

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

January 07, 2022 Minutes

WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. 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

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

Greg Dorman, DMVA Interim Deputy Executive Director, Resource and Legislative Director

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer Supervisor

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer - Northeast

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer - Southwest

Diana DeBor, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer - Southeast

Jessica Quackenbush, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

Guests Present

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer, Regional Vice President UVC

Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Megan Gurka, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer
Jules Hoschauer, Sedgwick County Veterans Service Officer
John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer
Tim Hutchinson, Broomfield County Veterans Service Officer
Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer
Joshua Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Cindy Meyer, Teller Count Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Darrick Peterkin, Pueblo County Assistant Veterans Service Officer
Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Regarding the draft of the December 2021 minutes, Ms. Hammon clarified that under her UVC report, the names Sheila Scanlon and Mr. Robertson should read Shelly Kalkowski and Robby Robinson. Ms. Scanlon said that her comments should read “Marines and sailors” rather than “Marines and soldiers.” Mr. Gonzalez moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Marshall Bosworth greeted all in attendance. He said he will attend NACVSO’s legislative summit as the state delegate from Colorado at the end of February and will report on that after his return. He expects to have additional information on the CVSO Act, which is intended to route federal funding to county veterans service offices.

Old Business

Restoration of Honor

Mr. Callahan said no applications have been received to date. Application information is available on the DVA website.

Honor Guard Stipend

Mr. Callahan said implementation will begin on 15th January. Participating organizations can apply for a vendor number on 10 January and can submit for reimbursement as early as 15

January. Information has been widely distributed via email and a news release should follow. A hard copy reimbursement process is available for any organization that may encounter a technological barrier.

New Business

State Veterans Service Officers

Ms. Hammon asked if the new state veterans service officers could introduce themselves to the Board and invited them each to provide reports from their regions at upcoming meetings.

Kristy Cunningham is the service officer for the southwest region, based in Durango. She has been working remotely with plans to move into her office this month. She has been visiting the county veterans service officers and has initiated conversations with tribal nations in her area, including the Southern Ute, the Navajo Nation, and the Ute Mountain tribe. They would like be involved in state veterans activities and are also interested in hosting a meeting of the Board.

Kristy served six years in the USAF working with radar systems. She used to work with Volunteers of America and is very familiar with the region she serves.

Debra Antista-Bianchi is the service officer for the northeast region, based in Windsor. She previously work with the Alzheimer's Association and has worked in many different parts of Colorado. She is a veteran of the Coast Guard, where she was the first female to serve at a small boat station in New Hampshire. Her daughter is Air Force veteran and her husband is an Army veteran. She is in her third week with DVA and has meetings scheduled with the county veterans service officers throughout the region.

Eric Moncibais is the service officer for the southeast region, based in Pueblo. He is retired from the Marines and recently worked at Fort Carson in Army community service. He saw his current position as an opportunity to continue to help fellow veterans. He has attended various meetings of veterans organizations and Chambers of Commerce in his region.

Also on board is Drew Stem, service officer for the Denver metro region and Front Range, based in Aurora at the Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center. Mr. Stem was not able to attend the meeting.

Ms. Hammon said that hiring in underway for a service officer for the northwest region, based in Grand Junction. Former state VSO Brian Oney has been promoted to appeals specialist.

Information Resources

Mr. Dorman forthcoming legislation proposes the use of an existing service to fulfill the information clearinghouse requirement that exists in statute. He asked if the Board has any feedback on the services that the Board has investigated. Ms. Hammon asked what the connection is between The Home Front Military Network and Trilogy IR. Mr. Dorman said that The Home Front Military Network is a customer of Trilogy. She asked how Network of Care is connected. Mr. Dorman said that Trilogy produces Network of Care and it is one of their primary products. There is the possibility of a fiscal note to add an FTE to manage the process.

Mr. Maday said each of the resources appeared to have a good mobile experience. The NRD.gov option was full-featured and has the ability to submit a resource, though it still might need staff to manage local content. He also said the readability can be an advantage for users with sight impairment. Ms. Hammon said she thought the content should be more robust and that local management would be helpful. Mr. Dorman said it is not known if NRD, as a government resource, would be able to bid on the project if the bill should pass. Ms. Scanlon asked if it was possible that the bill could pass without a fiscal note and Mr. Dorman said that it could.

Reports

Mr. Dorman said that DMVA is maximizing telework. The Guard is mobilizing to support more testing sites statewide and was heavily involved in the Marshall Fire efforts. DMVA is monitoring the decision item for a state women veterans service officer. The SMART Act hearing will be held on January 18. There will be a JTC briefing on January 24. February 4 is Military and Veterans Appreciation Day at the capitol, with virtual attendance utilized similarly to 2021. Mr. Gonzalez said that legislation regarding extending the property tax exemption for disabled veterans to gold star spouses will be reintroduced this year as well. Mr. Robinson said that item is the #1 legislative effort this year for the UVC.

Mr. Callahan said DVA is building a people-first culture, assuring that all team members and customers feel welcomed, valued, respected, and heard. He thanked the Board and the Division's community partners for their support during the reorganization process. Once the state veterans service officer for the northwest region and the administrative triage specialist for the WROS are hired, the Division will be fully staffed. He said that three more leases have been established in the WROS. The triage position will be announced next week. There are no volunteers at the WROS right now due to COVID conditions. Subzero temperatures have caused HVAC issues at the

WROS and some events have had to be moved to other parts of the building. The electronic parking gate project is going out to bid this month. The weekly coffee club continues to be held on Wednesdays. The sunset review requests have begun and data is being provided in support of that review. The VMC has had a record-breaking year for interments and will try capping interments at 25 a month due to the number of staff. The Division is preparing a decision item to increase the number of staff at the VMC. The improvements to the shelter and administration building were completed in December.

Ms. Stamm was introduced to all in attendance. She has background in grant writing for organizations that serve military families. She has worked as an independent contractor with agencies receiving federal grants. She joined the DVA team on December 6. Emphasis for the first month has been on training and speed of grant payments. The DMVA Controller has been training Ms. Stamm and Ms. Snyder to enter payments into the state payment system, and it is anticipated that in the next few weeks they will be able to enter payments independently. The goal is to process reimbursements within 10 business days of receipt. She has asked grantees to put their grant number of their reimbursement requests to help speed up the process.

Mr. Robinson said that there is no update from the Veteran Monument Trust committee, although the park is now open and is regularly policed. The CLCs continue to struggle with COVID conditions. They are open to visitors under strict conditions. Staffing shortages are a continuing problem. CDHS has requested a salary increase for dietary and housekeeping staff. Cash flow has been affected because patient census is down. He emphasized the quality of care available the CLCs and asked attendees to make sure their clientele understand how many veterans and dependents are eligible. He said his current term on the CLC commission will expire in 2023 and encouraged an interested board member or designated party to consider applying. There are upcoming vacancies.

Ms. Hammon said that UVC has a real mailing address rather than a post office box and may soon have an office at the Bill Daniels Center in Denver. Regional vice presidents are reaching out to local veterans service organizations. UVC has a veterans resources web page that relies on local organizations and event sponsors submitting their information for publication. The banquet and award ceremony will be separate events this year.

Remarks

Ms. Scanlon said the Women Marines Association held a breakfast at Buckley for Marines and sailors just prior to Christmas with about 80 in attendance. On February 12 the Association will celebrate the 79th anniversary of women in the Marines. The guest speaker will be Lieutenant General Laurie Reynolds (Retired). Tickets are \$35 per person. She thanked the COAG for their efforts in regard to COVID and the Marshall fire.

Mr. Gonzalez said he attended the local Chamber's Military Affairs Committee on 08 December and on Wednesday there was a legislative update.

Mr. Maday said his neighborhood was evacuated during the Marshall fire. His home survived but neighbors suffered significant losses. It was reassuring to see the Guard at the entry control points. In December he attended the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley. He has been volunteering as a mentor for startup companies working through TechStars and encountered a veteran who is building an eLearning platform for veterans who are visually impaired.

Ms. Motupalli said she had coworkers evacuated by the fire and as a result has begun to update her family's emergency plan. Gusto's Veteran Affinity Group has wrapped up its giving campaign for International Rescue Committee. The total contribution with matching is \$4,000, and they will also sponsor a few families.

Ms. Golonka said she has been working with Red Cross Service to Armed Forces program. She is now a caseworker with that program. She has begun a new role with Xcel and their social investments lead, which included the space heater distribution provided by Xcel in the wake of the Marshall fire.

Mr. Taylor said local schools have switched to remote learning due to COVID. He met with his commissioners and was able to report that he has 206 more veterans and more than \$2 million more in revenue than on the previous report. During Wreaths Across America every veteran's grave in the main cemetery was covered. There are 22 cemeteries across the county with veteran graves, and the next effort will be to cover them all. He had all branches except the Space Force represented. Local veterans have been meeting with eighth grade class to describe the experience of serving the country.

Ms. Hammon said that interviews are being conducted now for an assistant VSO in Eagle County. Extreme temperatures and large amounts of snow have been a problem particularly for veterans in mobile homes. Christmas baskets were prepared with the Salvation Army and distributed by local veteran volunteers. The 10th Mountain Legacy Parade is a ski-down with active duty 10th Mountain will be held in February. The DAR and the Boy Scouts assisted with Wreaths Across America and 480 wreaths were distributed across four cemeteries.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon asked the Board's preference in regard to the February meeting and annual training. Both were originally scheduled for February 4 but are now in conflict with Military and Veterans Appreciation Day at the Capitol. The consensus was to hold the regular meeting at 9:00 a.m. on February 3 and the training at 1:00 p.m. on the same day. Both will be virtual.

03 February 0900 Virtual (annual training 1300, virtual)

04 March 0900 Virtual

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

February 03, 2022 Minutes

WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. 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

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

Greg Dorman, DMVA Interim Deputy Executive Director, Resource and Legislative Director

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer Supervisor

Brian Oney, CDVA Appeals Specialist

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer - Northeast

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer - Southeast

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest

Jessica Quackenbush, DMVA DEERS Specialist

Diana DeBor, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

Guests Present

Madeline Beasley, Office of the State Auditor

Bill Brown, Alamosa County Veterans Service Officer

Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Jules Hoschauer, Sedgwick County Veterans Service Officer

John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer

Joshua Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Ray Odum, Las Animas County Veterans Service Officer

Cindy Meyer, Teller Count Veterans Service Officer

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Steve Otero, Gunnison County Veterans Service Officer

Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer

Rick Ward, Bent County Veterans Service Officer

Ed Wilkinson, Moffat County Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Regarding the draft of the December 2021 minutes, Ms. Hammon clarified that under her UVC report, the names Sheila Scanlon and Mr. Robertson should read Shelly Kalkowski and Robby Robinson. Ms. Scanlon said that her comments should read “Marines and sailors” rather than “Marines and soldiers.” Mr. Gonzalez moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Wilkinson asked if veterans service officers could receive a current contact list of CDVA staff. Ms. Cunningham said an overview is available in the minutes from the recent VSO virtual coffee chat, and Ms. Hammon said that a formal list will also be distributed.

Mr. Odum said that he distributed two good citizenship awards last week and the story was covered by the local paper. The community in Las Animas County is very supportive of the veterans service office. He invited all in attendance to a Valentines’ dance at Fort Wootton on February 12. The event is free and music will be provided by the 4th ID rock band from Fort Carson.

Old Business

Restoration of Honor

Mr. Callahan said no applications have been received to date. Information on the program has been sent to the Center on Colfax and to the Colorado LGTBQ Chamber of Commerce. Applications can be sent to the CDVA administrative office in Lakewood to be distributed to the Board. The application consists of a copy of the veteran's DD214 and affidavit regarding the circumstances of the discharge. Ms. Hammon said that the program was also announced in the UVC newsletter. She asked that information on the program and the benefits that could be made available to LGBT veterans be sent to veterans service officers statewide. Mr. Maday asked if a news release could be issued regarding Restoration of Honor and Mr. Callahan said that will be done.

Honor Guard Stipend

Ms. Ingalls said the program began on January 15 and there are currently three participating organizations. They are working on direct marketing to organizations that provide these services. There have been inquiries from groups that provide this service that are not associated with a congressionally chartered veterans service organizations. Only congressionally chartered veterans service organizations are eligible, so those groups are encouraged to consider operating in conjunction with an eligible organization.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that with appointment of Dominic Edginton as the state veterans service officer for the Northwest Region leave one vacancy, the support services representative at the WROS. Interviews will take place in the near future. He visited the Northwest Region last week, meeting with veterans service officers in Grand Junction, Eagle, and Montrose. In Montrose he also met with Mike Trickey, Executive Director of Welcome Home Alliance for Veterans. On 08 July that organization will host Freedom Sings USA, where veterans' stories are turned into songs by songwriters. He will continue traveling throughout the state and hopes to have the opportunity to meet reach of Colorado's veterans service officers within the next six months.

Mr. Poteet said that as of 07 February the hiring will be complete for regional state veterans service officers. He presented Debra Antista-Bianchi, Northeast Region; Kristy Cunningham, Southwest Region; Dominic Edginton, Northwest Region; Eric Moncibais, Southeast Region; Drew Stem, Central Region. Each VSO then had the opportunity to provide a report.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said that January was her training month. She completed her TRIP training and is now accredited. Her office in Windsor is set up and she has been focused on meeting all of the county veterans service officers in the Northeast Region. She has found that many service officers struggle with the TRIP training as it laborious and entirely on the computer. A five-county group is setting time aside to do the TRIP training together. She has attended the Northeast Collaborative for Veterans headed by the Cheyenne VHA with the VSOs from Morgan and Phillips Counties and has joined the region's Continuum of Care Collaborative, which focuses on services for homeless persons. She has also attended the Aging Well Collaborative and networked with the local Area Agencies on Agency. She is a participant in the Leadership Northern Colorado Collaborative, which is a six-month long training cohort with a 10-year cohort of alumni.

Mr. Stem said he has been visiting each of the county veterans service offices in his region, somewhat hampered by COVID restrictions. His office has a lot of traffic and he has had a lot of work with disability claims. He invited veterans to seek him out in his office anytime when they are the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC. The proximity to VHA resources has been helpful for many veterans who also need health care services. In outreach, he has connected with MSU Denver and DU and has reached out to CU to offer assistance to student veterans.

Ms. Cunningham said she also has completed her training and is accredited, but is awaiting her PIV card. She has been working with La Plata County VSO as time permits and her office has a high call volume. Connecting veterans with their county VSO has helped her to become acquainted with service officers even outside of her region. Outreach is a focus for the upcoming year and new promotional materials have been ordered. The DMVA webmaster has helped create QR codes to provide to veterans. Her office is now set up and she is assisting VOA by taking over local veteran collaborative meetings.

Mr. Callahan said that CDVA will hold its spring training 28-29 March at the WROS. Both in-person and virtual participation will be available. Hotel information will be forthcoming.

Ms. Iglesias said that Volunteers of America has leased three more offices at the WROS. There is now a total of three vacant offices, but VA social workers should be moving in soon and at that point the facility will be fully leased. Most of the tenants are open for in-person engagement with clients. Additional programs for veterans that began in January are two yoga classes and two tai chi classes. Starting soon will be a women veterans group, a men's health group, and a moms

group. The veterans coffee club has approximately 50 attendees each week. In January the WROS served approximately 340 veterans. Interviews for the support representative should take place within the next week. The DEERS office is not yet open as DEERS specialist Jessica Quackenbush is still in training. The WROS is undergoing its sunset review, which is progressing on schedule.

Ms. Ingalls said that in January the number of interments were limited due to staffing. There were no complaints from customers regarding that new limit. The VMC intends to add staff as soon as possible. She said that while the VMC had requested VTF funds for work on the committal shelter. The improvements are incomplete because the committal shelter has been in constant use, and due to the high need for services it could not be shut down and made unavailable. Work can now resume but material costs have risen, so the work completed this year may be limited. Planning is underway for an in-person 2022 Memorial Day celebration. She invited those attending the spring training in person to visit the cemetery.

Ms. Stamm said in January she held four application trainings each for the VTF and VAG grant programs. Training is continuing on the state's CORE finance system so that grant payments can be entered by grants staff. Payments are now caught up and current. She has reached out to grantees who are not projected to expend their grant funds this year to see if any will be returning funds. If funds are returned it is possible to reallocate funds to other grantees who have already expended. To date, American Legion Post 62, Costilla County, and Columbine Women Marines History Chapter have expressed interest in additional funds. No grantees currently have outstanding issues. Mr. Wilkinson said his post has submitted their application and would like to confirm receipt. Ms. Stamm said she would confirm. Ms. Antista-Bianchi thanked Ms. Stamm for all her work to bring the grant payments up to date. Mr. Taylor said he has attended most of the application webinars and he thanked Ms. Stamm for the guidance she has provided to prospective applicants. Ms. Hammon recommended that veterans service officers attend the webinars as well to increase familiarity with the grant programs and processes. Ms. Stamm said the next webinars will be on 08 February and 10 February, with VTF at 0900 and VAG at 1300. The meeting links are on the web site.

