

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs 2020 Meeting Minutes

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
Friday, January 3, 2020
VA Regional Office 155 Van Gordon St.
Lakewood, CO 80228

Members and Guests Members Present:

Jack Rudder, Chair

Pat Hammon, Vice Chair Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Hollie Caldwell, Member Duane Dailey,
Member

Longinos Gonzalez Jr., Member Norm Steen, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Greg Dorman, DMVA Interim Deputy Executive Director, Resource Director and Legislative
Liaison Matthew Biniki, DMVA Legislative Liaison

Richard Tremaine, CDVA East Director

Gail Hoagland, CDVA East Grant Administrator Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Office Manager
Megan Fraser, CDVA East Administration

Guests Present:

Teresa Rudder

Don Davis, Jefferson County Manager, Retired Marine Colonel

Dick Young, Admiral, Vice Chair of United Veterans Coalition of Colorado LeeAnn Morrill, 1st
Assistant Attorney General

Opening:

Mr. Rudder began the meeting at 0900.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes presented were edited as follows: pg. 6, Norm Steen – National association of Counties
(instead of county commissioners); pg. 2 “It is impossible to direct the county commissioners” to
“It is not within the legislative authority to direct county commissioners.”; pg. 3 change “only
VSO” to “only one VSO”; pg. 3/5 following Ms. Hoagland change “that” to “than”. Mr. Dailey
motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Ms. Scanlon seconded, the Board voted

unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

Speaker: LeeAnn Morrill on Open Meetings Law

Ms. Morrill provided an overview of the open meetings law, this met the training requirement for the year. Board members made queries for clarification.

Public Comments –

Mr. Davis shared that the men and women in our services have a lot to offer when they transition; he has also found that the men and women in the local government are every bit as patriotic as our military members. The stronger our local government is, the stronger our nation is, because the less our national assets have to be used to assist at the local level. It's time to change the discussion from veterans being damaged goods and needing assistance to everything most veterans bring to their communities. He wants to change the conversation to the uncommon virtues that veterans bring to their companies and communities. Board members thanked Mr. Davis for his remarks and concurred with his opinion.

Mr. Young shared that the unemployment rate for Veterans in Colorado is lower than the general unemployment rate for the general public. He inquired as to where he can find the program information for incarcerated veterans, homeless veterans' initiatives and veterans' nursing homes that are listed on the DVA website? Mr. Dorman provided that veterans' court is provided under the Dept. of Law. Mr. Tremaine said the website needs to be updated. Ms. Caldwell said that the website shouldn't say veterans nursing homes it should state Veterans Living Centers (VLCs).

Unfinished Business

Ms. Hammon moved that the Bylaw Committee Report and Task Force Committee Report be moved to priority one and two as Ms. Caldwell has to leave at 11am. There were no objections.

Ms. Hammon shared that the sub-committee reviewed the existing bylaws and have suggestions of changes for the Board. Their first recommendation is "All Board members must vote in person, or by phone, or by other electronic means (email) when initiated by the Chairman in special circumstances." Discussion ensued. The Board agreed that LeeAnn needs to be consulted as to the legality of this suggested change.

The second recommendation was in regards to section 2a, Special Meetings, specifically the need to vote before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Mr. Dorman said that a public

notice needs to be given at least 24 hours in advance. He suggested to strike the word ‘special’ as all meetings need to have a 24-hour notice. Ms. Caldwell pointed out that all meetings are equal and require the same public notice. Ms. Hammon suggested discussing striking sections 2,3 and 4 of Article III with LeeAnn. Ms.

Caldwell agreed, stating that section 1 should be modified to include all necessary information required for scheduling a meeting.

The sub-committee suggested a third revision of the by-laws under section 4 ‘Officers’: “The board may, by vote of majority, appoint a DVA division staff with DVA Director consent to serve as secretary”.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Dorman suggested “the Board may delegate the responsibilities of the secretary to a member of the DVA staff”. The final wording discussed was: “The board may request a DVA division staff with DVA director consent to serve as administrative support”.

Ms. Hammon, section 7, the Duties of the Division, timing of when the minutes should be prepared from the previous Board meeting and how much time ahead of the next meeting should the agenda be finalized and sent to the board members. 1 week for each was proposed, agreement was made for 2 weeks for each. One week after the approval of minutes the minutes need to be posted online. ‘Continue’ was changed to ‘continuing’ – see meeting minutes of working group on 23 DEC 2019 for the suggested additions. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Scanlon requested help understanding the origin and circumference of the clause ‘standards of conduct’ found in the ByLaws, Mr. Dorman will assist with this.

Ms. Hammon will provide Ms. Fraser with the finalized suggestions for the Bylaw revisions to be provided to the Board for the next meeting.

Ms. Hammon reminded the committee and visitors present about the Task Force that the Adjutant General put forth. She shared the meeting minutes with those present. She requested the Board put together an advisory summary for the Adjutant General. Discussion ensued between Board members with input from guests. A definition of ‘homeless’ will be requisite for this project. ‘Rural’ needs to be a section of the demographics. Gap analysis: The Board won’t

be able to know how many people aren't being reached by any service whatsoever and who are not retirees.

Ms. Caldwell left at 11:05am

Mr. Dorman was queried as to what exactly TAG has requested. The answer was that a conceptual Scope of Work needs to be presented to TAG. Ms. Hammon said the working group for the task force will have one more call and will produce a suggested scope of work for the Board for the next Board meeting in February.

At 11:12 the meeting adjourned until 11:20.

Ms. Scanlon queried the Board what she can do to reduce the letter CCI letter to make it a single page. The other Board members had no suggestions.

Ms. Hammon reminded the Board of their discussion from the last meeting in regards to improving communication about the Board's activity to veterans. She suggested asking the DVA to assist with reaching out to the AL, VFW, VVA, UVC, Purple Heart, DAV, team Rubicon, Team White and Blue, Project Sanctuary and the veteran liaisons at each community college, etc. so they can announce where the Boards upcoming meetings are. Ms. Fraser was tasked with getting the appropriate state contacts.

Mr. Dailey congratulated Carissa Snyder on her promotion. He also checked with Ms. Snyder if everything the Board is tasking the administrative staff with at DVA East is an appropriate amount of work or if it is too much. Ms. Snyder said that all requests are manageable.

Ms. Snyder shared that the Governor's report went to Mr. Dorman today.

Ms. Hammon highlighted the letter from Joanne Iglesias at Western Region OneSource, thanking the Board for the monies they voted for at the last meeting.

New Business

The February meeting date no longer has any conflicts associated with it. The next meeting will be Feb 7 2020 at Mt. Carmel in Colorado Springs.

The VFW Post in Burlington for March is grateful the Board wants to have a meeting there but is warning the Board about high winds and snow drifts at that time of year and suggested they come another time. The upcoming meeting locations are as follows: April – Aurora; May – Cortez; June – Steamboat Springs. Grant training is expected to be the night before the March meeting in Burlington. Ms. Hoagland suggested coming up with a plan B for March, discussion ensued.

Ms. Hammon motioned to move the March meeting to the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center and move Burlington to August 2020. Ms. Scanlon seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favor by the Board. Ms. Hammon will notify Ms. Fraser if she is able to secure a room.

Reports

Mr. Dorman shared that there is no military day currently scheduled at the Capitol. General White was selected to be the Director of Space Operations for National Guard which is a 2-star billet; Colonel Scott Sherman will become the Director of the Joint Staff, which is a 1-star billet; the current G3 Colonel Charlie Davey will become the Army Chief of Staff. Today is Greg Dorman's last day as interim Deputy Director, Mr. Hopkins starts tomorrow. The Legislative Session starts on January 8th and Mr. Biniki will be at the Capitol daily managing everything there. The Department of Human services has a 3.5 million reduction of funds in their budget request in regards to CLCs. Mr. Dorman encouraged the Board to communicate through Division staff to the Nursing Board chair.

Ms. Snyder reported for Mr. Tremaine at DVA East. The job position for two VSOs closes on Jan 13th. The position for the Program Assistant just closed. We are still in talks with the Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center to give our VSOs access to patient units for veterans seeking mental health services. We are interested in pursuing get a TBI specialist on the team of VSOs at DVA East. Narrowing in on the hotel for the conference in September. There may be a virtual training in the spring. Office staff is still short a person at DVA East. VBMS training has not yet been scheduled. Monthly reports from County Veteran Service Officers should still be directed to Diana Debor.

No report from Robbie Robinson

Ms. Hoagland had nothing additional to provide other than her written report. She invited questions from the Board on her written report. Ms. Scanlon queried in regards to the grantees that are in non-compliance and how to recuperate funds from grantees who have not yet spent anything. Ms. Hoagland said that she is working with each of the non-compliant grantees and that it can take time to make the necessary changes. There is no policy about cross-quarters reimbursement. Discussion ensued. Mr. Steen and Mr. Dailey shared frustration about how VTF funds are being utilized, he does not feel that Veterans are being served as best as they could be.

Mr. Steen queried those present about how many VFW and AL posts there are state-wide. Mr. Dailey answered there are at least 200 AL posts. There are only 30 VTF grants given annually. Mr. Dailey reminded the Board of the history of the VTF fund and praised the work Ms. Hoagland is doing. Ms. Hammon informed the Board that they should expect a grant request from Pitkin County. Those applying for HISSA grants must be enrolled in VA Health Care.

Ms. Hammon highlighted the report from DVA West, they held a Wreaths Across America at the Cemetery in Grand Junction and they placed over 2,000 wreaths.

Board Member Remark

Mr. Dailey participated in Wreaths Across America in Kremling. They placed approximately 154 wreaths. 80 wreaths were accidentally sent to Ft. Logan but they were able to be placed later. There are many homeless vets who need assistance. He appreciated the program 'Volunteers for America' and the work his local coordinator is doing.

Mr. Gonzalez was a guest speaker at VFWs Voice for Democracy; also participated in Pikes Peak Wreaths across America, lots of children attended.

Ms. Hammon said there is lots of homelessness and lots of vets in transit along I-70. She highlighted a young man who is a single dad of two living in a trailer with no running water.

Ms. Scanlon had a very successful Christmas at Buckley Air Force Base, everybody who attended received a gift and breakfast, it was done by One Marine Association. The United Veterans Coalition, is having a banquet on April 19th she will be the conduit as Board members submit the checks for the event to ensure they get to sit together.

Mr. Steen reminded the Board that he has the National Association of Counties Veterans Service Committee meeting on March 1st in D.C. They will be discussing HR 5516 Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act (CVSO) bill, it provides federal monies to states for veteran outreach and service and was proposed by Mike Leven out of California. Mr. Steen proposed providing a letter of support to Congressman Leven to support HR 5516 and to write letters to our own Federal elected officials. Mr. Steen also requested that Aaron Tremaine provide an update about Veterans Living Center plans for the Colorado Springs area at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Rudder said he missed his Wreaths Across America event for the first time in 12 years. He was told it took about 12 min to be placed, it was well below zero so the process went quickly. His AL group did 36 funerals and 16 honor guards.

Mr. Dailey motioned to adjourn Mr. Gonzalez seconded.

Board voted unanimously to adjourn as 12:18pm.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes

Friday, February 7, 2020

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center

530 Communication Circle

Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Members and Guests Members Present:

Pat Hammon (via Phone), Vice Chair Norm Steen, Member

Longinos Gonzalez, Member Duane Dailey, Member Hollie Caldwell, Member Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Jack Rudder, Chair

DMVA Staff Present:

Gail Hoagland, Grant Administrator

Greg Dorman, DMVA Resource Director and Legislative Liaison Joanne Iglesias, Director CDVA West, via phone

Guests Present:

William Robinson, CO Board of Commissioners Bob McGlaughlin, Mt. Carmel Director

Aaron Tremain, Mt Carmel

Dan Williams, American Legion Post 1980, VFW 6051, Teller County Post 19 Commander

Robert Lourt, COO at Mt. Carmel Ric Morgan, Elbert County VSO

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County VSO Tom Weyer, AL Post 9-11

Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order at 0915 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Rudder invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dailey motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Mr. Steen seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

Aaron Tremaine Presentation

Mr. Tremaine presented a short brief on constructing a new Veterans living center in the Pikes Peak region. A facility for Long Term Care, In Home Care, Assisted, and Memory Care is what is being considered. He would like to gain the Board's support for a new VCLC in the area. It should be something similar to Fitzsimmons in Aurora. The approximate cost for the proposed VCLC is: \$300/sqft, totaling \$37-42 million. It is anticipated the construction will take five years to complete. The approximate cost provided does not include the land. The goal is to develop a home with public/private partnership that will provide long-term care for veterans and their gold-star family members. It gets the state out of the nursing home business.

VCLCs are enterprise funded and the state would not be part of the hiring/firing at the new facility.

Minnesota, Oregon and Michigan are all examples of good VCLCs. There is a federal code specifically detailing financing these veterans homes. The states' cost for this VCLC will be 35% of the total cost, the VA will be 65% of the total amount *plus* they will take on the burden of the price increase (est. 12-15%) over time. This home would be in the second largest concentration of veterans in the nation.

The Colorado veteran population is estimated at 430,000 – 480,000. Colorado Springs is rated number one for all military assignments. The projected increase over next X years is a 17% increase in veterans who will need VCLC care. Most veterans are located – or projected to be located - in the I-25 corridor within that time period. There has been a review of the 5 existing VCLCs in the state, the most recent was built in 2002. The labor forces don't always exist in an area to support the VCLC in the area. Greeley and Ft Collins have another large concentration of veterans and should be kept in mind as a future location for another VCLC.

Mr. Tremaine invited the board members to participate in a working group regarding the proposed VCLC. He identified the next steps as formalizing the working group and identifying land where the facility can be built. Meetings with developers and architects have already begun. The VA needs to know what land will be built on in order to agree to fund it.

Board members made inquiries.

Mr. Bosworth introduced Bill 1220, the 'Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act'. It

requires DHS to conduct a statewide needs survey. The state demographer had very little Veterans information. There is no money needed for this, and accordingly, there is no fiscal note attached to the bill. The funding will come from the general fund - the department is already pursuing this. The Board of commissioners is supposed to participate in any RFP or any contractual stuff and they haven't been doing that.

CDHS sold land to the Ft Logan cemetery. That money was earmarked for projects like these. Also \$25 million in central fund. The DHS thinks they need to spend that money down. That money can only be used for operation, construction and improvements at CLC's. The Board made inquiries for clarification.

There is a need to ascertain that they are using the right business models for the VCLCs. MI, OR and MN need to be more fully examined as to how and why they are succeeding.

Ms. Scanlon put a question on the table to have Michelle Barnes or someone from her staff to come and talk to the BVA at the next meeting. Ms. Hammon concurred.

Ms. Hoagland recommended extending the time of the March meeting in order to allow for two guest speakers and the grant training. Mr. Rudder inquired how much time each guest speaker requires. The Board unanimously determined to add one and a half hours to their normal meeting time in order to allow for all necessary items on the schedule.

Guest Comments -

Mr. Williams from Teller County spoke about a challenge they have been having. Two fires have destroyed two veteran's homes in the last few weeks. 1 out of 4 men in Teller County is a veteran, one out of ten women is a veteran, many don't want to be found. The challenge with the VTF, is that the turnaround is too long for veterans in crisis. Having to return \$5k of grant monies last year was not helpful. He is imploring the board to pay attention to these real needs as they consider their funding disbursement. This organization took a vote as to whether to stay with the VTF or not due to the issues they have been having with it. They are staying but did want to bring their concerns to the board.

Mr. Williams American Legion Post 1980 wants to be able to use funds for paying for expenses incurred in the previous years. They are requesting to see all laws pertaining to the disbursement

of the VTF funds; specifically the regulation that prevents using funds for capital improvement of house. A vet wanted to make a wheel-chair ramp for their house which they couldn't do because that was a capital improvement. At the end of quarter, they have to return any unused funds and then asked for an advance on the next quarter, that is a duplication of effort. They would also like the funds to be able to be used for cremation efforts – this was requested by a family of a vet and was denied because it was a ceremonial expense – cremations are not ceremonies. Additionally, they would like to be able to use VTF funds on a down payment for a house or a car and to be able to get approval/disapproval for every expense prior to making that expense – last year they lost \$6k on non-reimbursable expenses. Mr. Williams understands that this involves changing laws. He would like to thank Ms. Hoagland for all of her assistance. Board members engaged in brief discussion on this topic. Mr. Rudder assured Mr.

Williams that he had been heard. Mr. Dorman requested to be able to staff out this issue before the Board addresses it. The Board members thanked the guests for their professional demeanor and their presentation. Ms. Hammon shared that the VA will assist with cremation costs if the veteran had a service – connected death and will also assist with installation of a wheel-chair ramp. Mr. Dailey stressed the timing difficulties when trying to assist veterans in urgent need. Mr. Rudder recognized the guest, Mr. Morgan of Elbert County. Mr. Morgan is the sole County Veteran Service Officer in a county with 22,050 veterans and 400 active cases. 9 years ago they only had 900 veterans total. VA expenditures during that time have increased from 900,000 to 11.3 million dollars in Elbert County alone. This means that veteran numbers tripled while VA money multiplied by eight during the same nine year window. Mr. Morgan used to be a volunteer. Since 2018 he has been receiving g \$1250/month towards expenditures. He is the only VSO there, and he works the hours that are needed. His county is sandwiched between the Greater Denver area and Colorado Springs. He expects to see continued increase in number of vets, and is grateful for the money that is coming in now. Mr. Rudder recognized him as the greatest silent asset of CVSOs and stated that Mr. Morgan is the most under-utilized VSO in the state. Mr. Morgan used his GI Bill to go to law school. He set up a group of 7 attorneys to provide free legal clinics across the state of CO, they specifically invite veterans to come in. He built the checkerboard.co website which is the mother lode of free legal advice for the state of CO. It covers law in 60 different areas. The website is all privately funded. They received a

generous grant from the Free Masons in Denver. Over the years they have seen approximately 7500 individuals with various issues across the state. The Board thanked him for his service.

