Service Officers share outreach ideas with each other during their biannual training. Mr. Rudder added that the roundtable discussions at conference were very helpful in generating new ideas.

The Board toured the facility at 10:00 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:30 a.m.

Reuben Mestas: With the long bill now passed, County Service Officers will see an increase in their monthly payments which will help with their outreaches. The Western Slope One Stop was also approved and will be open in May 2019 in Grand Junction for the cost of about 3.4mil. The Division is working with the consulate in San Francisco to recognize Korean War Veterans. Mr. Mestas assisted with getting Metal of Honor recipient and Civil War veteran, William Evans a corrected headstone. Mr. Robinson stated that the Federal VA usually doesn't change headstones to those who served prior to World War I. Mr. Simard added that channel Fox 31 had recently run a story about Fort Logan.

Gail Hoagland: The Governor signed the long bill a week ago. Notifications and contracts are being sent out to grantees. Most will not be executed by July 1.

A new grant program will be commissioned in October for the nuclear submarine U.S.S. Colorado. The Department must decide to focus on events surrounding the commissioning, the media campaign or support of crew. The grant application will be on DMVA's website. The commissioning will take place in Connecticut.

Mr. Robinson suggested speaking with retired Naval Captain Glen Kataoka, who may be on the Commissioning Committee. He also clarified that typically support of crew means purchasing silver service for the officer's mess. Ms. Hoagland replied that they want to establish scholarship programs, but monies from the general fund need to be fully expended by the end of June. Another idea would be for an auxiliary group to make black-out curtains for the crew. Ms. Hammon requested clarification on grantees with leftover money from the Veterans Trust Fund. New grant administrators, compliance issues and communication issues are some of the reasons for not all the money being spent. For those grantees who request advances, it is typical that they do not spend it all. The Veterans Assistance Grant deals with larger amounts of money that is spent faster.

### **Old Business**

New Mexico holds the licensing to the DAV van in Durango and refuses to allow transport of veterans to benefit appointments in Colorado. The issue will need to be addressed at the October town hall in Durango. It may require Congressional action to resolve.

### **New Business/Future Meetings**

Mr. Mestas proposed that next year's Board retreat be held the day before September's meeting and Mr. Dailey proposed that next year's meetings be held in the Congressional Districts.

04 August 2017-4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - Fort Lyon 07 September 2017-Board Retreat in Grand Junction 08 September 2017-Grand Junction Cemetery

06 October 2017-5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - El Paso County Area 08 November 2017-Wings over the Rockies

01 December 2017-VA Regional Office, Lakewood

04 January 2018 -2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District - Boulder Area

02 February 2018-3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District – Pueblo/Alamosa Area 02 March 2018-1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District - Denver Area

06 April 2018-6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - Aurora Chamber of Commerce 04 May 2018-Northern Jefferson County

01 June 2018-Spanish Peaks Community Living Center, Walsenburg

Mr. Mestas expressed that he would like the Board's involvement with Congressional Districts other than their own, whether it be finding a location for the meetings or arranging keynote speakers for the Board meetings.

Mr. Robinson stated his concern for not knowing who the contact people are outside of his Congressional

District and that Ben's office would be relied on heavily for those tasks.

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On behalf of TAG, Deputy Director Mickey Hunt and Division Director Ben Mestas, Mr. Simard was presented with a gift of appreciation for his service on the Board.

With Mr. Simard stepping down as Board Vice-Chair, the two-year position is available. Mr. Robinson nominated Jack Rudder for Vice-Chair. Ms. Hammon seconded the nomination and it was approved by unanimous vote.

Meeting adjourned 11:27 a.m.

## **Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes**

**04 August 2017**

**Fort Lyon County Road 14**

**Las Animas, CO 81054**

### **Members Present:**

Duane Dailey, Chair Lacey Golonka, Member

Patricia "Pat" Hammon, Member William "Robby" Robinson, Member Jack Rudder, Member

### **DMVA Staff Present:**

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director

Dave Callahan, DMVA Strategic Planner, Safety Director, Lean Champion Ben Mestas, CDVA Director

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

### **Guests Present:**

Lynne Ciancio, Army Retiree

Jim Collins, Mayor of Las Animas, CVSO Bent County Dan Davis, Commander, American Legion Post 09

Richard Devlin, Commander, American Legion Post 9313

Phil Harrington, Associate Director, Fort Lyon Residential Community Kim MacDonnell, Bent County  
Commissioner

Bob McLaughlin, COO, Mount Carmel Center for Excellence

Theresa Rudder, President Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, Jack's wife Jay Scott, CVSO Otero County

### **Opening**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 1000 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. New board member Lacey Golonka was introduced. Ms.

Golonka served in the U.S. Army and currently serves with the Colorado Army National Guard. She is a Veterans and Diversity Consultant for Xcel Energy and was previously employed as Veteran Advocate and Outreach Coordinator for Senator Michael Bennett.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 02 June 2017 were approved as submitted.

### **Board Member Comments**

Ms. Hammon was in attendance in Grand Junction on 23 July when General Loh made the announcement about the upcoming veterans' one-stop. Eagle County is among eight on the western slope participating in Cover to Cover, a program funded by a VAMC grant to teach community members and organizations about veterans benefits. The northwest Colorado Council of Governments will meet on 23 August in Frisco. The Sturgis

Veterans Charity Ride was in Eagle on 02 August and was attended by county employees as well as employees from three nearby towns. The Western Slope Veterans Coalition has plans underway for a resource center in Glenwood Springs. The recent Mental Health Summit addressed the opioid crisis and intends to open mental health crisis centers in Grand Junction and Frisco. Healing Waters Fly Fishing will have a veterans event in Eagle County in August.

Mr. McLaughlin joined the meeting by phone to acknowledge his resignation from the Board. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve and expressed his regret that his professional commitments prevent him from continuing. Mr. Dailey thanked him for his service and his impact during his time on the Board.