Ms. Hammon said that UVC will have a fundraising banquet and separate awards dinner in 2022. Regional vice presidents are in place to try to elicit participation from more veterans service organizations. UVC focuses on veteran-related legislation and has several that they are following this session.

Mr. Oney said that BVA is returning to a block schedule for hearings and he is working with the hearing coordinator to attempt to minimize overlaps. Recent hearing have been virtual. He has been learning some of the intricacies from Mr. Poteet while transitioning from his former role as the Northwest VSO.

Remarks

Ms. Golonka said Xcel Energy's Veterans Resource Group will hold a Salute to Veterans event comprised of providing care packages to veterans who are VHA patients; the event begins with the assemblage of the care packages on Friday. They are also preparing for their Memorial Day flag planting.

Mr. Maday said his family has had COVID in the wake of the evacuation from the Marshall fire. He brought to the Board's attention Patriot Boot Camp, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Colorado that focuses on helping military veterans build technology companies through technological entrepreneurship. The have been acquired by the Disabled American Veterans charity to expand the program nationwide.

Mr. Gonzalez said on 27 January he attend a meeting of Air Force Academy graduates. The guest speaker was the Academy Superintendent Lieutenant General Richard Clark. On 19 January he attended Governor Polis's state of state address, in which the governor highlighted the presence of Space Command in Colorado.

Ms. Motupalli said this is the busiest time of year for Gusto with quarterly and end of year filings. They have been working more broadly with their Veterans Affinity Group leadership team to see how they can partner with other affinity groups, as the Veterans Group has a lot of intersectionality. This month they are celebrating Black History Month. Next month they will host the broader affinity group meeting, where they will ensure that veterans issues are represented along with others. She and her spouse are becoming certified as foster parents so that they can adopt a minor niece.

Ms. Hammon said that her office has hired Jackie Allen as the new associate VSO. Housing is still at a crisis with little housing or resources available as cold temperature continue. On February 18 there will a parade to celebrate the 77th anniversary of the Battle at Riva Ridge that will include a ski down in the afternoon. Project Health waters, equine therapy, and trauma-informed yoga classes are ongoing.

Mr. Taylor said that local veterans have been meeting with eighth grade class to explain the components of service and to describe the experience. The local American Legion and Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County have expanded their scholarship program to include trade schools. Veterans of Archuleta County has been nominated Nonprofit of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce for the 10,000 hours of volunteer service performed in 2021. The local skating rink now features a banner recognizing three veteran organizations in the community.

Ms. Hammon said that Military and Veterans Appreciation Day will be held on February 4 at the capitol. Public are welcome to attend in person with masks and social distancing. The session will be available virtually on Colorado Connects and the link will be sent out. The Board will hold its statutorily required annual training beginning at 1:00 p.m. and the public is invited to attend. The meeting link is available on the web site.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon said that the March and April meeting will be virtual and the April meeting will feature decisions for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant.

04 March 0900	Virtual
01 April 0900	Virtual (VTF grant decisions)

Adjournment

There being no further business, the business meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. with the training portion scheduled to start at 1:00 p.m.

Training

The Board reconvened with all members present at 1:00 p.m. Also present were CDVA staff David Callahan, Lisa Stamm, and Carissa Snyder.

Strategic Plan

Mr. Callahan and the Board members reviewed the extant plan and refined the mission, vision, and goals. The SPIs from the original plan will be reframed as Wildly Important Goals (WIGs).

The vision statement was reworded as “Colorado remains an environment that cares for those who served and sacrificed.” The mission statement was revised to, “Advocate for veterans and their families to improve their quality of life throughout the state of Colorado.”

The statement of values will be edited to align the TAG's values to make all feel Welcomed, Valued, Respected, and Heard. A strategic plan committee will be established to finalize this statement.

Each of the WIGs and the accompanying goals were reviewed. Committees were formed to finalize the wording of each WIG and its goals. The committees are:

WIG 1 – Advocacy – Sean Maday, Jasmine Motupalli, Longinos Gonzalez, Pat Hammon

WIG 2 – Communications – Lacey Golonka, Sheila Scanlon, Sean Maday, Pat Hammon

WIG 3 – Grant Programs – Lacey Golonka, Sheila Scanlon, Jasmine Motupalli, Longinos Gonzalez, Raymond Taylor

Ms. Hammon reminded the Board that the committee meetings need to be public noticed and minutes taken.

Statutory Training

Mr. Callahan began the statutorily required training with a review of C.R.S. § 24-3.7-102, which requires the training and establishes the best practices. This was followed by C.R.S. § 28-5-703, the duties of the Board.

Conflict of Interest, Open Records, and Open Meetings

LeeAnn Morrill, First Assistant Attorney General, joined the meeting. Ms. Hammon moved that the Board move into executive session to receive legal advice regarding compliance with conflict of interest, open records, and open meetings laws. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried. The Board entered executive session at 2:31 p.m. Regular session resumed at 3:21 p.m. Ms. Morrill exited the meeting.

Statutory Training

Mr. Callahan resumed statutory training resumed with a review of C.R.S. § 28-5-703, the duties of the Division followed by a review of C.R.S. § 28-5-103, Restoration of Honor. Ms. Stamm then discussed the DMVA grant programs, including grant guidance and best practices, a discussion of C.R.S. § 28-5-712, the Veterans Assistance Grant, and C.R.S. § 28-5-709, the Veterans Trust Fund Grant. Carissa Snyder reviewed and C.R.S. § 26-12-402(3)(b)(I), coordinating with the Board of Commissioners for the State Veterans Community Living Centers, and C.R.S. § 24-40-1401(2), coordinating with the Veterans Monument Preservation Trust Committee.

Appointment of Committees

Ms. Hammon appointed Longinos Gonzales and Raymond Taylor to serve with her on the VTF committee and appointed Raymond Taylor and Sean Maday to serve with her on the Veterans Assistance Grant advisory committee.

Adjournment

There being nothing further, the annual training session adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

March 01, 2022 Minutes

WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. 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

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer Supervisor

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast State VSO

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest State VSO

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer – Southeast State VSO

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest State VSO

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

Guests Present

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Eric Winterrowd, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer

James Leist, U.S. Navy Veteran

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer

Elizabeth Mullins, Veterans Community Living Centers

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Robby Robinson, CBVA Liaison to VCLC Commission and Veterans Monument Trust
Committee

Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer

Sheldon Smith, Montrose and Ouray Counties Veterans Service Officer

State Veterans Service Officer Reports

Kristy Cunningham said that in Archuleta County Veterans for Veterans continues to hold weekly breakfasts for the veteran community. In Dolores County VSO Rick Brown is assisting with transportation to medical appointments. In Gunnison County VSO Steve Otero is now preparing for OGC accreditation and has applied for a Veterans Assistance Grant. In Hinsdale County VSO Erin Cavit will be working with the winter sports clinic the week of March 28. In La Plata County, she and VSO Greg Dotson recently met with the DAV regarding reactivation of the DAV Outreach Center. In Montezuma County, VSO Sarah Kuhn has been working with the suicide awareness team and they are planning an outreach event for 2022. In Montrose County, she and VSO Sheldon Smith will attend two resource events in March, one sponsored by the Montrose Center and one by the VA. In San Juan and San Miguel, the VSOs know all of the veterans in their respective counties.

Debra Antista-Bianchi said that Lincoln County VSO Laurie Rogers is retiring. In the northeast portion of the region they have been conducting TRIP training and the collaborative approach is proving helpful. They are creating a vanpool plan for fingerprinting. She and the division director will visit 15 counties in her region in March and that prospective outreach is highly anticipated. She attended a meeting of the Summit-Grand regional transportation committee and Dominic has been assisting with this committee as well. She has been working with the Caregiver Support Program contact in Aurora and Cheyenne. She is participating in the Governors Challenge and working on resources for suicide prevention. The NECO collaborative chaired out of the Cheyenne VHA will hold a family fun day in the near future.

Eric Moncibais said that outreach is going well and he was able to be featured on the CSU-Pueblo radio station. He has been asked to return and make his address into a series. He has been working with Volunteers of American and the Rescue Mission regarding homelessness and has been successful assisting veterans who are unaware of their eligibility for VA health care. He is seeing a large number of veterans with mental health conditions who have been hesitant to file a claim for service connections due to misinterpretations of the Brady laws. ECHCS Director Michael Kilmer has been making visits to southeast Colorado and Eric's office has been helping to communicate these events to veterans. The VSO in Saguache County has given notice and new County VSO has been appointed in Crowley County.

Drew Stem said that he has been connecting with the substance use coordinator at the RMR VAMC; their office was unaware that a VSO was available on site. He has also connected with members of the social work team to make sure they know that his office is available on the campus. The office has a high volume of appointments and walk ins. He shared a story of a Blue Water Navy veteran he was able to contact thanks to a hospital social worker who wouldn't have sought out a claim but was willing to consider it when Drew came to see him. He has observed that many older veterans who are hospitalized are not accessing service connected benefits and that many are socially isolated. Cooperative efforts with the Arapahoe County service office have been successful. Adams County is proactive on outreach events including a recurrent bowling night for veterans.

Approval of Minutes

Regarding the draft of the February 2022 minutes, Ms. Hammon clarified that the Center on Colfax is the name of the organization. She corrected a grammatical error under Reports and committee assignments. Mr. Taylor corrected spelling errors under Public Comments and Upcoming meetings and a grammatical error in Reports. He corrected that Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County was nominated as Nonprofit of the Year. It was moved by Mr. Maday and seconded by Mr. Gonzales to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Bosworth said he attended the NACVSO Legislative and Leadership Summit in Washington DC. Significant items include the CVSO Act, which would provide federal grant funds for CVSO support and it has passed the House. The other is the PACT Act, which would add additional toxins to the presumptive lists for Agent Orange and burn pits. Michael Kilmer was in

Colorado Springs providing a community brief on VA health care. Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Callahan both attended. The CCVSOA will meet to consider training needs in the near future.

Old Business

Restoration of Honor: Mr. Callahan said that the media release has been distributed and no applications have been received. He learned at the NASDVA conference that some states include other types of discharge in their Restoration of Honor efforts, which can be discussed at a later date. Ms. Hammon thanked Mr. Callahan and his office for the media release and trifold.

New Business

VCLC Update

Elizabeth Mullins is the Director of the Division of Community Living Centers. She has worked for VCLC division for two and half years, now emerging from an extended period of pandemic management. There are five state VCLCs in Colorado, all managed by state Human Services except for Spanish Peaks, where the state has an oversight role. The other locations are Fitzsimons, Homelake, Rifle, and Florence. Eligible persons are veteran, spouses, and Gold Star parents. VA payments cover some veterans but not spouses. Neither service connection nor service in a conflict are eligibility requirements. An Honorable or general discharge is required. The active duty requirement is 180 days prior to 1980 and two years after. The VCLCs accept Medicaid. The pandemic has created difficulties with patient census and staffing, and the centers are now rebuilding their capacity. They are working on building community partnerships and adding behavioral health and telehealth capabilities moving forward.

Ms. Hammon asked which VCLCs have secure memory units. Ms. Mullins said they are at Fitzsimons, Florence, and Spanish Peaks. Rifle has one but it is currently not open. Ms. Scanlon asked if the JBC has provided any additional funding this year for the VCLCs. Ms. Mullins said the division is included in a request for wage increases by CDHS but nothing final is known yet.

VTF Application Training

Ms. Stamm said that the Grant committee will meet in April and funding decisions will be made at the May meeting to allow for more time for the applications to be reviewed and scored. At the April meeting the Board will receive training on how to score the applications.

HCR 22-103

Ms. Hammon invited Mr. Gonzalez to address this issue. Mr. Gonzalez said this resolution would provide a ballot item to extend the property tax exemptions for qualifying veterans to

Gold Star spouses. He suggested that the Board might consider a statement of support. She asked Mr. Callahan to clarify whether the Board can express support. Mr. Callahan said the Board can support the resolution but the Department cannot take a position. Ms. Hammon said any statement from the Board will be reviewed by the Department before being sent forward. Mr. Gonzalez moved that the Board write a letter in support. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

Spending Authority Request from Western Region One Source

Ms. Hammon said this would be considered in conjunction with the grant application review.

Bylaw Review

Ms. Hammon said that the current bylaws are in effect but need to be signed. She asked if there was any feedback from the Board members in regard to the bylaws. Hearing none, the bylaws will be signed and posted.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that all of the Board members have now been confirmed by the Senate. He thanked the Board and the VSOs across the state for their work on behalf of Colorado veterans. There is no date available to continue with the JBC figure setting but it will be provided as it becomes available. He said that HB 4673 would establish that departing service members would have to opt out of VA rather than leaving it to the veteran to voluntarily enroll. Mr. Callahan said he enjoyed his visits to the counties in the Southeast and Southwest regions and appreciated the diversity of VSO offices and approaches. The WROS has hired their triage position and the Division is now fully staffed. Spring training for VSOs will be March 28-29.

Mr. Edginton said he is in the process of acquiring his PIV card but it was otherwise ready to commence his new position as the Northwest Region Veterans Service Officer. He has been in contact with Mesa University and the Women's Coffee Club at the WROS. He will attend the Veterans Resource Fair that will take place in Grand Junction on 22 March.

Ms. Iglesias said the new triage specialist at the WROS is Army veteran Dan Coulter. His first day will be March 21. They also have Hannah, the new VA work study, who will be on board part time until May. The audit is still underway; auditors will visit the WROS in person in May and attend the meeting of the advisory committee. Comfort Keepers has terminated their lease due to changes caused by COVID. The VA plans to lease three additional offices, possibly as soon as April. Classes and groups have increased. New events are yoga, a moms' support group, a men's health

support group, and veterans' wellness classes. The Women Veterans Coffee Hour just resumed after a pandemic hiatus with great attendance at their first event. The WROS will attend upcoming outreach events in Grand Junction and Montrose. The Paralyzed Veterans Association will have an event out of state at the end of March which the WROS will stream for the benefit of local veterans.

Ms. Ingalls, Veteran Memorial Cemetery Director, said the stipend program is going well. Seven groups are participating and six more are signing up. 41 requests have been submitted to date. Several have needed assistance setting up the vendor ID with the state. Ms. Hammon thanked Mr. Edginton and Ms. Ingalls for their work establishing and executing the program. Mr. Taylor asked if an organization had to be a registered vendor before providing services. Mr. Edginton said requests have to be made within 15 days of the date of service. At the VMC, renovations continue on the committal shelter. The shelter will be closed for two weeks in May to accommodate some of the needed repairs. Direct interments will continue while the shelter is closed and military honors for those interments will be provided at a later date. Interment numbers are still restricted due to staffing. The VMC has a new work study but has lost their CWT participant. His contract attended and the VA had suspended the local program. The VMC will attend Beaconfest this year and will try to participate in the Montrose event as well.

Ms. Stamm, Grant Administrator, said that the application webinars have concluded and she thanked Mr. Taylor for his attendance and feedback. The grant application deadline was 01 March and they are currently being processed. 57 payments were entered in February, each pre-audited and desk reviewed. She reported on budget modifications. American Legion Post 44 returned funds due to not receiving as many requests as anticipated. The MISSION Act has helped with health care access in their area. The Veterans Memorial Cemetery has not needed all of its allocation due to a rescaling of the project as a result of increased material costs. American Legion Post 62 requested additional funds as theirs are nearly expended. The Pikes Peak Workforce Center returned funds due to pandemic-related changes to their outreach. Douglas County has returned funds due to increased community partnerships. The City and County of Broomfield returned funds due to a smaller number of requests, likely related to pandemic-related lack of outreach. The Columbine Women Marines History Chapter requested an increase; they have expended their grant and have a wait list for funds. Costilla County requested additional funds. Their grant is 95% expended as they have seen an increase in requests for heating assistance.

Mr. Robinson member of and CBVA representative to the VCLC Board of Commissioners, said that he had nothing to add to Ms. Mullins statements. He reminded everyone that the Commissioners' meetings are public and attendance is encouraged. In regard to the Veterans Monument Trust, a plaque is being added that rededicates the new name of the park as Lincoln Veterans Park.

Ms. Hammon said that UVC will hold two events this year rather than one. The Accolades and Remembrances Luncheon will be held on May 18 in Littleton. The banquet will be a fundraising event held on October 15 at the Gaylord Convention Center in Aurora.

Ms. Hammon reminded the WIG committees to attempt to meet in March. The meetings must be open and minutes taken. She advised that Mr. Callahan be invited to the meetings due to his experience in strategic planning.

Remarks

Ms. Scanlon said that the Colorado Women Marines Association celebrated 79 years of women in the Marines on February 12. The guest speaker was Lieutenant General Lori Reynolds, USMC Retired.

Mr. Taylor said transportation assistance has been in great demand and road conditions have been challenging, adding significant road time. The Durango clinic is open again as of March 1. The Farmington clinic needs a doctor. Veterans for Veterans has been inviting political candidates to speak at their meetings. They will hold an event for the Vietnam Commemorative and provide a coal train event for Gold Star family members. Ongoing VA assessments could result in some realignment of VA health care resources.