Mr. Bosworth spoke of the bill at federal level – CVSO Act – this is for federal grant funding for county veteran service offices. He is requesting a letter of support from the board. The CVSO Act is a 15 million dollar grant over 5 years that CVSO offices can use and can be used to hire staff and pay staff to do VSO work. Counties of all sizes need more funding to meet their needs. It can also assist with program funding to meet veteran’s needs. This bill has received support from many veterans’ related groups. HR 5516, S 3002 are identical bills with two different titles. Commissioners Steen and Gonzalez will both be in D.C. in a few weeks to support in their roles as county commissioners. Mr. Dorman okayed the Boards vote however he requested they wait to send a letter. Motioned by Mr. Steen, seconded by Longinos Gonzalez. It received unanimous approval by the Board. 10 minute break

Ms. Hoagland reported that it is now halfway through the grant year and she has accordingly reached out to those grantees that are slow spending and some have sent some of their funding back, which she says is better for veterans in the long run. She has other grantees who need funding increased because they have no money left. She provided this information to the board in a handout broken down by each grantee. This is being done as a modification to the existing grant. Those who have spent 65% of their award or more, which are in compliance and have a need to access additional funds are eligible for increases. She requests the board votes on each increase in award individually after the Board members make any inquiries they have. The Board members made inquiries for clarification.

Mr. Dailey moved to approve the \$8k raise in grant money to AL 9 in La Junta. Second by Mr. Gonzalez. The Board approved the funding increase unanimously.

Mr. Dailey motioned to approve VFW Post 12063 Westcliff for \$5k, Mr. Steen seconded the motion. The Board approved the funding increase unanimously.

Mr. Dailey motioned to approve VFW 5231 Cortez for \$18k. Brief discussion ensued. Ms. Caldwell seconded. The Board approved the funding increase unanimously.

Mr. Dailey motioned for AL post 22 North Glen for \$9k, Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The Board

approved the funding increase unanimously.

Bylaws

Ms. Hammon says the bylaws subcommittee is behind, she will be sending things to Mr. Dorman so it can be reviewed by attorneys. This will be postponed until the next meeting.

CCI Letter

Mr. Rudder signed, it went to Ms. Fraser to give to Mr. Tremaine. Neither Ms. Fraser nor Mr. Tremaine are present to make inquiries of.

Task Force

Ms. Hammon reported the task force met again and has produced a revised list of their thoughts for the purpose of the group. They would like to suggest forwarding this list to the TAG. She clarified that TAG isn't just after the number of vets in the state but also the numbers of the subset groups of veterans in the state. Mr. Robinson pointed out that finding the subset groups of vets will be difficult if not impossible, that even the VA has to guestimate their numbers.

Further discussion ensued. Ms. Hammon asked the board to approve the white paper put forth by the subcommittee. Seconded by (no audible second). Unanimous votes.

Upcoming meetings

March - RMVAMC – Ms. Hammon will call them to extend the amount of time the room is reserved.

April – Aurora Chamber of Commerce for Grant Decisions May – Cortez, Ms. Hoagland is arranging

June – Commissioners Hearing Room, Steamboat Springs, Routt County. August – Burlington, Kit Carson County

New Business

Ms. Scanlon – requests to hold her new business until after Mr. Dorman speaks Reports

Mr. Dorman reported that the Joint Budget Committee analyst pitched that the COLA provider rate goes to the CVSOs as well. Right now that amount is 30k for the entire state. DMVA will not push back against that initiative. The Governor's office may direct them otherwise.

Brey Hopkins is the new deputy executive director. He is doing a system-wide assessment. The Director of Purchasing and Contracting announced her retirement approximately one week ago.

Ms. Scanlon inquired as to Mr. Rich Tremaine's email proposal regarding the change of function of DMVA East. Mr. Dorman said that Mr. Tremaine's "intent was good, his wording was horrible" in regards to the letter he sent to the County Commissioners. He reinforced that the state and counties are in a partnership. Mr. Dailey wanted to verify that he was instructed by DVA West to ~~then~~ not present this letter to the county commissioners. Mr. Dailey had already presented it.

Mr. Dorman agreed with DVA West that they should not present it to their commissioners.

Mr. Steen inquired about other bills that relate to veterans that are being considered in the state government. Mr. Dorman says the DMVA is not taking a stance on other current bills in the state government related to veterans. Mr. Robinson assisted in providing updates on bills currently under consideration.

Ms. Iglesias reported there is a vacancy open for a property administrator that has not been posted yet. The monies granted by the BVA earlier this year for special projects at DVA West are being put to use as those projects are moving forward and should start next week. The concrete project started in the fall, it was shut down for the winter and will shortly resume. Western Region VSOs are attending the webinars that they are holding. Shawn Martinez, Mesa County VSO, resigned two weeks ago and the county has posted the position for hire. Ms. Iglesias will be attending the National Association of State Directors Conference at the end of the month.

She will be in D.C. Feb 22 – 27th.

Ms. Hoagland shared that DVA East is completing interviews for the two new State Veteran Service Officer positions. The board inquired as to who is current staff at DVA East.

Regarding grants, Ms. Hoagland shared that they are getting some applications in from very rural areas that had not previously submitted applications. She is anticipating many veterans' assistance grant applications this year. The Board members made inquiries regarding grants.

Mr. Dailey reported that in the state of Colorado there are 150 active American Legion posts, 93 active VFW posts, and 14 active DAV posts. Mr. Steen asked if the VTF is meeting its legislative purpose when there are 300 possible VTF recipients and yet they only handed out 20 grants last year. Ms. Hammon commended Ms. Fraser for acquiring contacts at veterans' organizations that the board can reach out to; she also voiced how thrilled she is that the county veteran service officers attended the meeting.

Board member comments

Ms. Hammon appreciated getting to go back to the Capitol and being confirmed by the Governor for another term on the Board. There have been many funerals recently in Eagle County. She thanked Mt. Carmel for putting together the conference call allowing her to attend remotely.

Ms. Scanlon attended the January UVC meeting, they are requesting the CCI letter. She inquired if the other board members will be attending a dinner that is coming up. The security level at BAFB has been increased.

Ms. Caldwell is monitoring the new program with Centura regarding tracking if patients are veterans. They are making progress on providing appropriate care for veterans.

Mr. Steen is focusing working on suicide and homelessness with veterans. Last month El Paso County hosted a suicide prevention workshop. In El Paso the suicide rate is 32 per 100,000, in Colorado 20 per 100,000 the national average is 14 per 100,000. He would like to board to discuss how they can get engaged more aggressively in suicide prevention. Regarding homelessness, the Pikes Peak Council of El Pomar Foundation has taken it on as their number one issue. They are forming a task force to address homelessness in a unified manner, bringing together 12 different groups that have been working individually to tackle the problem in the area. There is a veteran's exemption for state taxes.

Mr. Gonzalez met recently with his County VSO regarding the VTF. He was notified about a veteran who passed recently and they got out the news to local groups about the funeral in hopes that people will attend despite the weather. He was unable to attend the funeral himself because the funeral was this morning at 9am.

Mr. Dailey thanked everyone for attending despite the weather. Next week the Warrior Bonfire

is going to be in Grand County.

Mr. Rudder reported that three WWII veterans died last week. After his Christmas vacation he had two inches of standing water in his office at Homelake. He is now trying to get caught up.

Adjournment

Mr. Dailey motioned to adjourn. Mr. Rudder seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously voted to adjourn.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes

Friday, March 6, 2020

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Hospital 1700 North Wheeling St.

Aurora, CO

Members and Guests Members Present:

Pat Hammon, Vice Chair Norm Steen, Member Longinos Gonzalez, Member Hollie Caldwell, Member Duane Dailey, Member Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Jack Rudder, Chair

DMVA Staff Present:

Brey Hopkins, Deputy Executive Director DMVA Gail Hoagland, Grant Administrator

Joanne Iglesias, Director CDVA West Rich Tremaine, Director CDVA East

Carissa Snyder, Office Manager CDVA East Megan Fraser, Administration CDVA East

Guests Present:

Robbie Robinson, VCLC

Tristan Wyatt, Prosthetics Admin at VAMC Anna Manceas, Prosthetics Program Assistant Mike Meinen, Chief of Prosthetics

Robert Sheetz, Adams County CVSO Bob Lowry, VSO

Teresa Rudder, President CO Federation of Women Mike Kilmer, Director RMVAMC

Weld County VSO's

Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order at 0905 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Rudder invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Special Presentation

Mr. Tremaine explained to those assembled his history with the prosthetics staff at the hospital and their history together during deployment. There was a single incident during deployment in 2003 that left three soldiers with amputations, all three were each given new computer chip prosthetic legs and regained their mobility. Accordingly, Mr. Tremaine presented a Purple Heart

Stamp Poster to Mr. Meinen, Chief of Prosthetics that he has been waiting to give him for many years.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Steen requested that under 'Guest Comments' to have "His VFW post" be changed to "Mr. Williams American Legion Post 1980" and under his Board Member comment to add "of El Pomar Foundation" after "the Pikes Peak Council". Ms. Caldwell requested under her Board Member comment to change "UCHealth" to "Centura". It was also verified that the last meeting was adjourned by Duane Dailey motioning for adjournment and Jack Rudder seconding the motion. There was unanimous approval for adjournment at the last meeting.

Mr. Dailey motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Ms. Hammon seconded the motion. The Board approved the minutes unanimously.

Mr. Kilmer, Director of RMVAMC

In regards to Covid-19, the state nursing homes are one of the most vulnerable populations. The VA has offered infectious disease support to the entire state of Colorado. They will be becoming more aggressive in regards to their response to Covid-19 starting tomorrow. He is coordinating with the state office of public health. The RMVAMC currently has one patient with unknown issues; they tested the individual for Covid-19 and it came back negative. The RMVAMC will be closing down entry/exit points so that everyone coming into the facility can be screened.

Ms. Scanlon inquired if they had enough Covid-19 test kits. Mr. Kilmer had no response to the query. He did explain that it takes 48 hours to run a Covid-19 test and if they have a possible case they are allowing minimum staff access to those rooms including no resident access. He reoffered the consultation services of the RMVAMC to the state of Colorado.

Mr. Kilmer shared that nationally the VA is in a fiscal crunch and they have been told that there will not be a pay raise. The RMVAMC is solvent therefore he has been told to cut five million dollars from his program and give it to the rest of the VA. He needs quick assessment and amazing staff to move his program forward in addition to amazing infrastructure. Mr. Kilmer is working to realign the business and clinical sides of his operations. Community Care and the Mission Act are hemorrhaging primary care doctors and teams. He needs eight new primary care teams. Currently he is forty-six out of fifty in regards to overall market penetration.

Consequently he is working on an aggressive outreach and marketing campaign and is about to start targeting both veterans and their loved ones. Colorado needs growth in its VA system.

Mr. Kilmer has negotiated to retain one third of the old VA facility, he will be selling the other two thirds of the old facility. He may make the remaining facility a residential campus. The Aurora clinic should in the next two to three years be expanded to house thirteen primary care teams instead of the current nine teams. He has received approval for a new clinic in Castle Rock that will house eight primary care teams. Colorado Springs should have a new clinic with four primary care teams opening in six months. There are needs for a super CBOC closer to Fort Carson and to expand specialty care and ambulatory surgery operations.

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center needs to stop acting like a community hospital and work more like Kaiser. It will be a hub site for spinal cord injury, there will also be a Taver program, a heart reconstructive surgery, built here. Travel funds will be revamped and the position of a travel coordinator for the patients added to the staff. There will be a grand opening of the new Fisher House in June or July and he invited the Board to attend. Mr. Kilmer's four main goals are: Health care, Emergency preparedness, Academic training, and Research/Clinical trials. He has approved twice the proposed research grants for the next year as previously approved. He is hoping that a specific grant will be approved for one of the staff to go **overseas** and study a geriatrics program there.

Mr. Kilmer wants to institute and increase partnerships between VSOs, the VA, etc. as his goal is to help all of the VA succeed. He is helping Grand Junction to fill their research department so that the same service that is received at the RMVAMC during the day will be available 24/7 in Grand Junction.

Mr. Kilmer invited questions and the Board members made inquiries for clarification.

Public Comments

Mr. Sheetz shared that he is working with two vet centers to provide mental health assistance to the veterans in his area. He has also established both a community wellness and a women's vet to vet program. Adams County is building a veterans memorial, the project is expected to cost five million dollars. The new memorial will be at 120th St. and US 85. Mr. Sheetz is actively trying to work with other counties, he is diversifying what the CVSO role does and not waiting

for his phone to ring with a call from a vet. Mr. Hopkins recommended using Adams County as a bottoms-up training example at the annual training conference for CVSOs.

Grant Training

Ms. Hoagland reviewed the major audit recommendations from the last audit with the Board members and the Board members made inquiries for clarification. Much of the application review process is driven by audit compliance as well as 2 CFR 200. Ms. Hoagland clarified that the VTF functions as a high- risk grant program, which also drives many of the procedures and policies. The Board discussed having a future meeting regarding board ability to change the grant process. Mr. Hopkins indicated a department wide review will include the grant program.

For the application review, it will be important to utilize the scoring rubric. This will help to eliminate extreme variances in scoring. The Board reviewed all of the documents to be utilized for the review process.

The Board recessed at 1110 hours. The Board reconvened at 1128 hours.

The Board members practiced grant evaluations on areas where they have differed greatly on their scores in previous years and then discussed why they scored as they did.

Reports

Mr. Hopkins shared the reports for the DMVA, Governor, and Legislature jointly. The DMVA is continuing to monitor and track bills for their fiscal impact. The DMVA sponsored two bills, both breezed through the confirmation process and are waiting to be signed by the Governor. Neither of these bills affect vets. On 22 April there will be a DMVA day at the Capitol. CONG, CDVA and ANG will all be present. There will be a signing ceremony in the rotunda and a fly by. Mr. Hopkins is in the process of going through a holistic review of the DMVA. There has been a zero net growth at the state government level and the Department has to cut one percent from next years' budget. The Board members made inquiries.

Mr. Tremaine gave the report for DVA East. On 09 March there are two new SVSOs starting, he will bring them to the next Board meeting. He expects the Program Assistant position to be filled in during the next month. A statement of work is being developed for the task force as soon as 01 July additionally a statement of work for the software needs of the CDVA is also

being developed. DVA East is gearing up for the annual conference. The first DVA synchronization meeting was two days ago. The Board members made inquiries and it was clarified that Mr. Hopkins has implemented two new meetings for the Division, one of which is a monthly synchronization meeting. Ms. Snyder shared that she will be going to the VA women's summit this October.

Ms. Iglesias shared the report for DVA West. Mesa County has had their County VSO position vacant. Anthony Lee will start on 24 March. Pitkin County is also vacant, the position had been posted and just closed; Brian Oney will be sitting on the selection committee. The OneSource is partnering with the VA hospital in Grand Junction and the vet center to host a Vietnam War Veterans Day on 27 March later at the OneSource. The cemetery is moving along in the capitol construction project and they are hoping to break ground in the September/October time frame. There is a reimbursement issue for the cemetery as the process was changed. There are still issue with tracking who the reimbursements are for.

Ms. Iglesias said that the projects have started at the OneSource with the monies received from the Board. The access door has been installed for the receptionist. Mesa County is also working actively to combat suicide, especially amongst the veteran population. Brian Oney is attending an event regarding suicide prevention this Saturday. Ms. Iglesias went to DC for NASDVA last week. She was invited to speak/ present there in the future. There is now a women vets coffee club, yesterday was the first meeting and it will now convene monthly. There is a 'Come back' yoga class weekly, a veteran coffee weekly, caregiver support meetings and a LGBTQ monthly meeting.

Mr. Hopkins said that in regards to OneSource there are two primary issues. The first is tenant leasing as they want to find appropriate tenants to be around and provide services to the veterans. The second issue is that there is limited parking. In order to resolve the second problem, CONG will assist with laying asphalt for forty additional parking spaces. This is an example of the department integration he wants to see more of. The Colorado Wing of the Civil Air Patrol will now meet at OneSource once a month.

Ms. Iglesias continued her report by sharing that the Women's Auxiliary American Legion meeting that convenes at OneSource once a month is growing. DEERS will have a temporary

replacement as their operator is going to be on maternity leave beginning in May. The property administrator spot just closed and they will begin to screen those candidates. The front administrator or 'triage assistant' position has not yet been approved by the Governor. Mr. Hopkins said that position will not wait to be posted till 01 July – it will be posted and filled as soon as possible. Ms. Iglesias said she discovered that the funeral home in Grand Junction is charging vets and their family members to do the necessary paperwork and she is working to fix that problem.

Mr. Robinson shared that there has not yet been a meeting about the veteran monument. The Board of VCLCs is studying the healthcare needs of vets in the state. The overall number of vets in the state is declining although the number of women veterans is increasing. VCLCs are going out of vogue and they are asking the question of what services are really needed. A problem is posed by funding bouncing back and forth. It was up last year, and down this year. This is sending mixed messages.

Ms. Hoagland shared that she received a total of seventy-five applications for both grant programs. Eleven of the applications were incomplete or had other issues and had to be removed from consideration. There were a large number of new applicants and various current grantees did not reapply due to staffing issues with their organizations.

Old Business –

Ms. Scanlon wrote a letter to Congressmen and Senators. Ms. Hammon motioned to approve, Mr. Steen seconded the motion. The Board approved the letter unanimously. Ms. Scanlon will send it to Mr. Dorman for approval. After Mr. Dorman approves the letter it will be sent to Ms. Fraser with Mr.

