

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) Meeting

Date: 7 February 2025

Location: Rocky Mountain Regional
VAMC

Time: 9:00 AM

Break: 10:35-10:47 am

Members Present

Shelia Scanlon, Chair

Raymond Taylor, Member

Sean Maday, Vice Chair

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Howard Richards, Member

Members Absent

Lacey Golonka, Secretary - Excused

Longinos Gonzalez, Member -
Unexcused

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan - Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial
Cemetery of Western Colorado
Administrator

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran
Services Supervisor

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Darin Collazo, Western Region One
Source Administrator

Beth Maxwell, Program Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Operations
Coordinator

Sharon McCormick - Interim Training
Officer

Guest

Destry DeWolf - Huerfano County
Veteran Service Officer

Mary Cornum - Veterans Coalition of
the San Luis Valley

Pat Hammon - Eagle County Veterans
Service Officer, VCLC Board of
Commissioners, UVC Representative

Paul Rieker - Veteran

Janelle Mendelson - VA ECHCS Public
Affairs

Richard Nagley - American Legion, San
Luis Veteran Coalition

Gerald Renner - American Legion Post
11

Chuck Graves - El Paso County Veteran
Service Officer

Bernice Renner - American Legion Post
11

Travis Gale - Kit Carson County Veteran
Service Officer

Gar Williams - Director, Veterans
Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Major Carmilya Jones - US Space Force

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December meeting were approved by all with the changes previously emailed. Mr. Taylor made the motion. Mr. Maday seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Rieker requested assistance with a medical study for a new treatment for PTSD. He has asked for letters to be submitted to Governor Polis and the Department of Defense (DOD) on behalf of the board. These letters will be sent out following the board meeting.

Mr. Nagley requested an audio recording of the meeting. Additionally, he would like public comments to be placed at the end of the meetings. He also inquired about the expected completion date for the annual report.

VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

VCLCs Update: There has been no change in residency for VCLCs.

VCLCs Outreach: VSLCs would like to know of outreach locations for distributing flyers for the VCLCs.

Staffing Concerns: Staffing remains an issue, but administrative staff are using creative methods to retain employees.

UVC Updates - Pat Hammon:

Department of Labor Law: The Department of Labor has a law that requires a certain amount of labor be provided by veterans.

Claim Shark Bill (HB25-1047): The HB25-1047 bill aims to prevent unethical charging of fees for submitting claims, ensuring fair practices for veterans. A vote on this bill is scheduled for 10 AM on Monday, February 10.

DV Offenders on VTC: Mrs. Hammon will ask the UVC for the prevention of removing Domestic Violence (DV) offenders from Veterans Treatment Court (VTC).

Standing Reports

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

Department of Labor Law: The Department of Labor has a law that requires a certain amount of labor to be provided by veterans.

March for Budget Cuts: For further information regarding budget cuts, the board will need to review the public notes to understand the JBC (Joint Budget Committee) recommendations.

Claim Sharks Options: There are a couple of options available regarding the Claim Sharks issue.

Property Tax Bill for Veterans: A property tax bill is currently under review for veterans, with an emphasis on adjusting for inflation. The new bill would allow a property tax exemption based on the service connection rates.

Director Cowan will ask the legislators the prevention of removing Domestic Violence (DV) offenders from Veterans Treatment Court (VTC).

Prop KK: Prop KK was a tax initiative, the funds generated could possibly assist with mental health services outside of the VCLCs.

State Contracts for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses: Research is ongoing regarding state contracts for veteran-owned small businesses. However, the information is not easily accessible. It would be beneficial to add this information to the departmental details given to the board.

Director Report - Bruce Cowan

CVSOs Getting a PIV Card: County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) are in the process of receiving a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card.

Goals - VTF and VAG Applications and Incarcerated Veterans: The goals include expanding VTF and VAG applications, particularly for incarcerated veterans. Currently, services are provided in Englewood, and plans are underway to begin working with veterans in Sterling.

Peer Review Process for CVSOs: A peer review process is being established to train CVSOs in best practices for the claims process.

Veteran Services - Eric Winterrowd:

Outreach Events: Outreach efforts include prison outreach at the National Student Vet Conference and Southern Colorado Veterans events.

County Movement: Bent and Otero counties have dissolved their Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), while Saguache and Alamosa are in the process of creating an IGA.

Look, Listen, and Learn (LLL) Tour: The LLL tour will include visits to Summit, Grand Huerfano, Broomfield, and Adams County this month.

Elizabeth Dole Grant for FY 26-27: CVSOs are working toward securing the Elizabeth Dole Grant for the fiscal year 26-27.

Concerns: Ongoing concerns include redundancy in processes and the lower rates of fully operational Veteran Service Officers (VSOs).

Training Updates: Mr. Winterrowd provided an update on the training progress, with a focus on upcoming training sessions, including one scheduled for April.