Ms. Golonka said Xcel Energy is considering future support for Veterans Day Parade as events resume.

Mr. Maday thanked Mr. Dorman and Mr. Callahan with the assistance in regard to the Senate confirmation. He met this week with Lieutenant General Michael Loh, former Adjutant General of Colorado and currently Director of the Air National Guard.

Mr. Gonzalez said on February 23 he participated in a veterans community roundtable at Mount Carmel presented by Congressman Lamborn. Yesterday he attended the town all the ECHCS Director Michael Kilmer.

Ms. Hammon said her new hire is in training and her office is very busy. Transportation requests to the Grand Junction hospital and the Glenwood Springs clinic have been at a high volume. Homeless is still of great concern and resources are stretched thin. Home Depot has a program that allows them to provide materials and sometimes labor to provide modifications to veterans homes and a local construction company is partnering with them to help make those services available.

Ms. Motupalli had provided her remarks in the meeting chat. She said that the Veterans Affinity Group at Gusto is planning to host some mindfulness, resilience, and inclusion events during March and April.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon said that Boards and Commissions can now meet in person. The April 1 meeting is currently planned as virtual and will have grant training. She asked if the Board would like to meet in person or virtually. She recommended meeting in person in May for the grant decisions.

Mr. Taylor suggested holding the April meeting virtually and the other Board members agreed.

Ms. Hammon said she would work on finding a location for the May meeting. She said that while the Board does like to travel, she recommended the May meeting be held in the Denver area as it is someone central. It is usually a long meeting.

Mr. Taylor asked if that would leave sufficient time in the fiscal year to meet the meeting location requirements set forth in the bylaws. Ms. Hammon said that grace is extended on those requirements this year due to the pandemic restrictions on face to face meetings.

06 May 0900 Denver – VTF grant decisions

03 June 0900 TBD

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

April 1, 2022 Minute
WebEx

Opening

Ms. Scanlon called the meeting to order at 0902 while Ms. Hammon resolved a tech issue. 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. Taylor requested a moment of silence for Otero County Veterans Service Office Jay Scott, who died on March 30.

Ms. Hammon reassumed the gavel. She announced that the VTF grant application training would be moved to the end of agenda to accommodate attendees who may not wish to remain for that training.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA State Veterans Service Officer Supervisor

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast State VSO

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest State VSO

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest State VSO

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Office Manager

Guests Present

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer

Aleah Farrell, Public

Keith Gilbert, Larimer County Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Wendy Mendoza, Public

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer

Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Eric Winterrowd, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Regarding the draft of the March 2022 minutes, Ms. Hammon corrected verb tense and spelling on pages two and three and asked that Ms. Ingalls, Ms. Stamm, and Mr. Robinson have their titles specified with their reports. Ms. Scanlon corrected the name of the speaker at the Colorado Women Marines Association February 12 event to Lieutenant General Lori Reynolds, USMC Retired. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Golonka seconded. The motion carried.

Agenda

Ms. Hammon announced a change in the agenda. The VTF training will be at the end of the meeting, so that non-Board member attendees who do not wish to remain can leave.

Public Comment

Mr. Bosworth acknowledged the loss of Otero County VSO Jay Scott. He said that he attended the CDVA spring training in Grand Junction and thanked the state VSOs and Mr. Callahan for the event. The officers of Colorado County Veterans Service Veterans Service Officers Association are reviewing association's bylaws and revising the nomination packets for the Nardini and Conroy awards. They are considering developing a service pin for county veterans service officers.

Old Business

HCR 22-1003

Ms. Hammon said that HCR-1003 is headed to Appropriations and asked that Ms. Golonka draft a letter of support from the Board to the committee. The Board previously voted to send a letter of support. Ms. Hammon said the letter should be sent prior to the House Appropriations deadline of April 15.

Capitol Committee Statue

Ms. Hammon asked the pleasure of the Board regarding the Capitol Committee statue relocation. The consensus was to send feedback to the committee supporting relocating the statue at DMVA headquarters at no expense to DMVA. Mr. Taylor volunteered to write the letter.

WIG Committees

Ms. Hammon reminded the WIG committees to attempt to meet in April. The meetings must be open and minutes taken.

Reports

Ms. Hammon asked that a report from Mr. Dorman's office be emailed to the Board. Ms. Scanlon asked for an update regarding the Womens Veterans Service Officer. Ms. Hammon said the new FTE had passed the JBC and is now in the Long Bill. She asked Mr. Callahan to report on the Division's plans for that position.

Mr. Callahan said the position will be announced with the intent to have it filled by July 01, which is the start of the state fiscal year. It will be based in Colorado Springs with the cooperation of the El Paso County Veterans Service Office. At Ms. Hammon's request he then continued with his report. He said that the Spring Training was held on March 28-29 and will be held the last week of March in Grand Junction moving forward. The annual conference will be held in August on the Front Range, this year in Colorado Springs. Both trainings will have virtual options. Additional trainings will be held virtually on alternate Wednesdays throughout the year. He expressed his sympathy for the family of Jay Scott.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said the office at the Windsor Readiness Center is now shared with the Family Resources team. She is in the office on Mondays and remote the remainder of the week. Lincoln County VSO Laurie Rodgers, VSO from Lincoln County is retiring today and Joy Johnson has been appointed to that role. She and Mr. Callahan were able to visit 12 of the 15 counties in the northeast region in March. The counties meeting for group TRIP training completed the training in March and are now prepared for accreditation.

Ms. Cunningham said she will attend a breakfast at Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County on April 5. La Plata County VSO Greg Dotson won a DMVA You Rock award that presented at the spring training in recognition of his leadership and community involvement.

Mr. Stem said he presented a DMVA You Rock award to Arapahoe County VSO Eric Winterrowd at the spring training. Mr. Stem has received a great deal of positive feedback from veterans regarding the service provided by Mr. Winterrowd. Visits to county veterans service offices from Mr. Stem and Mr. Callahan are being scheduled. Adams County is having a veterans resource fair on April 18.

Mr. Edginton said that he is scheduled to get his VA PIV card Monday and will then have access to VA systems. At the spring training he presented a DMVA You Rock award to Mesa County VSO Tony Lee, who has been a great asset to veterans and to Mr. Edginton in his role of state VSO. Mr. Edginton has conducted outreach to Colorado Mesa University and was able to begin the claim process for two veterans. Visits to county veterans services offices by Mr. Edginton and Mr. Callahan will take place in May. He is collecting a calendar of events from the counties in his region. He will attend the Mesa County Resource Fair is scheduled for April 26 and Beaconfest on April 28.

Ms. Hammon asked Mr. Callahan to explain the You Rock award. He said it was developed by a DMVA NextGen team to support employee recognition. Recipients receive a certificate and a rock painted with the Colorado flag that says You Rock. These can be presented to anyone making a valuable contribution to the veteran community. The certificate template can be obtained from the DVA administrative office; contact Carissa Snyder or Beth Maxwell.

Ms. Iglesias said that the VA HUD/VASH program has been moving their furniture in this week and the move should be complete by the end of the week. Liberty Mutual is renewing their lease for an additional month. There is one vacant office space available for \$450 per month, currently is use as flex space. Dan Coulter joined the team and WROS Support Representative on March 21. March events at the WROS have included additional classes and wellness groups, the Mountain States PVA conference, seminars on home loans and Medicare, a presentation from the council on aging, and the spring training. WROS events average about 300 attendees per month but in March the count was 573. In outreach, the WROS participated in the Mesa County and Montrose County Resource Fairs and a ceremony for Vietnam veterans held at the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park in Fruita.

Mr. Callahan reported on behalf of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The improvements to the committal shelter will be completed in May, Ground crew members will receive additional training

at Fort Logan National Cemetery in May and additional training is scheduled moving forward. The kiosk that assists visitors in finding grave locations is down but is scheduled for repair. The CWT assistant has been replaced by VA work study Ashlie Ray and Sophie Hayner is the new coordinator for the Honor Guard Stipend Program. The VMC also participated in the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park ceremony for Vietnam veterans and will participate in Missing in America the first week of June. Ms. Iglesias explained that the Missing in America project has identified veterans' remains that have not been interred and will hold a military honor funeral for those veterans prior to interment at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. In regard to the stipend program, 68 invoice have been processed and paid to date.

Ms. Stamm, Grant Administrator, said that all payments are up to date and being processed within less than 10 days. In March 35 payments were processed. There have been 21 applications received for the VTF Grant and 32 for the Veterans Assistance Grant. The grant report provided to the Board indicates current VTF grantee who did not apply for funding this year. Ms. Stamm reached out to those organizations and has learned that effects of the pandemic have made it difficult, although some expect to reapply next year.

Remarks

Mr. Gonzalez said that he attended a local West Point Founders Day luncheon on 11 March. On 23 March he attended the county chamber's "State of the MAC" event produced by the Military Affairs Committee. On 29 March he attended a welcome reception for Retired General Hyten who will be living in Colorado Springs.

Ms. Motupalli said she now has official custody of her niece. At Gusto the affinity group is preparing to lead a virtual workout on April 14 and a mental health workshop of April 19, which will focus on advocacy, affordability, and accessibility. On April 21 she will host an intersectionality panel with members from different portions of the affinity group, including veterans, Pride, visible and invisible disabilities, women, black, and latinx. A monthlong fundraising campaign will benefit the Denver International Rescue Committee which supports refugee resettlement efforts.

Ms. Golonka said she is now transitioning her replace at Xcel's veterans program. Xcel is considering becoming the presenting sponsor for the Veterans Day Parade in 2022. She is working to reinstate the Womens Veterans of Colorado nonprofit that disbanded in 2020 with a goal to start a foundation.

Mr. Maday said he had no remarks and thanked his colleagues for their hard work.

Ms. Scanlon said that on April 9, General John Allen, USMC Retired, will be a guest speaker at a fundraiser for the U.S. Marine Memorial. General Allen is president of the Brookings Institution and is the former commander of NATO International Security Forces and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. She will be teaching at U.S. Army War College both this spring and in summer.

Mr. Taylor said that Archuleta County has resumed having department head meetings once per month. He was interested to note that four of the department heads are veterans. The county is purchasing a vehicle to for veterans' transportation. The Vietnam War Commemorative had 75 attendees and featured a flag folding and a Native American blessing.

Ms. Hammon said she has been busy with mental health committees; they are working on establishing a crisis center. Housing is a continuing problem. Pandemic funding is available to pay but no housing is available. The area has been busy with funerals and color guards. Memorial Day celebration plans are underway; a local high school has a new drum corps that is very proficient and that group will participate in the event. The last session of the season is approaching for veterans ski days; during the winter veterans have been able to ski for free from 6:00-12:00 on Thursdays. In veterans services, she has noticed an increasing number of male veterans aged late 70s and older who performed part time or gig work for resorts in the area and now are trying to live on extremely limited funds in retirement. Many are not eligible for VA pension and finding assistance is proving difficult.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon said the next meeting is scheduled for May 6. She has secured meeting space at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC. The VAMC follows CDC rules and requires that visitors be fully vaccinated and wear masks. She asked that Board members let Ms. Snyder know if they have a conflict with either of the requirements. The June meeting is scheduled for Durango and August for Steamboat Springs. Virtual options will be available.

The meeting recessed for 10 minutes at 10:26 a.m. to prepare for VTF Grant application training. The meeting resumed at 10:36 a.m.

New Business

VTF Application Training

Ms. Stamm shared a presentation on how to score the Veterans Trust Fund Grant Applications. It began with an overview of the grant's origin and purpose. The VTF Grant is to assist Colorado veterans in need of financial or material assistance. Nonprofit organizations eligible to receive funds must be nationally recognized veterans service organizations.

The Board received instruction regarding conflict of interest and were introduced to the application scoring rubric. The rubric explains the qualifications and scoring windows for when application responses exceed, meet, partially meet and do not meet the criteria for each category. The Board then considered sample exercises to practice scoring according to the rubric.

The Board was also introduced to the Excel scoring sheet, a map showing the geographic distribution of applicants, and a scoring addendum that indicates whether applicants are current grantees or new applicants with notes on current compliance and spending. Along with the applications, the Board members received copies of the rubric, the scoring sheet, the map, and the scoring addendum.

Ms. Scanlon recommended for the benefit of new Board members to have copies of the applications convenient at the May meeting when decisions are made, either electronic or hard copy, so that they can be referred to during discussion.

Ms. Hammon thanks Ms. Stamm for the presentation. She reminded the Board that these decisions are one of the Board's most important responsibilities. Ms. Stamm invited all to contact her if they have any questions.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

May 6, 2022 Minutes

VHA VISN 19

4100 E. Mississippi Avenue

Glendale, CO 80246

Virtual Option via WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Dan Coulter, WROS Support Representative

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest

Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer - Northwest

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer – Southeast

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer

Keith Gilbert, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hammon asked if there were any corrections to the draft of the minutes. There were none. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Agenda

Ms. Hammon recommended to change the agenda to move the VTF grant decisions to the last item of business. There were no objections.

Public Comment

Mr. Bosworth said he was just back in the country after vacation and is being caught up. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend and said that it was good to see everyone.

Old Business

HCR 22-1003

The Board's letter of support for HCR 22-1003 was received by the Appropriations Chair. Ms. Hammon said that the resolution is now out of Appropriations. This resolution would extend the state property tax exemption for qualifying disabled veterans Coto Gold Star spouses.

Capitol Committee Statue

The Board's letter of agreement to relocate the Union Solider statue to JFHA at no expense to DMVA or DVA has been sent to the Appropriations Chair and to the chair and vice chair of the Capitol Improvement Committee. Ms. Hammon said that some veterans have asked that the statue's new location be more accessible, so the eventual location is not yet settled.

WIG Committees

Ms. Hammon reminded the WIG committees to attempt to meet in May. The meetings must be open and minutes taken.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said the Division recently held its strategic planning session. The mission and vision statements have been revised to align with the Division's statutory duties and the vision of DMVA. The mission is to further prompt and efficient service to all Veterans in the state of Colorado on a uniform basis. The vision is to earn and maintain the trust and confidence in those we serve; customers and staff feel welcomed, valued, respected and heard. The Division will

accomplish these by assisting veterans with the preparation and filing of claims for veterans benefits, cooperating with and assisting veterans service organizations and advisory groups in helping eligible persons, maintaining the state veterans cemetery in Grand Junction, administrating two grant programs that benefit Colorado veterans, and operating the Western Region One Source. The Division has a projected vacancy which is the appeals specialist. The position has been announced. He is continuing to visit counties throughout the Division's five regions. The Office of the State Auditor is conducting an audit in regard to VSO performance. Results should be available in July/August. 80% of eligible VSOs throughout the state are now VA accredited. A goal for the next fiscal year will be to secure VBMS access for accredited CVSOs. The Division will adopt the NAVSCO model for training and accreditation, providing multiple opportunities throughout the year for VSOs to acquire 16 CEUs. The Division is entering into a partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, which is a nonprofit organization that assists veterans with post-BVA appeals. This service is provided at no cost to either veterans or the state. The Division will host the NACVSO annual in conference in 2024. This year's conference is in San Antonio and all of the Division's state VSOs will attend. DMVA will have a position on a cabinet group formed to address homelessness in Colorado. Congruent with the sunset review, the JBC has requested that by 01 November the Division provide information on WROS services and finances for the preceding fiscal year and produce an outreach plan for underserved veteran populations. DMVA Deputy Executive Director Brey Hopkins is departing and that position has been announced. Resource Director Greg Dorman left DMVA on 03 May.

Mr. Bosworth said that he will attend the NAVSCO training in June, as will some employees from his office. The new award nomination packets from CCVSOA for the Nardini and Conroy awards should be available in June.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said that community partnerships include gun safety advocacy with the United Church of Christ in Longmont and Any is Too Many suicide prevention awareness events on the 22nd of each month. County VSOs have asked to meet weekly rather than twice a month and will be doing so going forward.

Ms. Cunningham said that community partnerships include the Southwest Veterans Collaborative meetings every 2nd Tuesday and various events hosted by the Southern Ute Veterans Association.

There will be Veterans Outreach Day in Durango on May 26. Two more VSOs in region are now accredited: Frank Lobue in Montezuma County and Steven Otero in Gunnison County.

Mr. Edginton said there have been three outreach events within the last two weeks that have increased walk-in traffic. Appointments have doubled over the past month. He will attend the Moffatt County Resource Tour next week and has a table at the Grand Valley Highland Games. The Grand Junction VAMC has opened the new Mesa County Center for Recovery, an inpatient wing for substance abuse treatment.

Mr. Moncibais said that community partnerships include mentoring with Veterans Upward Bound, networking with the Home Front Military Network, Mount Carmel Ambassador Board. Outreach continues at the Veterans Court, the Pueblo mission, and the local VFW. Saguache County has a new VSO, Michael Bondurant and Eric has had the opportunity to begin his training. He met with Kiowa County commissioners and the VSO regarding the function of the VSO office. Chaffee County VSO Liesel Hammond has done impressive work assisting local veterans. All countries in the region now have veterans appointed as their CVSO.

