

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) Meeting

Date: 06 June 2025

Location: Virtual

Time: 9:01 AM

Break: 10:25 AM -10:35 AM

Members Present

Shelia Scanlon, Chair

Raymond Taylor, Member

Sean Maday, Vice Chair

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Howard Richards, Member

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan, Director of Division of
Veterans Affairs

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veterans
Services Supervisor

Darin Collazo, Western Region One

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Source Administrator

Kristy Cunningham - Training Officer

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Operations

Katie McReynolds, CDVA Administrative
Assistant

Coordinator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Sharon DeVita, CDVA Administrative
Assistant

Guests

Pat Hammon, VCLC Board of
Commissioners, UVC Representative

Leah Larson, Director of Strategic
Growth and Partnerships, Neighborly
Software

Ben Kelsey, Green and Gold

Congressional Aide for Congressman
Crow

Courtney Stryker, Senior Resources and
Veterans Services Division Manager,
Arapahoe County

Marsha Unruh - Homefront Military
Network

Approval of Minutes

Moved to approve the May meeting minutes with all the minor changes previously emailed and two changes by Mr. Maday. Ms. Motupalli motioned. Ms. Golonka seconded, unanimous. Motion carried.

Standing Reports

VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

Pat Hammon spoke with Rose Campbell, the Director of Communications for the Nursing Home Division, to make sure VCLC's are executing all of their VTF funds.

UVC Updates - Pat Hammon:

The UVC is now asking their groups to start working on goals for new laws to focus on next year.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report - Bruce Cowan

- Director Bruce Cowan shared news about a new law (Senate Bill 25-282): The Governor is expected to sign it soon. It limits how much a business can be paid to help a Veteran get more benefits. The business can only get the smaller amount of \$9,200 or 25% of the extra benefit. No updates yet on new laws—they're waiting for the Governor's okay.
- Director Cowan will work with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA): They may use up to \$5 million from Proposition KK to help Veterans' mental health. BHA will give grants to help Veterans Community Living Centers (VCLCs). They

CBVA - June Minutes -Approved

want to add 2 Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) to help Veterans in prison. Cowan will meet with Andre Stancil from the Department of Corrections next week.

- The Board heard about federal transportation grants: These are for very rural areas (less than 7 people per square mile). 26 counties in Colorado are that rural. Grants are for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), not for counties. No grants are open yet. Counties will need to work together because the state can't do it alone. No counties have joined yet, but Southwest Colorado and San Miguel County are interested. 15% of the grant money can be used to run the program. Director Cowan wants to build a team before applying.
- Other news: The Board was invited to a Gold Medal Ceremony on June 26, 2026, in Washington, D.C. The event will honor World War II Army Rangers. Ms. Motupalli will attend and has RSVP'd. Ms. Scanlon suggested using Veterans Trust Fund money to pay for the trip. The Board will vote on that later.

Director Report - Bruce Cowan

- Director Cowan visited Durango: He found a building that might work for a new Southern Region One Source center. In August, Ms. Scanlon, Mr. Richards, Mr. Taylor, and Director Cowan will visit the building together. If the plan moves forward, Director Cowan may ask for Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) money in the 2027 budget to help open the new center.
- The Board talked about Veterans in La Plata County: Mr. Richards said Veterans there, especially Tribal Veterans, are not getting enough help. Ms. Scanlon

asked Mr. Richards to meet with Greg Dotson, the County Veterans Service Officer. He will report back with more information at the next meeting.

- Some eastern Colorado counties may start a “hub and spoke” Veterans Service Office system: Lincoln County wants to lead the effort. The counties involved are Lincoln, Kit Carson, Kiowa, and Cheyenne. The goal is for one Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to serve all the counties. This would help more Veterans and keep the VSO’s skills sharp.

Veterans Services - Eric Winterrowd:

- Outreach & Conferences: The NACVSO Conference is next month. Eric and Director Cowan attended the CCI Conference and visited six counties as part of the Look, Listen, and Learn Tour—more local leaders are engaging with Veteran issues. A Women Veterans Conference is set for June 14; Ms. Scanlon requested the flyer be shared.
- Programs & Training: Eric reported the Veterans Clearinghouse Database had 120 visits, but most lasted only 11 seconds; he and Breanna Bang will investigate. Five Regional VSOs completed Advanced Appeals Training. A new VA training system is live, and NVLSP may become a training partner. Carissa Snyder will attend group VSO training in June; Kristy Cunningham and Sharon McCormick will review the Basic Course. Amy Demenge will attend a Veterans fair and is developing new support efforts for women Veterans.
- Incarcerated Veterans & Staffing: The state is tracking outreach to Veterans in prison. Officer Brennan at FCI Englewood is helping with C&P exams—82 claims

submitted, 44 exams done, 9 approved. VA debt for justice-involved Veterans is also a concern. A new VA Policy and Procedure manual is coming. Hiring is underway for a new Regional VSO Supervisor; one Regional VSO resigned, and another is leaving in August.