Rudder's signature for dispersion. Ms. Scanlon will work with Greg Dorman on updating the By-laws based upon legal review.

Ms. Scanlon needs a generic CCI letter, Ms. Fraser will provide that.

The By-laws change proposed by the Board are under review by the Attorney General's office.

New Business

The Board discussed if the annual retreat will be in Burlington in August of this year. No decision was made.

Mr. Rudder is giving Ms. Fraser the list of places for the last five years that the Board has met. She will provide it in a visual form to the Board at the next meeting so they may determine where to meet during the next fiscal year.

Ms. Scanlon inquired as to what the next thing is that the Board should be working on. Multiple Board members will attend the CCI summer conference at Keystone on 01 – 03 June.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Steen said that Mr. Kilmer gave the same report at a roundtable he attended last week as he did today. Mr. Steen attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. and is expectant that Scott Tipton and Doug Lamborn will both sign onto HR 5516. Additionally bills S3020 and S785 provide funding for vets with mental health issues and are being sponsored jointly by both the VA and Labor Departments.

Mr. Gonzalez reported that he met with leaders in El Paso County regarding making Space Command a permanent fixture there. He is the new ambassador for Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center. Mr.

Gonzalez also attended NACo in D.C. and said that Colin Powell addressed their group when they were there in addition to other leaders. The funeral service reported to the Board last month of a vet with no family in town that Mr. Gonzalez could not attend because it overlapped with last month's board meeting was attended by hundreds despite snow and freezing temperatures. Additionally, Mr. Donald Stratton, one of the last three survivors of Pearl Harbor died recently, his funeral also had a large turnout.

Ms. Hammon reported that she is busy with handling Covid-19 as she is also on the Board of Public Health for the State of Colorado. She is having trouble tracking infected homeless. There are currently many Blue Star families in her area. Ms. Hammon also noted that the Census is coming up and that it doesn't ask about veteran status. The Vail vets program is having a national event right now and is having color guards and the Civil Air Patrol perform for them.

Free mental health counseling is taking place one day a week in the county.

Ms. Scanlon reported that the Colorado Women Marine Association just celebrated 100 years of women in the Marine Corps.

Ms. Caldwell reported that 10% of all patients from Penrose, St. Francis, Porter and St. Anthony's hospitals are vets. 2% of the patients at Penrose are active duty military. She said that there is a free healthcare provider certification called 'Psych Armor' that requires the provider to take seven out of fifteen available modules that will train them in how to appropriately work with the special needs of veterans.

Mr. Dailey reported that he recently had Warrior Bonfire #91 in Grand County for a weeklong event. Those who attended were all Purple Heart vets. He attended a Stefan Stiller's Tunnels to Towers event awarding a home in Summit County to an OIF vet and his family. Vet lost both legs. Sadly his wife recently was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Mr. Rudder reported that he worked with a man in prison. The vet has a Bronze Star and was a sniper. Mr. Rudder wrote a letter to the parole board asking he be released and allowed to join the local honors guard. He's now even been given special permission to use a rifle with blanks at funerals.

Mr. Dailey motioned to adjourn, Ms. Caldwell seconded the motion, it was carried unanimously by the members of the Board.

The Board adjourned at 1325.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes

Friday, May 01, 2020

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Jack Rudder, Chair

Pat Hammon, Vice Chair Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Hollie Caldwell, Member Duane Dailey,
Member

Longinos Gonzalez Jr., Member Norm Steen, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Brey Hopkins, DMVA Deputy Executive Director Matthew Biniki, DMVA Legislative Liaison

Paul Von Riesemann, DMVA Budget Director Joanne Iglesias, DVAAw Director

Richard Tremaine, DVAAe Director

Gail Hoagland, DVAA Grant Administrator Carissa Snyder, DVAAe Office Manager

Megan Fraser, DVAAe East Administration

Guests:

Robby Robinson, CBVA Liaison to the SVCLC Commission and Veterans Monument Trust

Seth Walter, Budget and Policy Analyst, Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting

Opening

The meeting was called to order at 09:06 a.m. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Steen moved that the March minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Dailey seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

Reports

DMVA

Mr. Rudder recognized Mr. Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins in turn introduced Mr. Von Riesemann and Mr. Walter and said that Mr. Von Riesemann would provide information on the DMVA budget outlook, amplified by a slide presentation.

Mr. Von Riesemann said that the state currently has a \$3 billion deficit. For the current fiscal

year, DMVA is required to revert \$572,137. He said that the state can save money through strategies including general fund reversions, creative accounting, federal Influx, program line reduction or elimination, statutory changes, and/or accessing any cash funds. All options are currently possible. DMVA will need to determine how the department can reduce expenses. He shared the projected 2020-2021 budget from the JBC's earlier figure setting, which is expected to change within the next few weeks.

He said that funding for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant and the Veterans Assistance Grant for FY 2020- 2021 is currently unknown. From available figures, the current estimate of what will be available to award to VTF Grant applicants is \$860,000 less administrative expenses of \$42,500 and Board travel costs which are typically \$12,000, leaving a net of \$805,500 potentially available. Not included in the deductions were any potential allocations the Division or the WROS.

He said that potential courses of legislative action could be a sweep of the account balances of both the VTF and VAG, to reduce general fund spending and replace the funds with the cash balance of the VAG, and/or to utilize the VTF to fund a portion of the costs of the WROS, in particular the new triage specialist. Mr. Robinson added that there is precedent for this type of action, as the VTF cash fund was raided circa 2002 and the funds later paid back with interest.

Mr. Walter said that while the CARES Act provides federal funds for states during the pandemic, the Treasury is very specific that those funds be used for pandemic-related expenses. Most of the funds are reserved for COVID-19 response efforts and cannot be used as revenue replacement.

Mr. Von Rieseemann said that the Board might consider using VTF cash funds to cover the projected expenses of the WROS, as the triage specialist position is considered necessary and some of the building's utility costs are also covered from the general fund. Mr. Walter said this could be done through increase in the available appropriation from the VTF and would not affect the amount available to grantee organizations. Both gentlemen thanked the Board members for their time and relinquished the floor to Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins concluded the report on behalf of DMVA. He said that the Colorado National Guard has been on site to provide COVID-19 test support in hotspots throughout the state,

including meat packing plants that have been affected. This week their priority have been the CLC at Fitzsimons. They are also supporting the new shelters and medical facilities available in Denver, including a 600-bed facility at the National Western Complex for homeless men and a 2,000-bed medical facility at the Convention Center. COVID-19 response efforts are funded federally while retaining the state chain of command.

Mr. Hopkins said that on 16 April he revealed a new plan for DMVA cultural transformation, which he augmented with a slide presentation. The foremost issue is customer service, which is vital to the department's industry. He asked that the Board be provided with a copy of his slides, which provide the details and priorities for the plan.

Governor's Office/Legislation

Mr. Biniki reported on behalf of himself and Mr. Dorman. He said that the JBC will convene on 04 May and legislative session will resume on 18 May. The Long Bill needs to be revised and passed.

CLC Commission/Veterans Monument Trust

Mr. Robinson said that to date there have been two deaths at the Fitzsimons CLC and that testing of patient and staff should be completed this week. CLCs including Fitzsimons are experiencing a shortage of disposable gowns and are seeking sources.

The Board here recessed at 10:42 a.m. and resumed at 10:52 a.m.

Veterans Trust Fund Application Review

Mr. Rudder said that the applications would be reviewed in numerical order. Ms. Hoagland told the Board that two applications had been received after the committee meeting but prior to the extended deadline, so there will be no committee recommendations for those applications. She reminded the Board the currently projected available funds do not account for any prospective allocations to the Division, the WROS, or the cemetery.

VT 21-01, VFW Post 8661, Conifer

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 86.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of

\$8,400. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$8,400.00

VT 21-02, American Legion Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs

Mr. Dailey recused himself from discussion. Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 79.3. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Scanlon asked if the line item for eye exams was allowable, as VHA can provide those exams. Ms. Hammon said not all veterans enrolled in VHA are eligible for vision care and that some veterans in need of the care are not enrolled in VHA at all. Mr. Tremaine asked whether that eligibility is verified. Ms. Hoagland said that as a term of the grant, the grantee is required to determine that the service would not be a duplicate one available from VA. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$35,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$35,000.00

VT 21-03, American Legion Post 62, Craig

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 63.6. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$6,000. The recommendation was based on the lack of justification of need in the application and the fact that as of March, the applicant still had \$3,000 remaining of the current year's

\$8,000 in grant funds. Ms. Scanlon moved that this application be funded in the recommended amount of \$6,000. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$6,000.00

VT 21-04, American Legion Post 44, Steamboat Springs

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 86.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$5,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$5,000.00

VT 21-05, VFW Post 5231, Cortez

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.3. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$50,000. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$50,000.00

VT 21-06, DAV Chapter 48, Durango

Ms. Hoagland said that this applicant has withdrawn their application. The post has informed her that it will not have their assistance program this year and is likely to close.

No funding: application withdrawn

VT 21-07 Spencer-Young VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 89.3. The committee recommended funding this application at the current funding level of \$75,750, as the need for an increase was not well justified in the application. Mr. Dailey so moved. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Ms. Hammon suggested that the Board consider funding the application in full at the requested amount of \$80,500 due to the need that exists in the area. Mr. Dailey said that the justification of need should have been in the application. As there was no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. Four were in favor of the motion. Ms. Hammon and Dr. Caldwell opposed. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$75,750.00

VT 21-08 Department of Colorado VFW, Lakewood

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 79.4. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$50,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$50,000.00

VT 21-09 American Legion Post 11, Trinidad

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 74.9. The committee recommended funding this

application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$27,000. Mr. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$27,000.00

VT 21-10 American Legion Post 67, Berthoud

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 70.4. The committee recommended removing retreats as an ineligible line item, leaving a funding recommendation of \$27,000. Dr. Caldwell so moved. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$27,000.00

VT 21-11 American Legion Post 09, La Junta

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 84.6. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$29,920. Ms. Hammon seconded. Ms. Scanlon asked if the budget needed clarification. Ms. Hammon stated it did not as the vast majority of the funds are for transportation only. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$29,920.00

VT 21-12 American Legion Post 1980, Woodland Park

Mr. Steen recused himself from discussion. Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 56.2. That is below the minimum score required for consideration. This was also the case for the committee. Ms. Scanlon asked if the application could still be discussed. Ms. Hoagland said not unless some board members were willing to modify their scores to bring the average to the required amount. All but one board member scored the application below 60. Ms. Hammon said that the grantee has a problematic history with the grant, both failing to expend and noncompliant. She asked if Ms. Hoagland could comment on the grantee's performance. Ms. Hoagland said that the current grant cycle was the grantee's third consecutive year of poor performance, and that the problems include lack of compliance,

disregard of grant policies, failure to use the surveys, and difficulties with both required reports

and documentation of expenses. The grantee has had site visits and on-site training. Mr. Dailey asked if a particular person was the source of the problems. Ms. Hoagland said that she has been unable to pinpoint a single root cause. The grantee uses a board to make their grant decisions. She has met with the entire board and has been on multiple phone calls attended by the entire board. Dr. Caldwell said that the application should not be considered because it did not receive the minimum required score, and like applications have been denied in previous years. Ms. Hammon moved that this application not be considered. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Do not fund, application score ineligible

VT 21-13 American Legion Department of Colorado, Denver

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.9. The committee recommended funding this request in part at \$30,000 to see if the new applicant is able to execute. The application met the requirements but is one of the lowest scores in consideration. Mr. Dailey so moved and Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Ms. Hammon asked the committee members to comment on the recommendation to fund in part. Mr.

Rudder said the committee average score was also low, and the applicant is new so there no record of performance to consider. As there was no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$30,000.00

VT 21-14 American Legion Post 18, Greeley

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.1. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$35,000. This previous grantee has demonstrated capacity and reasonable projections, but the range of service is small compared to the amount of the request. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in part at \$35,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$35,000.00

VT 21-15 VFW Post 5843, Meeker

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 74.3. The committee recommended funding this

application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$9,000. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$9,000.00

VT 21-16 American Legion Post 22, Northglenn

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.1. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is in compliance and is on track to expend this year's allocation. Mr. Dailey moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$30,000. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Ms. Hammon queried the number of veterans to be served as listed in the application, which is 10. That would be \$3,000 per capita. Ms. Hoagland said this was likely an error, as in the current year the grantee has served far more than 10 veterans. Ms. Scanlon and Mr. Steen both said that the Board must consider the application as written. Ms. Scanlon asked Ms. Hoagland to comment on the grantee's current performance. Ms. Hoagland said the grantee has received an increase for a total amount of \$25,000 and has expended all of it. Ms. Hammon suggested that the Board consider funding the application as \$25,000 based on the grantee's demonstrated capacity. Mr. Dailey declined to amend his motion and as there was no further discussion he called for the question. Mr. Dailey was in favor and all others opposed. The motion failed. Mr. Steen moved that the application be funded in part at \$25,000. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$25,000.00

VT 21-17 VFW Post 3641, Pueblo

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 75.6. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$15,000, as the capacity of the new applicant is unclear and the statement of need was not well supported. Ms. Scanlon asked the committee members to amplify why only \$15,000 was recommended, but no additional reasoning was offered. Ms. Hammon pointed out that the application states an intent to serve 150 unduplicated veterans. She moved that the application be funded in full at

\$20,100. Mr. Steen seconded. Ms. Hoagland said the one of the budget line items is for the Pueblo Stand Down, which is on the budget of other VTF applicants and that of one of the VAG

applicants, the last of whom has supported the Stand Down for several years. Dr. Caldwell said that the grantee would need to be informed that they cannot use grant funds to make a donation to the Stand Down. Ms. Hammon agreed that the applicant would have to be instructed to buy specific items. There was no further discussion and Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$20,100.00

VT 21-18 American Legion Post 9-11, Palmer Lake

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 77.1. The committee recommended funding this application in full, as this current grantee is working on compliance and expending this year's allocation. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in full at the requested amount of \$4,000. Mr. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$4,000.00

VT 21-19 American Legion Post 103, Littleton

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 81.4. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$30,000, as this grantee has relied heavily on the Arapahoe County Veterans Service Office to execute this grant and that office is currently experiencing 100% turnover. Mr. Dailey moved that be application be funded in full at \$37,500. Mr. Steen seconded. Ms. Hammon asked what the funding was for this grantee in the current year and how much if any was remaining to be spent. Ms. Hoagland said they current funding is \$37,500 and there is currently \$12,000 remaining. Mr. Rudder said they are unlikely to expend. Ms. Hammon said that she agreed with the committee's recommendation. Dr. Caldwell concurred. Mr. Rudder called for the ballot. Mr. Dailey and Mr. Steen were in favor and all others opposed. The motion failed. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in part at \$30,000. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$30,000.00

VT 21-20 VFW Post 4061, Canon City

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 64.3. The committee did not consider this application, as the committee's average score was below 60. Ms. Hoagland said that the committee also thought that the bid for the van was an excessive amount. She also said that the

post's statewide governing body has provided a caution in regard to this post. Mr. Steen agreed that the van amount seemed high, particularly if compared to the bid obtained by the Rifle CLC for a similar vehicle. Dr. Caldwell asked if the post intended to use the vehicle for other than medical transportation and Ms. Hoagland said possibly, and also for transportation for non-veterans. Ms. Hammon asked if the grant agreement could specify how the grant-funded vehicle can be used and Ms. Hoagland said it could. Ms. Scanlon suggested the Board fund the application in the amount that the Rifle CLC is using for a van. Ms. Hammon agreed and said the grant agreement would specify the use and purpose of the vehicle. Mr. Steen moved that this application be funded in part at \$41,000, to be used for a van with the discussed stipulation regarding its use. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Ms. Hoagland said she would monitor and perform a site visit. There being no further discussion, Mr. Rudder called for ballot. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$41,000.00

VT 21-21 American Legion Post 32, Longmont

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 57.3. The committee did not consider this application, as the committee's average score was also below 60. Ms. Hammon asked what the problems were with the application and/or the grantee. Ms. Hoagland said it was incomplete, as pages are missing and only questions one through seven were addressed. Currently the grantee is very slow to spend grant funds and will not expend at least half of this year's allocation. Ms. Hammon asked if the missing pages could be a fax error. Ms. Hoagland said applications are required to be mailed. She said the grantee also struggles with documentation. She has performed a site visit and could suggest a new grant manager for the grant. Mr. Rudder invited a motion. Ms. Hammon said the Board members could revisit their application scores in the interest of prospective modification. Mr. Steen said that the application could not be considered due to its score. Dr. Caldwell agreed. Mr. Steen moved not to consider the application. Mr. Dailey seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Do not fund, application score ineligible

VT 21-22 DAV Chapter 44, Cortez

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 72.5. The committee recommended funding this application in part at \$50,000. This grantee has been slow to spend and has had minor problems

with documentation. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded in part at \$50,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$50,000.00

VT 21-23 American Legion Post 75, Cortez

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 67.1. This application was received after the committee assembled and thus there was no committee recommendation. This is a new applicant with

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demonstrated capacity but unclear projections according to the application. Ms. Hammon said the need in the area is justified, particularly in light of the prospective closure of DAV Chapter 44. She moved to fund this application in part at \$40,000. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$40,000.00

VT21-24 American Legion Post 2, Pueblo

Ms. Hoagland said that the average score was 71.1. This application was received after the committee assembled and thus there was no committee recommendation. This is a returning applicant with prior compliance issues and unclear capacity and projections. Ms. Hammon mentioned \$5,000 in the budget for the Pueblo Stand Down. Ms. Hoagland said that a VAG applicant is requesting \$8,600 for the same items for the Stand Down and has provided these items for Stand Down for several years. Ms. Scanlon asked if it would be possible to fund only the assistance portion of the application. The budget contains events, which are not eligible. Ms. Hammon said removing the events and the Stand Down items would leave a budget of \$17,500. She moved to fund the application in the amount of \$17,500. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$17,500.00

The Board here assessed subtotals before discussing the applications from the CLCs. It was determined that if there was enough remaining of the projected funds to fund all of the requests from the CLCs if that proved to be the pleasure of the Board.