Ms. Scanlon asked that future VSO reports include the number of women veterans have been served. Mr. Taylor complimented the work being accomplished under the regional structure.

Mr. Coulter, WROS Support Representative, said the VA has a lease in process for three additional offices and that should be final by 01 June. There are more than 30 VA staff members now on site. State auditors toured the WROS and the VMC in April. The DEERS office will open soon and will have weekend hours available, at first monthly due to the waiting list and then quarterly.

Ms. Hammon referred the Board to the written report submitted by the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Ms. Stamm, Grant Administrator, said that the VAG review committee met on 26 April. There were 30 applications. There were 12 new applicants. The final review is schedule for 12 May. Applications have shown that outreach is needed in some parts of the state. Notes for applications revision include statistical information, survey results, and operating budgets. The training will include more information on grant writing. She is also working with IT to have a shared drive available for future application cycles. She will reach out to grantees next week regarding remaining funds so that they can be expended by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Maday asked if it

is known how this year's new applicants learned about the grant opportunity and suggested adding that to the grant application.

Remarks

Ms. Motupalli apologized for being unable to attend in person. One of her children has been ill. Gusto's Veterans Heritage Month concluded at the end of April with more \$2,000 raised over raised for international resettlement committee, which Gusto will match.

Ms. Golonka relayed her remarks in the WebEx chat. The Women Vets of Colorado is just starting to come back online. Xcel Energy is finalizing their sponsorship of the Veterans Day parade. Her Xcel Energy veterans replacement is Maytham Alshadood. He comes from Congressman Crow's office and is an Iraqi refugee. Xcel is very happy to have him aboard.

Mr. Gonzalez said he attended the quarterly Hails and Farewells of the local Chamber of Economic Development's Military Affairs Committee on 18 April. On 10 April he attended a forum by the local space foundation on Why Space Matter. He attended the Home Front Military Network's reception celebrating their merge on 03 May.

Mr. Maday said he recently participated in a panel at the National Defense University in Washington D.C. on the future of communications, command, and control. Google's employee veteran network is hosting a virtual career week in June and he will provide details as they become available so that the information can be distributed. He will need to attend the June meeting virtually.

Ms. Scanlon said she attended a fundraising dinner for U.S. Marine Memorial on April 9. The memorial may become a joint memorial moving forward. The Women Marines Association continues to receive requests for assistance and may expend their VAG grant before the end of the year.

Mr. Taylor said veterans have recently experience difficulties with nursing home admissions due to staffing problems at the CLCs. Ms. Scanlon asked if pay is the issue and Mr. Taylor said that is a factor. Ms. Hammon said some organizations use travel nurses, but that is becoming more difficult due to lack of housing and Mr. Taylor agreed that affects recruitment also. General Jesse Morehouse will be the guest speaker at the Memorial Day observation at the local cemetery.

Ms. Hammon said she attended the most recent WROS Advisory meeting and they are happy to have Mr. Coulter on board. She also attended a meeting of local nonprofits and many are experiencing some of the staffing issues seen at the CLCs. A new associate VSO has been hired in Eagle County. Robby Robinson is doing well with his recovery from a stroke. Since he cannot report on behalf of the CLC Board of Commissioners at this time Elizabeth Mullins will be invited to upcoming meetings. The bill regarding the Veterans Information Clearinghouse has been sent to Appropriations. The Long Bill passed and the Division has funds for the Womens VSO, who will also perform other EDI functions. The 10th Mountain Division Memorial Day service will be held in person after a two-year hiatus.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon said that the next meeting is scheduled for June 3 in Durango, as it seems there are flights available. Ms. Snyder will be checking on lodging and meeting space, beginning at the DoubleTree.

The August meeting will be in Steamboat Springs. The Routt County VSO has already secured a meeting room and can assist with lodging.

It was decided that the September meeting will be Colorado Springs and the October meeting in the Northeast. Mr. Bosworth may have meeting space available for September and Ms. Antista-Bianchi will assist with October

August 5 Steamboat Springs
September 9 Colorado Springs
October 7 Northeast Colorado

The meeting recessed at 10:21 a.m. to prepare for VTF Grant decisions. The meeting resumed at 10:35 a.m.

New Business

VTF Grant Decisions

Ms. Stamm led the discussion and the applications were considered in numerical order.

VT23-01 American Legion Post 44

Area Served: Steamboat Springs

Amount Requested: \$3,880.00

Score: 84.4

These grant funds would be used for transportation, financial assistance including rent, temporary housing, food, medicines and emergency medical treatment. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$3,880.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$3,880.00

VT23-02 American Legion Post 62

Areas Served: Moffat, Rountt, and Rio Blanco Counties

Amount Requested: \$8,000.00

Score: 79

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, temporary housing, and rides to medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Motupalli asked if duplication between VT23-01 and VT23-02 is a concern. Ms. Hammon said it would not be because the service providers cover such a large geographical area. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$8,000.00. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$8,000.00

VT 23-03 VFW Post 5231

Area Served: Montezuma County

Amount Requested \$60,000.00

Score: 75

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance with housing, utilities, mental health and substance abuse resources, and a Stand Down. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this application covers some of the same geographic area and VT23-10 and VT 23-02, but they serve a large number of resident veterans as well as may passing through. Ms. Motupalli said the application would be stronger if metrics were available to demonstrate quantifiable impact. Ms. Scanlon and Mr. Maday agreed. Ms. Stamm said that she will provide more coaching to applicants for the next application cycle in regard to demonstrating measurable outcomes. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$8,000.00. Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$60,000.00

VT23-04 American Legion Post 75

Areas Served: Montezuma, Dolores and La Plata Counties

Amount Requested \$50,000.00

Score: 74.6

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance for housing, food, utilities, mental health and well-being, transportation to medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Mr. Taylor said that the budget is unclear. Ms. Hammon said the Stand Down is historically a successful one. Ms. Scanlon suggested funding the application at this current amount of \$40,000, since the increased amount was not well justified. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the amount of \$40,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$40,000.00

VT23-05 American Legion Post 88

Areas Served: Grand, Summit, Jackson Counties

Amount Requested: \$35,000.00

Score: 83.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, transportation, medical, prescriptions, outreach, stand-down products through a voucher program for dental, grooming and optical, and food assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$35,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$35,000.00

VT23-06 DAV Chapter 44

Areas Served: Montezuma, Dolores, and La Plata Counties

Amount Requested: \$73,700.00

Score: 81.4

These grant funds would be used for assistance with basic needs and health and wellness, including access to a wellness facility. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is \$50,000.00. Ms. Scanlon asked for the status of current spending by

this grantee. Ms. Stamm said there is currently \$6,000.00 remaining. M. Hammon said the budget contains some administrative costs. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of \$50,000.00, consistent with this year's funding. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$50,000.00

VT23-07 American Legion Post 11

Area Served: Las Animas County

Amount Requested: \$20,000.00

Score: 81.0

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, therapy, vision, dental, and unexpected emergencies. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this [program serves a large county with a high poverty rate. Ms. Scanlon said the requested amount was reasonable.

Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$20,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$20,000.00

VT23-08 DAV Chapter 48

Area Served: La Plata County

Amount Requested: \$93,630.00

Score: 88.6

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, temporary lodging, rent, and mental health and substance abuse treatment. This is a returning applicant and former grantee. Ms. Scanlon questions the amount requested in the budget. Mr. Taylor said the applicant was using an out of date application form. Mr. Gonzalez asked what the last funding amount was for this applicant. Ms. Stamm said it was \$50,000.00. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$50,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$50,000.00

VT23-09 VFW Post 5843

Area Served: Rio Blanco County

Amount Requested: \$3,750.00

Score: 82.2

These grant funds would be used for travel to and from medical appointments. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is \$5,000.00. The consensus was to recommend funding this application at \$5,000.00. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$3,750.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$3,750.00

VT23-10 VFW Department of Colorado

Areas Served: Statewide

Amount Requested: \$40,000.00

Score: 86.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance to veterans in need. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Hammon said this is a longstanding grantee with no issues. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$40,000.00. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$40,000.00

VT23-11 American Legion Post 22

Areas Served: Adams, Weld, and Larimer Counties

Amount Requested: \$40,000.00

Score: 78.7

These grant funds would be used for financial and emergency services. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon said the amounts for rent utility assistance seem high. Ms. Stamm said mortgage and rent assistance payments from grantees often exceed \$3,000.00. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$40,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$40,000.00

VT23-12 VFW Post 3641

Areas Served: Pueblo County and surrounding areas

Amount Requested: \$40,400.00

Score: 80.8

Recommended Funding: \$40,400.00

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance and a homeless fair. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. Ms. Scanlon said the budget total is higher than the amount requested in the application. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the amount of \$40,400.00, which is the amount on the application. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$40,400.00

VT23-13 American Legion Post 0009

Areas Served: Bent, Crowley, and Otero Counties with some services in Prowers and Pueblo Counties

Amount Requested: \$20,119.15

Score: 87.6

These grant funds would be used for transportation of veterans to appointments. This current grantee is compliant with fair performance. Ms. Stamm said this grantee has had difficulties with the survey and she will assist them with outcomes if they receive funding. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this application in the round number amount of \$21,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$21,000.00

VT23-14 American Legion Department of Colorado

Areas Served: Greater Denver Metro Area

Amount Requested: \$25,000.00

Score: 82.6

These grant funds would be used to assist with housing. This is a returning applicant and former grantee. The application addresses a prior theft that affected the organization. There has been a criminal investigation and charges have been filed. Mr. Gonzalez said the application was not very thorough and Mr. Taylor agreed. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of \$20,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$20,000.00

VT23-15 Bruce McCandless Veterans Community Living Center

Amount Requested: \$27,303.03

These grant funds would be used for massage therapy, a coffee bar, and Scandent system support. Ms. Motupalli asked if administrative expense were permissible for CLCs. Ms. Stamm confirmed they are allowed. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$27,303.03. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$27,303.03

VT23-16 Homelake Veterans Community Living Center

Amount Requested: \$30,869.00

These grant funds would be used to upgrade the wall-mounted flatscreen TVs that are currently in each resident room and to add Bluetooth headphone technology. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$30,869.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$30,869.00

VT23-17 Fitzsimons Veterans Community Living Center

Amount Requested: \$109,914.00

These grant funds would be used to replace the CLC's transit van. The VTF Grant has a \$100,000 maximum allowable. Ms. Stamm said they the committee recommended funding this application at \$100,000.00 because that is maximum allowable under the grant rules. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application at \$100,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$100,000.00

VT23-18 Rifle Veterans Community Living Center

Amount Requested: \$21,699.99

These grant funds would be used to purchase a Needle Point Bi-Polar Ionization air purifying system and a speaker system. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the round number amount of \$21,700.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$21,700.00

VT23-19 VFW Post 12063

Areas Served: Custer, Fremont, Huerfano and Pueblo Counties

Amount Requested: \$85,500.00

Score: 93.8

These grant funds would be used for financial and emergency assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current grant award is \$70,000.00. Ms. Hammon said this area is fairly isolate with a low average income. Ms. Scanlon asked if this grantee is projected to expend their funds this year. Ms. Stamm said that they are. Ms. Scanlon moved to fund this application in the amount of \$75,000.00. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$70,000.00

VT23-20 Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

Amount Requested: \$39,911.00

These grant funds would be used for installation of ADA door actuators at the administration building, stucco renovation to administration building, and repair to three WWII-era military jeeps that are utilized as a caisson during military honors and interment services, as well as at parades and community events. Mr. Maday moved to fund this request in the round number amount of \$40,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$40,000.00

VT23-21 Western Region One Source

Amount Requested: \$60,000.00

These grant funds would be used for to fund the WROS Support Representative/Triage Assistant. Funding this position will ensure all DVA staff, WROS tenants, and Veterans, a first point of contact at the WROS. Mr. Gonzalez said that going forward this this expense should be part of the DVA budget. Mr. Taylor moved to fund this request in the requested amount of \$60,000.00. Ms., Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$60,000.00

VT23-22 DAV Chapter 21

Areas Served: Eastern Denver Metro, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert Counties

Amount Requested: \$28,850.00

Ms. Stamm said that this application was received by March 1 but was late to VTF because the applicant erroneously applied under the Veterans Assistance Grant. These grant funds would be used for housing, utilities, food, and transportation assistance and for wheelchair repairs and meals .Mr. Taylor said it was unclear who was doing the repairs referenced in the budget and who the recipients of the meals are. These could be administrative expenses. Mr. Maday moved to fund this application in the amount of \$15,000.00 due to the possible administrative expense. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$15,000.00

VT23-23 American Legion Post 16

Area Served: Huerfano County

Amount Requested: \$8,000.00

Ms. Stamm said that this application was received by March 1 but was late to VTF because the applicant erroneously applied under the Veterans Assistance Grant. These grant funds would be used for housing, utilities, food, and transportation assistance. Mr. Taylor said the amounts on the budget do not match the total amount on the application. Mr. Gonzalez said that if awarded the applicant might be able to request additional funds mid-year. He moved to fund this application in the requested amount of \$8,000.00. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund at \$8,000.00

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn. Mr. Maday seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Raymond, jasmine

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

June 3, 2022 Minutes

Doubletree Hotel

501 Camino del Rio

Durango, CO 81301

Virtual Option via WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer – Southwest

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer – Southeast

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Front Range

Dan Coulter, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Dana Berry, Office of the State Auditor

Nina Frant, Office of the State Auditor

David Girard, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer
Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Lemieux, Public
Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hammon asked if there were any corrections to the draft of the minutes. Mr. Taylor provided corrections on page 3 and page 5. Ms. Hammon provided corrections on page 3 and page 4. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comment - none

Old Business

Ms. Hammon said that the strategic plan committees are expected to meet for the new fiscal year.

New Business

Ms. Hammon said the Board anticipates hearing from VHA regarding the recommendations of the AIR commission. The commission has not yet been approved by the Senate.

Ms. Hammon said that the annual NACVSO conference will be held in Denver in 2024 in coordination with DVA.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that DMVA has appointed a new Deputy Executive Director. Michael Bruno assumed the position on June 1. Currently still vacant are the positions of legislative liaison and chief operating officer, both of which the department intends to fill in June. These functions were both previously covered by Greg Dorman. A new Controller, J.T. Davis, was appointed May 31. Mr. Callahan and Mr. Bruno will attend Missing in America at the WROS on June 6. Mr. Callahan said that decision items for the next legislative session include additional staff at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery and restoration funds swept from the Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant in 2020. DMVA has recommended Sheila Scanlon and Raymond Taylor for additional terms on the Board. The announcement for a Women's State Veterans Service Officer should be posted next week. Mr. Callahan and General Clellan, Adjutant General, attended the Memorial Day event at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The Division

will be seeking approval from the Board for a Training and Certification Plan for new veterans service officers. Ms. Hammon suggested that include a minimum number of hours of training with an experienced VSO.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi said that she attended a community Memorial Day event in Larimer County that presented good opportunities for future partnerships. She complimented American Legion Post 22 and Qualified Listeners for their help in assisting a veteran in need. She currently has one woman veteran client.

Ms. Cunningham reported on behalf of Dominic Edginton. In community partnerships he is working with local VHA on enrollment, with the Vet Center to assist veterans who may need to file claims for compensation, and with HUD/VASH at the WROS to assist with housing. There was a resource tour in Moffatt on May 22 with seven claims completed in four hours of outreach. Attendance at the Grand Valley Highland Games resulted in two claims. He attended the CCI conference and reported positive engagement with commissioners from around the state regarding DVA's goals to make resources and training available to county VSOs. He will attend the NACVSO conference in June. In success stories, a local veteran submitted a WROS sunset review statement that was very complimentary of the services provided. He recognized Huerfano county commissioner Gerald Cisneros for his extraordinary efforts in helping a local family obtain a grave marker for their veteran family member.

From her region, Ms. Cunningham reported that Veterans Outreach Day in Saguache was on May 25. It was attended by 14 organizations including the Albuquerque VHA. Approximately 45 veterans attended. Outreach in Silverton on May 24 resulted in contacted with 15 veterans, two of whom she is working with personally. She has VBMS access and there are now three VSOs with this access in the 10-county region, with both Montezuma VSOs working toward that access as well. She will attend the NACVSO conference next week and will be at Gunnison Veterans Resource Day on June 15. Between her office and Montezuma County they are currently working with 15 woman veterans, with other counties yet to report.

Mr. Stem said in community partnerships his office is working with the office of social work at the Denver County Jail to help veterans reintegrate. In outreach he has connected with MSU and DU to secure VSO space to help student veterans with claims and VHA enrollment. In success stories, he has been working with VOA and Denver County to assist homeless veterans in the field

on housing as well as claims. Some metro area counties have month-long waits for appointments and his office has been assisting.

Mr. Moncibais said that community partnerships include Mount Carmel Pueblo, which has requested an increased VSO presence and has joined the VSO rotation at the Pueblo Vet Center. He attended a memorial service at the riverwalk in Pueblo, resulting in eight new eight clients. He also gained 18 new clients at a veterans event in Port Arthur, Texas. In May he provided in-person training to seven counties. He is collecting photos from Memorial Day events to include in the next DVA newsletter. In success stories, he has been conducting outreach to incarcerated veterans has was able to secure in in-facility C&P exam for a veteran who has a claim under appeal. He is currently working with four woman veterans, all of whom have MST claims.

