

## Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA) Meeting

Date: 7 March 2025

Location: Virtual

Time: 9:00 AM

Break: 10:11-10:25; 11:19-11:30

### 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

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran

Cemetery of Western Colorado

Services Supervisor

Administrator

James Poteet, Appeals Specialist

Darin Collazo, Western Region One

Beth Maxwell, Program Assistant

Source Administrator

Sharon DeVita - Admin Assistant II

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Operations

Coordinator

### Guest

Dominic Edginton - Custer County  
Veterans Service Officer, President of  
the Colorado County Veteran Service  
Officer Association (CCVSOA)

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

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

Marsha Unruh - Home Front Military  
Network

Travis Gale - Kit Carson County Veteran  
Service Officer

Mary Cornum - Veterans Coalition of  
the San Luis Valley

Paul Reiker - Veteran

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

#### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February meeting were approved by all with the changes previously emailed. Mr. Howard made the motion. Mr. Taylor seconded. Motion carried.

#### VCLC Board of Commissioners Minutes - Pat Hammon:

Mrs. Hammon gave an update on the residency and respiratory illness numbers for the VCLCs. The updated figures were shared to keep all members informed on the current status.

On, the audit of the Community Living Centers, by the State, it did not reflect the current admissions changes, which have occurred due to the impact of the pandemic. The reduction in staff has led to a necessary reimagining of strategies to assist with financing, marketing, and maintaining adequate staffing levels. These changes are being made in response to the evolving needs of the facility, and the board is focused on finding solutions to meet these challenges effectively.

#### UVC Updates - Pat Hammon:

The board was updated on the bills the UVC is requesting. It was noted that the Veterans Treatment Court bill is unlikely to pass, and as a result, the UVC is exploring available grants as an alternative source of funding to support the program.

#### Standing Reports

Legislative Report - Bruce Cowan

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The board was updated on the Claims Shark bill, which will limit the amount billed to a veteran to no more than five months of service connection payments or less than \$1,200 for services rendered. This bill aims to protect veterans from excessive billing while ensuring they still receive necessary services.

Additionally, Prop KK, which allocates \$5 million to be paid out over time, was discussed. These funds will be distributed to VCLCs and providers who are assisting veterans with mental health services. The governor's office confirmed that mental health providers supporting veterans will be included and eligible to receive funds from Prop KK, which will help enhance the care and resources available to veterans in need.

#### Director Report - Bruce Cowan

The Division of Veteran Affairs leadership team attended the National Association of Veterans State Directors of Veteran Affairs (NASDVA) conference. During the event, the team had the opportunity to network and learn more about the work being done by their counterparts across the nation. NASDVA also addressed a significant cut of 70,000 (17%) Federal VA staff, which is slightly less than the growth the Federal VA had seen in recent years. Federal VA leadership will have the authority to determine which positions will be affected by these cuts.

Additionally, the DVA Look, Listen, and Learn (LLL) Tour recently visited rural communities and discovered a disconnect between the County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) and the information shared with their commissioners and leadership. To address this gap, Director Cowan will be requesting approximately \$30,000 from the Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2026. These funds would be used to support a platform that will enable Regional and County Veterans Service Officers (RVSO's and CVSO's), along with county leadership, to standardize metrics

and share information of CVSO qualification requirements and policies throughout the State of Colorado.

Veteran Services - Eric Winterrowd:

The NASDVA conference proved to be a valuable opportunity for sharing information on best practices for the Prison Program. The conference helped refine the process as the Veteran Service team begins to add Sterling, the second prison, to the outreach program. Mr. Winterrowd also took the opportunity to discuss Tyler Tech's plans for adding remote signatures to their VetaSpect platform, which could improve efficiency in service delivery.

In other good news, the February 6th deadline prompted action among County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) who were not providing uniform service to veterans. With the changes made, veterans are now more likely to receive consistent and uniform services. Regional reimaging has been implemented, allowing Regional Veteran Service Officers (RVSOs) to share information and better understand the needs of their new regions to support their counties. However, there are still three lead RVSO positions and the Claims and Benefit Manager position that need to be filled. The LLL tours have provided insights into a gap in service to the counties, and Mr. Winterrowd is currently researching solutions to address these gaps.

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation has announced \$10 million in funding for Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to help support their counties. However, the foundation has not yet developed the application process or determined how the grants will be maintained.

Spring Training is scheduled for April 2-3, with phase training to be announced and implemented in Fiscal Year 2026. This training will include cross-training with Appeals during times when hearings are not being conducted.