VT 21-28 SVCLC Homelake

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$51,924.42 for recliners

for resident rooms, privacy curtains, and valances. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$51,924.42

VT 21-26 SVCLC Rifle

Dr. Caldwell moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$40,814.00 for a van. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$40,814.00

VT 21-27 SVCLC McCandless

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$52,000.00 for an entertainment system for residents. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full \$52,000.00

VT 21-29 SVCLC Fitzsimons

Ms. Hammon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$24,750.00 for a Scandent system. Dr. Caldwell seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full \$24,750.00

Unfinished Business

Bylaws – there has been no response yet from the Attorney General’s office regarding proposed bylaw changes. Mr. Biniki said that he would follow up.

9

CCI Letter – the letter has been sent by email. Mr. Rudder says he has had follow up inquiries from a few commissioners. Ms. Fraser said there were there were a few email addresses that have not yet been obtained. Mr. Steen said he probably has them and will provide them.

New Business

Mr. Rudder asked the members their pleasure for the next meeting. The consensus was to hold the June meeting virtually via WebEx.

Dr. Caldwell said the Board may want to entertain a motion to allocate funds to the WROS to fund the triage specialist and utilities, as mentioned by Mr. Von Rieseemann and Mr. Walter. Ms. Hammon moved to allocate \$150,000 from the VTF cash fund to support the triage specialist and

utility costs for the WROS. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Mr. Steen asked if the WROS also serves non-veterans and Ms. Hammon said that it does not. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Hammon said that Eagle County has seen an increase in domestic violence incidents during the stay in place order. The county is practicing social distancing and mask-wearing in public. Mr. Rudder complimented Ms. Hammon on her office's efforts to support veterans during the pandemic.

Mr. Steen said the Teller County has employed a volunteer force to make calls and deliver meals during the stay in place, and that veterans have been very active with the volunteer force. He said that the meeting fell on the 15th anniversary of the death of a member of his command. SPC Derrick Lutters lost his life to an IED in Iraq on 01 May 2005.

Mr. Gonzalez said that COVID-19 efforts has kept El Paso County very busy. Access to mental health care for veterans has been an area of focus. He thanked the Board members for their commitment to supporting veterans during this time.

Mr. Dailey said that both Grand and Summit Counties have been busy and it has been difficult to accomplish some tasks. Mental health has been a significant concern and the VAG has been assisting in those counties. Mr. Rudder thanked Mr. Dailey for his efforts.

Ms. Scanlon had no comments.

Dr. Caldwell thanked the grant committee for proceeding without her as she needed to prioritize her professional commitments to Centura Health during the response to COVID-19. She said that many health care workers are now finding themselves on mandatory PTO or furloughs as health care systems endeavor to meet their payroll obligations.

Mr. Rudder thanked the Board members for their time and patience with the long virtual meeting. His Homelake office is still unavailable, so he continues to work from home as much as possible.

Upcoming Meetings

05 June – Virtual via WebEx 07 August - Burlington

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder invited a motion to adjourn. Mr. Steen so moved.
Ms. Hammon seconded. The meeting adjourned at 01:11 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes

Friday, June 5, 2020

WebEx

Members and Guests Members Present:

Jack Rudder, Chair

Pat Hammon, Vice Chair Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Norm Steen, Member Longinos Gonzalez, Member Hollie Caldwell, Member Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Gail Hoagland, Grant Administrator Joanne Iglesias, Director CDVA West Rich Tremaine, Director CDVA East

Carissa Snyder, Office Manager CDVA East Megan Fraser, Administration CDVA East Dee Debor, Administration CDVA East

Guests Present:

Jack Murphy

Jake Underwood, Team Rubicon Dan Scalise, CVSO

Jay Scott, Otero County CVSO

Ray Odum, Las Animas County CVSO Adrian Medina, Pueblo County CVSO Jamie Robelson, Team Rubicon

Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order at 0907 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Rudder invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Pat motioned to approve minutes as submitted.

Guest Commentary

Mr. Scott provided information about the VA clinics reopening and the VA hospital recommencing elective procedures and other services.

Mr. Dailey requested Team Rubicon to remind everyone of their mission statement.

Mr. Underwood, stated Team Rubicon unites skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams, both domestically and internationally.

Recent response has been in regards to Covid-19 and they have been responding across the state.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Hammon says they are still waiting to hear back about proposed changes in By-laws from the Attorney General's office.

New Business

Protecting veterans benefits during a state budget deficit

Ms. Hammon can report from legislative committee of the UVC. General assembly is back in session, working through a 3-4 billion dollar loss in general funds. Funds are being swept in order to handle general fund needs. Some possible impacts for veterans – 100% PTE will be suspended for at least one year. This bill has not yet been passed but this is the proposal. Mr. Steen provided clarification about the Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption Law when Mr. Rudder queried about the specifics.

Query was made by Mr. Dailey about the PTE, whether the revocation would just be of new enrollees or of all existing veterans in the state program. Mr. Steen provided further clarification of the PTE, he was uncertain on the total fiscal note of the program statewide. Mr. Tremaine stated the state should not take away veterans benefits.

Ms. Hoagland provided an update related to the VTF and VAG. The master settlement fund created the Trust Fund account, each year funds are allocated that the Board has spending authority on. A certain percentage goes into the Trust Fund account and gains interest. There is approximately 7 million in the VTF, 3 million was taken for the general fund next year leaving 4 million dollars in the account. The amount that was allocated for spending authority for VTF grants has not been impacted. Regarding property tax, excess PT funds that the state does not give to counties, a percentage of that is allocated to go into a cash fund for the Veteran assistance grant program. In consultation with the board, the decision was made to only spend a percentage of that money so that a cash fund would remain and it could be utilized on an annual basis. There is just about 1.6 million in that account. 1 million of that is being swept, leaving approximately \$600,000 in that fund. Ms. Hammon thanked her for the detailed explanation. She provided that in the past when they have swept those funds, the Board and other interested parties have reminded the legislature that they owe them the funds back with interest. Ms. Hammon expects

that to be the protocol this time as well. Ms. Hoagland let her know that at this time there is no discussion about returning those funds in the proposed legislation as there was in the past.

Mr. Dorman HB 2387 clarified that the proposed legislation only gets rid of the senior homestead exemption, not the disabled veteran property tax exemption.

Strategic plan

Mr. Callahan began by reminding the Board it has been 18-24 months since they last reviewed the strategic plan.

SPI 1. 1.1 is understanding issues facing veterans. Meeting conducted in each congressional district by 2020. Mr. Callahan requested an update from the Board. Mr. Rudder that provide for both 2019 and 2020 that they are at 6 out of 7 for each year. In 2018 they were at 5/7.

SPI 1.1.2 is receiving annual feedback for issues facing veterans. Mr. Callahan is unsure if accurate data exists for this SPI; Ms. Hammon confirmed that this data does not exist. Mr. Callahan inquired if they were going to continue with this SPI. Mr. Rudder said that they were going to get that data from the annual conference, which has not yet occurred this year. Mr. Callahan inquired about the data from 2018 and 2019; Mr. Rudder confirmed that data was not collected; Mr. Callahan is putting 0/64 for each year. Ms. Hammon proposed to ask the SVSOs to include a survey to distribute to all of the CVSOS that they can disseminate this year at the annual training conference. Mr. Steen reminded the Board that there is a report function in VetraSpec that summarizes the number of actions by category, that this report could be generated in that way.

Mr. Tremaine says that on VetraSpec that they don't have the ability to mine specific data because there is an a la carte charge. He said that he could send a message to the state VSOs running the conference with the request. Mr. Steen inquired if this ties into TAGs mission, Ms. Hammon says yes. She believes it is achievable for 2020.

1.2 CVSos consolidate and provide feedback. Provided target amounts for 2018 – 2020. Mr. Steen spoke – check recording.

1.3 Provide annual program updates to the legislature NLT July of each year for all state funded

Veteran programs. Ms. Hammon inquired of Mr. Dorman if he has been doing this. Mr. Dorman said those are done in December by the letter from the Board of the Governor and legislature. Date changed from July – December. Ms Scanlon inquired if it should be left as July because that is the end of the fiscal year. Added 9by statute)

1.4 – Communicate recommended changes to Colorado VA director No later than July of each year. Ms Hammon inquired, what changes? Mr. Steen and Mr. Dorman worked to clarify what communication is required. Mr. Callahan suggested the board needs to examine whether the strategic plan being extended out for more years. Ms. Hammon suggested they try and get this done by October. Mr. Steen pointed out that they had two years with no action. Ms. Scanlon asked if they wrote the letter now, what it should say. Ms Hammon inquired, this is VA general, what information are they really after? LISTEN TO THIS DISCUSSION.

Ms. Hammon inquired of Mr. Tremaine if this is data that could also be collected at the ATC? Mr. Tremaine replied in the affirmative. Ms. Hammon offered for her or Mr. Ruder to work with the SVSOS running the conference to put together a survey for those items. Mr Rudder inquired about what is and what is not working. Mr Tremaine said that they can send out a letter to all VSOS at any time. Ms Iglesias said she emails all west cvsos every month asking for their data.

She said it would be easy to include the questions the board needs information for and collect monthly info. Mr. Scott suggested that a form could be submitted with the CVA 26 as to what their wants and needs are and they could submit those together. Mr Rudder said that some counties don't submit those forms and supported Ms Iglesias idea. Mr Dailey backed Mr. Scotts suggestion, citing its efficiency. Ms Caldwell said there could be data collection in both ways. Mr Rudder cited challenges LISTEN for these. Ms Hammon suggested she would work on a template for CVSOs changes for VA and vHA policies. Mr. Rudder thanked her, verified this can not be completed by July, it was changed to December.

SPI2 – advanced communications

2.1 – CVA brand established and circulated. Mr. Rudder inquired if they were supposed to make a logo. Mr. Callahan confirmed that was the case. Ms. Hammon said they wanted to come up with a mission statement and a brochure. Mr. Steen clarified what they meant by their branding. Mr Rudder said their byline was going to be 'veterans really matter' Mr Steen said it is more than

an advertising scheme, it is how they function, their entire ethos. Ms Hammon says that committee needs to work on that.

Multiple board members inquired as to how they meet. Mr. Steen says that the strategic plan should govern how they function, if it is a distraction, they should no longer have one. Ms Caldwell asked if what is in the SP is appropriately within their purview as a type II Board. Ms Scanlon asked if somebody on the staff can look into it. Mr Steen said that if it is inappropriate that the board can drop a measure if they can't do it. Ms Caldwell said that while a pamphlet could be helpful, that the branding is not necessarily a thing. Mr Steen said it isn't about a logo, it's what the veterans see and think of the board. Ms Caldwell suggested getting rid of measure 2.1. Ms Hammon said she would like to try it again. Mr Steen suggested redefining the outcome not the objective. Ms Hammon suggested tabling 2.1 to come up with a new outcome to a future meeting.

2.1 publish a dCBVA trifold No later than July of 2019. Mr Callahan requested an update. Ms Hammon thought it was done, Mr Rudder said not the trifold. Mr Rudder says they don't have that capability. Ms Hammon suggests tabling this measure as well for a later meeting.

2.1 – increase stakeholder and customer attendance at CBVA board meetings by 15% in 2020. Mr Callahan suggested looking at the rosters to determine who was attending and inquired Mr Tremaine if that is something his office could provide. Mr Tremaine said that Ms Fraser can look back and gather that data.

2.2 increase number of outreach activities and events attended by CBA members 15 percent by 2020. Ms Hammon said that again they would have to review the minutes. Mr Rudder said we only need to review 2020, Ms Hammon said the data for 2020 is skewed due to Covid-19. Mr Gonzalez said things have slowed down. Mr Callahan asked if they wanted to go back to 2018 and 2019. Mr Steen pointed out that if we are going to establish a trend. Ms Hammon says she believes the numbers from the previous years are important. Mr Callahan concurred with Mr Steen that online events also count as outreach. Mr Callahan asked if could expand till 2023. Mr Tremaine inquired if this could be put on hold until Ms Fraser determines if she can gather the requested data.

2.3 create a CBVA website by July 2019. Discussion ensued. Mr Dorman said he doesn't think

the board is going to get their own full website, they have a page on the department website. He inquired, you want mission, vision, etc. Said we don't have the bandwidth to do a regular update. Mr Rudder suggested scrapping this.

SPI3

3.1 – increase CBVA board members non monitoring site visits. Ms Hammon says she finds this to be important LISTEN. Mr Scott inquired how many grant applications were turned in by April. Mr Rudder replied 71. Ms Hoagland described this as a meet and greet. Ms Hammon suggested each board member talks with Gail and visits with 3 grantees each about what LISTEN

3.2 – increase collected of VTF feedback to 21 by 2020. Ms Hoagland has put together a survey monkey, by the end of the month that will close and she can collect that data.

3.3 formalize and establish distribution process of the VTF grantee best practices.

SPI4

Mr steen talked.

Mr Callahan said that due to the reduced funds as stated at the beginning of the meeting, that they need to reduce the target amount.

Mr. Callahan said he would update the dashboard and send it to the board. Mr. Rudder called for a 10 minute break at 10:40am.

Mr. Callahan and Mr. Scott had to leave the meeting. Meeting resumed at 10:53am

FY 20 – 21 CBVA Meetings

August meeting – Burlington VFW Post is not big enough to meet in and maintain a 6 foot distance. Ms. Hammon says things are closed through August and suggested one more WebEx meeting till things reopen. Mr. Dailey suggested NE CO where there isn't a VA presence, perhaps a fair ground or something so social distancing is possible. His idea is to expand the presence of the CBVA.

August – WebEx

September – Eastern plains – Limon? Duane and Pat

October – Grand Junction, WROS and training confirmed. Megan and Pat discuss where to stay

November – Wings over the Rockies

December – VA Hospital

Board Reports

Ms. Iglesias received exciting news from National cemetery administration. The cemeteries are now reopening and can have full honors for anyone interred since March. County parameters will still be observed. WROS – hired a property administrator and a triage assistant for the front desk, both are starting next week. She thanked the board for the funding for the assistant position.

Ms Caldwell announced her resignation to the Board effective June 20, 2020.

Mr Rudder reviewed that Mr Steen has to reapply for his Board position this year.

Mr Dailey said that Mr Robinson is at the veterans memorial that was recently damaged and working on assessing damage and repairing it. Ms Hammon said that funds are being swept regarding the CLC's. There was to be a research study to see what veterans needs would be, that study has been scrapped. The DHS is still going to do that research study. Ms Scanlon said only Fitzsimmons had COVID, 14 veterans died, the other VCLCs are okay. All are still closed to visitors.

Lots of Fitzsimmons staff is asymptomatic and that is causing a staffing problem.

Ms Scanlon asked Mr Tremaine for an update on General Loh's position. Mr Tremaine suggested Mr Dorman could provide a better update. Ms Hammon said General Loh's nomination has not yet come up for review therefore his national appointment is not yet finalized. He has been nominated by Gov Polic to be the commanding general of the US national guard.

Ms Hoagland – echoed the remarks to Hollie, thanked her for her leadership, particularly in regards to the VAG, she appreciates Ms Caldwell's insight, LISTEN. Ms. Hoagland is not certain if the long bill will be finished and designed for the new FY grants to begin on July 1 as normal. We are currently in a holding pattern. Ms Scanlon inquired if all monies will be spent by grantees for the last FY. Ms Hoagland said that is varying, execution rate may be about 80%.

Many trust fund grantees are individuals at high risk and are limiting contact, additionally not all are tech savvy and are therefore not easily able to continue services during the pandemic. Some grantees however have been very creative and active in supporting veterans during the stay at home and safer and home periods.

Ms Hammon said many of the posts have a restaurant or bar that their revenue is used to keep the post open and many posts are in the position of closing permanently due to lack of income during Covid. It is another problem that grantees are having. Mr Dailey inquired if long bill is signed by 30 June, what date could they then project the announcement of the VTF awards. Ms Hoagland said if signed by 30 June then announcements will go out that day. LISTEN

Mr Steen inquired if there is a 10% cut what happens. Ms Hoagland said this could be discussed in this meeting, that the plan was if it was a 10% cut that would apply across the board, if it is a 20% or greater cut then they will reconvene and determine who will actually receive funding.

LISTEN

Motion from Mr Steen, Ms Hammon seconded.

Mr Dailey said it is premature to consider because there are too many unknowns. Vote – 20% or less

Unanimous approval Board member remarks –

Ms Caldwell – are covid patients veterans? in over 400 cases, not a single instance of documenting veteran status was documented because that staff had no PPE training to go into the rooms to collect the demographic information. Mr Steen thanked her for her service.

Ms Scanlon – began a new job on 1 June, now chief of staff of CO homeland security and emergency management. She is no longer on the UVC legislative committee because this is a state job. Ms Hammon is the new UVC rep. she took an 80 year old vet to emergency care, got him covid testing, took 45 minutes to get him seen and he was in very bad shape. The UVC is having their banquet on the 23 August, she pointed out that Mr Hopkins is not at this meeting

and she is disappointed that he could not make this once monthly meeting. Mr Steen will also attend UVC.

Ms Hammon – has been busy with zoom meetings, has still been actively engaged in outreach and providing financial support. Lots of her veterans are seasonal employees. She has many only veterans and they are working to stay in close contact and be supportive of them. WROS will be opening with modified service. Is uncertain if the UVC banquet will happen. Did lots of memorial day activities, taped at 10am with only 10 people present and showed it at 5pm. The boy scouts did do flags in the cemetery. The community still came together and honored vets.