On behalf of the WROS, Mr. Callahan reported that three additional leases in the final stages of execution. Only one office remains vacant. Liberty Mutual has signed a new 12-month lease. Events that continue to see success include Veterans Coffee Club, VA peer support, Vets for Vets, Tai Chi, Guitar for Veterans, Women Veteran Coffee Hour, and Yoga. The Adjutant General visited the WROS earlier in the week. DVA is still working to get the DEERS office at the WROS operational. A contractor has been identified for the parking lot gate project. Ms. Hammon reminded the Board that the JBC is conducting a sunset review of the WROS and the report should be available by the end of the summer.

On behalf of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Mr. Callahan reported that veterans were honored at the Memorial Day Service. Within the past 20 years the cemetery has seen 5,459 interments. There have been 138 so far in 2022 and there were 375 in FY 21-22. Improvements to the committal shelter are complete. The bronze eagle statue is in place overlooking the committal shelter. Corrective actions from the NCA audit continue. The June interment schedule is full and they are now scheduling into July. The stipend program is almost fully expended and will be renewed for the new fiscal year.

Ms. Stamm said that May has been busy with the approaching close of the fiscal year. She is in frequent communication with grantees. Final reimbursements need to be submitted by June 15. During May 40 payments were processed. The VTF grants for 2022-2023 have been finalized. The final approval of VAG for 2022-2023 was on June 1. The VAG received 30 applications. There was \$957,000 to award and requests exceeded that amount by \$424,165. Of 12 applications from

new applicants, eight were funded. Kickoff trainings for both grants have been scheduled for June 22 and June 23. She is working strategies to improve execution rates. Possibilities might include midyear budget revisions or allowance of some administrative costs. She said that the VAG applications that were denied were largely administrative costs. Ms. Golonka asked if applicants can be funded with administrative costs excluded and Ms. Stamm confirmed that they can.

Mr. Callahan reported that he and Mr. Moncibais attended VHA briefs on the AIR Commission recommendations. The soonest the recommendations could be implemented if approved is 2026. The recommendations must be accepted or declined as a whole. If the recommendations are implemented, the primary effects in Colorado would be the closure of CBOCs in Burlington, La Junta, Lamar, and Salida. There are additional concerns regarding resources for the Grand Junction VAMC and the Albuquerque VAMC.

The Board recessed at 10:30 a.m. and resumed at 10:50 a.m.

Remarks

Mr. Maday said the Google's Veteran Network will be holding a Career Week June 11-23 regarding how to transitions in a civilian careers for veterans a military members. The event will be virtual and a link will be provided. There is still a lot of wildfire cleanup underway; many homes were underinsured and the rebuilding process has been gradual.

Ms. Golonka apologize for her remote attendance that was due to a delayed flight. Xcel Energy volunteered for Memorial Day flag planting and pickup at Fairmount Cemetery as is looking ahead to wreath laying in December. Xcel is sponsoring the Veterans Day Parade. She is working on the administrative aspects of newly reinstated the Women Vets of Colorado.

Ms. Motupalli said that Memorial Day provides an opportunity for reflection and assessment. She has decided to step down as chair of Gusto's veterans' affinity group effective May 31 due to an increase in personal and professional responsibilities.

Mr. Gonzalez said on May 20 he participated in a fundraiser for Citizen Solder Connection, a Colorado Springs nonprofit that supports military families. He attended a food insecurity panel at Mount Carmel on May 26. He was the keynote speaker at the Memorial Day ceremony in Fountain and attended both the Colorado Springs Memorial Day ceremony and a flag raising by a local American Legion post.

Ms. Scanlon said she attended a Memorial Day Ceremony at the U.S. Marine Memorial; the guest speaker was Lieutenant General Lewis Craparotta, USMC (R). The Colorado Women Marines Association has expended their Veterans Assistance Grant as is looking ahead to the upcoming grant year. She is completing her six-week class at War College and it is going well.

Mr. Taylor said that the veterans CLCs are having continuing difficulties with staffing and it is affecting admissions. The local American Legion placed 341 flags at the local cemetery for Memorial Day in partnership with other veterans organizations. More than 150 people attended the Memorial Day ceremony. The addition of a new superintendent promises increased partnerships in local schools. His county has lost 22 veterans within the last 12 months, including veterans from WWII, Korea, and a veteran lost to suicide.

Ms. Hammon said that the Board did send a letter to the legislature's Appropriations Committee in support of the resolution to extend eligibility for the disabled veterans property tax exemption to Gold Star families. The resolution passed and it will proceed to the ballot. UVC is having a fundraising banquet on October 08 at the Gaylord Hotel. The legislative committee is collecting goals and ideas for the next sessions. She is serving on a committee that is considering establishing a memory care CLC in the Grand Junction area. The local veterans coalition placed 280 flags for memorial days in combination with their community partners. She reported that Mr. Robinson is recovering well.

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hammon said that the next meeting is scheduled for August 5 in Steamboat Springs. Routt County VSO has already secured a meeting room.

Upcoming Meetings: August 5, Steamboat Springs

September 9, Colorado Springs

October 7, Northeast area

Executive Session

The executive session consisted of information confidential to the Board by the Office of the State Auditor, pursuant to 2 C.R.S. § 3-103(3) and 2 C.R.S. § 103.7.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

August 5, 2022 Minutes

Routt County Administrative Building

522 Lincoln Avenue

Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Deborah Salerno, DMVA Strategic Planner

Parker White, DMVA Legislative Liaison

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist

Debra Antista-Bianchi, State Veterans Service Officer – Northeast

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Front Range

Dan Coulter, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Dana Berry, Office of the State Auditor

Monica Bowers, Office of the State Auditor

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer
Michele Colin, Office of the State Auditor
Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Don Fontainebleau, American Legion Post 44, VFW Post 4264
Nina Frant, Office of the State Auditor
Adrien Kordas, Office of the State Auditor
Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Elizabeth Mullins, Division of Veterans Community Living Centers
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Jeff Steck, American Legion Post 44, VFW Post 4264

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hammon asked if there were any corrections to the draft of the minutes. Mr. Maday provided a correction on page four. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Golonka seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comment

Mr. Steck said that he has observed that veterans services organizations do not coordinate with one another or with local veterans and he hopes that can be improved. Ms. Hammon agreed and said that Board has just resumed in-person meetings, and they will work on communicating with local veteran communities. Ms. Hammon and Mr. Taylor said that local coalitions can also be helpful. Mr. Steck said that one is currently being formed in Routt County.

Mr. Fontainebleau said that local veterans organizations have a story recording program that capture the first-person accounts of local veterans. Ms. Hammon encouraged them to forward those to the Library of Congress and/or to local media.

Old Business – none

New Business

Ms. Mullins reported on behalf of the Veterans Community Living Centers. She thanked the Board for the VTF grant awards made to community living centers. Staffing difficulties continue, including some large vacancies. The administrator at Fitzsimons has relocated to another state and an interim is in place. That facility also has a vacancy in the Director of Nursing and is recruiting nationwide. Outbreaks continue in all five locations. Employees who do not meet CDC guidelines for vaccination for public health workers are required to test daily.

The Division is continuing to consider the need for community-based services. Ms. Hammon asked if the CLCs are taking admissions and Ms. Mullins said that they are, as possible according to staffing requirements. Mr. Maday asked if visitors are now permitted and whether volunteer organizations are permitted to assist with functions. Ms. Mullins said that visitors are allowed and that some local organizations and hospitals do assist. Internal cross-training has also been helpful.

Mr. Maday said he has been considering how veterans become aware of available services. He has observed the use of trifold and billboards in other states and he shared a photo of a billboard seen recently in Minnesota. He and Ms. Hammon acknowledged that Colorado has different laws in regard to billboards, but the image helps to underscore how essential visibility is in the marketing of services. Mr. Callahan said it would be possible to use VTF funding for this type of campaign, and that a prospective increase in spending authority could be helpful. Ms. Hammon asked Mr. Maday if he would head a committee to consider marketing strategies. Ms. Golonka offered to assist.

Mr. Callahan presented the current draft of the Division's training plan for new county veterans service officers. The plan has been developed by the state veterans service officers and features a curriculum that follow a 30-60-90 day timeline. The curriculum and a slideshow presentation were shared among the Board members. Recommendations from the Board were to be used to update the plan and curriculum, with the revised version to be presented to the Board upon completion. Recommendations provided at the meeting were: updated grant allocations for FY22/23, add VA medical contact information including CBOCs, add links to VSO Reference Book and Veterans Handbook, add how to request a DD214 and how to verify one, add a link to the wartime era chart, incorporate a shadowing plan, and to expand on C&P expectations and processes.

Mr. Callahan said that DMVA and DVA are seeking an increase in spending authority for the Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant to maximize the use of available funds. Both accounts have funds that are currently not utilized. Ms. Golonka asked if additional funds are available, whether grant awards could be made in smaller amounts outside of the current fiscal year cycle. Mr. Callahan said that Ms. Stamm could address the question. Ms. Hammon said that would probably require additional staff. Mr. Callahan said that DMVA is also pursuing

a statutory change to allow each grant to spend up to 10% on administration rather than the current five percent. Ms. Scanlon said that the Board should have been consulted in advance on both topics. Ms. Hammon asked if a letter of opinion on either topic would be helpful at this point. Ms. Hammon invited a motion regarding a letter of support to be sent to OSPB on behalf of a statutory change to increase the allocation from the VTF for administrative costs from five percent to 10 percent. Mr. Taylor so moved. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Scanlon suggested that the letter to OSPB also express support of the increased spending authority. Mr. Taylor moved that both items be included in one letter. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Ms. Stamm said that she support the requests for increased funds to support the VTF Grant program. She said she would like the Board to consider allowing limited administrative costs to be allowable for recipients of the VTF Grant. She is in conversations the state Grant Management Office on suggested language if this is something the Board would like to pursue. She said that some of last year's grantees did not apply for the current cycle due to the burden presented by administrative expenses. Regarding gift cards, she has receive requests to raise the limit per card from \$50 to \$100 due to inflation and fuel costs. They are vested in keeping the gas cards available as they are often the only available method to assist veterans with food and fuel expenses. Ms. Scanlon asked if administrative costs would be on top of the grant request. Ms. Stamm said it would be included in the total request and that grantees would have to request reimbursement and document each expenses just as they do with other grant expenses. Ms. Hammon said it would be of assistance to the grantees. She said grantees would need to be informed on allowable costs. Mr. Medina addressed the Board and also spoke in favor of allowing limited administrative costs to grantee. Their local American Legion post has withdrawn from the VTF grant program due to the administrative burden. Ms. Stamm said that she will work on specifics of the proposal for the Board to consider at the next meeting. The Board considered the question of gas/gift cards. The consensus was that a higher limit might prove helpful, perhaps requiring receipts from veterans. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Stamm will draft a proposed rule change. Ms. Golonka asked if grantees who have unspent funds can roll them over to the subsequent year. Ms. Stamm said they are limited to the state fiscal year but lack of expenditure is something the Board can consider when evaluating applications.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that DMVA's new Deputy Executive Director has been visiting DVA sites and plans to attend the Board meeting in September. DMVA has also appointed DeeDee Salerno as the new Strategic Planner. Parker White is now the Legislative Liaison and Public Relations Officer. DMVA expects to announce for a Chief Operating Officer as well. The Division has received a required from the Southern Ute Mountain tribe to be included on the Board and he has meeting scheduled with the Ute Mountain Tribe at the end of August. Ms. Scanlon asked if the issue can be considered at the next meeting after that meeting has taken place. The Division is also seeking advice from the Board regarding implementation of the Veteran Information Resource Clearinghouse requirement. The National Resource Directory has been fulfilling this purpose to date. The Division is also asking the Board to advise on vouchers for CVSO payments, and whether the current full time and part time division is the most efficient and uniform utilization of those funds. Ms. Hammon asked if Marshall Bosworth could consult on this topic and Mr. Bosworth agreed. Mr. Maday asked if DMVA has an internship program that could assist and Mr. Callahan said there is not one at this time. Ms. Hammon asked if Ms. Salerno could address the Board's strategic plan at the October meeting. Mr. Callahan said the state VSOs will attend the NACVSO virtual basic benefits course in August. He will join ECHCS Director Michael Kilmer at town hall events in August in Burlington, Lamar, La Junta, Alamosa, and Salida. The Division has received the eligible list for the Womens VSO and will schedule interviews. The VSO Supervisor position is currently open for applications. The final audit report will be available in September.

Mr. Bosworth said the CCVSOA has been working on their bylaws and updated processes for the annual CVSO awards. They have received eight nominations for the Nardini award and four for the Conroy. The two awards are for full time and part time county veterans service officers. They will hold their annual meeting in conjunction with the training conference in September. Ms. Hammon asked if retiring county VSOs could be recognized by the association at the conference and Mr. Bosworth agreed. He also attended the NACVSO conference in June.

Ms. Cunningham said that there was a veterans resource event in Hinsdale County in July and there will be another in San Miguel County in August. One is being scheduled for Dolores County. Senator Bennett hosted a recent roundtable to hear veterans' concerns. She and Mr. Callahan met with the Ute tribes and look forward to an increased partnership. In success stories, the

collaboration among VSOs throughout the state has been working well. The recurring Wednesday meetings have been helpful.

Ms. Antista-Bianchi thanked the three VSOs in her region who are retiring, including Monty Kinder in Morgan County, Jim McCracken in Washington County, and Karen Townsend in Boulder County. Two new VSOs have been hired: Ricky Arellano in Morgan County and Sasha Mathews in Boulder County. A six-week education series on caring for veterans with dementia sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association, CDVA, and VHA began on June 30. The Boulder County AAA has started a series of focused conversations regarding veterans. In success stories, VSO Joy Johnson in Lincoln County has been conducting outreach to incarcerated veterans and Angel Flight West attended one of the Wednesday VSO meetings to help make VSOs aware of their service.

Mr. Stem and Mr. Edginton had to leave to attend veteran appointments. Ms. Snyder will share the slides from all the VSOs with the Board.

Ms. Hammon referred to Board to the written report from the Western Region One Source.

Ms. Ingalls referred the Board to her written report. They currently have a vacancy for the stipend manager. Jennifer Lesko from the grounds crew is assisting, although that leaves a vacancy on the grounds crew. The VA Back to Work program may be helpful to temporarily cover vacant positions. The issue of slow reimbursements from VA is resolving, with only 1-2 reimbursements delayed at the FY 2022. The Honor Guard stipend program has spent \$5,625.00 of the \$20,000.00 appropriated. Saluting Branches will be in September. Mr. Maday asked if the cemetery staff had received a thank you letter from the Board and Ms. Ingalls said she has not seen it.

Ms. Stamm had no additions to her submitted report.

Remarks

Ms. Scanlon said she completed the Army War College course she was instructing. She said the Women Marine Association has seen an increase in the number of people seeking assistance and the amount of need has increased also.

Mr. Gonzalez said on 11 July he attended the meet and greet for the outgoing and incoming commanders at Space Base Delta 1. On 23 July he participated in the Korean War Ceremony at Memorial Park and reread the city's proclamation. On 25 July he attended the groundbreaking

ceremony for the new Visitors Center at the Air Force Academy. On 26 July he was the keynote speaker at the commanders' dinner at the annual American GI Forum.

Ms. Golonka said that Xcel Energy has posted its consultant job position and she will share the link. Xcel is sponsoring the Veterans Day parade in Denver.

Mr. Maday said he had training with Michigan Guard in July and attended the annual conference of the National Guard Association in August.

Mr. Taylor said he has had military funeral every weekend since before Memorial Day. Their veteran coalition has a flying squadron that attends at most funerals and was also at the 4th of July parade. Veteran continue to experience problems with Community Care and travel and he has been working with Albuquerque VAMC to try to resolve the problems. He complimented Ms. Stamm's customer service, saying he has heard positive feedback from grantees.

Ms. Motupalli said he has observed economic indicators of an approaching recessions and is concerned about the possible impact in the veteran community. It might be helpful for the Board to consider possible service and support that could be needed. She has also been thinking of ways for grantees to demonstrate the impact of their service programs and suggested the Board assemble some information and education for grantees to assist them with this process.

Ms. Hammon said that housing and transportation continue to be significant issues for local veterans. She has been working with ASCEND, a program that focuses on suicide prevention among veterans who are not enrolled in VHA.

Upcoming Meetings

The next stated meeting is scheduled for September 9 at the Mount Carmel Veterans Service Center in Colorado Springs. The October meeting will be at the WROS.

September 9, Colorado Springs

October 7, Grand Junction

November. Northeast Colorado.