Mr. Robinson said that the five acres on the south section of the Fitzsimons campus has been designated for permanent supportive housing. The plan is to build a four-story residence with 80 single occupancy units. The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless has submitted a successful proposal and is currently seeking grant funds for low income housing. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs has approximately 40 VASH vouchers at their disposal. Discussion is under way with how to use the five acres on the north campus. Ideas include a greenhouse model, mental health and /or memory care units, and skilled nursing care, perhaps with a VAMC partnership. The CLC in Rifle has been struggling for staff due to competition from a private nursing home. CDHS is trying to reinstate the Rifle CLC's CNA training program and is considering a partnership with the local taxing authority to address this issue.

Mr. Dailey thanked Mr. Hunt for serving as the Grand Marshal at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in Granby, which had more than a thousand attendees. Diamond Star Ranch in Eagle held a weeklong veterans retreat for more than 70 veterans from Balboa Naval Hospital, Brook Army Hospital at Fort Sam, and Walter Reed Medical Center.

Mr. Rudder said that the Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley met that last week of July and heard from representative from the VAMC and the Choice program.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Collins greeted the Board and welcomed the members to Fort Lyon. He has taught at the campus and acknowledged it as a powerful program. Fort Lyon has had good support from the State of Colorado. He then introduced county commissioner Kim MacDonnell.

Ms. MacDonnell welcomed the attendees to Bent County and to the Fort Lyon campus. As commissioner and a fifth generation Bent County resident, she provided a history of the Fort Lyon campus, beginning with its inception as Fort Wise in 1861. It became a Navy hospital in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and then a VA hospital. When VA left the facility in 1990s it was economic blow to the community. The Colorado Department of Corrections leased it for a decade until the current supportive residential community was formed in 2013. She

then introduced the community's associate director, Phil Harrington.

Mr. Harrington provided details on the supportive services provided. The program has a target goal of two years, although the timeline is adjustable according to circumstance. Rehabilitation is nonclinical and often employs the 12-step program. Addiction issues are addressed first. Chapters of AA and NA are available on campus. The program has seen 11 graduates since its inception and approximately one in five leave needing no government assistance. Referrals come through the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and all residents must apply through the agency.

Mr. Devlin spoke on behalf of American Legion Post 9313, which operates on the campus and is the only post in the state with a primarily homeless membership. This has caused fluctuating membership due to the transitional nature of the campus. When necessary the post has been assisted by Post 6 in Las Animas and Post 9 in La Junta, and is currently suspended with members now formally associated with Post 6.

Mr. Hunt said that the location for the Grand Junction one-stop in an unused 14,000-square-foot armory that is being refurbished. The one-stop is modeled on the Bill Daniels veterans one-stop in Denver. The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recently met with Senator Bennett's office on the topic of behavioral health, and Colorado Serves may be reestablished to address this topic. Mr. Hunt recalled visiting the Fort Lyon campus when it was still part of the Department of Corrections, as he was part of the committee considering options for the campus. He reminded the Board that the Department needs any legislative suggestions or proposals as soon as possible. The Blackhawk CLC visits will be in September.

Mr. Scott reported that a primary issue faced by veterans in southeastern Colorado is access to professional medical services. Transportation is a critical problem and often local care is entirely unavailable. Mr. Rudder concurred that access to care is a problem throughout rural Colorado. The Choice program is not always a viable option due to a lack of providers willing to accept it. The VA is working on a loan forgiveness program for physicians that looks promising. Mr. Scott asked if VBA has plans to address the appeals backlog, and Mr. Mestas told him that currently some claims staff are working appeals.

## **Reports**

Mr. Mestas emphasized from his report that that CVSO compensation from the state has increased and that county commissioners were notified in July. From fiscal year 2012-2013 to fiscal year 2017-2018, compensation to the counties from the state has increased tenfold. A recent meeting with veterans and veterans organizations in Trinidad was attended by the director of the New Mexico VAMC. The Division also had the opportunity to meet with Willie Clark, VBA Area Director for USDVA and discuss transportation complications between Colorado and New Mexico, as well as issues experienced by CVSOs such as the

availability of VA documents and award letters. The Division's outreach goal for the last fiscal year was 120, which was exceeded with an outreach total of 166.

Ms. Hoagland reported that the new VTF contracts are approximately 90% executed. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Dailey, she confirmed that the process has been slow this year. The Long Bill was signed late in the legislative session, which affects the turnaround time. She told the Board that while last year's execution rate of 95% was very good, the new quarterly report form will help more closely track spending rates and asks grantees to project whether they will be able to expend their grant award. Grantees that are unlikely to expend will be asked to modify their contract. Negotiations are under way for the grant contract for USS Colorado.

### **Action Items**

American Legion Post 25 in Florence was contracted from \$15,000 in VTF funds rather than \$20,000. This modification requires Board approval. Ms. Hammon moved to accept the modification and Mr. Robinson seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Mestas then recommended that the now-unallocated \$5,000 be held over until the Board considers contract modification after the first of the year. This was so moved by Ms. Hammon and seconded by Mr. Robinson. The motion carried.

### **New Business**

The Board decided that the next meeting will be held on 08 September in Grand Junction, with the annual retreat in the same location on 07 September. The strategic planning meeting will wait until October. The date of the November meeting has changed to 08 November to coincide with Wings Over the Rockies.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Robinson made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Ms. Hammon. The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

September 8, 2017

**Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado**

**2830 Riverside Parkway,**

**Grand Junction, CO 81051**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0902 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, members of the Colorado National Guard aiding in hurricane relief or deployed and all service members.

**Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests**

**Board Members Present:**

Duane Dailey, Chair Jack Rudder, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Pat Hammon, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member DMVA Staff Present:

Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator

Joanne Iglesias, Veterans Memorial Cemetery Director

Steven Stogsdill, Veterans Memorial Cemetery Support Assistant Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant

**Guests Present:**

Damaris Bliss, Grand Junction Veterans Health Care System Sheldon Smith, Montrose County Service Officer

Paul Sweeney, Grand Junction Veterans Health Care System

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Dailey provided a correction to the meeting minutes from August 4, 2017 that he was also in attendance in Grand Junction on July 23, when General Loh made the announcement about the upcoming veterans' one-stop. The minutes were then approved as corrected.

**Board Member Comments**

Hollie Caldwell: Student veterans at the Platt College will now receive a military service sash during commencement as part of an increase in recognition.

