

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Meeting

Date: 04 October 2024

Time: 9:01 AM

Location: Recruiting & Readiness Center 9510 Voyager Parkway, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Break: 10:48 to 11:00

Members Present

Shelia Scanlon, Chair

Longinos Gonzalez

Sean Maday, Vice Chair

Jasmine Motupalli

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Raymond Taylor

Members Absent

Howard Richards, Member - Absent

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan Division of Veteran
Affairs Director

Carissa Snyder, CDVA
Operations Coordinator

Angela Ingalls, Veterans
Memorial Cemetery of Western
Colorado Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants
Administrator

Darrin Collazo, Western Region
One Source Administrator

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran
Services Supervisor

Amy Demenge, Women Veteran
Coordinator

Guest

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veteran Service Officer, NASCVSO delegate, Colorado County Veteran Service Officer Association

Dr. Tina Garcia, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Disable Veterans of America (DAV), United Veterans Coalition (UVC) Legislative Chair

Pat Hammon, Eagle County VSO, VCLC Board of Commissioners, UVC Representative

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veteran Service Officer

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley, American Legion VSO

Craig Rauwolf, Valley Veterans Recreation, Valley Wide, American Legion Veteran Service Office

Approval of Minutes: September 2024

- Mr. Maday made a motion to stop reviewing the lengthy September minutes and to discuss reformatting shorter Board's minutes with a review of September 's minutes and October's minutes at the November Board meeting. Mrs. Golonka Seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved
 - Colorado Revised statutes have a minimum requirement regarding meeting minutes to be addressed by a Class II Board: every agenda item; significant issues; and votes need to be reflected.
 - Mr. Maday made a motion to reduce the details and have the minutes reflect the points of discussion and actions being taken. Mrs. Golonka seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

- The Board also discussed receiving the minutes no later than the Monday before next month's meeting to be able to review and submit corrections prior to the meeting. The Division Reports do not need to be sent to the board with the minutes.

Public Comments

- Dr. Garcia, asked for a response from the comptroller's office regarding the number of contracts awarded to Veteran owned businesses. Dr. Garcia was advised the comptroller's office sends an annual report to the Board of Veterans Affairs. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 this report was recorded in the October Minutes. Mrs. Scanlon requested the documents Dr. Garcia has from last year be sent to Mrs. Snyder. Mrs. Scanlon and Mrs. Snyder will contact the comptroller's office for a FY 2024 report.

Legislative Update – Director Cowan

- The Department of Military and Veteran Affairs decision items should be available on 1 November 2024.

VCLC Board of Commissioners

- There has been an increase of non-agency staff at the VCLCs. Florence and Bruce McCandless have zero agency staff in their facilities and have hired 13 staff personnel since January. Fitzsimmons has 15 new hires and 11 Agency Staff personnel. Homelake has zero agency Registered Nurses (RNs) with two Agency Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). Riffle has zero agency RNs and is conducting a CNA class with the caveat that the student would work at the facility for several years upon graduation. This has led to 20 new hires since January. Spanish Peaks 3 Staff and 5 Agency Personnel.
- Ms. Rose Campbell is speaking with VSOs, as they are in direct contact with the veterans and their families.

- No updates on legislative items.
- No current requests for VTF funds will follow up after the next VCLC Board meeting.

UVC Legislative Update

- The UVC Executive Board has voted on the legislative goals but has not published them yet, Mrs. Hammon will request a copy of the goals at the next UVC meeting. She will then submit the goals to the CBVA Board to review for FY 2025.

Standing Reports

DMVA/DVA - Bruce Cowan

- Mr. Cowan informed the board of his upcoming visits to the VCLC on 24 and 25 October. There will be representation from the board on these trips.
- Mr. Cowan's goals and objectives for FY 25 are: to revise and reclassify the VSO position descriptions, meet with the DMV to revise the Disabled Veteran License Plate requirements, work with the VA to gather Data Driven Decisions and peer review process.
- SB24-004, working group has been completed and is currently working to obtain PIV cards and VBMS access for the CVSOs. They will have February for existing VSOs to obtain the PIV card and VBMS access.

Veterans Services and Training

- Mr. Winterrowd updated the board with outreach events for the veteran service team as well as their good news stories.
- Mr. Winterrowd informed the board about staffing concerns.

- There are eight counties with new VSOs. Mr. Winterrowd is currently in the process of hiring a temporary training officer, as Mrs. Cunningham will be taking extended leave.
- Women VSO Coordinator is continuing her outreach and training. Ms. Amy Demenge is completing a Military Women's Display at the WROs.
- Appeals have seen an increase in hearing and grants as it is the end of the Federal fiscal year.