Mr Steen, doing lots re covid in the county level. Now working towards economy recovery. One focus is working on getting vet back to work. Working on a state wide vet org and the commercial sector to rehire vets and get them back to work. Personal announcement – reapplied to get reconfirmed to this board. Yesterday he was called by the AL and appointed as the legislative chair for the AL, he will be working closely with the UVC for legislative matters.

Mr Gonzalez – thanked Ms Caldwell for her service. Defunding of senior and disabled vets PTE, he opposed that. In the middle of their local vet of the year award in el paso county, he is participating in reviewing the applications for the candidates.

Mr Dailey – thanked Ms Caldwell for her dedication, her agenda has been veteran centric with a specialty in grant guidance. Would like to discuss the new 72 hour rule for contacting the VA with Mr Tremaine. Mr Fraser will communicate this to Mr Tremaine. Flags laid at gravemarkers at Fraser cemetery and at Granby.

Mr Rudder wont be back into his regular office until at least July and expects it to be later than that. They have done two funerals which were both lightly attended by family. The VFW in Alamosa is now gone. To Ms Caldwell, you will be missed, we hope the very best for you, you have been a great inspiration for me, you have been an influence on every member of this Board.

Ms Scanlon requested Mr Rudder send Mr Hopkins an email requesting he not hold other meetings during the monthly board meeting. Mr Rudder agreed.

Ms Hammon motioned to adjourned. Mr Gonzalez seconded. Unanimous approval. Meeting

adjourned at 11:55am.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes

Friday, August 7, 2020

Webex

Members and Guests Members Present

Jack Rudder, Chair

Pat Hammon, Vice Chair Sheila Scanlon, Secretary Lacey Golonka, Member Norm Steen,
Member Longinos Gonzalez, Member Duane Dailey, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Gen. Laura Clellan, The Adjutant General of Colorado Brey Hopkins, Deputy Executive Director
DMVA David Callahan, Strategic Planner DMVA

Greg Dorman, Legislative Liaison DMVA Richard Tremaine, Director CDVA East Joanne
Iglesias, Director CDVA West

Gail Hoagland, Grants Administrator DMVA Carissa Snyder, Office Manager CDVA East
Megan Fraser, Administration CDVA East

Guests Present:

Bryan Stice, VA Mental Health Robbie Robinson, VCLC

Leon Pohl, CVSO Gilpin County Jim Pickart, CVSO Park County

Sheldon Smith, CVSO Montrose County Ron Brown, CVSO Yuma County

Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order at 9am. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Rudder then yielded the floor to Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins introduced the new TAG, Brigadier General Laura Clellan, and asked the Board members to introduce themselves. In order:

Mr. Rudder, Rio Grande County CVSO Ms. Golonka, returning Board member

Mr. Steen of Teller County, 32 year army veteran, County Commissioner Teller County

Ms. Hammon, VSO for Eagle County, the western slope representative on the Board and a Vietnam US Army nurse, welcomed the new TAG

Ms. Scanlon, Marine, CO Dept. of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, in Colorado Springs Mr. Dailey was having technical difficulties

Mr. Gonzalez, retired Air Force intelligence officer, went on deployments to the Middle East and Latin America, is presently a County Commissioner for El Paso County

TAG stated it was nice to meet the Board, she is having lots of tech issues this morning and is glad it's Friday. She is looking forward to working with the Board. She is about finding areas where the Board can make a difference. She is in listening mode right now and she'd like the Board members to let her know what we can do to get better and help out our veterans. It is a tough year. TAG looks forward to hearing from everyone over the next month. Ms. Iglesias said it is good to see TAG again, Mr. Tremaine and Mr. Robinson concurred. TAG reiterated, that this is a big job and she is listening a lot right now. She stated that she is not the smartest person in the room, that there are plenty of smart people that I want to listen to.

Mr. Hopkins apologized for hijacking the meeting from Mr. Rudder.

Mr. Rudder welcomed the new TAG, commented they like having a new TAG so they can train her themselves.

Minutes

Ms. Hammon motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Unanimous approval. The motion carried.

Guest Speaker

Mr. Bryan Spice, VA Mental Health

Mr. Spice gave gratitude for being able to speak with the group. He stated that historically every VA hospital has been tasked with putting on a VA mental health summit. Due to the issues this year the summits were initially put on a full stop however, they have now been cleared to put on a virtual conference. Mr. Callahan will be presenting the relative WIGs for the key stakeholders who will be attending. Additionally, there will be sessions related to veteran and military culture,

and trauma informed care. Some of the stakeholders will be new to working with veterans and they need to become culturally attune to the veteran population. They also want to give time to race related trauma. Other topics include domestic violence, MST, and suicide prevention. A save the date will be sent out soon. It will be Wednesday, October 7th and is expected to last approximately 6 hours.

Mr. Spice invited feedback. Mr. Rudder queried about the software being used to host the virtual conference. Mr. Spice verified that it will be held online using either WebEx or Adobe Connect. Ms. Hammon reminded Mr. Spice about how many CO veterans use the Albuquerque facility. Regarding culture, Ms. Hammon said that there are two veterans at the University of Denver who teach a military culture course. She expressed concerns regarding the Cohen and Stern foundations as they only assist Post-9/11 veterans and not veterans from any earlier period. Mr. Spice said that Given Hour is pro-bono and can provide telehealth services across the state for older veteran populations. The goal is to bring together all resource options, not just the VA.

Mr. Stice provided his email for the Board. Mr. Tremaine inquired if Mr. Stice knows Mr. David Ayer. Mr. Tremaine doesn't think they can have enough information regarding mental health but he is wondering if they should have a single joint summit. Mr. Ayers is American Legion and as far as Mr. Tremaine can tell they are still having a separate summit regarding veteran mental health.

Mr. Robinson from the CO United Veterans Coalition he suggested getting in touch with Mr. Nagley who also deals with veteran mental health. Mr. Rudder said he knows Mr. Richard Nagley and that they can coordinate with him. Ms. Scanlon inquired if the summit addresses the special needs of women veterans. Mr. Stice said they covered that last year and had therefore not been discussed by the planning committee for this year. At the end of each summit they are given a survey that asks what topics they would like to have at future summits. Ms. Scanlon asked if this topic can be added back in.

Ms. Scanlon inquired if he has women on his regional planning group. Mr. Stice responded in the affirmative. Mr. Rudder thanked him for his time and invited him to all future CBVA meetings.

Public Comments

Mr. Rudder invited public comments. None were provided.

Unfinished Business

Strategic Plan –

Mr. Callahan said that he had captured everything discussed at the last meeting and wanted the Board to be able to review it for corrections. It was dispersed prior to the meeting by Ms. Fraser.

SPI 1 –

Mr. Callahan requested the Board members notify him if there were any errors on SPI 1. None were provided. Mr. Callahan added an additional fiscal year to the plan so that it lays out future goals. He suggested the Board consider having it go out three more years.

Mr. Rudder stated that as VSOs we don't always know what county and state services are being utilized because the veterans don't always go through our office anymore. Between eBenefits, my healthy veteran and all of the geographical options, the veterans are frequently not going through their CVSO to access their benefits and programs available to them.

SPI 2 –

Mr. Callahan said data was still being researched for 2.1 and 2.2. He inquired if the Board had a data update and also inquired if the Board wanted to table 2.1. Mr. Steen said these objectives require funding and resources which are a concern with the current fiscal projections. Mr. Rudder suggested tabling 2.1 due to the pandemic.

SPI 3 –

There were several unknowns with this SPI. Mr. Callahan inquired if some of these goals could be done virtually. Mr. Rudder said it would have to be done remotely. Mr. Callahan inquired for data updates, Mr. Rudder said there were none and that they should move on. Mr. Callahan suggested thinking outside the box to achieve this SPI, he believes it is achievable.

SPI 4 –

Mr. Hopkins said this is probably a dead issue for at least a few years. Mr. Callahan accordingly recommended they drop SPI 4 and focus on the first three strategic plan initiatives. At the next CBVA meeting he recommends being able to say if they want to continue the first three objectives and look out three years at that point. Ms. Scanlon said she knows money is tight for the state but believes this objective is important and that they should keep it. Mr. Hopkins said he doesn't disagree. Keeping the SPI helps to get it more attention and he recommends leaving it but wants to be transparent with the Board, letting them know that from a state general fund

prospective that the funds will not be there. Mr. Callahan inquired if they want to move out to the FY 22-23. Mr. Rudder said he would like to project for the next 3 years. Mr. Callahan said Ms. Fraser or Ms. Snyder can help set up a meeting with the various board working groups. Ms. Hammon agreed with keeping this SPI and suggested Mr. Callahan be the staff member who attends those meetings. Ms. Golonka will be replacing Ms. Caldwell in the working groups.

Meeting Locations FY 20-21

Mr. Rudder turned the Board's attention to the meeting locations for FY 20-21 and pointed out that due to the current pandemic, they have even been unable to schedule the meetings for the rest of this calendar year. He inquired if anyone is apprised of when they will again be allowed to travel. Ms.

Scanlon said the state government is continuing to recommend to work from home until Oct. 31st. Mr. Hopkins concurred, those who can need to continue to work from home. Mr. Hopkins is expecting there to be updated guidance provided by the state in the middle of October as to whether that deadline will extend again. Ms. Hammon said that there is no reason the Board can't meet in Grand Junction in October for their training as the WROS has been approved to hold large meetings. She recommended the staff be on Zoom if they are not allowed to travel with the Board. Mr. Hopkins said he sees no problem with that alternative but that per the direction of the Governor the staff would not be allowed to join. Ms. Hammon said the WROS has excellent resources for virtual meetings. She suggested the Board travel to Grand Junction from their training and meeting in October and that the staff can attend remotely. Ms. Scanlon stated she understands the Governor's request that they work as remotely as possible does in fact apply to the Board as well in spirit if not in letter. Mr. Rudder inquired if anyone else had further comments. None responded. Mr. Rudder reminded the Board that in November they normally meet at Wings Over the Rockies but that they still might not be allowed to travel then. He suggested they go meeting by meeting through the end of the year. Ms. Hammon pointed out that the event at Wings Over the Rockies could be cancelled. Mr. Rudder suggested that September and October both be virtual meetings on WebEx as the pandemic continues to play out.

Mr. Gonzalez queried as to the deadline if they were going to decide to meet in Grand Junction in October. Mr. Rudder stated no later than mid-September. Ms. Scanlon said she must still disagree with planning to meet in person in October per the Governor's request. Mr. Rudder

suggested putting the retreat off because he doesn't know how it can be accomplished virtually. Mr. Rudder stated he would be in touch with Ms. Fraser and Mr. Hopkins about October. Ms. Hammon said if they do allow for travel beginning at Halloween then they could schedule the retreat to be at Wings Over the Rockies. Mr.

Rudder agreed that was a possibility.

Mr. Steen stated that he is dealing with this daily as a County Commissioner. He stated that life does not stop, we don't quit, just because life throws us curveballs. The challenges must be accommodated. He suggested meeting in person in Grand Junction with proper social distancing and staying in the open hotels.

Mr. Rudder reiterated that he will work with the Denver staff and Mr. Hopkins regarding the next meetings and that the Board will do what it can regarding scheduling per the Governor's directives.

New Business

Protocols –

Mr. Rudder stated that things are running well today and inquired if the other Board members had any concerns over today's meeting. Mr. Rudder said it seems like the video issue he was having was his old computer. He is going to work on getting a new one. Things are going smoothly, we will take our first break shortly.

WIG items –

Mr. Rudder inquired as to the Board's opinions on the WIG items. Ms. Hammon inquired if everyone has a copy of them. Mr. Hopkins explained that as part of the SMART act, an accountability act for the Governor, – the Dept. has to develop wildly important goals that tie into the governors bold 4. There is only one that ties into the Board of Veterans affairs and that affects the CVSOs. He said that involves the state offices are moving into a teach/coaching role for the counties which is difficult with the current pandemic. They will be collecting various data points with the goal of being able to go to the state government and collect more funds for the CVSOs. Ms. Hammon stated that she is very concerned about the WIGs and how they are written, talking of 'mature' veteran service officers is insulting. Mr.

Callahan asked Ms. Hammon to put together a group of CVSOs to discuss this WIG with him. She advocated that the level of 'maturity' cannot be based off of how many veterans the CVSOs deals with each month. There are wildly different veteran populations in the different counties across the state leaving some CVSOs meeting with three a year while others may see many more.

Mr. Rudder said he has concerns. He understands as a veteran he should be able to walk into every office across the state and receive the same level of service. Mr. Rudder further stated that as a VSO he has concerns understanding this is unrealistic. Mr. Rudder said he recently spoke with a Mr. Mike Atwater, Mineral County CVSO, and asked him how many compensations claims he has done recently. Mr. Atwater replied that he has not done any in over a year. How can Mr. Atwater's workload be compared to Douglas or Jefferson County? Ms. Hammon said the other aspect is how often they call the state office. She shared that she calls the state office about four times a week. She wants to do everything exactly right, she doesn't want to do anything wrong that could delay the veteran getting assistance. There are things that come up such as burial at sea that are just not done frequently but need to be done correctly.

Mr. Tremaine commented that the mission of the state office is really education, training, and support. There are a limited number of state veteran service officers. They will always be available for training and support for complex cases. They are preparing to unveil their YouTube channel and stated that there they will have different videos available on various processes. This will be available for County Veteran Service Officers as well as veterans. This is not about wanting to answer questions, limiting or counting calls, we are there for the CVSOs, there is not question about that. We utilize that time we have, that we can afford to the counties as an educational opportunity, not an assistance opportunity. We will still be working with the counties on appeals, there are lots of complexities there, Mr. Poteet will continue to assist statewide on appeals. He does not want anyone to have the impression that we are grading them. We are about the highest level of customer service that we can provide. The video library will assist with answering basic questions while the state office will be able to help with the more rare cases. They are trying to be as understanding as possible with the video library and the Board can expect that more videos will be generated over time.

Mr. Rudder stated that his very first thought on hearing the WIGs is that they want to fire all the old guys and get in a bunch of new hot shots. Mr. Tremaine reassured him that it couldn't be further from the truth. He also stated that there aren't many young veterans that step forward and want to be involved as evidenced by their own recent hiring process.

Mr. Pohl inquired of Mr. Tremaine if the videos will replace the annual mandatory training. Mr. Tremaine stated that this year's conference will be virtual and that the state has waived all fees for this year. Mr. Tremaine informed the Board that the goal is to go completely virtual for all conferences in the future. Mr. Hopkins stated that this year they will be virtual, there is no other way. Due to the pandemic and that most of the attendees are in the high risk category. Mr. Hopkins further stated that in regards to future conferences no decisions have been made. Budget will be a factor but he does understand that professionally it is very helpful to have the in person conference.

Mr. Pohl further inquired if there is any way to get all the State VSOs back to the office as it has been very difficult to reach them. Mr. Tremaine suggested that Ms. Fraser may be able to provide further information on this. Mr. Tremaine did suggest that email is a good way to reach the SVSOs but they are still in back to back meetings all day. He also offered that if a CVSO needs something they can email Mr. Tremaine directly and he will farm it out. Ms. Fraser provided that Diana Debor has been answering the phone for DVA East during the pandemic. Ms. Fraser now has a line that works from her house and will provide that number to all CVSOs and Board members. Mr. Rudder stated that Ms. Fraser is his go to any time he needs anything.

Covid – 19

Mr. Rudder asked if the Board needs to cover anything related to Covid-19 although he expressed concern that this does not fall within the purview of the Board. Mr. Hopkins said he would provide details when he gets to his report.

Legislative Issues

Mr. Dorman brought up the legislation he has been working on in regards to the Space National Guard. He state that unfortunately the National Defense Authorization Act has been submitted in both the House and Senate and it does not include a Space National Guard provision.

Accordingly they are already working on this legislative goal for next year. This is not to be

confused with Space Command, Mr. Dorman has been coauthoring the state supplement regarding Space Command with OEDIT. They have submitted this to both Aurora and CO Springs which are two communities which are both submitting to be the permanent home of the US Space Command. They have worked to collect lots of information to support these bids.

Joining Community Forces which is through our office of family programs has already put out their 2020 resource guide – something he has already received very positive feedback about. Ms. Hammon inquired how she can get a copy of the resource guide. Mr. Dorman referred her to the Colorado JCF webpage.

There has been some movement around Restore Honor. Kristen Gillibrand is doing work on the federal side, if you got a BCD due to sexual orientation, she is trying to change that. The state of New York subsequently did a bill called the restoration of honor act and it goes beyond sexual identity. Mr.

Dorman is looking to do something similar in CO in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity. He also sent the by-law information from the attorney from the AGs office. Mr. Steen inquired about Senate 785, the VA Mental Health Act, he asked if CO is at all engaged in that conversation. Mr. Steen said that both CO Senators are sponsors and that it is now in the House. Mr. Steen suggested supporting this. Mr. Dorman said the Board could choose to support it. The House bill in HR 5122.

Ms. Hammon requested the By-Law information be put on the agenda for the next meeting so the Board members have time to study it. Mr. Rudder placed the By-law discussion on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Scanlon asked that the Board support the bill currently under consideration requiring the VA to provide gender specific services at every VA medical facility. Mr. Steen and Mr. Longinos both requested to be able to read the information first.

Mr. Tremaine expressed his regrets that he had to leave the meeting due to another engagement. He informed the Board that DVA is now the agency that will be issuing letters for Disabled Veteran License plate qualification in the state of Colorado. Mr. Tremaine said that Ms. Snyder will be giving the report for DVA East.

Mr. Rudder called for a ten minute break at 10:25am. The meeting resumed at 10:40am.