Jack Rudder: The San Luis Valley has an Eastern Colorado Medical Administrator that visits the area once a month. During Regional Training, it was brought up that most of the rural County Service Officers are older, with many considering retirement. This may lead to Counties and/or regions without Service Officers.

Pat Hammon: The Healing Waters event in Eagle County was a success. As part of the Grand Junction One-Stop Advisory Group, Ms. Hammon will be in attendance at next week's meeting via phone conference. A



well-received Cover to Cover workshop was held with Paul Sweeney of the Grand Junction Veterans Health Care System. Ms. Hammon and other veteran representatives met with the Deputy Secretary of the VA and discussed blue water, bad paper and the Choice program. The new Choice plan is set to roll out in January 2018. A parade, from Vail to Edwards, will commemorate Patriot Day on September 11. Ms. Hammon will attend Regional Training September 12-13.

Robby Robinson: The Rifle Community Living Center continues to struggle with staffing. They are finding it hard to compete with the neighboring nursing home that pays higher wages. One option may be to follow the Spanish Peaks model in Walsenburg, which has only one State employee to oversee that all State requirements are met.

In 2002, the Division of Veterans Affairs moved from Human Services to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. It was in that year that the dedication of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado was held.

Duane Dailey: Constitution Week will be held in Grand County with several events scheduled for next week.

### **Guest/Public Comments**

Sheldon Smith: The remains of several unclaimed veterans are being stored in Montrose area crematoriums. Mr. Smith asked the Board if they can cover the cost to properly transport and bury the veterans. The cost is under \$200 and the Veterans Assistance Grant only helps those still alive. Ms. Hammon suggested that Mr. Smith contact Fort Logan, since they deal with similar situations. Due to the high numbers of claims in Mesa and Delta Counties, Montrose County is helping with the overflow.

Paul Sweeney: The Grand Junction Veterans Health Care System is working to streamline healthcare in the area. A handout was distributed. Once the mobile medical clinic is running, it will provide the area with better communication and information on benefits. Some VA hospital patients are transferred to the Rifle Community Living Center for rehabilitation. Mr.

Sweeney encouraged County Service Officers to attend VA Hospital events. Rocky Mountain PBS interviewed several veterans in the Grand Junction area for a documentary that will run after Ken Burns Vietnam series.

Damaris Bliss: Ms. Bliss has been busy marketing Telehealth in Southern Colorado.

### **Staff Reports**

Joanne Iglesias: Ms. Iglesias presented the Board with a book on the Navaho Code Talkers, whom presented the Cemetery with a commemorative blanket. Duncan Brown has volunteered to retire US flags at the Cemetery. He replaces Navy veteran and Navajo member Roger McGuire. The replacement ceremony was covered on the front page of the Grand Junction Sentinel, which generated donations of \$2k for the Cemetery.

Ms. Hammon added that area Boy Scouts can earn badges if they help retire flags.

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Since opening its doors 15 years ago, the cemetery has provided a final resting place for 2,780 veterans, 1,062 spouses and nine dependent children. Last year, the cemetery underwent a Formal Compliance Review by the National Cemetery Administration and received a rating of 85%.

Since it takes about two years to complete the process, Mr. Robinson asked if it is too soon to look at investing more money into building additional columbariums. A map was created with proposed columbarium sites and Ms. Iglesias secured a general contractor to assist in the projection of the sites.

In age-related issues, liner failures have created erosion issues near a couple of columbariums and silt build up in both ponds.

Ms. Hammon asked if the cemetery offers memorial plaques for those veterans who had their ashes scattered at sea or elsewhere. Ms. Iglesias stated that family members can select Memorial stone for the cemetery's Memorial Garden. Quarterly memorial services are now held for those veterans without families. There were five veterans honored in October 2016. 27 veterans were given military honors in July. Members of the community attend the services that include the release of doves, cannon fire and the tolling of bells. Ms. Hammon requested an invitation to the next service. Mr. Dailey thanked Ms. Iglesias and her staff for the excellent work that they do. Both Mickey Hunt and Greg Dorman will be helping the cemetery crew in the coming weeks.

Duane Dailey (on behalf of Mr. Hunt and Mr. Dorman): Both Mr. Hunt and Mr. Dorman are preparing information to be submitted in the Governor's Report. The Community Living Center visits via Blackhawk helicopters will be held on October 4-5 this year.

Ben Mestas: The Annual Board Retreat was held yesterday at the Clarion Inn. The Board was asked to review all the documents that were discussed and to bring up any changes that need to be made in a timely manner. Top contractors for the Grand Junction One-Stop will be interviewed next Thursday. Mr. Mestas encouraged Board members to attend this year's homeless stand-downs, which are listed on his report. Many of the stand-downs are supported through the Veterans Trust Fund.

Gail Hoagland: Grant reimbursement requests have recently increased. In October, Ms. Hoagland will travel to the four-corners area to monitor grantees in the four-corners area as well as attend the homeless stand-down in Durango. Board members are strongly encouraged to attend the Durango stand-down.

Mr. Dailey inquired about the Durango town hall meeting with the VA. Mr. Mestas will check on the date of that meeting.

The USS Colorado Commissioning Grant Agreement is in the works. County Service Officers Sheldon Smith, Greg Bak and Brian Oney were asked to coordinate with the Commissioning Committee awareness events on the western slope and cohost the crew members in various community events and site visits at the Rifle Community Living Center and the ROTC in Montrose. The Commissioning Committee is promoting a STEM curriculum via the State Library System.

The Board recessed at 10:25 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:37 a.m.

Ms. Caldwell wondered if and when the Board will be able to tour the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center, which will officially open next spring. Mr. Mestas will try to coordinate a tour following the December Board meeting.

Mr. Mestas will help locate veterans on the Colorado Freedom Memorial for Mr. Dailey.

### **Future Meetings**

October 6, 2017: El Paso County- location TBD.