Executive Session

The executive session consisted of information confidential to the Board by the Office of the State Auditor, pursuant to 2 C.R.S. § 3-103(3) and 2 C.R.S. § 103.7.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

September 9, 2022 Minutes

Mount Carmel Veterans Service Center

530 Communication Circle

Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist

Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer - Southeast

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Front Range

Dan Coulter, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Dana Berry, Office of the State Auditor

Matthew Ball, Public

Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer
Michele Colin, Office of the State Auditor
Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Nina Frant, Office of the State Auditor
James Kliesen, Cheyenne County Veterans Service Officer
Bob McLaughlin, Mount Carmel VSC Executive Director
Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hammon corrected the date and location on page 1. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Address

Mr. McLaughlin welcomed the Board. He served on the Board in 2016, has been executive director of the Mountain Carmel Veterans Service Center since 2014, and is also a regional vice president of UVC. He provided an information packet to attendees that included a map of veterans resources and a bubble chart showing the competencies of the Mount Carmel Veterans Service Center. Primary legislative issues of interest are transitioning to civilian employment and suicide prevention. With the assistance of public-private partnerships, there is also intent to establish at least one more veterans' One Stop in southern Colorado as well as Veteran Connections, to assist veterans with needs not addressed by VA benefits. The priorities are speed and effectiveness of service.

Address

Ted Robertson thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend. Mr. Robertson hosts the Veterans Voice podcast in Colorado Springs, which focuses on improving the lives of military members, veterans, and their families. One of the emerging challenges for the veteran population is available housing. The podcast is available on major podcasting platforms or online at www.veteransvoice.us.

Reports

Ms. Hammon moved some of the staff reports up in the agenda to accommodate schedules.

Ms. Iglesias thanked Mr. McLaughlin for the continued partnership with Mount Carmel. August marketing and outreach for the WROS included a mention in the local paper, a presentation at

the Military Officers Association meeting, and a feature in that organization's magazine. Since opening in the first week of July, the DEERS office has served 277 customers. There has been one Saturday clinic and another one is scheduled for November. The WROS recently partnered with VA for Cultural and Diversity seminar with tribal nations. Administrative Assistant Dan Coulter will attend the state VSO training September 13-16. The WROS served 507 people during the month of August and in total served 1,162. They are looking forward to hosting the Board for the October meeting. Ms. Scanlon asked what the biggest issues are for veterans and for the WROS. Ms. Iglesias said housing and mental health services are a significant need. The WROS has been very busy with triage with the addition of more tenants and is considering adding more staff, including work study and temporary employees.

Ms. Cunningham said that community partnership events included hosting the monthly Southwest Veteran Collaborative, a meeting with the Ute tribes that included the DVA Director, and participating in the monthly meeting of Veterans for Veterans and the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs. Outreach included the San Miguel County Veterans Resource Day, a DVA Director Meet and Greet with Dolores, Gunnison, and Hinsdale Counties, and letters of appreciation delivered to organizations that contributed to the Veteran Outreach Day. Successes include having met all of the county VSOs, Ute tribe leadership and veteran organizations in the region.

Mr. Edginton said community partnerships include collaboration with the Veterans Outreach Coordinator at the VAMC as well as connections with the Vet Center, the Student Veterans Association at Colorado Mesa University, local veterans service organizations, and WROS tenants including VOA, HUD-VASH, and caregiver support. Upcoming outreach events include Grand Junction Farmers Market Military Night, the Eagle County Veterans Resource Tour, a WROS Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff, and a Routt County Veterans Resource Tour. Successes include having participated in the first Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff, positive results from claims files, and the hire of Ron Epplin, a new county veterans service officer in Rio Blanco County.

Mr. Moncibais said community partnerships include the Senior Resource Development Agency in Pueblo and an increased presence at Mount Carmel. Outreach included attendance at 9/11 memorials in Alamosa, Huerfano, Las Animas, and Pueblo Counties and at American Legion Post 2's POW/MIA Recognition Day in Pueblo. Successes include positive results in VA Administrative Process Reviews, where incarcerated veterans have had their service declared

Honorable for VA purposes, and effectively connecting veterans with Volunteers of America, giving them access to medical care and housing.

Mr. Stem said community partnerships include VHA, VBA, DAV, and the Chamber Defense Council in Aurora. In outreach he will be providing VSO support at DU and Metro State University once a month. Successes include positive claim decisions and the completion of NACVSO training.

Mr. Bosworth said that NACSVO now allows service officers from state organizations to join as members. They are hosting virtual information events on the PACT Act and on Camp Lejeune. El Paso County has created a briefing to help inform veterans about the PACT Act. The Colorado County Veterans Service Officers Association will meet in conjunction with the state VSO training and he will meet with the state veterans service officers as well.

The Board recessed at 11:07 a.m. and resumed at 11:15 a.m.

Old Business

DVA Training Curriculum: Mr. Callahan said that the adjustments recommended by the Board in August have been made to the training curriculum for new veterans service officers. The changes are highlighted in the distributed copy. Ms. Hammon said that prompt training will be valuable to new VSOs, particularly in the format presented in the curriculum. Mr. Maday moved to accept the training curriculum as presented. Ms. Scanlon suggested waiting for feedback from county VSOs at the annual training before approval, which met with consensus. Ms. Motupalli asked what feedback methods the Division uses. Mr. Callahan said it is usually direct feedback. Ms. Motupalli offered to assist with methods and quality of feedback. Ms. Hammon said she would also like the Board to receive regular reports on training, particularly using the curriculum once approved.

Veterans Trust Fund Administration Costs: Ms. Stamm said the prospect of allowing administrative costs for the Veterans Trust Fund Grants has been discussed with the state grant management office and state fiscal rules have been consulted. She recommended that the VTF allow a Supplies line item not to exceed \$1,200.00 per year. The expenses would have to be justified and documented for reimbursement in the same manner as all other grant funds. Ms. Motupalli moved to add a supply category to the Veterans Trust Fund Grant not to exceed \$1,200.00 annually. Ms. Scanlon seconded. Ms. Stamm's recommendation for the Veterans

Assistant Grant was to allow a direct program cost category up to the 10% of the requested budget. These would also require the standard documentation for reimbursement. Using the direct program cost category would avoid VAG funds being used for other functions. Mr. Maday asked if other state departments might have sample rules around program costs that could be consulted. Ms. Stamm said she will inquire. Mr. Gonzalez asked if there are example of VAG grantees unable to deliver services without assistance with program costs. Ms. Stamm said there have been former grantees who said they did not reapply because of the cost burden of the program, and others who were not able to maintain service delivery. She will confirm what policies are used by other departments.

New Business

Ms. Hammon asked if the Division could send a letter to county commissioners addressing the anticipated increase in work burden for veterans service officers due to PACT Act. Mr. Callahan agreed.

Ms. Hammon asked for an update on the DVA customer service survey. Mr. Callahan said the survey will be updated per recommendations by the State Auditor.

Ms. Hammon said the DMVA strategic planner will join the Board in October and she also invited the new Legislative Liaison.

Reports

Mr. Callahan said that decision items for DVA for the upcoming year will be updated when the governor's budget is released in November. This includes staffing for the cemetery and for grants. The grant item needs to be modified to ask for funding for additional staff rather than increase the administrative allocation from the grant. Ms. Hammon asked about additional staffing for the WROS. Mr. Callahan said that the WROS only has two vacancies and its income should suffice to include the triage administrative assistant from operating funds. The VSO training conference will be held September 13-16 in Colorado Springs, hybrid in person and virtual. Visits to the CLCs are scheduled for September 29 and 30; Board members are invited to attend. Debra Antista-Bianchi has received a promotion to the position of executive director of the Alzheimer's Association in Wyoming. The announcement for the state veterans service officer in the northeast region has been posted. The Women's VSO position will also be reannounced. Mr. Maday asked whether there were not enough candidates. Mr. Callahan confirmed that there were not enough qualified candidates. He thanked Ms. Gonlonka, Mr.

Maday, and Mr. Bosworth for participating in the interviews for VSO Supervisor. A hiring decision will be made after the training conference. A position is being developed to specialize in operations and training. They will oversee and manage training and continuing education for state and county veterans service officers. On behalf of the VMC, he reported that interments are up to 40 per month. The electrical repair and installations are being scheduled. There are 11 honor guards participating in the stipend program with approximately \$10,000 remaining for the year. Ms. Scanlon asked if the Board could receive detailed reporting on veterans services in the eastern part of state. Mr. Callahan said that would also be developed after the release of the audit report.

Ms. Stamm said that all of the final reports are in from 2021-2022. The statistics have been compiled and are in the report. She will assist grantees with training on how to categorize emergency financial assistance, as it is a significant category for both grants. Ms. Scanlon asked what type of assistance falls into the emergency category other than housing. Ms. Stamm said that food, fuel, and car repairs are recurrent items. Ms. Scanlon asked for a breakdown of what was spent on administrative costs last year. Ms. Stamm will have that information at the next meeting. Mr. Taylor thanked Ms. Stamm for her work.

Remarks

Mr. Gonzalez said on 12 August he attended the Honoring the Brave Concert benefiting Home Front Military Network. On 18 August, he attended a farm to table community leaders dinner hosted by the superintendent of the Air Force Academy. On 02 September, he attended the Patriot Day giveback event hosted by Mount Carmel. On 07 September, he attended the Pikes Peak Area Community Discussion with ECHCS Director Michael Kilmer

Mr. Maday said that in the interest of time he would save his report for October.

Ms. Scanlon said she served on the interview board for the Women's State Veterans Service Officer. The Women Marine Association of Colorado is seeing a large increase in need with veterans needing greater amounts of money than in previous years.

Mr. Taylor said that housing continues to be a difficulty. Rents are too high for housing vouchers to cover a sufficient amount. The county is making good use of VAG funds for mental health support for veterans, with four counselors now involved in the program.

Ms. Motupalli said she is continuing to monitor economic indicators of recession with concern for small businesses. The Board may want to consider how to support resiliency for veteran owned small businesses. She has recently provided information to the Minority Business Advisory Council on effective surveys and will revisit it for the purposed of veterans services. Ms. Golonka attend the American Military Family fundraising event in August. She is leading Xcel's United Way 211 campaign this year with a goal of raising goal 200 million. On this date, she is working with the Veterans Community Project groundbreaking for tiny homes.

Ms. Hammon said gave a report at the Military Officers Association meeting and shared the DVA slide deck. The VA resource tour took place in Edwards and was well-attended by both local nonprofits and VA. She also participated in Senator Bennett's veterans round table in August.

Upcoming Meetings

The next stated meeting is scheduled for October 7 at the Western Region One Source. A tour of the cemetery will be available at 7:30 with a tour of the WROS to follow the meeting.

Upcoming dates are:

October 7, Grand Junction

November 4, Northeast Colorado

December 2, TBD

Executive Session

The executive session consisted of information confidential to the Board by the Office of the State Auditor, pursuant to 2 C.R.S. § 3-103(3) and 2 C.R.S. § 103.7.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

October 7, 2022 Minutes
Western Region One Source
482 28 Road
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0905. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair
Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair
Lacey Golonka, Secretary
Longinos Gonzalez, Member
Sean Maday, Member
Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

David Callahan, CDVA Director
Joanne Iglesias, WROS Property Administrator
Angela Ingalls, VMC Director
Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator
James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist
Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest
Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer - Southeast
Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Front Range
Jessica Quackenbush, DEERS Operator
Dan Coulter, CDVA Administrative Assistant
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Melissa Armstrong, Regional Director, Volunteers of America
Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer/CCVSOA President/UVC
Regional VP

Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Destry DeWolf, Huerfano County Veterans Service Officer
John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer
Tim Hutchinson, Broomfield County Veterans Service Officer
James Kliesen, Cheyenne County Veterans Service Officer
Glen Marciniak, Kit Carson County Veterans Service Officer
Stephanie McAntee, Communications Director/PIO Western Colorado VAMC
Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, President, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley, Asst Chair American Legion Dept of Colorado, VA&R
Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer
Courtney Stryker, Arapahoe County Division Manager of Senior Resources and Veterans Services
Rick Ward, Bent/Otero County Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Corrections were provided by Ms. Hammon and Mr. Taylor. Corrections from Ms. Scanlon had been received prior to the meeting. Mr. Maday moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried. Sheila lacey

Address

Ms. Iglesias welcomed the Board and its guests to the Western Region One Source. She said that the building was established as an armory in 1958 and became the Western Region One Source in 2019. The building has a full house of tenants. She said she would provide a report during the meeting and would be available for questions after the meeting as well.

Public Comments

Ms. Armstrong thanked the Western Region One Source for the space and thanked the Board for funding the triage specialist. VOA has enjoyed increased traffic and partnerships as a benefit of their location at the WROS. VOA has a VA grant that enables them to assist veterans at risk of homelessness. She said that Mesa County has recently been reclassified from a rural area to an urban area.

Mr. Nagley said that he would offer comment after the discussion of DVA Audit findings.

Special Reports

Audit Findings: Mr. Callahan said that audit began in December 2021 and he thanked both the Office of the State Auditor as well as all who assisted. There were six findings: VSO Training, Accreditation, Data Security, Support Payments to Counties, Deployment of Division Resources, Strategic Planning and Governance. The recommendations are enumerated in the audit report attached to these minutes and available online at <https://leg.colorado.gov/audits/veterans-services>. The Board has been asked to advise on and approve the new VSO Training Curriculum currently in development. The Board is also asked to advise regarding support payments to counties. Under Strategic Planning and Governance, Ms. Hammon spoke to Recommendation 8 which instructs the Board to create written policies and procedures for the content and design of its annual report as well as how to draw conclusions from the report and how to create recommendations therefrom. She said that she and Mr. Callahan attended the Legislative Audit Committee hearing on the findings on September 28. The Committee was supportive but expressed a concern that not all of the recommendations could be accomplished without additional staff. She said a work session would be held later in the meeting in regard to the annual report. Mr. Nagley said that the American Legion appreciates the audit. He said that an area of concern is that 2023 target dates are a long time away, and would like to see those timelines shortened if possible.

Community Living Center Visits: Ms. Hammon said that prior to the pandemic, Board members were afforded the privilege of visiting Community Living Centers around the state with the Adjutant General. Those visits were suspended during the pandemic but resumed in September. Over two days, the group visited the CLCs at McCandless, Walsenburg, Homelake, Rifle, and Fitzsimons. Mr. Maday thanked the department for the opportunity to attend and said he enjoyed meeting the residents. The event helped to underscore the value of the services provided by the CLCs. Mr. Callahan expressed appreciation for the services provided to veterans at each of the locations.

PACT Act Communication to County Commissioners: Mr. Callahan said that a letter has been sent to county commissioners that explains the PACT Act and the additional benefits that have been made available to veterans. It encourages counties to assess the capacity of their veterans services offices to help ensure that Colorado is able to meet the increased demand. Ms. Hammon concurred that many VSO offices are already overwhelmed.

Ms. Cunningham said that community partnership events included hosting the monthly Southwest Veteran Collaborative, a meeting with the Ute tribes that included the DVA Director, and participating in the monthly meeting of Veterans for Veterans and the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs. Outreach included the San Miguel County Veterans Resource Day, a DVA Director Meet and Greet with Dolores, Gunnison, and Hinsdale Counties, and letters of appreciation delivered to organizations that contributed to the Veteran Outreach Day. Successes include having met all of the county VSOs, Ute tribe leadership and veteran organizations in the region.

Mr. Edginton said community partnerships include collaboration with the Veterans Outreach Coordinator at the VAMC as well as connections with the Vet Center, the Student Veterans Association at Colorado Mesa University, local veterans service organizations, and WROS tenants including VOA, HUD-VASH, and caregiver support. Upcoming outreach events include Grand Junction Farmers Market Military Night, the Eagle County Veterans Resource Tour, a WROS Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff, and a Routt County Veterans Resource Tour. Successes include having participated in the first Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff, positive results from claims files, and the hire of Ron Epplin, a new county veterans service officer in Rio Blanco County.

Mr. Moncibais said community partnerships include the Senior Resource Development Agency in Pueblo and an increased presence at Mount Carmel. Outreach included attendance at 9/11 memorials in Alamosa, Huerfano, Las Animas, and Pueblo Counties and at American Legion Post 2's POW/MIA Recognition Day in Pueblo. Successes include positive results in VA Administrative Process Reviews, where incarcerated veterans have had their service declared Honorable for VA purposes, and effectively connecting veterans with Volunteers of America, giving them access to medical care and housing.

Mr. Stem said community partnerships include VHA, VBA, DAV, and the Chamber Defense Council in Aurora. In outreach he will be providing VSO support at DU and Metro State University once a month. Successes include positive claim decisions and the completion of NACVSO training.

Mr. Bosworth said that NACSVSO now allows service officers from state organizations to join as members. They are hosting virtual information events on the PACT Act and on Camp Lejeune. El Paso County has created a briefing to help inform veterans about the PACT Act. The

Colorado County Veterans Service Officers Association will meet in conjunction with the state VSO training and he will meet with the state veterans service officers as well.

Old Business

DVA Training Curriculum: Mr. Callahan said that the VSO team in incorporating feedback from county veterans service officers under the leadership of VSO Kristy Cunningham, and that the final revision should be ready to present to the Board in November. He thanked the Colorado County Veterans Service Officers Association and county veterans service officers for their advice and expertise.