Mr. Hopkins, DMVA -

Mr. Hopkins apologized for his absence last month, things were hectic. He had a conflict on his calendar, he has rectified that situation going forward. He will not however be able to make of all these meetings. The reason for that is that two weeks ago he formally assumed command of the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (*Mountain*). That is 4200 soldiers spread across 6 states all of whom will be deploying within the next 12 months. Unfortunately the drill weekends fall on track with the Board meetings. Mr. Hopkins can guarantee the complete support of the DMVA staff. Mr. Dorman will provide Mr. Hopkin's updates. He would like to highlight the following: Now Lieutenant General Loh has been confirmed promoted and assumed position as DANG all in the last two weeks. As far as working with the Governor's office the budget is currently the primary focus although a side item being worked closely is taking care of the statue destroyed by the recent riots. They are looking at potentially replacing that with a Sand Creek Massacre Memorial but this is still a work in progress as to what will happen with the original statue. The budget forecast is still bad. The long bill was signed in June. They are looking at an additional ten percent budget cut where they already are. They have already started working on next year's budget. Brey has already stopped overtime, stopped pay differentials and cannot provide monetary compensation to exceptional employees. Brey has eliminated the travel budget, which is easier to do during the current pandemic, eliminated all membership to professional organizations, and the potential still exists for voluntary furloughs and some limited restructuring as well. As the budget process continues Mr. Hopkins has two primary focuses for DMVA – customer service, both internal and external. The second focus is to preserve our work force talent. The DMVA is a small department compared to others in the state, only 44 of 194 employees are true state employees because the others are paid by federal funds to some degree.

Potential still exists for voluntary furloughs and potentially some restructuring as well. Just over 50% of the DMVA workforce is eligible for retirement in the next 5 years. Brey is working to retain higher quality individuals to bring into these emptying positions. Before the pandemic they were operating on a rope diameter budget, now shoe string, next year fly fishing line diameter. The budget impacts the Executive Directors office, DVA and our ability to provide state match for federal funding – maintenance and upgrade of facilities and construction.

There are still 84 airmen supporting the Covid response. Up till now they have been fully federally funded. This has just changed to 75% federal and 25% state. The state has to make budget decisions around this because this will quickly cost over 500k and 750k. Our Covid response is going to be limited by budget availability.

A large percentage of state employee workforce are continuing to flex work / telework. About 55% are still doing this. As part of the Covid mitigation strategy this will continue until at least Halloween. Mr. Hopkins opened for questions. Ms. Scanlon inquired with the budget reduction does that reduce the Boards budget also for travel this year. Mr. Hopkins said that currently, as an external customer, they have not impacted their travel budget for this year. However, the more virtual of these meetings that occur the more money is being saved. Ms. Scanlon further inquired as to who will be Mr. Hopkins representative when he is unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Hopkins replied that Mr. Dorman will be the primary representative for him. Mr. Steen said that Mr. Hopkins is a great American, congratulated him on his command.

Mr. Hopkins said for the next 6-8 months Mr. Dorman will be his primary representative. Mr. Hopkins said he is deploying next May and they have not yet filled the interim Deputy Executive Director position for when he is gone.

DVA West – Joanne Iglesias

Covid has not affected the construction project at the cemetery. They started breaking ground this week on their project. The WROS has had its door open, weekly support groups are meeting and clubs are meeting, the new administrative staff is on board. Ms. Iglesias opened for questions. Ms. Hammon asked Ms. Iglesias for the clearance she has received to host events by the Dept. of Health. Ms. Iglesias explained the process, reporting they had received a perfect score for not needing to alter anything to make anything safer for the staff and customers at both the WROS and the cemetery. Both facilities have now been visited three times and they will continue to stop by every few weeks. Mr. Stice inquired about the support groups and how veterans can get involved. Ms. Iglesias assured him his counterpart is already involved. Ms. Iglesias said that Mesa County loves the WROS that it is a very safe place. Mr. Steen congratulated her on her work.

VCLCs, Robbie Robinson

With regard to the damage done in June any repairs on that will depend on the final settlement with the insurance company that insured that structure. He hopes that no monies will be needed from the trust. With regards to the VCLCs, 62 residents at Fitzsimmons have tested positive and 22 staff. 34 residents have recovered and 27 have died. The 27 number is lower than previously listed as they reviewed the cause of death and in some instances Covid has been a secondary cause. For veterans, listing as Covid is a substantial disadvantage because this is not service connected. Homelake had one employee who tested positive, and they were sent home for 14 days. At Rifle 3 employees have tested positive.

Walsenburg has one resident that have tested positive. A related issue is the sale of the Ft. Logan property, the 7.9 million dollars from this sale is now gone. They have written a letter requesting that this be repaid with interest, he doesn't have much hope of it but will try. Michelle Barnes didn't even acknowledge receipt. Mr. Robinson opened for questions. Ms. Scanlon provided that coroners are doing autopsies on everyone they think died from Covid to verify if that was the cause so the state has two running numbers. Ms. Scanlon asked him to discuss the agency banquet. He said it was scheduled for the 23rd of August. He stated that is not happening but they will have the program pieces presented virtually.

Ms. Scanlon further inquired if he is monitoring any state legislation that the Board should be paying attention to. He stated that they are in their final phase of deciding what they will be focusing on. He knows that they will be focusing on having a women's program coordinator at DVA, the other is the veterans hiring preference. He knows anything with a fiscal note has no chance of passing. Supporting business owners who want to give a veterans hiring preference without retribution.

Mr. Steen commented regarding HB 1220 which is the bill 'the study bill' it was lost this year due to funding it had a 300k fiscal year. There is still a discussion to look for a site for this. Is there any discussion with the VCLCs on that topic? The dept. position is that they need to do the need study – that is ongoing, it is due in November. It will illuminate the need for where specific services are. It is obvious that El Paso County will show specific needs. He doesn't believe there will be a location recommendation. That study is on track. Ms. Hammon pointed out that a big problem at Fitzsimmon's is the number of employees who have tested positive, due to the

contact tracing, they are having serious staffing problems. Mr. Rudder expressed his appreciation to Mr. Robinson.

DVA East – Carissa

Ms. Snyder apologized. She knows the Board received the written report. It mentioned they did some work with the DMV allowing vets to use a state issued letter instead of a federally issued letter. This has been an ongoing issue for a while, Motor Vehicle now understands that our office can look at the same thing that the VA looks at to verify. Ms. Snyder said this problem has been exasperated by the pandemic. Mr. Rudder said this is going to be a very big deal for rural Colorado. Ms. Hammon inquired how soon this letter is coming out – today or Monday. Under training the written report says that 21 august they will receive the times for the training, she hopes it will come sooner. Ms. Snyder said that it is the uploaded content that will be published on Aug 21, which the agenda will come out in the next day or two. Ms. Snyder stated that there will be no fee this year.

Grants – Ms. Hoagland

Hopes everyone checked out the link on the survey monkey results. The grants were fully in effect as of July 1 and things are moving forward. Ms. Scanlon inquired how much money was returned last year. Ms. Hoagland said that was covered in the written grant report. For the VTF the execution was about 58%, the VAG was about 88%, the remainder was returned. Mr. Robinson said the director of the VCLCs that something they need is more iPads and laptops so that veterans can stay in better touch with their families. He inquired if they could use their funds to purchase these technology needs instead of the other items they were going to buy. Ms. Hoagland stated this would require a reapplication process. The Board can say that they will consider a reapplication process to existing applications. This means it must go through the governor's office and come back, it would not be an expedient process. Ms. Hammon said she would consider facilitating this process due to the current need. She notes however that Rifle did not spend any of their money. Ms. Hoagland said this is incorrect, that all VCLCs spent all of their money.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Golonka – working on getting up to speed. Happy to jump back in on the strategic plan. Mr. Rudder noted things have changed a lot since she left.

Ms. Scanlon congratulated Mr. Hopkins on his new command and inquired as to who is his representative on our Board? Mr. Hopkins stated that in the short interim it will be Greg Dorman. The decision has not yet been made as to who the interim Deputy Executive Director will be when he deploys. The actual deployment begins in May. He does not know when the orders will begin, but expects them to commence anywhere between January and March.

Ms. Scanlon shared that The One Marine Assoc. is meeting virtually. She now has the Women Veteran license plate on her car! She sent it to the DMV with her ID card and DD214 but found that was insufficient, she had to go in person and sign the form.

Ms. Hammon reported that the VA did a resource fair and a town hall at the One Source. She is scheduled to have one in Eagle County on September 9th. Approximately 80 people attend the one in GJ. The advisory council met the next day and everyone is grateful to have the two new employees. She also met with the new Director of the VA Hospital in GJ, she was impressed with him and his sensitivity to the rural issues. The hospital is still following Covid protocols. There is a new VSO in Garfield, Delta and La Plata. They are all being trained this week by the State Officer in GJ. Ms. Hammon is working on cases with the cvso in Garfield county. Pitkin is behind in interviews, all of them are excited about attending the state training virtually. The local VFWs are not able to function normally due to Covid. Ms. Hammon inquired of Ms. Hoagland if any of the grantees will be unable to take care of their grants due to Covid. Ms. Hammon said there are lots of alternative options for grantees to still assist their veterans.

Mr. Gonzalez welcomed Ms. Golonka. On 23 July Mr. Gonzalez participated in reviewing the nominations for the El Paso County Veteran of the year, on 25 July he attended the local Korean War remembrance ceremony. He also attended a teleconference with the head of the Air Force Academy. Lt. General Richard Clark has been nominated to replace the current commanding officer there.

Mr. Steen stated the day before they had their regular veteran's community engagement board. Dr. Linda Davis, the chief veterans experience officer was the primary speaker and discussed mental health extensively. Mr. Steen expressed gratitude having Dr. Stice on the call. PREVEN task force was established by the President the year before, just a few months ago they rolled out the REACH program, both of these pertain to reducing suicide among veterans. Mr. Steen said

his county just reached their national average and it is only the first week of August. He would love to see the Board spend more time addressing veteran suicide mitigation efforts. Mr. Steen announced that is County Veteran Service Officer Mr. Bartol is retiring at the end of this month. They hope to have a new part-time CVSOS on by January 1, 2021. Ms. Hammon says the Governor does have a mediator that is tasked, amongst other things, working on suicide, she will try to send this information his way. Mr. Stice offered suggestions for networking on this as well. Mr. Hopkins shared that he sits on the Behavioral Health Task Force of the state. Mr. Hopkins further shared that a service member in CO did commit suicide this week. One of the Governor's specific challenges he is focusing on is suicide prevention.

Mr. Dailey expressed regret that he missed Mr. Kilmer's WebEx meeting the day before. He further expressed disgust at the changes being made in the state office and disappointment that the Board was not involved in directing these changes. Mr. Dailey welcomed Ms. Golonka back and said he had missed her.

Mr. Rudder stated Mr. Frank Muniz of Alamosa County has decided to retire. There are a couple of new CVSOSs in his area and he has been trying to help them learn the basics. He expects a big turnover in VSOs over the next few years. Mr. Rudder gave gratitude to Ms. Fraser and Ms. Snyder for going above and beyond for all the technical help they have provided to make this meeting happen. Mr. Rudder is having difficulty with his arthritis which is causing typos in his messages and he apologizes for this. He is attending funerals again as an honor guard. He is still working from home. Ms. Scanlon gave her back to Mrs. Rudder.

Mr. Stice provided links to VA resources that can assist with Covid related issues. Mr. Steen provided a phone number for the White House.

Mr. Rudder congratulated everyone for the smooth meeting and encouraged everyone – Board members and staff to hang in there.

Ms. Hammon motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Steen seconded. Unanimous approval. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Friday, October 2, 2020

WebEx Meeting

Opening

Mr. Rudder brought the meeting to order at 9:00AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POW's, MIA's, those deployed, their families and all those killed in the line of duty. Mr. Rudder invited the Board members to introduce themselves:

Board Members

Ms. Hammon, Eagle County CVSO, US Army Nurse Corps, Vietnam

Ms. Scanlon, Vice President of CO Women Marine Association, Chief of Staff of the CO Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and an Afghanistan War Veteran.

Ms. Golonka, works at XCEL energy doing their veterans programs, still in the National Guard, has done four tours overseas

Mr. Dailey, Grand and Summit County VSO, US Army Medical Corps, Vietnam

Mr. Steen, Commissioner, Teller County, 32 Years Commissioned service, US Army Infantry, Active Duty and National Guard

Mr. Gonzalez, retired Air Force, 20 years in intelligence, then a school teacher, currently serving as Commissioner of El Paso County

Mr. Rudder, Rio Grande County Veteran Service Officer, Vietnam Era Air Force Aviation Electronics; used his GI Bill to get a teaching certificate then taught shop for 25 years

Staff

Mr. Hopkins, Deputy Executive Director of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Greg Dorman, Legislative Director of DMVA

David Callahan, Strategic Director DMVA; 34 Years active duty service in the Army, OEF/OIF

Mr. Tremaine, Director CDVA East

Joanne Iglesias, Director CDVA West Megan Fraser, Administration DVA East Carissa Snyder,

Officer Manager DVA East

Gail Hoagland, Grants Administrator DVA East Robbie Robinson, VCLC Commission

Visitor:

Shannon Kopp, Commit Foundation

Minutes

Mr. Steen corrected ‘bill under consideration at state level’ to ‘discussion between the VA and CDOT’. Ms. Hammon moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Scanlon seconded.

Unanimous approval.

Public Comments

Ms. Kopp stated her CEO would be online at 9:30am.

Old Business

By-Laws Review –

Tabled until the next meeting. Strategic Plan –

Mr. Callahan queried if the Board wanted to discuss branding. Mr. Rudder opened the floor up for discussion. Mr. Rudder stated he had done research on ideas and came up with the slogan “Veterans Helping Veterans”. Ms. Hammon then queried if the Board should have their own logo. Mr. Dorman stated that “Veterans Helping Veterans” is already a 501c3. Ms. Scanlon suggested “Veterans for Veterans”. Mr. Steen said that they have staff and support that are non-veterans and want to ensure that those individuals who still want to support veterans are not excluded. Ms. Hammon suggested “Working for Veterans”; Mr. Callahan suggested relooking at the Mission, Vision and Values for a guide, he inquired of Mr. Dorman if they could use the seal of Colorado. Mr. Dorman stated they can use the one that has ‘The Adjutant General’ at the top. Mr. Steen reiterated that they need to be all-inclusive in their branding. Mr. Rudder suggested “Making CO a great place for Veterans”. Mr. Callahan was tasked with coming up with a few options and distributing those to the Board members. Mr. Tremaine’s suggestion of “CO Cares for Veterans” was to be under consideration as well.

Branding ideas generated include:

Making Colorado Great for Veterans Colorado Cares for Veterans

Honoring and advocating for those who have served Serving those who have served

Trusted advocate for Colorado's Veterans

Improving the quality of life for all Colorado Veterans Committed to improving the lives of
Colorado's Veterans Advancing the interests of Colorado's Veterans

Outreach

Mr. Rudder opened for discussion what the Board members should be considering outreach.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Fraser requested that the Board Members be explicit about their outreach numbers each month so that determining Board outreach is not a subjective decision by the DMVA staff.

New Business

Travel

Mr. Hopkins was queried on long bill general fund monies. Currently it looks like there will be some loosening of travel restrictions come November 1. Mr. Hopkins stated that all Covid protocols would need to be followed strictly. Ms. Scanlon requested a plan A and plan B, she will not be able to travel unless the Governor changes the restrictions. Covid case numbers and hospitalizations are going up. Ms. Iglesias provided that WROS is clear to have fifty percent capacity in each room, in the large room they can therefore have 35-40 people. Ms. Hoagland reminded the Board that they have to vote to approve their own monies from the VTF. Ms. Hammon motioned to allow for the necessary monies to cover travel, hotel and expenses for all Board members. Ms. Hoagland stated there has to be a dollar amount. Last year the Board allocation 25k for travel, they spent approximately 6k. Ms. Hammon amended her motion to set aside 10k for the Board travel through the end of the fiscal year. Ms.

Golonka seconded. Mr. Dailey said the Board would be well-advised to wait to travel until at least 1 January. Ms. Scanlon suggested voting on the budget, and then discussing where they will meet. Mr. Rudder confirmed. Ms. Hammon said that her motion includes the meeting at the WROS in November. Mr. Hopkins cautioned any meeting in person would have limited staff due to budget cuts. Ms. Hammon withdrew her motion.

Members expressed concerns about the date of the November meeting for various reasons.

Ms. Hammon motioned for a budget of 10k for the Board travel budget for the rest of the fiscal year. Ms. Scanlon seconded the budget. Unanimous approval.

Anne Maree Craig, Commit Foundation – Ms. Craig joined the intelligence community shortly after the events of 9/11 and deployed to Iraq in this capacity in both 2005 and 2007. She married into the Army and had to start adjusting to the effects of her husband's TBI. She realized her family was not alone in the difficulty with transition and she wanted to help others. The Bush foundation has credited their foundation as being the best transition program for veterans. They have been operating in Colorado since 2013. In October of 2019 the Anschutz family began donating to their organization as well. They are planning on greatly increasing their involvement in CO over the next 15 months. General Clellan is interested in their technology becoming available to the CONG. They invest approximately \$3,300 in every individual who comes through their program. Ms. Golonka contributed that she has been in touch with the Commit Foundation in her role at XCEL energy. Ms. Craig observed that there is disconnect between Colorado Springs and Denver and she would like to help bridge that to improve the lives of veterans.