### **Old Business New Business**

The Board discussed changing the dates of the monthly Board meetings. With dates and locations already confirmed for this year, it would be difficult to change. Keeping the meetings standardized will promote more community involvement. Mr. Mestas suggested that the Board discuss the issue with Lacey Golonka, the only Board member not present, during next month's meeting. Mr. Dailey stated that he wanted to entertain the motion that the Board keeps its current meeting schedule. Ms. Caldwell motioned to retain the current meeting schedule. Mr. Rudder seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. Robinson addressed the issue of recruiting younger veterans to serve as County Service Officers. Although income for County Service Officers has increased ten-fold it is still not enough to solely live on. Mr. Rudder added that with advancements in the digital age, many rural County Service Officers now need to purchase additional equipment to complete work. The Counties are responsible for purchasing any additional office equipment. Various agencies such as the American Legion may be able to donate laptops and printers as well. Mr. Dailey stated that County Commissioners need to be educated in what the Veteran Service Officers do. Mr. Smith suggested that we should recruit disabled veterans with a 60% or higher rating (i.e., independent income) and Ms. Hammon said that marketing ideas could come from the Strategic Planning Committee.

Ms. Hammon mentioned that a Vietnam Documentary by director Ken Burns will run on Rocky Mountain PBS beginning on September 17. A documentary about western slope veterans and alternative therapies will run on Rocky Mountain PBS on October 19. Meeting adjourned 11:20am.

**Veterans Trust Fund and  
Veterans Assistance Grant**

**Report to the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

**28 September 2017**

Reimbursement and advance requests are on the increase as the grantees are in full swing now. Despite very specific information provided in the Grantee Handbooks and on the Webinar trainings, grantees are getting worse in terms of providing all of the required documentation.

This takes up a great deal of time. Next year, we will likely institute a policy of straight denial of those items rather than numerous follow-ups to ensure the documentation is provided within the 10 day limit.

Accounting has been short staffed and consumed with year-end closing. As a result, reimbursements have been slower getting processed. Procurement has also been very busy, so the Commissioning grant has not yet been fully executed.

The Grant Administrator will provide the board a brief verbal report regarding the contract monitoring visit, as well as the Four Corners area Stand Down. A written report will be provided to the Board within 2 weeks.

Revisions to the grant application process will be provided to the Board in late October for discussion and approval at the November Board meeting.

Current grant activity through 28 September is provided below.

		<u>Award</u>	<u>Amount of</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
<b>Grant #</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Original \$</b>	<b>Remaining \$</b>	
<b>VT18-01</b>	DAV Chapter 48, Durango	\$80,270.00	\$79,972.87	
	Stand down, Trans., Vet Asst., Mental Health			
<b>VT18-02</b>	VFW Post 8661, Conifer	\$8,400.00	\$6,452.16	
	Veterans Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18--03</b>	AL Post 25, Florence	\$15,000.00	\$7,777.13	Advance
	Veterans Assistance			
<b>VT18-04</b>	AL Post 32, Longmont	\$60,000.00	\$45,100.20	Advance
	Stand Down, Vet Assistance, Ed./Training			
<b>VT18-05</b>	American Legion Post 09, La Junta	\$6,080.00	\$4,222.62	
	Vet Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18-06</b>	AL Post 44, Steamboat Springs	\$6,550.00	\$4,912.50	Advance
	Transportation Program			
<b>VT18-07</b>	VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe	\$40,000.00	\$21,911.54	Advance
	Veterans Assistance			
<b>VT18-08</b>	VFW Post 41, Loveland	\$59,000.00	\$40,344.45	Advance
	Vet Assistance, Employment			
<b>VT18-09</b>	Dept. of CO VFW, Lakewood	\$30,000.00	\$28,178.08	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-10</b>	AL Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs	\$20,000.00	\$17,978.82	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-11</b>	VFW Post 5843, Meeker	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	
	Trans Program			
<b>VT18-12</b>	AL Post 1980, Woodland Park	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
	Vet Assistance			

<b>VT18-13</b>	AL Post 108, Pagosa Springs	\$30,000.00	\$26,516.32	
	Vet Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18-14</b>	AL Post 62, Craig	\$7,000.00	\$5,749.00	
	Veteran Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18-15</b>	VFW Post 7829, Monument	\$40,450.00	\$40,450.00	
	Stand Down, Vet Assistance, Trans.Housing			
<b>VT18-16</b>	VFW Post 5231, Mancos	\$7,000.00	\$5,581.14	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-17</b>	AL Post 22, Northglenn	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-18</b>	DAV Chapter 44, Cortez	\$63,200.00	\$61,699.00	
	Vet Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18-19</b>	American Legion Post 38, Fountain	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-20</b>	AL Post 4, Ft. Collins	\$50,000.00	\$40,500.00	Advance
	Vet Assistance, Transportation			
<b>VT18--22</b>	American Legion Post 16, Huerfano	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
	Trans Prog, Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-23</b>	AL Post 103, Littleton	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	
	Vet Assistance			
<b>VT18-24</b>	DAV Dept. of CO	\$19,300.00	\$0.00	Advance
	Stand Down			
<b>VT18-25</b>	DAV Post 25, Grand Junction	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00	
	Vet Assistance, Stand Down			
<b>VT18-26</b>	VFW Post 1, Denver	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	
	Gift cards			

<b>VT18-27</b>	Spanish Peaks VCLC-Walsenburg	\$12,016.00	\$12,016.00	
	Security Camera			
<b>VT18-28</b>	VCLC at Fitzsimons, Aurora	\$26,682.00	\$26,682.00	
	Bariatric Accommodations			
<b>VT18-29</b>	McCandless CVLC. Florence	\$16,000.00	\$16,000.00	
	Barber/Beauty Shop			
<b>VT18-30</b>	CO VCLC Homelake, Monte Vista	\$5,485.00	\$5,485.00	
	Exercise Equip.			
<b>Totals</b>		\$734,933.00	\$689,549.30	
		Total awarded		

VAG

Funds Awarded	Available Funds Remaining	Funds Expended
\$950,000.00	\$840,239.86	\$109,760.14

**October 6, 2017**

**The Country Club at Woodmoor**

**18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument, CO 80132**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0904 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, members of the Colorado National Guard aiding in hurricane relief or deployed and all service members.

**Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests**

Board Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair Jack Rudder, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Pat Hammon, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

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

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

Guests Present:

Carl McDaniel, El Paso County Service Officer Amy Cutler, Home Front Cares

Joe Carlson, VFW Post 7829 John Crouse, VFW Post 7829

Theresa Rudder, president-elect of Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs and Jack's wife

Tim Amthor, CDLE/Pikes Peak Workforce Center

**Approval of September Minutes**

The minutes from the September meeting were approved as presented.

**Board Member Comments**

Pat Hammon: Mr. Dorman was thanked for setting up the Blackhawk helicopter tours to the Veterans Community Living Centers. Setup for the new Garfield County office, located in Glenwood Springs, is underway. The space will be shared with CASA and VOA with the grand opening being November 10. The VOA has opened an office in Eagle. The committee for the Western Slope One Stop will meet next week. It was clarified that Mesa County does currently have a mobile veteran clinic.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell provided feedback on last month's Board Retreat and will be attending the Denver Stand-down. Platt College will host an outreach event focusing on post 9-11 veterans on October 9.

Jack Rudder: While visiting the Fitzsimmons Community Living Center, Mr. Rudder presented a Vietnam era veteran with a commemorative coin. It was also noted that the same veteran had a broken Bronze Star pin,



which Mr. Rudder will help get fixed. Through fundraising efforts, over \$1k was raised for the projects that included reclamation and burial of remains on the Western Slope as well as flag replacement and handicap ramps. The Rio Grande County Commissioner is discussing the creation a fund specifically for veteran projects.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey thanked Mr. Hunt and Mr. Dorman for inviting the Board to tour the Veterans Community Living Centers. Over 100 residents and staff from Fitzsimmons were outside to greet the Blackhawk helicopters.

### **Guest/Public Comments**

Joe Carlson: Mr. Carlson distributed a handout, reviewed veterans' statistics in El Paso County and gave an overview of VFW Post 7829 and the services they provide. Through the Transitional Housing Initiative, seven homeless veteran families will be temporarily housed in El Paso County for 30 days. Meals, transportation and assistance with navigating supporting agencies will be provided. Ms. Caldwell asked what happens to the families after 30 days and how successful is the program. Mr. Carlson explained that the program has a 65% success rate, but that after six months that rate drops down to 50%. Mr. Hunt suggested use of the Fort Lyon facility. Mr. Carlson presented the Board with a Certificate of Appreciation for the Veterans Trust Fund.

Carl McDaniel: Currently, over 98,000 veterans reside in El Paso County. The County has two offices that serve veterans: one on the east side of Colorado Springs, and another smaller satellite office housed at Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence on the west side of Colorado Springs. With weekly rotation, the Veteran Service Officers are able to take walk-ins. Veterans who use the County office receive an average of over \$4k more than veterans who use another service organization or file claims on their own. Mr. McDaniel sits on the Pikes Peak National Cemetery Committee and construction for the cemetery will begin this month.

Mr. Hunt asked if they track war-era veterans. Mr. McDaniel stated that while they don't track that specifically, they do see more Vietnam era and Post 9-11 veterans than any other group. Ms. Hammon wondered if there are any issues with the Choice card in El Paso County.

Although there aren't any issues with Choice in the area, there are staffing issues at the new VA Medical Center.

Amy Cutler: The Home Front Cares organization has a staff of three and offers veterans one-time emergency financial assistance. They also help connect veterans to resources.

Tim Amthor: Veterans are able to find employment through the Pikes Peak Workforce Center in Colorado Springs. Currently there are about 30,000 veterans registered with 12,000 of those having service-connected disabilities. USAA is teaming up with the Pikes Peak Workforce Center to host a job fair on November 1.

### **Staff Reports**

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt, Mr. Dorman and Human Resources Director Tamy Calahan visited the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado and met with the One Stop Advisory Board. Military personnel will be stationed at the Readiness Center in Grand Junction to issue badges. The position will eventually be filled by a State employee. Ms. Hammon will be on the interview panel for the position.

Greg Dorman: Military Appreciation Day will be held at the Capitol on January 26, 2018. Defense Industry will be the continued focus. The Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce is self-funding a broad, economic study which will include veteran spending. The legislative session will be January 2018. The Board should refrain from taking positions on the bills.

Possible issues for the session include an upgrade for military spouse employment, women veteran's space and the commemorative Vietnam War Book fundraising issue. Mr. Dailey inquired about the Rockies Veteran's Appreciation Day.

Ben Mestas: Mr. Mestas strongly encouraged Board members to attend this year's stand-downs. Staff member Krystal Anderson attended the Pueblo Stand-down and Ms. Hoagland attended the Stand-down in Durango. Ms. Hammon has agreed to attend the stand-down in Grand Junction. The Division lost four Service Officers last month. Mr. Mestas asked the Board for their recommendations and the interview panel has been set. There are only three seats left to fill on the two reserved tables for Wings over the Rockies.

Gail Hoagland: A detailed report of the meeting with the four-corners grantee will be available soon. An estimated 75-100 veterans were in attendance at the Durango Stand-down, which had tremendous community support. Companies were present to hire on the spot.

DoubleTree Hotel donated a van for transportation to Albuquerque for Choice and C&P appointments. The area town hall meeting has been rescheduled for November 16.

### **New Business**

The assignment of Board members to Committees is as follows: Jack Rudder will report on the Annual Training.

Hollie Caldwell agreed to be on the Veterans Assistance Grant Committee. Robby Robinson will stay on the Veterans Community Living Centers Committee. Duane Dailey assigned himself to the Veterans Trust Fund Committee.

Both Jack Rudder and Pat Hammon will stay on the Strategic Planning Committee. A Board member is no

**Old Business Future Meetings**

November 1, 2017: Wings over the Rockies, Aurora December 1, 2017: VA Regional Office, Lakewood

January 4, 2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District – Boulder Area

February 2, 2018: 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District – Pueblo/Alamosa Area March 2, 2018: 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
– Denver Area

April 6, 2018: 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District – Aurora Chamber of Commerce May 4, 2018: North Jefferson  
County

June 1, 2018: Spanish Peaks Community Living Center, Walsenburg

Ms. Hammon mentioned that a documentary about western slope veterans and alternative therapies will run on  
Rocky Mountain PBS on October 19.