The Women Veterans Services Officer (WVSO) program continues to grow, with the addition of a work-study position and the hosting of “Lunch and Learn” events. These events are also helping to raise awareness of the VAG grant program and the Women Veteran Memorial Program. Ms. Demenge is scheduled to attend the WVSO conference later this spring.

Western Region One Source - Darrin Collazo:

An update was provided on the growth and movement of the weekly and monthly events, including the DEERS program and outreach efforts. Both Women Veterans’ Representative Outreach Services (WROS) specific outreach and cross-divisional outreach with the cemetery were discussed. The VTF-funded programs are continuing to progress as planned.

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

**Mrs. Ingalls** provided an update on federal funding, noting that there are no expected changes in the near future from federal programs. Updates were also shared on the cemetery’s outreach efforts, early registration processes, and upcoming events. The VTF-funded program is moving forward as scheduled. Additionally, the cemetery plans to request funding for a Blue Star Plaque in May to honor veterans.

Grants - Lisa Stamm:

The board was updated on the training facilitated by the grants team. Feedback from attendees indicated that the training was beneficial in educating participants about the requirements for the VAG grants. Attendees found the session helpful in understanding the documentation required to determine eligibility and the policies governing the grants. Additionally, VCLCs provided feedback, requesting that future training sessions be specifically dedicated to VCLCs.

The upcoming VAG reviews are scheduled for April 17, with VTF reviews to follow on April 18. The current execution rates for the grants are 42% for VAG and 67% for VTF. Additionally, 55% of the surveys have been returned, showing an increase in the underserved veteran population. In Fiscal Year 2026, the grants team plans to present data from the surveys to better educate the veterans being served and, hopefully, increase the percentage of surveys returned. The grants team also highlighted some positive developments in their grant report.

Colorado County Veteran Service Officer Association (CCVSOA) - Dominic Edginton

The board was updated on the efforts of the Colorado County Veterans Service Officers Association (CCVSOA), which has been working closely with Veteran Services to help County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), Commissioners, and supervisors receive unified information. This collaboration ensures that all stakeholders have the necessary resources to work effectively with CVSOs. Both the CCVSOA and the Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA) are working together to increase the resources available to CVSOs and their leadership, further supporting their ability to serve veterans.

Old Business:

Veterans Clearing House - Mr. Winterrowd will meet the Vendor in March. Traffic to the site has stabilized.

Veteran “protected class” - Mrs. Snyder will try again to obtain this information from the AG’s Office.

Women Veteran Subcommittee - no updates

Branding - Would like to board to determine best use of social media for branding at next month’s meeting.

New Business:

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Veteran Identification Project - Division of Veteran Affairs requested VTF funds for to identify veterans outside of the VA to target veterans and send information to the veteran on best ways to receive services. Requesting VTF funds to support this program with not greater than \$150,000 to obtain and use the information. Ms. Stamm was asked to ensure there is funding in the VTF account this FY to support. Motion to authorize not greater than \$150,000 provided it is available for the veteran's identification program and must be executed this FY. Mr. Gonzalez made the motion. Mr. Maday seconded the motion. Motion was approved pending funds availability.

Veteran Homelessness - Mr. Taylor updated on the demographics for determination of eligibility based on various factors including if the veteran would like to receive assistance. Mrs. Motupalli will research federal grants for grantees and the State. Mr. Howard asks Mr. Taylor give a PowerPoint brief on this topic at next month's board meeting. Mr. Taylor agreed.

Access to Prescriptions - Will wait until there is a new appointment in Washington D.C. to resend the board's letter to. Mr. Maday will update next month.

#### Board Remarks

The Board remarked on events they attended in February.

#### Statewide Veterans Issues:

Access to Prescriptions	Homelessness	Transportation
Veterans on the Fringes	Mental Health Service	

#### Upcoming Meetings

04 April 2025	Ignacio, Colorado
17 April 2025	VTF Subcommittee
18 April 2025	VAG Subcommittee

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09 May 2025	JFHQ - VTF Grants
06 June 2025	Virtual
11 July 2025	TBD
12 September	Eagle County

#### VTF Board Training

The program provides funding to veteran's service organizations to assist veterans in need of material or financial support. Funds may only be used for direct assistance to veterans and the maximum funding amount is \$100,000, Applications are scored according to a standardized rubric. Colorado Veterans Community Living Centers are allowed by statute to use this funding for capital improvements or amenities.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Taylor made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Richard seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:27 PM.