Mr. Hopkins asked a few clarifying questions of Ms. Craig. Ms. Craig clarified the Commit Foundation never takes placement fees because they never want service members to question what their motive is. Ideally the Commit Foundation will start working with someone 12-18 months before separation so they can both envision what they want their life to be like and then work on implementing that veteran's meaningful life. The Commit Foundation serves all services and all ranks. They began with special operations but have expanded from there. Ms. Craig stated that veterans of any length can earn their highest level of services but have to show investment in the program and in themselves. The Commit Foundation began with serving Post 9-11 veterans but has expanded to assist all veterans as needed.

Board Reports

Mr. Hopkins – CONG is still busy with numerous domestic operations including Covid-19 testing stations, and wildfire support. The Cameron Peak fire currently has 24 Guard members staffing it plus an aircraft available. He drew attention to the Mullen Fire which began in Wyoming but it growing rapidly into Colorado. Planning is underway for election support, both civil disturbance and cyber support. Planning is also underway for storage and distribution of a

Covid - 19 vaccine. CONG executed 27 SAR missions in FY 20. CAP squadrons have begun meeting again. Budget is being discussed with the Governor's office. No significant impacts to the Division of Veterans Affairs budget are expected. In a two year period the overall DMVA budget is expected to be cut by approximately 20%. The Governor will present his budget request on 1 November. Mr. Hopkins expressed interest in feedback between the customer service between DVA and the County Veteran Service Officers.

Mr. Tremaine stated the conference testing will occur in ten days. Office staffing continues to be at 30- 40%. The office is continuing partnership with the Buckley TAPS program. VBA is going to be partnering with our office in a virtual clinic. The office of patient experience is providing all the ancillary costs and DVAEast is providing the staff. Secretary Wilkie may visit the DMVA when he comes to CO as a result of this project. Mr. Tremaine stated that at the next ELT meeting for his office that each SVSO will be assigned counties that they will be responsible for mentoring and training. As soon as possible the SVSOs will start visiting their new counties in person; the date of this is pending the ongoing state of the Covid-19 pandemic. Information about virtual clinics will be coming out soon as soon as they discuss it with Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Robinson stated that Lincoln Park has not yet been fixed and he doesn't expect it to be before the election due to more expected civil unrest. The VCLCs are doing a statewide needs assessment to determine the needs of the future.

Ms. Iglesias was having technical difficulties and Mr. Hopkins provided the DVA West report on her behalf. Mr. Hopkins highlighted that she has been on the road, visited all the southern counties meeting both commissioners and CVSOs in those locations. Mr. Oney is still holding is weekly huddles with the western CVSOs. The western counties continue to be a bit more lenient with Covid protocols due to the demographics in that area. There is a lot of construction going on at the Memorial Cemetery. They had been about 8 months away from running out of columbarium space. After this project is complete they should have enough columbarium space until the late 2020's.

Ms. Scanlon inquired about Mr. Hopkins timeline. Mr. Hopkins said that he will be on Additional Duty Operational Support (ADOS) orders on 1 January. At that time he will move to Vermont, he will be pushing out a battalion task force to CENTCOM in January, an additional

battalion task force to AFRICOM in March, a third battalion task force to CENTCOM in April and he will be deploying to EUCOM in May with a Calvary squadron and his brigade headquarters. He is currently in discussion with TAG as to who will be covering his duties. As early as 1 December Mr. Hopkins replacement will be brought in for training.

Mr. Dorman is trying to get more sponsors for the department bill, he currently has one senator. HR 5610 (the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act) is the only bill that has been discussed that has had any movement and that has simply been adding more co-sponsors. He doesn't expect much to happen legislatively until the New Year.

Ms. Hoagland stated that things are beginning to pick up with the grants. One VTF grantee has their funds frozen at present pending them turning in information. She anticipates getting this information. She needs to request a significant amount of time at next month's meeting because the application needs to be approved by the Board so it can be released in December. There are some minor changes and she would like the Board to consider thresholds around funding. She will disperse the updated application in the coming weeks. Ms. Scanlon inquired why the funds were frozen. Ms. Hoagland stated that as part of the grant agreement itself, that they agree if there is a negative audit or a suspicion of fraud or theft of the organization's funds that they need to share that with us and provide information on a plan of what they have now put in place to prevent those situations from reoccurring, as much as they possibly can. She is awaiting those documents. As good stewards of the funds, we need to freeze those funds until this information is provided.

Ms. Hammon stated she did her assigned grantee visit and looks forward to writing up her report for the rest of the Board. She said she'd be happy to do more of these visits. Discussion ensued about grantees and the remote non-monitoring site visits. Mr. Rudder requested copies of all reports be sent to Ms.

Hoagland and Ms. Fraser so they can keep a record and share information with the Board.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Hammon is working on her Veterans Day programs. She continues to enjoy the DVAVest webcam call. The Grand Junction mobile medical unit is finally up and running, it will be coming to Eagle County two days a month. Ms. Hammon said she is a featured speaker on a 29 October

event for a Comeback Yoga fundraiser.

Ms. Scanlon reported that the CO Women Marine Association is using their grant money to support veterans. She bought a new car and has a Woman Veteran license plate on it. Covid is causing the CO Women Marine Association to not meet in person. She requested that we find a new platform for the CBVA meetings.

Ms. Golonka said she has continued to work with Annie from Sen. Bennet's office about military sexual harassment cases. Regarding her two grantee visits, they will be held after the thirteenth of this month.

Mr. Steen stated he is continuing with the veterans round tables with Congressman Lamborn's office. He was shocked to learn that there was no observance of 9/11. He stressed that remembering and commemorating big dates in history – both recent and past – is important to continue. He is working on backfilling through a non-profit backfilling of those projects that the VTF turns down.

Mr. Dailey stated his county system had disconnected and he missed everything from the time Ms. Hoagland was speaking. She provided a recap. He inquired of Mr. Hopkins if he can schedule to meet with him and provide feedback as offered to CVSOs. 17/29 of grantees have spent nothing. 4 spent a total of \$772. He queried if that is a concern. Ms. Hoagland said she is not overly concerned at this point but she is watching it. She sees that tons of veterans are getting kicked out of their living place and this will be expensive to handle.

Mr. Gonzalez reported on 10 September El Paso County held its annual Veteran of the Year Ceremony. He attended the Ft. Carson 9/11 remembrance ceremony on September 11th.

Mr. Rudder stated that as a VSO he has had the opportunity to utilize funds from the... his Covered Wagons Days account is now nearly fully depleted and he will no longer be able to assist with food and housing. In the next 30 hours he will be attending three funerals. He is on the Senator Bennett selection panel for Academy candidates. He sat in on a panel last night for the Merchant Marine academy, he was thoroughly impressed with their program. Mr. Dailey congratulated Mr. Rudder and his wife on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Upcoming meetings

November – Ms. Golonka requested a poll be sent out to discern which date would work best.

Ms. Scanlon suggested the third week, allows avoidance of the election, Veterans Day and

Thanksgiving; she reminded this would be a two day meeting. Unknown if this will be virtual or in-person. 19th from 1pm – 4pm, 20th at 9am.

December – 4th - If in person then it will be held in the Denver area.

Ms. Scanlon motioned to adjourn. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Unanimous approval by the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 1107 Hours.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Friday, November 20, 2020

WebEx Meeting

Opening

Mr. Rudder brought the meeting to order at 9:00AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POW's, MIA's, those deployed, their families and all those killed in the line of duty. Mr. Rudder invited the Board members to introduce themselves:

Board Members

Mr. Rudder, Rio Grande County Veteran Service Officer, Vietnam Era Air Force Aviation Electronics; used his GI Bill to get a teaching certificate then taught shop for 25 years

Ms. Golonka, works at XCEL energy doing their veterans programs, still in the National Guard, has done four tours overseas

Mr. Dailey, Grand and Summit County VSO, US Army Medical Corps, Vietnam

Mr. Steen, Commissioner, Teller County, 32 Years Commissioned service, US Army Infantry, Active Duty and National Guard

Mr. Gonzalez, retired Air Force, 20 years in intelligence, then a school teacher, currently serving as Commissioner of El Paso County

Ms. Scanlon, USMC Veteran, Women Marine Association; joined at 9:15pm

Minutes

Mr. Dailey motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Steen seconded. Unanimous approval to approve the minutes as presented.

Staff

Mr. Hopkins, Deputy Executive Director of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Greg Dorman, Legislative Director of DMVA

David Callahan, Strategic Director DMVA; 34 Years active duty service in the Army, OEF/OIF

Rich Tremaine, Director CDVA East

Joanne Iglesias, Director CDVA West

Paul Von Riesemann, DMVA Budget Specialist Megan Fraser, Administration DVA East

Carissa Snyder, Officer Manager DVA East Gail Hoagland, Grants Administrator DVA East

Jessica Quackenbush, Administration DVA West Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Heather Benjamin, DVA West

Visitors

Theresa Rudder

Robbie Robinson, VCLC Commission

VTF Grant Application Changes for FY 2021-2022

Ms. Hoagland presented three proposed changes for the Board's consideration:

- 1) Process for submission – by email, instead of snail mail. Due in part to COVID protections, and eliminates the deadline issues.

Mr. Steen queried if all of our applicants have email capability? And if so, do they have the ability to submit such large files? Ms. Hoagland responded that she has broken down the applications into two files and clearly delineated what goes into which one. Further, as everything is currently electronic, if they don't have email capability then they probably can't administer their grants. Mr. Robinson pointed out this also requires them to have scanning capability. Ms. Hoagland agreed. Mr. Dorman offered that applicants could take pictures of the documents with a cell phone? Or that DocuSign could be used. Mr. Hopkins queried if they are currently in fillable PDF forms, because then everyone would need Adobe Acrobat; they are Word Documents which is more common, and may be more accessible to more people. Most complaints received last year had to do with the accessibility of the old process and he is therefore very receptive of the new ideas although agrees with the concerns thus far mentioned. Ms.

Quackenbush offered that Google can turn documents into fillable forms and they just hit submit.

Mr. Steen queried if a VSO doesn't have a scanner could grant funds be used to provide one?

Ms. Hoagland responded in the negative and stated that currently, all grantees are scanning and

submitting their reimbursements electronically; the last grantee who was using paper has now been assisted in transitioning to electronic means for submittal. She pointed out that times are changing and everyone is becoming more proficient. Mr. Dailey warned about last second electronic filing, if an application doesn't reach Ms. Hoagland on time then there may be complaints. He also pointed out that currently many CVSOs can't get into their offices and this may prove to be an additional problem. Ms. Hoagland believes this will actual decrease the submittal issues.

2) Requirement to attend kick off training

Ms. Hoagland explained that each year, while provided, a number of grantees don't attend the training meetings. These are then the ones who have difficulties managing the grant, leave out important and required paperwork, and struggle in general. Mr. Tremaine queried if they should record the training and post it on the YouTube channel so that the applicants can access them in case they need to double check. Ms. Hoagland stated that the training is provided on WebEx and is recorded and the applicants can access the recording on that platform however, adding it to the YouTube channel as well could be considered. Ms. Hoagland's suggestion is that anyone who does not attend the training will have their funds frozen until they attend one of the make-up opportunities provided to them in an effort to ensure that everyone has the access and ability to complete the training.

Ms. Scanlon joined the meeting.

Mr. Steen queried if Ms. Hoagland would like to institute a test at the end of training. Ms. Hoagland indicated this was a good idea and would work on ways to implement this suggestion. Ms. Hoagland cited that previously, she tried getting grantees to sign a document stating that they had read the handbook however, the rate of return was abysmal so she took it out for a while. A grantee provided feedback that it should be returned to the process and she did. The rate of return last year on the signed page was about 75%.

3) Funding thresholds –

a. Increase likelihood of grantee success

- b. Increase execution rates
- c. Decrease need for as many modifications.

Ms. Hoagland explained that the proposed process will slightly change the way the Board approval works. The Board will first have to decide to award a grant, then there will need to be a determination if a threshold should apply, then the amount of the award determined. The goal is for the grantees to use the money appropriately and fully, however she has repeatedly received feedback from first time grantees who ask for large sums of money and are awarded such sums that they weren't truly ready for what they were getting into and smaller sums in their first year(s) would have been smarter. Discussion ensued amongst Board members and DMVA staff.

Ms. Hoagland stated that there is also a minor proposed change on the application form indicating that the signature represents acceptance of the Grant Award terms and Conditions and then queried if anyone had any other changes that they would like made to the application itself. There were none.

Mr. Longinos motioned to approve the changes as suggested by Ms. Hoagland, Mr. Steen seconded, although he verified that Ms. Hoagland would act on the Board's suggestions. Ms. Hoagland stated she had been taking notes and felt like it was the processes behind the changes that they were commenting on the most. Board members Dailey, Golonka, Gonzales and Steen voted for approving the changes suggested for FY 21-22. Ms. Scanlon abstained. The motion passed.

Ms. Scanlon requested that when Ms. Fraser sends out documents for the Board that Ms. Fraser specifically notes which documents, if any, will be voted on.

Budget Update

Presented by Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Van Rieseemann. Mr. Hopkins stated that due to the increased measures due to rising Covid numbers. There is a significant number of new tasking's coming in with the NG supporting with alternate healthcare facilities in addition to the work they are doing with fire mitigation. The down select for the HQ for US Space Command took place. Buckley did not make the cut, Peterson and Colorado Springs did, in addition to four other possible locations.

The determination on who will be the Acting Deputy Director while Mr. Hopkins is gone has been made. Two individuals will split at 7.5 months each. David Callahan will begin on January 1, the handoff has already begun. The second replacement, beginning mid-August will be Mr. Dorman. Mr. Hopkins acknowledged that this will affect the legislative session staffing in 2022 however, Mr. Hopkins believes there will be flexibility in the budget at that point in time to have a temporary Legislative Liaison for that year. Mr. Hopkins stated that the two biggest cuts are coming to two specific line items: the Executive Director's office took a significant cut as did the tuition assistance program for the Division of the National Guard.

The Governor has already presented the budget, and it is now going into the JBC process. Mr. Hopkins turned the floor over to Mr. Von Riesemann. Mr. Von Riesemann introduced himself, he has been with the department for four years, the state for nineteen years. The Governor did announce a special session, beginning Nov. 30th. It is anticipated to go 3-5 days, they do not anticipate DMVA being affected by this at all. It is focusing on COVID. A total of \$572,137 dollars was reverted last year, most of those didn't impact any services provided. In both 2019 and 2020 some of the cash funds were swept. Cash funds affected for DMVA include: Real Estate Proceeds, Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant. Total funds swept were \$8,908,395. Regarding the Veterans Assistance Grant, a few years ago there was a bill stating if the Senior Property Tax Exemption funding was not fully used it would go into the VAG and another program. The VTF funding comes from the Tobacco Master Settlement and there has been no legislation to change that. The Board members made queries.

Mr. Von Riesemann presented the FY 21-22 Budget request. There are four line items: 1) Executive Director and Army National Guard 2) Division of Veterans Affairs 3) Air National Guard and 4) Federally Funded Programs. The cemetery does get some funding from cash sources as well, as there is money for each interment. Ms. Scanlon inquired if they will be losing any FTEs at the WROS. Mr. Hopkins stated that some of the FTEs across the state will be redistributed, they are trying to capitalize on currently empty spots, or not filling spots when they are vacated. Over a 2.3 year period there will be a cut to the department of roughly 20%.

Reductions for a Reimagined DMVA include 1) Total net fund reduction of another \$475,000, this will primarily come from the general funds and 2) continuing Tuition Assistance Funding for

the Lower Demand. Questions and discussion ensued between the Board members and the DMVA staff regarding the budget.

The Veterans Assistance Grant will be continued at current funding levels through the supplementation of cash funds from the Veterans Assistance Grant cash fund. The statute mentioned earlier that diverts excess property tax savings to the cash fund (vice the general fund) has been changed and the Veterans Assistance Grant will no longer receive these supplemental funds. The Veterans Assistance Grant will continue with the general fund appropriation, subject to any changes made by the General Assembly. Ms. Scanlon queried if the National Guard is getting extended past December. Mr. Dorman said that is a question for the President, 30 states have already requested that.

Mr. Dailey thanked Mr. Hopkins for coming up to his county for the Veterans Day celebration.

Mr. Steen thanked Mr. Hopkins for his transparency. Stated that he is on several boards for the state and this is by far the best experience.

Meeting took a brief recess at 11:05am. Meeting reconvened at 11:15am.

Old Business

Strategic Plan

Ms. Fraser presented two suggestions regarding the strategic plan. The first is that the quarterly strategic plan for the Board falls in the months of October, January, April and July. The second suggestion is that prior to those meetings the Board members email their updates regarding the SPIs to Ms. Fraser so that she can distribute them to everyone. The Board members agreed with both suggestions. Ms. Fraser further requested any non-monitoring site visits reports that have not yet been submitted need to be sent to Ms. Hoagland as soon as possible.

New Business

Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Ms. Ingalls from the Veterans Memorial Cemetery requested funds in the amount of \$21,010 from VTF monies for the purpose of replacing the Rainbird Irrigation Computer, this comes with 5 years of technical assistance. The current system went down, and cannot continue to function as needed. They also need to replace the gravesite locator kiosk as the current one is no longer supported. A Dinotouch would be purchased which is also what is in use at Ft. Logan.

Mr. Rudder verified this is within purview and the monies exist. Ms. Hoagland answered in the affirmative and explained that the VMC historically receives \$50k - \$100k each year.

Ms. Scanlon motioned to approve at \$21,010. Mr. Steen seconded. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

WROS Funding

Ms. Hoagland provided background information regarding this issue. Ms. Scanlon motioned to amend the prior approval of \$150,000 to \$157,862. Ms. Golonka seconded. Mr. Dailey queried if they are approving for administrative costs, and if they are, is that legal? Ms. Hoagland stated yes it is for administrative costs however it was a direct request from the JBC that the Board approved with additional funds. Mr. Dailey inquired of Mr. Hopkins if this is legal. Mr. Dorman replied that as this money is coming from the VTF that it should be fine however he believes the Board is owed a White Paper on this for clarification as the VTF allows for monies to support the Board or to Veterans. Ms.