Western Region One Source

- The WROs is fully staffed. There is one tenant vacancy at the WROS as of 1 November.
- There was growth in multiple programs offered at the WROS. The WROS hosted a standdown in addition to other Outreach events and hosted a visit from the JBC.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

- The Stipend program has paid out \$15,500 for the first quarter of FY 2025.
- The lithograph project restores the headstones that is positively impacting the appearance of the Cemetery grounds. The sign in the entrance has made an impact on the community and has maintained the appearance of the Cemetery overall.
- The power washer and trailer the Cemetery was planning to purchase with the VTF funds is currently under review to determine if it will appropriately preserve the headstones as is stipulated in the application.

- Mrs. Ingalls updated the Board with staff updates, visits to the cemetery from the JBC, Saluting Branches and Department of Corrections and the Missing in America in a new program to assist deceased veterans to be laid to rest in the location prior to their incarceration. Ms. Ingalls is working with DORA on the new Funeral Home regulation (SB24-173). Funeral homes with an abundance of unclaimed remains work in conjunction with Missing in America to identify veterans, their spouses, and dependents of veterans.

Grants

- Ms. Stamm updated the board with grant processing and education provided with the new grantees with lower execution rates, make-up grant training, quarterly report forms and the complaint and appeal process.
- Director Cowan, Ms. Stamm, Mrs. Snyder, and Mrs. Scanlon met to discuss improvements to the VTF application for FY 26.
- Military Honors Stipend Program position description is under review.
- Small CBVA Group will meet in April to review VTF Grant Applications. Small Group will be made up of Mr. Maday, Mr. Taylor and Ms Golonka.

CCVSOA/NACVSO – Marshall Bosworth

- Mr. Bosworth updated the board with the CCVSOA board meeting during Fall Training. This meeting consisted of electing members into new and vacant board positions. The meeting also discussed revising the Bylaws. Mr. Bosworth highlighted Rick Ward of Bent and Otero County as the recipient for the Nordini Award.

- 19-21 November El Paso County is sponsoring a Claims Clinic at the North Colorado Springs Readiness Center. This Event is a partnership with multiple counties. The Board requested a Women’s only claims clinic in the future.

Old Business

Veteran’s Clearinghouse

- 130 unique individuals searched the clearing house. Marketing to advertise the clearing house is warranted and wanted.
- Mr. Winterrowd has the updates from Mrs. Montupalli.

Albuquerque VHA Support to Rural Veterans

- Mr. Taylor recommended having a single point of contact for Colorado to meet with a single point of Contact at the Albuquerque VA. Mr. Taylor recommended an in-person meeting with the Albuquerque VA, as Mr. Taylor has not been able to meet with the Director of the VAMC ABQ.
- The travel claims department has confirmed they are not receiving all the travel claim faxes being sent by Farmington, Durango and Pagosa Springs. Emailed receipts have not been confirmed as received or not. Mr. Taylor plans to call the Travel Claims Department to determine success rates of emailed requests.
- There are difficulties with continuity of care in Southwest Colorado as there are few VA doctors at facilities and high turnover.

Veteran “protected class” for number hires for FY AG’s office response

- The AG has requested a schedule for the Board meetings.

Women Veterans Subcommittee

- Working with Ms. Demege to determine the next course of action.

IBM

- Mr. Maday confirmed that Mr. Jim Cressman will be meeting the Board in Grand Junction and will speak at the meeting, after public comments.

Access to Prescriptions Letter for Board Review

- Mr. Gonzalez made the recommendation the Prescription Drug letter be approved with corrections. Mrs. Golonka 2nd motion. Board unanimous. This will be left on the agenda until action is taken.

Legislation for next Legislative Session

- The Board is determining whether a memo to the TAG is needed to formally request no less than \$500,000 increase for VAG funding for this FY.
- The Board would like to add language to the statute for the VAG and VTF grants to include surviving spouses of veterans but may wait until the next FY to make this request.
- The board is waiting on requests from the VCLCs, VMC, WROS and DVA for more VTF funding.

New Business

Annual Report from Departments within the State

- Mrs. Scanlon will discuss with Ms Synder from DVA on how to go about obtaining the missing Annual Reports.

Branding Success Stories

- Mr. Maday would like to create a CBVA social media account for marketing and branding and to share other pertinent information, with weekly updates. Mrs. Scanlon asked if the board needs to send a letter to Colorado Boards and Commissions to determine if it is possible for the CBVA to create a social media presence. If it is possible for CBVA to have a social media page, who would be the administrator of that page? If the DMVA has a social media page is the board able to partner with that social media page?

Board Member Remarks

The following members gave remarks.

Shelia Scanlon, Chair	Longinos Gonzalez
Sean Maday, Vice Chair	Jasmine Motupalli
Lacey Golonka, Secretary	Raymond Taylor

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions; Veterans on Fringes: Homelessness; Mental Health Service; Transportation

Upcoming Meetings

Meeting Date	Location
15 Nov	Western Region One Source, Grand Junction
13 Dec	Virtual
10 January 2025	TBD

07 February 2025

Denver VA Hospital

02 May 2025

Denver – VTF Grants

Adjournment:

Mrs. Golonka made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Maday seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:34 pm.