Veterans Trust Fund Grant Administrative Costs: Ms. Stamm said that she has discussed the prospect of adding office supply costs to eligible costs for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant and direct program costs to the eligible costs for the Veterans Assistance Grant with the state Grants Management Office. They reviewed the proposed language and provided examples from other departments. They advised not to use a prescribed list since it is difficult to make a strict list sufficiently exhaustive. Ms. Stamm said both categories would be considered under the usual grant application review. She proposed allowing for \$1,200.00 per grant year in office supply costs for the Veterans Trist Fund Grant that would be audited and reimbursed in the same manner as other grant-related expenses. The amount is based on a survey of current Veterans Trust Fund grantees. Ms. Hammon asked about allowing car insurance and/or fuel expenses for grant administrators. Ms. Stamm said that the Grants Management Office said that is allowable. Ms. Hammon invited a motion. Mr. Taylor moved to establish an office supply category not to exceed \$1,200.00 annually. Ms. Golonka seconded. The motion carried. Ms. Stamm said the recommendation under consideration for the Veterans Assistance Grant is up to 10% of direct program costs. Ms. Hammon to accept this adjustment to the VAG rules. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried.

New Business

Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Tribe Representation: Mr. Callahan said that he and Kristy Cunningham visited the veteran's organization for the Southern Ute tribe. They have requested a position on the Board to represent both the Southern Utes and the Mountain Utes. They have been informed of recurrent vacancies to which any eligible person may apply. Ms. Hammon said to create a new member slot would require a statutory change and the Board would also need to ensure that fair opportunities are provided to other tribal nations. Ms. Hammon asked if any

progress had been made with establishing a recurrent VSO presence for either tribe. Kristy Cunningham said that neither tribe has a space available for a VSO. In the interim, La Plata County Greg Dotson has been meeting with tribal members monthly at the library in Ignacio. The Southern Ute Tribal Council has approved an office space for this purpose, with the details currently under consideration.

State Veterans Issues: Ms. Hammon said that at each meeting the Board will endeavor to collect information on veterans issues throughout the state. Two issues mentioned in September in the increased workload for VSOs, difficulties with VA Community Care, economic threats to veteran-owned businesses, and a more effective veterans services survey.

Standing Reports

DMVA/DVA: Mr. Callahan said that DMVA plans to announce a vacancy for a Chief Operating Officer to fill one of roles vacated by the former resource director. DVA is working on the selection process for VSO Supervisor. The announcements for Womens Veterans Service Officer and Northeast Veterans Service Officer both closed on October 2 and those applications are now being screened. He has requested sample position descriptions from both DPA and CDOT for a certification and training officer and that position description is being developed. OSBP has requested a supplemental budget request for other requested positions and that has been submitted. Additional information should be available by mid-November. Ms. Hammon encouraged the Division to be sure that job announcements are circulated to the Board and to county VSOs.

NAVSCO/CCVSOA: Mr. Bosworth said on 22 September he participated with NACVSO and VHA on a panel outreach attended by approximately 10,000 Colorado veterans about what county VSOs and VHA each provide. The panel received a lot of questions about the PACT Act and Camp Lejeune. NACVSO has provided targeted information about Camp Lejeune he will share that presentation with the group. On 03 October, he met with members of the VA Congressional and Legislative Affairs team about the PACT Act and the lack of funding provided to support local veterans services. He attended a Meet and Greet with Senator Hickenlooper and had the opportunity to communicate those funding concerns. Ms. Hammon said she has been in communication with Senator Bennett's office about predatory practices in regard to potential Camp Lejeune lawsuits. HR 8736 is being drafted now to address this issue

and the senator's office has asked for information about organizations that may be engaging in such practices.

SW VSO: Ms. Cunningham said that community partnership events include the Montezuma Stand Down in Cortez, which had about 330 veterans and 22 providers in attendance and she presented the You Rock Award to Montezuma County VSO Sarah Kuhn. The La Plata County Stand Down was attended by approximately 100 veterans and 25 providers. Training Plan feedback has been received from 10 county VSOs and 44 have returned the survey sent after the September training conference. The Veteran Collaborative Group continues to meet every second Tuesday. Outreach includes meeting with the New Mexico Tribal Liaison, a presence at the DAV Outreach Center, a letter of appreciation and DVA coin presented to the Veterans Relief Committee, and assistance in the northwest region.

Central VSO: Mr. Stem said ongoing community partnerships include VHA, VBA, and Community Care. His office is moving to appointments only and he is taking benefits training with the National veterans Legal Services Project. In outreach he provides VSO support at DU and Metropolitan State University once a month and has recently completed site visits at El Paso, Park, and Teller Counties. Wait times for VSO services in the metro area are an issue of concern, with most office scheduling at least a month out.

NW VSO: Mr. Edginton said community partnerships include VHA, the Vet Center, VOA, HUD/VASH, and Caregiver Support. Training for the new VSO in Rio Blanco County is scheduled for 20-21 October.

Upcoming outreach events include ANG Transition Assistance in Montrose 22-23 October and a Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff at the WORS on 29 October.

SE VSO: Mr. Moncibais said community partnerships include the Pueblo Veterans County, Mount Carmel, Veteran Upward Bound, and a recent approval to visit the Fremont Correctional Facility. He is providing training in Cheyenne and Kiowa Counties. Outreach included the Pueblo Stand Down and a Lunch and Learn at the Senior Resource Development Agency in Pueblo. He has been invited by Colorado State University to speak at a Veterans Day event.

Mr. Maday asked if it would be possible to collect appointment wait times at veterans service offices throughout the state and Ms. Hammon suggested the information could be added to the CVA -26 monthly report.

The Board recessed at 11:05 a.m. and resumed at 11:15 a.m.

WROS: Ms. Iglesias said tenants are in process of lease renewal and all offices are fully occupied. There is a need for an additional triage specialist and a maintenance technician. The WROS has received a grant for a sign that will list all the tenants housed there. The facility is a year into a sunset review and is about to enter the final stage of the review. The Grand Junction Stand Down will be held at the WROS on October 18 in partnership with VA the VFW. The DEERS office is open and Ms. Iglesias invited Jessica Quackenbush to report. Ms. Quackenbush said that in the 15 days the office was open in September she processed 121 transactions. The DEERS office is almost fully functional but is in need of authority for overrides. The office is open 10 hours a day, four days a week. The office will hold its next Saturday office hours on 5 November.

VMC: Ms. Ingalls said there cemetery has two groundskeeper positions vacant. Burial reimbursements will increase to \$893 per burial beginning 1 January. Honor Guard stipend funds are projected to be expended by the end of May. The cemetery is currently scheduling interments about six weeks out. Saluting Branches was completed on 28 September and 50 trees were planted.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said 40 payments were processed in September. A lot of time has been spent provided 1:1 technical and reimbursement assistance for new grantees. She presented on the grant programs at the September training conference and has since received questions from county VSOs. Both annual reports are complete. Revised application materials for VTF will be provided to the Board for review prior to the November meeting and application trainings will be scheduled. Ms. Scanlon asked if there are any concerns and Ms. Stamm said not at this time.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Golonka said she has been working on the United Way campaign for Xcel and a featured organizations has been Hero's Puppy for Life, a former VAG grantee. She participated in the recent groundbreaking for Veterans Community Project in Longmont building tiny homes for veterans.

Mr. Gonzalez said on 12 September, he attended the local Chamber Military Affair Committee's Hails and Farewells event honoring local installations' senior leadership. On 20-21 September he attended an annual Chamber DC fly-in where he served on the Defense track, focusing on both

Space Command and quality of life issues. On 30 September, he attended the 20th anniversary of the stand-up of U.S. Northern Command. On 3 October, he attended the VA conference regarding the PACT Act and on 4 October he attended the military roundtable with Senator Hickenlooper.

Ms. Scanlon said the Women Marine Association continues to experience high demand for assistance and will run out of funds before the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Taylor said that on Monday he received a phone call from the daughter of a veteran. The veteran was from Wyoming and died in Nevada. Through cooperation among veterans service offices and the American Legion, they were able to locate documentation of the veterans service connection and assisted the family with burial benefits.

Mr. Maday said he attended the Air/Space conference in DC also attended by former TAG General Loh. He thanked Mr. Callahan and the Division for the opportunity to visit the CLCs in September.

Ms. Hammon said VSO services have been very busy and Veterans Day activities are occurring in 18 schools throughout Eagle County. She has been working with VA's Ascend project, which recently produced a survey on suicide and suicidal ideation. Return rates have been high and she will report on those results. She invited Ms. McAntee to report on the Western Colorado Health Care System.

WCHCS: Ms. McAntee that patient census was recently affected by low staffing in their lab. That has since been corrected. They have just extended an offer to a new chief of mental health and on just recently posted or a program manager. Departing Outreach Manager Vicki Becoat has been replaced by Nadia Owens, recently from patient advocacy. There are plans to extend the Women's Health section of the Western Colorado VAMC. WCHSC will attend the VA Benefits Fair in Ignacio on 25 October.

Upcoming Meetings

The next stated meeting is scheduled for November 4 at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC. Ms. Hammon said that the meeting there cannot be accommodated until 11:00 a.m. and asked for opinions on the time change. There were no concerns with the changed start time. There will be a tour of the facility held in association with the meeting.

November 4, Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC, Aurora, CO – 11:00 a.m.

December 2, TBD

Work Session: CBVA Annual Report

Ms. Hammon said that under Audit Recommendation 8 the Board agreed to:

- Establish and implement written policies and procedures for the content and design of the annual reports, including which veterans programs to report on, what types of information all 68 Colorado Office of the State Auditor programs should provide, and adding a designated section for the Board's overall conclusions on the status of the programs and any recommended changes in programs, policies, rules, or statute.
- Establish and implement written policies and procedures for using the information collected and compiled for the annual report to identify recommended changes in policy, procedure, or law. For example, the Board could consider the need for any policy recommendations or Board action related to background requirements of veterans service officers (VSOs) and equitable payments to counties for VSO services, as discussed in the report.
- Establish and implement written policies and procedures for bringing any recommended policy changes identified to the attention of the Division of Veterans Affairs and/or the General Assembly, as needed.

Ms. Hammon said that this is a significant change from past reports, which have focused on service delivery of state programs. She suggested that for the current year's report, the Board keep the format but modify the information request to ask for recommendations or issues noted by the departments providing services.

Mr. Maday asked which departments have services that are currently included in the report. Ms. Snyder said that those are DVA, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Local Affairs, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Revenue, and the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Ms. Scanlon said that the Board could use the information from the individual reports and well as other information brought to Board's attention to discuss the Board's perception of veterans' issues in Colorado. Those conclusions and/or recommendations could be included in the Board's

section of the annual report. She agreed with asking contributing agencies for their suggestions, recommendations, or identified issues.

Mr. Taylor asked about requesting information from other veterans service organizations. Ms. Hammon agreed that might be future goal but there would probably not be time by the end of 2022.

The Board agreed to ask contributing agencies for recommendations on changes in programs and policies to benefit veterans engaged in their agency's programs.

Ms. Hammon asked if there are other state agencies that should be approached to contribute to the report. Ms. Scanlon suggested the community living centers and Ms. Hammon suggested federal veterans cemeteries, the WROS, and VAMCs with catchment areas in Colorado. Ms. Scanlon suggested including UVC. Ms. Hammon said it might work better to include all veterans service organizations at the same time for the following year. Ms. Hammon said she will work with DVA on modifying this year's information request.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Scanlon moved to adjourn. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

November 2, 2022 Minutes
Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC
Aurora, CO 80045

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 1100. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

Michael Bruno, DMVA Deputy Executive Director

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist

Eric Moncibais, State Veterans Service Officer – Southeast

DeeDee Salerno, DMVA Strategic Planner

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Central

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

Ron Brown, Yuma County Veterans Service Officer

Janelle Crow, Kiowa County Veterans Service Officer

John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Chris Maes, Douglas County Veterans Service Officer

Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer

Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Charles Militti, Acting Associate Director, RMR VAMC
Ray Odum, Las Animas County Veterans Service Officer
Sheldon Smith, Montrose/Ouray Counties Veterans Service Officer
Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer

DMVA Report

Mr. Bruno said this is his first Board meeting. He has been a member of the DMVA for 31 years, most of it in the National Guard. He has been in his current position for five months. He said on the governor's budget was submitted to JBC earlier in week. DMVA's items were restoration of \$4 million of swept real estate proceeds, authorizations for two FTEs for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, a vehicle for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and two new FTES for the executive director's office, specifically a COO and a CFO, and language to increase spending authority for the Veterans Trust Fund. He said that Parker White is DMVA's new legislative liaison. Ms. Scanlon said the Board may have recommendations for the Department and asked what the best method to submit them is. Mr. Bruno said the DVA Director is the primary point of contact, but it is fine to contact his office directly if needed. The department will begin collecting recommendation for legislative priorities for next year in early 2023 and he asked that any contributions from the Board be submitted by the end of February.

Approval of Minutes

Corrections from Ms. Scanlon had been received prior to the meeting. Corrections provided by Mr. Maday were typographical errors under Guests, Address, Special Reports, Reports, and Remarks. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Golonka seconded. The motion carried.

Address

Ms. Hammon said that VAMC Director Michael Kilmer was not available to address the Board but that the VAMC was represented by Charles Militti, Acting Associate Director. Mr. Militti extended a welcome on behalf of Mr. Kilmer and his regrets at being unable to attend. The VAMC is interested in collaborating with the Board in support of the needs of Colorado veterans. Ms. Scanlon asked if it would be possible to obtain a briefing on women veteran programs and Mr. Militti said he would supply his card. Ms. Hammon thanked him and said that the Board looks forward to visiting the facility again in the future.

Public Comments - None

Old Business

Audit Findings: Mr. Callahan said there are six audit findings for DVA that are currently being worked on by Division staff, including VSO training. Ms. Hammon asked that the Board received regular updates on the progress.

DVA Training Curriculum: Mr. Callahan said that the Training Curriculum has been revised and is ready for the Board's consideration. A slide was provided with the most recent changes. The curriculum itself consists of more than 100 slides. Changes since the last meeting include expectations and responsibilities, response times, samples of forms and DD214s, survivors benefits, and regional resources. Mr. Maday moved that the training curriculum be approved as presented with any modifications relayed to the Board at stated meetings. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The motion carried.

Customer Surveys: Mr. Callahan said the Board members received Ms. Motupalli's recommendations on survey methods. Qualtrics will be the tool. Surveys will be sent by email twice a year to veterans whose claim profiles with DVA have been active within the past six months. The Division proposes using the Net Promoter and Experience methods. The former will capture general sentiment about services received and the latter would help the Division understand how effective the categories of service offerings are Ms. Hammon asked if this method would provide specific or general feedback. Ms. Motupalli said that both would be possible, depending on the granularity of the prompts. She said she can provide examples of dashboards of survey results and recommended that the Division arrange a Qualtrics demo. Mr. Callahan said he would check into this with Ms. Salerno. Prospective survey questions can be shared at the next Board meeting.

State Payments in Support of County Veterans Service Offices: Mr. Callahan said this year the Division will continue with the current process of full time and part time payments, paid in biannual installments. Full time is 30 or more hours per week, part time is 29 and below. The full time reimbursement amount is \$26,000 annually and the amount for part time is \$13,000. Prospective changes stemming from audit recommendation would tie future payments to accreditation and certification rather than by hours worked. Counties would receive a set amount for each accredited VSO and a set amount for each certified VSO. Ms. Scanlon asked if hours worked would be considered under that current proposal. Mr. Callahan said that VA's Office of

General Counsel requires that an accredited VSO work at least 1,000 hours per year, but otherwise state funds would be based only on accreditation and certification status. This proposal would require a statutory change and he asked Mr. White to explain that process. Mr. White said that in order for DMVA to support the measure it would have to first be approved by the governor's office and that request has been submitted. If it is approved by the governor's office, he will seek legislative sponsorship. Ms. Hammon said if the funds are attributed per VSO it may be less money per county. Mr. Callahan said it would allow for the state reimbursement to be made on a more uniform basis, as currently there is a wide fluctuation in hours worked. Mr. Callahan said any change would be communicated at the earliest possible date due to a possible effect on county budgets. Ms. Scanlon asked who in the Division would monitor the program. Mr. Callahan said the Division has requested an additional FTE and this would fall into that position description. Mr. White reiterated that this is a draft proposal only and is not ready for public dissemination.

Ms. Hammon allowed Mr. White to proceed with his legislative report while he had the floor. He said that DMVA items that are ready to proceed are the removal of DVA from the process for the property tax exemption for qualifying disabled veterans. Mr. Callahan asked Ms. Snyder to clarify that item for the benefit of the Board. Ms. Snyder said that when the original referendum passed, the available method to determine whether a veteran qualified for the exemption was by review of the VA rating decision. It was important to have reviewers who understood those decisions. Now VA provides a Benefits Summary Letter that is easily read and can be understood by county assessors and staff. Removing DVA from the process would make the process more efficient and timely, by reducing a handoff and the number of reviews.