Meeting adjourned 11:08am

## **Board Minutes**

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**November 1, 2017**

**Wings Over the Rockies**

**7711 E. Academy Blvd.,**

**Denver, CO 80230**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0901 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, members of the Colorado National Guard aiding in hurricane relief or deployed and all service members.

### **Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests**

Board Members Present: Duane Dailey, Chair Jack Rudder, Vice-Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Pat Hammon, Member

William "Robby" Robinson, Member Lacey Golonka, Member

Norm Steen, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Major General Michael A. Loh, The Adjutant General Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director

Greg Dorman, DMVA Legislative Liaison Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director

Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator Claire Dean, CDVA Interim Office Manager

Guests Present:

James Craig, president of UVC and Rural Rehabilitation Specialist for Colorado AgrAbility Theresa Rudder, president-elect of Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs and Jack's wife

Aaron Termain, Veterans Community Living Centers Lewis Entz, former State Senator from the San Luis Valley Lynne Ciancio, Army Retiree

### **Approval of October Minutes**

The minutes from the October meeting were approved as presented.

### **Board Member Comments**

Pat Hammon: November is a busy month in Eagle County with 17 scheduled school programs where veterans will meet with students during Veterans Awareness Week. The Veterans Resource Center located in Glenwood Springs will have a grand opening on November 10.

Representatives from both Senator Bennett's and US Representative Tipton's offices will be present.

Volunteers are needed to staff the event.

Jack Rudder: Money continues to be raised for the project dubbed Operation Bring Them Home that deals with the issue of veterans unclaimed remains throughout the state. The Alamosa Gun Club will host a fundraiser for

the cause this summer. Mr. Rudder worked with Huerfano County Service Officer Nick Vigil to properly bury unclaimed remains in La Veta, Colorado. Several Veterans Day programs are scheduled to take place at Adams State College including the Air Force band. Mr. Mestas asked if headstones for the graves are being provided and offered to get free grave markers.

Hollie Caldwell: Students at Platte College have donated about \$500 to Operation Bring Them Home. Platte College will be on hand at the first aid booths during the annual Veterans Day Run on November 5. Positive feedback was given to Mr. Mestas for his visit to the college over Columbus Day.

Robby Robinson: Mr. Robinson attended the Veterans Trauma Court Conference last week. A draft of a proposal that has received bipartisan support will be presented to the legislature.

There will likely be some disagreements dealing with sealing records for felony convictions. With regards to the Veterans Community Living Center at Fitzsimmons, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless was successful in getting the contract for permanent supportive housing on the Fitzsimmons campus but was told that they will not receive low income tax credits this year. Mr. Termain added that the Colorado Department of Human Services rewrote the agreement with the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless allowing them another year to work on securing the tax credits. Both Mr. Robinson and Ms. Ciancio returned to the Rifle Community Living Center to visit with veteran residents Lewis Whorley and Larry Velasquez.

Duane Dailey: The YMCA of the Rockies donates kitchen staff to help with the Grand County Veterans Day festivities which total 400 in attendance. Area resident and veteran Betty Kramer is the area chaplain. Mr. Dailey is now assisting Jackson and Summit Counties.

Lacey Golonka: Ms. Golonka sits on the Veterans Economic Development Board. Currently, veteran unemployment numbers are down. Excel Energy staff may volunteer to help with the Wreaths Across America project at Homelake. Ms. Golonka requested that the board look at changing its schedule from the first Friday to either the second or third Friday of each month to accommodate her drill schedule.

Norm Steen: Teller County began fundraising for a full-size bronze statue commemorating Vietnam veteran Eric Dickson, one of Teller County's own. The statue will cost about \$60,000 and will be placed in the center of Woodland Park's main park. A school district-wide gathering will take place on November 10 at the Woodland Park High School for Veterans Day. Mr. Steen serves on Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) which advocates for legislature and serves as Vice-Chair for the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments. He also works closely with the American Legion and US Representative Doug Lamborn.

### **Guest/Public Comments**

Theresa Rudder: Wreaths Across America will be placing over 1,000 wreaths on graves at Homelake on

### **Staff Reports**

Mickey Hunt: The budget for FY 2017-2018 is closing out. Mr. Hunt will be at Mt. Carmel and Peak Military Care Network tomorrow followed by interviews for the DEERS position in Grand Junction. The position will be located in the National Guard Readiness Center. Mr. Hunt was very impressed with this year's organization of the Colorado Springs Stand-down. Civil Air

Patrol may be available to help with Homelake's wreath project. Mr. Hunt welcomes CCI to help the Department educate County Commissioners on who we are and what we do.

Greg Dorman: The legislative session will begin January 2018. The Board was reminded to refrain from taking positions on the bills. The Joint Budget Committee Hearing will meet on Monday, November 27. Military Appreciation Day will be held at the Capitol on January 26, 2018.

Ben Mestas: Mr. Mestas visited Platte College on October 9 and congratulated Ms. Caldwell on the amazing job she has done with the nursing program. The number of homeless that attended the Grand Junction Homeless Stand-down was corrected to 160 veterans served. The reorganization of the Division's office has begun in order to improve the client's experience.

We are still waiting for the three Service Officer postings. The fourth Service Officer will strictly handle outreach and state-wide training. Mr. Robinson asked if the Cemetery is requesting new vendor quotes, since the current vendor is making expensive mistakes on nearly half of the tombstones and plaques. The issue will be brought up at next month's Board meeting at the VA Regional Office, where vendor contracting is handled. Mr. Mestas will go over the CBVA information binder with those new Board members who missed the annual Board Retreat. Mr. Dailey asked how long it will take to see the Outreach Service Officer position posted onto the State's website. Mr. Mestas replied that on average it takes Human Resources three to four weeks to get positions posted.

Major General Michael A. Loh: Major General Loh introduced himself to the Board, gave a brief bio and requested the Board members reintroduce themselves. The Colorado National Guard provides ready forces for homeland defense, fosters partnerships with various boards and international forces and supports active families as well as veterans.