Scanlon requested to table this motion until the next Board meeting. Mr. Steen seconded. Unanimous approval of motion to table.

Annual Report

Mr. Rudder queried when the Annual Report needs to be submitted. Mr. Dorman stated it is due at the end of the calendar year, he said they would like to have it by the middle of December. Mr. Dorman states that some of the letters needed have already been received but the key piece is the letter from the Chair.

Non-Monitoring Site Visits

Non-Monitoring Site Visits, Ms. Hoagland. She requested if the Board member has not been able to connect with the grantee, to please let her know, she is happy to assist. After the first of the year, they will plan on doing the next round as long as the Board members still want to do so. Ms. Hoagland informed the Board that at this point, per the goal they had set themselves, they wanted to have a minimum of 8-10 grantees that have been contacted however, only 5 have been conducted. Ms.

Golonka had two of them. Mr. Rudder excused Mr. Dailey from needing to write any at this time; Ms. Scanlon also offered to assist with contacting more grantees. Mr. Gonzalez stated he

had not yet done his and would like his resent to him.

Ms. Scanlon queried about the matters containing to the 3rd Congressional District. Mr. Steen pointed out there is a new member of Congress in the third district. He queried if Mr. Dorman takes the lead on introductions. Mr. Dorman stated that he stays away until they assume office.

Reports

Mr. Robinson

Mr. Robinson said that there is nothing new to report on the Veterans Monument Veterans Trust Committee. Repairing the monument will be covered by state insurance. Regarding VCLC's they have hired a Nursing Home Administrator at Rifle. They are still shut down due to Covid. Testing now occurs every other day. A resident at Fitzsimmon's recently contracted Covid and some staff do from time to time. Funding disappeared that had come from veterans to increase the pay of their nurses at this time there is nothing to be done about it.

Mr. Dorman

Mr. Dorman said they are moving forward with a Restoration of Honor Bill similar to New York. This will restore service members being discharged as Honorary if they were discharged due to sexual orientation. The Board members made queries for further information. Mr. Dorman informed the Board that the Department is neutral on legislation for a new license plate for members of the US Space Force.

Ms. Iglesias

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery has begun the second phase of the construction process which has to do with the pond lining. The Veterans Day ceremony was cancelled due to Covid but there was still a flyover. Wreaths across America is December 18th. Mesa County is moving to red on the Covid Dial however, WROS and the Cemetery will still have staff come to work in person even though they will be closed to the public.

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery held no services this week however, they will begin next week with up to ten individuals in the committal shelter. They are still working on the backlog of internments from earlier this year. The WROS has new tenants, Shield Security and Western Colorado Area Healthcare.

They also have the long awaited VA lease. The HUD-VASH program is moving in, starting with

12-14 employees, potentially the suicide coordinator and the VA enrollment specialist may move in as well. They are actively seeking new tenants and focusing on behavioral health which is a pressing concern in the area. The advisory board is working on creating a sponsorship program with local businesses to support the group programs at the WROS by making a yearly donation.

The new parking lot construction is advancing. All western county CVSOs took the post conference evaluation and Ms. Iglesias and Mr. Oney worked together to review the assessments individually with each CVSO. The weekly meetings with all western CVSOs are continuing and they see them as mini- trainings and an opportunity to network. Ms. Iglesias has been conducting on-site visits to each county. This has included meetings with each CVSO as well as their direct supervisor and county commissioners as appropriate to dialogue on the role of the CVSO. Mr. Oney and Ms. Iglesias have been putting together a draft agenda to host a regional training in March. She stated that this will likely be held over two half days to accommodate those that decide to attend in person. This agenda will be submitted to the Board for review. Ms. Scanlon verified that masks are required for the wreath laying ceremonies and internments. Ms. Iglesias replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Tremaine

Mr. Tremaine stated that the YouTube channel is growing exponentially, they are receiving good customer feedback on what they would like to see. The National Office of VA Experience is on the second day of their event. On the first day of the event, the CO VSOs involved broke the VA record for satisfaction rating at 96.5%. The SVSOs have been contacting their regional VSOs and will be doing onsite visits once they are permitted. The assessment had a very high failure rate and the SVSOs and Mr. Tremaine reviewed the questions and worked to help the CVSOs get understand the answers they missed. They had a preceptor for the two new VSOs who abruptly resigned, since Mr. Tremaine is a certified VSO with the VA he went ahead and took over the preceptor responsibilities for the rest of their training year. Five of the seven service officers have medical reasons to not come into the office, there are only four people who ever go in. Mr. Steen stated he would be glad to help with the CCI connection. Mr. Tremaine thanked him for that assistance. Ms. Scanlon queried now that they have gone to regions, how do they handle women veterans issues. Mr. Tremaine stated that Mr. Darjeen is handling it but they also have a network of female CVSOs that will assist.

Ms. Hoagland

Ms. Hoagland stated that she is beginning to have regional feedback meetings with grantees to find out what is working and what is not. As she can't get out right now to do site visits this is the next best thing. She received information that one of the grantees and his wife both got Covid, had been in the hospital. He was recently released and is on the road to recovery, unfortunately his wife is not expected to make it. She is surprised this is the first grantee as so many of them are high risk. Mr. Tremaine stated if they are a patient at the VA Eastern CO Healthcare System that an email was sent out yesterday inviting them to be part of the initial vaccination group with the Pfizer vaccine.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Golonka stated that the NG has gone fully virtual for their training groups. Ms. Golonka enjoyed her non-monitoring site visit. It gave her insight into what is happening in the area, she finds this information invaluable and would like to continue them. She gave commendation to Ms. Hoagland for all the work she does.

Ms. Scanlon agreed that the site visits are very informative. The CO Women Marine Association will be delivering breakfast and gifts for the Marines and Sailors at the reserve center at Buckley Air Force Base next month. She highlighted the increased level of homelessness when the moratorium on evictions due to rent non-payment is lifted at the end of December; she sees many veterans will be in need of assistance. She also volunteered to trail the vaccine.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that they did a Veterans Day proclamation on November 10th. For the first time however, all events for Veterans Day were cancelled. He did receive an invitation to a virtual event with the Air Force Academy, talking about how active duty military personnel can be involved with their local communities.

Mr. Steen shared that the AL commander in Teller County will now also be serving as a county commissioner; we are however losing the district director for Senator Gardner who is the spouse of a veteran. Mr. Steen's last day in public office is January 12th. He is starting a consulting business and will continue to serve at the Governor's pleasure on this Board.

Mr. Dailey stated that the last month has been different in northern CO. He brought it a mobile medical unit after the fires to assist. There was extensive paperwork to get DC to approve travel

of more than 50 miles. TO go from summer to winter with a fire, with snow. The current problem is downed power lines with snow. The houses that weren't burned are at risk of having their pipes burst once they get their power back on and get to start heating up. It has been difficult to get insurance claims processed. 65% of the homes up there are secondary homes. He needs to discuss what options he has with expanding his grant purview to assist. They held a Veterans Day ceremony at which Mr. Hopkins and a soldier whose last post was the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were the guest speakers. He sadly highlighted a veteran and his wife who took shelter in their basement during the fire and made a final call requesting a new flag as theirs had burned; unfortunately neither of them survived.

Mr. Rudder stated that they had a veterans day parade and while half the parade route was empty they didn't march for the guests, they marched for themselves and the flyover, done by three local pilots, was perfectly timed. He further stated he will be missing Bill Hammon who passed away Tuesday morning this week. Ms. Hammon will be needing lots of support now as she is now alone. As a VSO he is getting calls from Saguache and Alamosa counties as they are struggling to contact their CVSOs. He thanked everyone for their efforts for the Board.

Upcoming Meetings

December – WebEx January – WebEx **Adjournment**

Ms. Scanlon motioned to adjourn. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 12:45pm

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Friday, December 4, 2020

WebEx

Opening

Mr. Rudder called the meeting to order at 9am. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POW's, MIA's, those deployed, their families and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Mr. Rudder, Chair

Ms. Hammon, Vice-Chair Ms. Scanlon, Secretary Mr. Steen, Member

Mr. Gonzalez, Member Ms. Golonka, Member Mr. Dailey, Member

Staff Present

Mr. Hopkins, DMVA Deputy Executive Director Ms. Fraser, DVA East Administrator

Mr. Callahan, DMVA Strategic Planner Ms. Iglesias, DVAAw Director

Ms. Snyder, DVAAe Office Manager Mr. Tremaine, DVAAe Director

Ms. Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator Ms. Benjamin, DVAAw Property Administrator

Guests

Mr. Robinson, VCLC Commission

Minutes

Mr. Steen moved to approve the minutes from November as presented, Mr. Gonzalez seconded.

The Board voted unanimously to approve.

Public Comments

None

Old Business

WROS Funding Amendment – Ms. Iglesias presented the background information. Ms. Hammon motioned to approve the increase of \$7,862 as approved by the legislature, Ms. Scanlon seconded. Mr. Rudder queried if anyone verified that this is legal, Ms. Hoagland reminded the

Board that they previously approved this expenditure, this is just an accounting adjustment to match the amount requested and approved by the JBC. Therefore, this is an acceptable expenditure but it needs to be appropriately adjusted. The Board voted unanimously to approve the adjustment.

New Business

Coronavirus – Ms. Hammon requested that everyone exercise caution and take preventative measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. One of the issues Colorado is having is a lack of staffing. Ms. Hammon stated that one thing people don't understand is that we will all continue to wear masks well into the summer. Ms. Scanlon stated hospitalizations are down a little bit in the last two days but we have not yet seen the effect of decisions over Thanksgiving, then what effects will we have to deal with people's decisions over Christmas and New Year's. High-risk people should no longer go to the grocery store or any other public place. We will only get 40,000 vaccines in the first shipment to our state.

Nursing homes are in Tier 1A. Ms. Hammon queried who is paying for the vaccines and Ms. Scanlon did not know.

Mr. Hopkins left the meeting.

Board Reports VCLC

Mr. Robinson stated staffing is at a critical level. Only Homelake is not having an outbreak. Walsenburg has had four veterans die and twenty-three staff test positive in the last two weeks. Rifle has twenty-four residents that have tested positive, twenty-three staff have tested positive and two residents have died. The VCLCs started this year with twenty-seven million dollars in their cash account, last year the legislature had allocated 2.7 million dollars, and they took that back and had the VCLCs pay for them out of the cash fund. The budget proposal states that 5 million dollars will be transferred to the general fund and once again use the cash fund for the pay raises. Therefore in one year the cash fund will go from 27 million to 6 million dollars. This is dangerously low as this fund is what allows them to operate. All of the homes are currently understaffed and under capacity but they don't have the staff to admit anyone new. The VCLC commission will be making an appeal to the JBC on an emotional level that the veterans, a vulnerable population, are being asked to take on too much of the current financial burden. Ms.

Hammon asked to be updated if the Board needs to support the request to not have their funds swept. Board members and staff made inquiries.

The monument that was destroyed earlier in 2020 has yet to be repaired and discussions continue as to when it may be fixed.

Legislative Update

Special session is currently in session, there will be no impact on DMVA. A staffer is meeting with the JBC today and the JBC hearing for the department is scheduled for next week. Ms. Scanlon inquired if any Board members are needed to attend the meeting. Mr. Callahan stated he would check with Mr. Dorman and find out if the Board members should attend in person or virtually.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery

The VMC received a 5 star rating which allows them to continue to have committal services. They will maintain Ft. Logan's standards which allows only five family members to attend plus required staff and the clergy. At this time the honor guard is not allowed because they are all high-risk. Wreaths Across America is still underway and will be conducted on Dec. 18th and 19th. Ms. Ingalls is moving forward with procuring what the Board approved funds for two weeks ago. There had been a vacancy on the grounds crew however that has now been filled by a retired Navy Veteran who will begin on Dec. 21st and formerly worked at Ft. Logan National Cemetery.

WROS

The WROS received a 5 star rating which is also allowing them to stay open. The DEERS Operator and State VSO are currently appointment only however they are allowing veterans to walk in. The HUDVASH program is officially on board and started paying rent on November 16th. They will move people in on December 17th. The WROS received a donation yesterday for \$1,000 from NOAH. Mr. Oney is continuing to provide weekly check-in and training meetings to all western CVSOs. Ms. Iglesias did conduct on-site visits to several counties and helped to identify and acquire headstones for five veterans whose graves had previously been unmarked. She virtually attended a two day winter conference for county commissioners. The midyear training for the western CVSO's is tentatively scheduled for March 9th and 10th. Mr. Tremaine queried as to how the 5 star rating works. Ms. Iglesias stated it was something Mesa County came up with earlier in the pandemic to determine if businesses could be allowed to stay open.

To achieve and maintain this rating they are having to follow strict protocols to reduce the risk of the spread with the coronavirus. This allows them to go back on the Covid dial for the county, so while the county is in the red, the WROS is at the orange level.

DVA East

Mr. Tremaine stated that there haven't been many changes in the last two weeks. A state veteran service officer who was in training did resign for personal reasons and the others have seamlessly taken on his responsibilities. All is going well with their regions. There are over fifty DV plates issued. Mr.

Tremaine is hopeful that the VAMC in Aurora will receive some of the earlier vaccines.

Grants

Ms. Hoagland stated the application would be on the website next week in addition to the Webinar training schedule. The slowdown that Ms. Hoagland had anticipated has not yet occurred so things are busy with the Grants program. Ms. Scanlon wanted to thank Ms. Hoagland for all her hard work and anticipates that all veterans programs will be quite busy in the new year. Ms. Hoagland stated in the month that the moratorium on evictions was not in place there was a tremendous increase in the requests for rent, utilities and food. Mr. Dailey stated that the reimbursements are coming in a very timely manner this year and thanked Ms. Hoagland for her efforts. Ms. Hoagland stated that this is thanks to having hired an additional person in the accounting department who is helping to process the payments so this labor is not just falling on one person.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Golonka thanked Ms. Scanlon for the information about the vaccine and informed the Board that the National Guard is still working on getting their regular flu shots; they just did their second virtual monthly drill training. Ms. Scanlon queried if Title 32 got extended for the National Guard. Ms. Golonka does not know.

Ms. Scanlon stated she did sign up for the VA vaccine testing program. The Colorado Women Marine Association has continued to assist veterans in need throughout the pandemic. They are unable to bring the marines and sailors on Buckley AFB breakfast as planned due to Covid, but they will be delivering them gift bags. Ms. Scanlon is continuing to work with the VAMC on

their mammogram program and praised the progress made while still asking all present to pay attention if a female veteran ever has a complaint about the process.

Ms. Hammon has been serving on Senator Bennett's panels to select who he will support as candidates to the military academies. The UVC is conducting a silent auction this year for their fundraiser and she will have Ms. Fraser disperse this link to all members of the Board. Her bicycling group is doing a fundraiser for victims of sexual trauma. Fifty-nine percent of female veterans state that navigating this issue is a problem and informed the Board that women are the fastest growing population of homeless veterans in the country. Ms. Hammon reiterated her request to Mr. Tremaine for a Women Veterans Coordinator. Mr. Tremaine expressed his hope that the 2018 statistics are in fact improving and Ms.

Hammon stated that it's getting worse. Ms. Scanlon seconded Ms. Hammon's recommendation that there is an immediate need for a Women Veterans Coordinator for the State of Colorado and a need to act now, not wait until the stats are even worse. Ms. Hammon stated she would like to have another grantee sent to her for a non-monitoring site visit, Ms. Scanlon concurred. Ms. Hoagland stated she would do this in January 2021.

Mr. Dailey stated in the last week he has gotten solicitations for a group similar to the DAV for assistance. He stated that all of the groups: American Legion, Purple Heart, etc. all seem to be dying out. Mr. Dailey stressed these groups, for most of the last century, have been at the heart of their communities and he requests once it is safe, that the Board intentionally work on liaising with them much more. Mr. Dailey stated that it has been a herculean effort to sift through who is getting assistance from the fire aftermath and who will not. Mr. Dailey thanked Ms. Hammon's husband for a lifetime of service to others and his country.

Mr. Gonzalez had Covid for the last two weeks and was in quarantine. He did however attend a virtual meeting with the cadets from the Air Force Academy with the discussion focusing on ethics. The commissioners in El Paso did pass their annual Minute 1:06 on Pearl Harbor.

Outreach: 1

Mr. Steen stated that there are four bills in consideration at the state level that while not veteran specific may impact them. HB 1001 addresses broadband access for Pre-K – 12 education. Mr.

Steen is keeping track of whether money going to the schools for broadband can also be used for veterans.

Senate Bill 20-002 may be able to provide assistance to veterans needing help with housing. This has already been signed into law by the Governor. Senate Bill 20-003 may be able to provide utility assistance for veterans if signed into law. A Food Pantry assistance grant is covered in HB 20-1003 which is headed to the Governor to sign. Tomorrow Mr. Steen will be on Congressman Lamborn nomination panel. Mr. Steen also now qualifies for TriCare for life. Mr. Rudder thanked Mr. Steen for following the bills under consideration at the legislature. Ms. Scanlon queried regarding HB 1001, she thought it was only for children. Mr. Steen responded in the affirmative but stated that when broadband comes to a community, there is a spill-off.

Outreach: 3

Mr. Rudder stated he has been quite busy as a VSO covering Rio Grande, Saguache and Alamosa counties. Project Healing Waters just had the awards ceremony and no veteran in Colorado won anything.

Ms. Scanlon welcomed Ms. Hammon back and expressed regret for her loss.

Outreach: 2

Upcoming Meeting

January 8th at 9am on WebEx

Adjournment

Mr. Steen moved to adjourn. Mr. Dailey seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 am.