Western Region One Source - Darin Collazo:

- Facility Improvements: The WROS added five handicap and 18 regular paved parking spaces, a Space Force Emblem, a new library wall, a workstation with free WiFi, and coffee.
- Events & Outreach: May events included a suicide prevention session (32 attendees), a book signing with Liz Estabrooks, and a Memorial Day event with a Blue Star unveiling.
- Community Engagement: WROS began tracking Facebook outreach, saw increased engagement, and continues to post local events to keep the community informed.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery (VMC) of Western Colorado - Bruce Cowan

- Statue & Audit: The Bronze Saluting Soldier Statue will be unveiled on June 7. The cemetery received top marks in the National Cemetery Association audit.
- Memorial Day & Sustainability: Over 1,000 people attended the Memorial Day event. The cemetery plans to fully switch to electric grounds equipment by the end of June.
- Truck Funding: The state fleet approved \$12,000 to paint the cemetery's truck, so Veterans Trust Fund money is no longer needed.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

Neighborly Software Demo: Leah Larson demonstrated a \$17,000 ADA-compliant grant tool with language translation and unlimited tech support. Board members asked questions, and delivery is expected in 8-10 weeks.

Grant Updates: The team processed 46 VAG and 33 VCLC payments. VTF execution is at 65%; VAG at 93%. FY26 VAG requests topped \$2.3M, with \$1,045,000 awarded. Funding dropped \$250K from last year; only 2 of 15 new programs received grants due to weak applications.

Challenges & Improvements: Concerns remain about VTF funds going unused. VCLCs are encouraged to submit reimbursements year-round. Lisa Stamm attended a Remount presentation—an equine therapy program using client surveys to track outcomes.

Old Business:

Concept paper -

- A concept paper for a legislative change will be presented in July, proposing that unused VTF funds be moved to the VAG program, with the Board deciding the amount.
- The Board discussed changing the law to allow VCLCs to buy comfort-related equipment by replacing the word “medical” with “comfort.”
- Ms. Scanlon suggested combining this wording change with the broader VTF-to-VAG funding update already in progress.

A motion was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Richards to recommend this wording change to TAG. The motion passed unanimously.

Neighborly Software -

The Neighborly Software cost is \$17,000 and the Board discussed voting on up to \$18,000 out of the VTF to spend on the Neighborly Software.

Motion to approve the Neighborly Software purchase for up to \$18,000.00 out of the VTF. Ms. Motupalli so moved. Mr. Gonzalez seconded, unanimous. Motion carried.

VTF Funds for VMC Vehicle -

Resolved by the state fleet providing VMC the money to paint their truck. No vote took place.

Women Veterans Subcommittee -

No updates; until the committee has a replacement for the Women's Program at the VA Hospital.

Branding - Sean Maday

The VAG and VTF due date is updated to March 1, 2026, and the stipend flyer now includes Renee Robinson's contact.

Prescription Letter - Sean Maday

No new appointment in Washington, D.C., for the Defense Health Agency Director to receive the Board's letter on prescription access; Mr. Maday will update the draft with the Acting Director's name and send it to Carissa.

Highly Rural Transportation Grant

Mr. Taylor confirmed that the Highly Rural Transportation Grant and the Rural Transportation Grant are the same.

New Business:

Board office Elections:

- Secretary: Lacey Golonka re-elected for a two-year term
- Vice Chair: Raymond Taylor elected
- Chair: Shelia Scanlon re-elected for one final year, through the end of her Board term

All votes were unanimous

Board Membership Updates:

- Longinos Gonzalez was reappointed by the Governor's Office for a four-year term
- Mr. Maday is stepping down from the Board
- New Member: Sheldon Smith, a U.S. Army and National Guard Veteran from the Western Slope and former County Veterans Service Officer, will replace Mr. Maday

Board Remarks

The Board updated on outreach and community events they attended for the month of May.

Motion to send Ms. Motupalli to represent the Board in Washington, DC for Congressman Crow's Gold Medal Ceremony and expend VTF funds to pay for the trip. Mr. Richards so moved. Mr. Gonzalez seconded, unanimous. Motion carried.

Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions

Veterans on the Fringes

Homelessness

Upcoming Meeting

11 July 2025

1 August 2025

11 September 2025

12 September 2025

8 October 2025

Adjournment

Mental Health Service

Transportation

Veterans Food insecurity

Steamboat Springs

Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Training in Grand Junction

Grand Junction, Colorado

La Junta, Colorado

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