Gail Hoagland: Mr. Robinson requested that the list of grantees receiving the Veterans Assistance Grant be put on the website. The action item was then discussed. The new application has been switched from written narrative to question and answer format to make the process even easier. The level of risk needs to be clear to comply with Federal and State Uniform Grant Guidance regulations. Mr. Dailey asked for clarification of the

pre-award assessment questionnaire. Ms. Caldwell asked for clarification on the Veterans Trust Fund 47 application and the request of number of veterans duplicated. So many applicants deliver their materials on the last day. Mr. Steen wondered if a drop box needs to be installed at the Revere address. Mr. Dorman replied that it would not be safe and that contractors often deliver time- sensitive material and may be confused with the drop box option. Clarification was given as to the rubric showing the quality of the applicant as well as the quality of the application.

Ms. Caldwell requested that the application be numbered. Ms. Hammon motioned to approve the grant application with modifications. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. Ms. Hoagland briefly explained webinars to the new Board members. Mr. Robinson recommended including wording on the applications that the State of Colorado follows the Federal Uniform Grant Guidance Rules.

### **New Business**

The Strategic Planning Committee will meet today at 2pm.

Ms. Golonka formally requested the Board meeting be changed to another day of the week, in order to accommodate her schedule. She will have definitive dates in the coming weeks for her ongoing drill. Mr. Hunt asked the Board to consider another Friday of the month to meet. Mr. Mestas reminded the Board of their deadlines to the Grant Administrator in March and April.

This discussion has been tabled until the next Board meeting on December 1.

Ms. Hammon asked at what level Board members can contribute to the legislative effort for increased pay at the Community Living Centers. Mr. Dorman replied that the Board cannot act until the Department has a position and they will not act until the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), whom the Community Living Centers fall under, has a position. CDHS will not take a position until they have the Governor's support. Mr. Termain shared news that the Governor has just approved the budget to increase Community Living Center employees pay and achieve competitive wages.

Ms. Caldwell has accepted the position of Regional Vice President of Orbis Education and will begin December 11. She will be mostly work remotely and should be able to attend the CBVA meetings.

Mr. Dailey inquired about conducting Board meetings via conference call. Mr. Hunt will look into that possibly. It is strongly encouraged that Board members be physically present at meetings.

### **Old Business Future Meetings**

December 1, 2017: VA Regional Office, Lakewood

January 4, 2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District – Boulder Area February 2, 2018: 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District –

Pueblo/Alamosa Area March 2, 2018: 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District – Denver Area

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April 6, 2018: 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District – Aurora Chamber of Commerce  
May 4, 2018: North Jefferson  
County

June 1, 2018: Spanish Peaks Community Living Center, Walsenburg Meeting adjourned 11:00am



## **Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes**

**01 December 2017**

**VA Regional Office, Director's Conference Room 155**

**Van Gordon Street**

**Lakewood, CO 80228**

### **Members and Guests**

#### Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair Jack Rudder, Vice Chair

Hollie Caldwell, Secretary Lacey Golonka, Member Pat Hammon, Member Robby Robinson, Member Norm Steen, Member

#### DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Executive Director Ben Mestas, CDVA Director

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

#### Guests Present:

Ivan Brooks, VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe

Katie Claussen, Assistant Veterans Service Center Manager, Denver VARO

Sara Elton, Chief of Operations-Continental District, National Cemetery Administration Teddy Kulkoski, Change Management Agent, Denver VARO, via conference call

Tiffany Morgan, Cohen Veterans Network

Theresa Rudder, Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, Jack's wife

### **Opening**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0903 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**

It was moved by Ms. Hammon and seconded by Mr. Robinson to accept the November minutes as submitted.

The motion carried.

### **Board Member Comments**

Ms. Caldwell said she enjoyed attending the Denver Stand Down in November and complimented the efforts of the VA staff members who supported and worked at the event.

Ms. Hammon said that Eagle County had 20 school programs in November in recognition of Veterans Day.

More than 5,000 students participated in the weeklong awareness event that acknowledged veterans from World

War II through the present. The community continues its support of the western slope veterans one stop and is working on outreach to local nonprofits in anticipation of a 2019 opening. A new veterans resource center has opened in Glenwood Springs and is entirely staffed by volunteers.

Ms. Golonka said that unemployment rates in Colorado continue to be lower than the national average, including unemployment among veterans. She said she has some suggestions to submit for nonprofits which might be interested in the western slope one stop.

Mr. Robinson said he attended the Joint Budget Committee hearing on 27 November. The new one stop was discussed but the committee did not need any information from CBVA at that time. He said SVCLCs may receive an exemption from state personnel rules regarding salary ranges, which is anticipated to help with recruitment and retention of staff.

Mr. Rudder said he also attended the Denver Stand Down and remarked on the number of both homeless veterans and service providers in attendance. In the San Luis Valley, Mr. Rudder spoke in recognition of Veterans Day at a school in Homelake, where both the superintendent and some of teachers are his former students. A representative of the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System come to Alamosa monthly to assist and advise on health care difficulties in rural parts of Colorado. Mr. Rudder continues to receive frequent complaints about the Choice program.

Mr. Dailey said he also attended the Denver Stand Down, which he has attended several times. He said it is interesting to arrive early and see how many veterans have camped out from the night before in anticipation of the event. He said that in his experience in the mountains of Colorado, many veterans who can be categorized as homeless deliberately try to live off the grid, which is dissimilar from the homeless populations he sees in urban areas. He complimented the staff and volunteers who helped with the Stand Down. Northwestern Colorado recognized Veterans Day with events in multiple locations including Craig, Granby, Hayden, Maybell, Meeker, and Steamboat Springs. The event at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby had more than 400 attendees. He said he appreciate the opportunity to work in conjunction with the Denver VARO because for many veterans in Colorado, CDVA and its VSOs are considered the face of the VA. He said that although the agencies are not connected there is common goal.

Mr. Steen said that on 21 November Congressman Doug Lamborn introduced HR 4457, the Veterans Empowerment Act. This would replace the Choice Act by creating a new nonprofit entity that would function as a single payer so veterans might have a wider selection of medical providers. Congressman Lamborn published an op-ed about the bill on 28 November and it is available on his web site.