Women's Coordinator: 261 Colorado Women Veterans have registered with the National Women's Memorial. Colorado will be recognized once the registration reaches 300. However, the work and resources that Ms. Demenge was successfully obtaining have been dissolved due to the change in administration.

Appeals Update: The BVA and NVSLP have been successfully winning claims for veterans. Mr. Winterrowd expressed interest in continuing the partnership with NVSLP.

Phase Training Outline: The previous 30-60-90 approach will be replaced by a phased training plan based on abilities rather than timing.

- Phase Zero: Onboarding with basic resources.
- Phase One: Complete trip training, meet regionals and peers.

- Phase Two: Once accredited by VS and OGC, start the PIV card process, attend outreach events, and complete claims shadowing through training, with completion leading to direct submit availability.
- Phase Three: This phase may face a delay as a PIV card is required to proceed. It will focus on VBMS and Share training, as well as NASCVSO membership and completion of the basic course. This phase aims to lead to self-sufficiency in most claims, with an added component focusing on medical claims.

A motion to approve the phase training plan was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mrs. Motupalli. The motion was approved.

Western Region One Source - Darrin Collazo:

Community Events: WROS has attended several community events and will be hosting a VA Townhall and Standdown this spring.

Veteran Wellbeing Activities: Several prospective activities focused on veteran wellbeing are being planned, including the formation of a new mental health advisory committee.

Improvements: Efforts are underway to improve parking by adding more handicapped spots and additional parking spaces. Additionally, there are plans to enhance the library wall to display veteran memorabilia.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery (VMC) of Western Colorado - Angela Ingalls

Reimbursements: Reimbursements are timely, and all reimbursements have been received.

Community Engagement & Memorial Updates: The Veterans Memorial Cemetery reported on community engagement activities, including the progress of a new

bronze statue for Women Veterans Service Day. Additionally, other memorials are planned for spring.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

New VAG and VTF Grantees: New VAG and VTF grantees learned about the VAG grant through referrals and outreach efforts.

Grant Applications Due March 1, 2025: Applications for the VAG and VTF grants are due March 1, 2025. For a board review, this will include scoring guidelines and criteria for evaluating good grant applications. The process of creating review materials and scheduling the board for grant reviews is in progress.

- VTF Subcommittee: Mr. Taylor, Mr. Maday, and Ms. Golonka
- VAG Subcommittee: Mr. Gonzalez and Mrs. Scanlon (alternate).
The review process is set for April.

Honor Stipend Program: The Honor Stipend Program is moving to the Grants department. Of the 15 applications, only 7 applicants were qualified. These will be tested, and the top 6 will be sent to Lisa for further review.

Training Progress: Separate training will be conducted for the VCLCs.

VLC Mental Health Payments: Payments for VLC Mental Health services are progressing smoothly. Ms. Fernandez will be working on an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for the continuity of this program.

VMC Software Requests: There is a request for new Cemetery software to replace the spreadsheet currently used by the Veterans Memorial Cemetery (VMC). This new software would assist with reconciliation and be beneficial for the cemetery's operations. The maximum cost is \$88,000, with an additional \$2,300 per year for upkeep. The software would also be usable by the Backoffice, with potential for future use to find available spots in the

cemetery.

A motion to authorize the purchase of this software for up to \$89,000 was made by Mr. Richards and seconded by Mr. Maday. The motion was unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Veterans Clearing House is seeing more traffic with the tracking system.

Albuquerque VHA support to rural Veterans - will be removed from old business and updated when needed.

Veteran “protected class” - There has not been a reply if there is a tracking of how many veterans have been hired.

Women Veteran Subcommittee - did not have a report.

IBM - did not have an update and recommended to remove this from old business and update when needed.

Branding - Social media presence will be postponed while the board focuses on grants.

New Business:

Motion to Allow 10% of VTF Funds for Program Costs Starting FY 2026:

A motion was made to allow 10% of VTF funds to be added to program costs starting in FY 2026. Motion made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Maday. Motion was unanimously approved.

Board Remarks

The Board remarked on events they attended in December and January.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions: Kroger now includes TRICARE for prescriptions.

CBVA - February Minutes - Approved

Homelessness: Homelessness remains a continued discussion topic and will be moved to New Business for further review.

Veterans on the Fringes: It was suggested to attend the VTF and VAG grants and advertise these programs for outreach.

Mental Health Awareness: Flyers on mental health awareness should be sent out to the Veteran Service Offices.

Upcoming Meetings

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|---------------|--------------------------|
| 07 March 2025 | Virtual |
| 04 April 2025 | Ignacio, Colorado |
| April | VTF Subcommittee Meeting |
| 02 May 2025 | JFHQ - VTF Grants |
| 06 June 2025 | Eagle, Colorado |
| 11 July 2025 | Craig, Colorado |

Adjournment

Mr. Maday made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Taylor seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.