## **Public Comments**

Ms. Kulkoski told the group that she is the contact for Denver VARO regarding Decision Ready Claims (DRC) and questions and issues about the process should come to her. She explained DRC as similar to the FDC program, with the difference being that with DRC claim developments is complete before the claim is submitted to the VA, and with this the VA can render a decision in 30 days or less. DRC is currently available for claims for increase only. Ms. Hammon inquired about the submission process. Ms. Kulkoski said go the direct upload on the 360 portal and to select the DRC option. Mr. Mestas said that training would be available at the Division's annual training conference. Ms. Kulkoski added that online training is also available and said to email her at [theodora.kulkoski@va.gov](mailto:theodora.kulkoski@va.gov) with any questions.

Ms. Morgan introduced the Cohen Veterans Network, which provides free mental health care for veterans and their families. The network plans to open a new clinic in Colorado in February or March of 2018. The network clinics provide a spectrum of care, including psychiatric care, medication management, individuals and family therapy, and case management. No clinical services are available prior to the opening, but in the meantime veterans' advocates can contact Tiffany at 303-704-9419 and she can provide referrals.

Mr. Brooks reported that as administrator of the Veterans Trust Fund Grant for VFW Post 12063, the post has served more than 90 veterans using VTF funds. He agreed that mental health care is an unmet need for many veterans. One program that has been well utilized in Custer County is Outdoor Buddies, which is an all-volunteer nonprofit that pairs volunteers with disabled individuals to access Colorado's natural resources. It is not limited to veterans but is accessed by many, as per census approximately 25%-40% of the county's residents are veterans. He said one of the reasons the VTF funds have been so well expended is the partnership he has with the CVSO. He said that other rural counties have trouble accessing their CVSOs and inquired whether that could be addressed. Mr. Mestas said that CVSOs are employees of their respective counties and many work part time. Over the past two years the state has greatly increased its financial support to Colorado veterans service offices, one goal being to improve accessibility.

Ms. Elton said that the National Cemetery Administration provides burial benefits for veteran v=buried or interred in either a national cemetery or a private one. It is the smallest branch of the VA, operating 21 cemeteries in nine states. When burial in a national cemetery is requested, the funeral home contacts the national scheduling office in St Louis and arranges the date and time. Burial benefit payments are done by reimbursement only. The national cemetery benefit includes the opening and closing of the grave, the concrete vault, perpetual care of the grave site, the gravestone, and military honors. National cemeteries in Colorado are currently at Fort Logan and Fort Lyon, with plans underway to develop another one in Colorado Springs. Burials not in a national cemetery are provided with a headstone or with a medallion for a private stone.

Memorial headstones are also available for service members who are MIA. Forms and information are available at [va.gov](http://va.gov) or questions can be directed to Ms. Elton at [sara.elton@va.gov](mailto:sara.elton@va.gov).

Ms. Claussen said she several years of history with the VA, having worked as a VSR in Nebraska, Washington, DC, and Florida before locating to Colorado. She reported that in Fiscal Year 2017 the Denver VARO completed 23,900 claims and 3,200 appeals, held 130 BVA Travel Board hearings, and held more than 500 BVA video hearings. There are currently 84 Travel Board hearings and more than 400 video hearings scheduled for Fiscal Year 2018. She introduced the Rapid Appeals Modification Program (RAMP), which takes the oldest pending appeals in date order and offers the veteran a higher level review in the hope of resolving the appeal more quickly. They sent out 500 RAMP letters early in the last quarter of 2017 and have just sent out 5,000 more. The goal is to speed of the processing of appeals, which still pend for a long time. There Denver VARO approximately 5,000 appeals at the NOD stage pending and they take an average of 400 days to be worked. There are approximately 1,300 appeals at the Form 9 stage and those wait approximately 600 days to be worked. The VARO recommends that if a claim is denied but the veteran has new evidence or submitted evidence was overlooked to request reconsideration rather than file an appeal. She suggested that if Colorado preference letters are not being sent in a timely manner that veterans can send an IRIS request from [va.gov](http://va.gov), as those messages must be responded to within 48 hours. Mr. Dailey and Mr. Rudder both asked for clarification on the PIV card process, which Ms. Claussen said she would research.

### **Recess**

Mr. Dailey here called a recess at 10:50 a.m. Order resumed at 11:01 a.m.

### **Reports**

Mr. Hunt said the new Board members will be confirmed by the legislature in January. He said there were some complications at the Denver Stand Down between the VA and the National Guard, and a proposed solution is to not use the armory for future Stand Downs but to seek a more central location. He was in Grand Junction on 29 November for the charette for the new one stop, which the community has termed a one source. He also attended the Joint Budget Committee hearing on 27 November where there was extensive discussion about the one source, with many questions for the department. A SMART Act briefing is schedule for 04 January and the Board is encouraged to attend. Suggestions for upcoming legislation should be given to Mr. Hunt no later than 21 December. The National Western Stock Show will host Military and Veterans Night on 16 January and recognize Viet Nam veterans.

Mr. Mestas said that Stand Down numbers are available in his submitted report. These have been tracked since 2008. Mr. Steen asked if is known whether attendees are unique or returning. Mr. Mestas says that information is not tracked. Planning is underway for the Board to tour the new VAMC at Fitzsimons.

Ms. Hoagland said she has no additions to her report except to thank Mr. Brooks for attending. Mr. Brooks also thanks Ms. Hoagland for her assistance.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Ms. Golonka said that her drill duties conflict with scheduled Board meetings in April, May, June and September and inquired if there was any decision regarding call-in attendance. Mr. Hunt said that according to the Director of the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions it is not prohibited. In discussion, the consensus was that the Board would like to keep the meeting schedule on the first Fridays of each month but no member had objection to call-in attendance. The upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

January 05, 2018, Longmont, American Legion Post 32. The strategic plan will be reviewed.

February 02, 2018, Alamosa

March 02, 2018, Denver

April 06, 2018, Aurora – VTF vote

May 04, 2017, Jefferson County

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Steen. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.