New Business

Veterans Trust Fund Grant Application: Ms. Stamm said the recommended adjustments have been made to the 2023-2024 application for the Veterans Trust Fund Grant. This includes modification of the details of the office supplies category, the addition of a single email address for application submission, removal of mention of advance payments, addition of encouragement to grantees to ensure they receive receipt of delivery, and instructions to include the overall agency budget and other program funding. The Attorney General's office is reviewing the application to see if they have any recommended changes but that feedback has not been received yet. Ms. Scanlon said on Question 8 she would like grantees to provide the amount of

money spent on each program listed. Ms. Stamm said she would make that addition. The Board elected to wait to see if feedback is received from the Attorney General's office by mid-November before approving the application. A special meeting will be called at that time. Application training webinars have been scheduled and that information is posted on the web site.

Veterans Information Clearinghouse: Mr. Callahan said that funding for an FTE to staff the Veterans Information Clearinghouse has been postponed indefinitely.

Veteran Identification-TransUnion: Mr. Callahan said a current challenge is identifying how many veterans are in Colorado and where they are located, since VA's GDX report only tracks veterans enrolled with VA. Other state Divisions have utilized TransUnion to gather data and information, currently at a cost of \$0.41 per record. The cost in Colorado is estimated at \$147,000. This may be an item that the Division presents to the Board to be funded by the Veterans Trust Fund. Ms. Scanlon asked whether exiting service members are automatically enrolled in VA. Mr. Callahan said they are not but there is pending legislation for that action. Ms. Hammon asked how TransUnion obtains their information and that was not known. She said that some veteran who are not enrolled in VA do not wish to be identified or contact. Mr. Callahan said he would reach out to the Idaho DVA, as they are known to use this program, to see if they can provide additional details on how it works. Ms. Scanlon asked if the Division still receives DD214s for exiting service members whose home of record is in Colorado. Ms. Snyder said they are sporadic.

Annual Report: Ms. Snyder is collecting information from state departments but has yet to reach out to the national cemeteries. Ms. Hammon asked if she had reached out to the Colorado Department of Human Services and Ms. Snyder said she had not. Ms. Hammon asked her to do so to obtain information on the Community Living Centers and any data on how many veterans use SNAP and LEAP benefits, as well as any issues or recommendation that department would like to report.

Standing Reports

DVA: Mr. Callahan said that interviews are being scheduled for the Northeast VSO and the Women's VSO. The position description for the VSO Supervisor is being revised. The position description for the Division Training Officer is under review by Human Resources. The training curriculum will be implemented under the leadership of Kristy Cunningham to allow VSOs to

gain and maintain certification and/or accreditation. Ms. Scanlon asked how many VSOs in Colorado are not veterans. Mr. Callahan said none, but some counties have clerical staff that carry out regular daily functions. Ms. Hammon said she is assist with recruitment and hiring for Garfield and Pitkin Counties. She said there is a new VSO in Rio Blanco County

Central VSO: Mr. Stem said October outreach included the VHA monthly meeting, visits to more than 10 counties, training on Higher Level Review conferences in Adams and Broomfield Counties and Outreach Day at the VA Community Resource and Referral Center. In accomplishments, myhealtheVet will present at an upcoming Wednesday coffee for VSOs, his office is completing 5-10 claims per week, and Broomfield County secured a retroactive payment for a veteran of more \$120,000. Opportunities include working county offices in regard to Higher Level Reviews. Issue include transportation difficulties in rural areas and an insufficient number of VSOs in the metro area.

Southwest VSO: Mr. Stem reported on behalf of Ms. Cunningham. He said that October outreach included monthly meeting with the DAV in Durango chairing the Southwest Colorado Veterans Collaborative meeting, a meeting with the New Mexico tribal liaison, and participation in the Ute Tribes Outreach Days. In accomplishments, work with the tribal community including four claims, a successful BVA hearing with a sensitive client, and final work on the training curriculum. Opportunities include potential new partnerships with entities contacted through VA Outreach days and Stand Downs. Issues include gaps in care for veterans with the New Mexico VISN and seasonal work for the San Juan County VSO, necessitating coverage from the Southwest office.

Southwest VSO: Mr. Stem reported on behalf of Mr. Moncibais. He said that October outreach included and Lunch and Learn at the Senior Resource Development Agency in Pueblo, the Pueblo Stand Down, and invitation from CSU to speak at their Veterans Day event, continued radio interviews with CSU, and participation in the Pueblo Veterans Community Wellness forum. Accomplishments include an invitation to join American Legion and gaining accreditation through the American Legion.

Northwest VSO: The report was obtained from the submitted slide. Upcoming outreach will include a Bootcamp BBQ Sendoff at the WROS and officiating the Veterans Day ceremony in

Fruita. Accomplishments include training the new VSO in Rio Blanco County, increased rating in 20 of 28 claims, and more than \$141,000 in retroactive payments.

WROS: Ms. Hammon referred the Board to the written report. Property Administrator Joanne Iglesias is out on leave and Dan Coulter is serving as the interim administrator. All of the offices are leased and the recurrent activities continue. The parking gate project is complete. An advisory board of tenants has been formed. They received a grant for an outside sign that will list all the tenants.

VMC and Honor Guard Stipend: Ms. Ingalls said the cemetery is now fully staffed. The stucco work funded by the VTF is complete. Federal reimbursements are increasing to \$893. This is the highest increase since 2011. The Vet Center brought veterans for a tour and cemetery staff assisted veteran with early registration; this event will recur bimonthly. The VMC participated in the local Stand Down. They are now preparing for Veterans Day. The stipend program had only \$2,225 remaining at the end of October.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said that the state grants management office has issued an opinion that the grant administrator cannot perform the desk reviews of reimbursement requests. The Division has now split the duties and Ms. Snyder will input the payments. This has slowed down the payment process. Speed of payment has also been delayed by instruction from the Controller that any documentation with PII needed to remain separate from the state financial system, necessitating an opinion from Attorney general's office on how to store the PII safely. They are now stored on the DMVA SHARE drive. Ms. Hammon asked if there were any concerns about grantees who have not yet spent funds. Ms. Stamm said not at this time but if they remain underspent at midcycle they will be asked to consider an agreement modification.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Scanlon said that the Women Marines Association continues to see a large number of request for assistance. The Marine Corps birthday is November 10.

Ms. Golonka said that Xcel Energy is assisting with Wreaths Across America at Fort Logan on December 17. They are sponsoring 22 wreaths.

Mr. Maday said he was in Michigan for a Military and Veterans gala and in connection with his work for the Air National Guard. In October he attended Patriot Boot Camp at DAV national

headquarters. The three-day event featured mentorship, education, and support for veteran entrepreneurs.

Mr. Taylor said the county has received the information on the PACT Act and the county payments to VSOs. The PACT Act has resulted in a large increase in claims from both veterans and surviving spouses. C&P exams are proving difficult with only one VA contractor in the area. There may be a mobile option for QTC as well. Ms. Hammon said James Poteet may have the contact. The local 8th grade will hold a Veterans Day breakfast; this will be the first time since prior to the pandemic. They are seeing a large amount of grant requests for fuel and utilities. The local cemetery will participate in Wreaths Across America and the event will feature a flyover.

Ms. Motupalli said that she will be the keynote speaker at the Lawnside Historical Society's Veterans Day event in New Jersey on November 10. She is the first African American woman to attend West Point.

Ms. Hammon said the local VFW has a two-page spread in the VFW magazine on winter activities. The veterans service office has been extremely busy as a result of the PACT Act. Eagle County will also participate in Wreaths Across America. There are 19 Veterans Day events scheduled at local school. There will be county-wide Veterans Day event with a Vietnam veterans as the keynote speaker. President Biden came to Camp Hale to sign the proclamation to make it a national monument. She was able to meet the President and received a presidential coin.

State Veterans Issues: Ms. Hammon said issue captured at the meeting include county veterans service officers learning to perform Higher Level Review conference, difficulties with transportation in rural areas, not enough VSOs in the metro area, high level of claims due to the PACT Act, homelessness and an increasing need for assistance with fuel, gas, utilities, and gaps in health care.

Upcoming Meetings

The next stated meeting is scheduled for December 2 at VFW Post 1 in Denver. The January meeting is tentatively scheduled for the VA Regional Office in Lakewood. Ms. Golonka asked if VSOs have any events they would like the Board to attend, to please submit them and Board may be able to arrange a visit in concordance with a meeting.

December 2, VFW Post 1, Denver

January 6, VA Regional Office, Lakewood

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

December 2, 2022 Minutes

Virtual via WebEx

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 1100. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and all those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

Michael Bruno, DMVA Deputy Executive Director

David Callahan, CDVA Director

Dan Coulter, Interim Property Administrator, WROS

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer-Southwest

Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer-Northwest

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer – Central

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Guests Present

John Haynie, Logan County Veterans Service Officer

Richard Hogue, All Veterans Honor Guard

Glen Marciniak, Kit Carson County Veterans Service Officer

James Kliesen, Cheyenne County Veterans Service Officer

Duffy Laudick, Larimer County Veterans Service Officer

Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Sheldon Smith, Montrose/Ouray Counties Veterans Service Officer
Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer
Adam Sutton, Boulder County Veterans Service Officer

Agenda

Ms. Hammon said the order of the agenda would be shifted, with Mr. Tschampi scheduled to present at 10:00 and State Veterans Service Officers at 10:30

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Taylor corrected the missing monetary figure in the DMVA report on Page 2. Mr. Maday corrected typographical errors on pages 4, 5 and 7. Ms. Scanlon corrected a punctuation error on page 3. Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Hogue asked that the Board be cognizant that the funds for the Honor Guard Stipend are already expended for the year. He asked that Board support additional funding for this program. He said that the stipend has proved very helpful as honor guards are continuing to receive less community support and fewer donations. Ms. Hammon asked if families of honorees are asked to contribute. Mr. Hogue said that practice is discouraged. Ms. Hammon agreed that funding for this program is important and that this need will be captured in the Board's annual report.

Old Business

Customer Surveys: Mr. Callahan said that questions have been drafted for the customer survey and the first survey should go out by the end of the year. Ms. Motupalli shared a link that illustrates different dashboards that can be provided by Qualtrics. Ms. Hammon asked if results will be aggregate or if they can be broken down by region or county. Mr. Callahan said that they can be county specific.

Veteran Identification-TransUnion: Mr. Callahan said he has been working DMVA procurement, legal advisors, and the state Office of Information Technology in regard to a possible contract with TransUnion. The director of the Idaho Division of Veterans Service will join the meeting to provide details of his state's experience with the program and answer questions.

Annual Report: Ms. Hammon said that reports are being collected for the annual report and will be provided to Board members. A special meeting will be held in December to finalize the content of the Board's portion of the report.

New Business

Claims Management System RFI: Mr. Callahan said that the state's contract with VetraSpec will expire at the end of June and an RFI has been issued for possible contracts. Demonstrations of Tyler Veterans Services and VetPro have been provided for the benefit of county veterans service officers and NACVSO has collected feedback on which system is preferred. Ms. Scanlon asked if there is a price difference compared to the current cost. Mr. Callahan said the maximum price changes by \$1 per license. Ms. Hammon said it might be difficult for some county veterans service officers to learn a new system. Mr. Callahan said it is a requirement for vendors that training and tech support be provided.

Presentation

Mr. Tshcampi from the Idaho Division of Veterans Services addressed his division's use of TransUnion to help identify veterans in the state for a fee. He said that TransUnion has been able to identify and provide contact information for veteran throughout the state allowing the division to significantly expand their outreach. To date Idaho has been the only state to execute this, although he has received inquiries from several other states that are also interested. Once the data is cleared of PII, contact information is uploaded into Qualtrics to allow for mass communication. Ms. Hammon said there has been concern about reaching out to veteran who have deliberately avoided veterans services. Mr. Tshcampi said contact info can be removed if a veteran requests no further contact. His office has been able to accommodate this without difficulty. Mr. Sutton asked if the information could be uploaded to a CMS as well. Mr. Tshcampi said he is not sure because Idaho does not do that, but it is probable.

Standing Reports

DMVA: Mr. Bruno said that budget inquiries from the JBC should be received in December. DMVA's budget requests are restoration of \$4 million of swept real estate proceeds, authorizations for two FTEs for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and a vehicle for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. DMVA is preparing to announce for the open positions of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer. A new budget director should be onboarded within a few weeks.

DVA: Mr. Callahan said that an appointment has been made for the Northeast Regional State Veterans Service Officer. Glen Marciniak has accepted the position and will start on December 2. Two finalists have been selected for the Women Veterans Service Officer. They will now be interviewed by Mr. Callahan and The Adjutant General. Those interviews will be completed in January due to the availability of candidates and TAG. Ms. Scanlon asked if preparations have been made to accommodate new applicants for the property tax exemption established by Amendment E. Ms. Maxwell said that the new application is expected to be approved by DOLA on December 14 and that an FAQ is available on the web site. All web site updates in regard to the new qualifications are complete.

Central VSO: Mr. Stem said November outreach included VSO support at DU and Metropolitan State University once a month and has recently completed site visits at El Paso, Park, and Teller Counties. Opportunities included benefits training with the National veterans Legal Services Project. A continuing issue is wait times for VSO services in the metro area, with most offices scheduling at least a month out.

Southwest VSO: Ms. Cunningham said November outreach included a veteran lunch at Fort Lewis, a lunch with the Southwest Republican Women, the monthly meeting of the Southwest Veteran Collaborative, meeting with the New Mexico tribal liaison, and attendance at the Women Veteran PACT Act town hall and the White House update for veterans and military partners. She will attend the quarterly meeting of Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs and the monthly meeting of Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County in December. In accomplishments, the Ute VA Outreach Day held in October was a successful event with another scheduled for February, and she met with Southern Ute Veterans Organization to discuss state support of a dedicated VSO office. Opportunities include training in San Juan County Training schedule in January and training on the state Learning Management System in December. She will also help support training of the new northeast Colorado VSO and has scheduled project management training as well. Issues include the lack of Veteran Directed Care in the region, no DEERS office, a limited number of shelters and the Montezuma lead CVSO is leaving her position at the end of December.

Northwest VSO: Mr. Edginton said outreach has included the Nadio Owens Vet Center, VOA, HUD/VASH, the Caregiver Support Program, Colorado Mesa University's Student Veteran

Alliance, and the local VFW. Accomplishments were working with Red Rock Dealer Group as a potential corporate sponsor,

Officiating the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Vietnam Memorial in Fruita, and a successful claim that will provide a veteran for the \$500,000 in retroactive payments with a projected 12 months in compensation payments. He will participate in a KAFM Radio Vet Talk highlighting what a VSO is on December 13. Opportunities include training in Rio Blanco County in January and regular monthly site visits to CVSOs.

Southeast VSO: Ms. Snyder reported on behalf of Mr. Moncibais, who was at a meeting of the Pueblo Coalition Working group scheduled at the same time as the Board meeting. Other outreach has included the ECHCS Suicide Prevention Team and serving as a guest speaker at CSU Pueblo on Veterans Day. In accomplishments, he continues to participate in podcasts on CSU radio and has been meeting Veterans and processing claims out of office at locations convenient to clients. Opportunities include continued work and corroboration with the coalition and community, as well expansion of services at Mount Carmel.

WROS: Mr. Coulter said that all of the offices are leased and the recurrent activities continue. The parking gate project is complete. An advisory board of tenants has been formed. A project is underway for an exterior sign that will list all the tenants.

VMC and Honor Guard Stipend: Ms. Ingalls said the U.S. Navy Jeep is now fully functional for service and the stucco work on the main administration building is complete. There is currently a shortage in reimbursements of approximately \$30,000, but she thinks that is a holdup in accounts payable rather than missing payments. Wreaths Across America will take place December 16 and 17. The funds for the Military Stipend Program were exhausted in November and there are no additional funds available for the rest of this fiscal year.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said 24 payments were submitted in November. She reminded the Board that in order to ensure compliance with separation of duties as instructed by state grants management, she conducts a desk review on each payment and then Ms. Snyder checked calculations and enters the payment into the state accounting system. Grantees have been made aware of this change. There is one grantee who has not been paid due to a problem with the W-9. The first application webinars have been held for the VTF Grant and the Veterans Assistance Grant. One

applicant has requested that Board members attend the training. The application training dates will be sent to the Board and to all VSOs.

Board Member Remarks

Mr. Taylor said that interactions with ChampVA have been difficult. Other concerns in his area are homelessness, particularly with the nearest shelter being located in Durango. Fuel and gas prices continue to be high and veterans continue to experience hardship under the economic stress.

Mr. Maday said that the next Patriot Boot Camp training is scheduled for February. This organization advances military members, veterans and military spouses in their mission to become creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs. He will send the information for distribution to VSOs.

Ms. Motupalli said she participated in the hiring panel for the Women Veterans Service Officer and was pleased with the quality of the candidates. She served as the keynote speaker at the Lawnside Historical Society Veterans Day event in New Jersey. The event was featured in the Philadelphia Inquirer and the link the article can be found [here](#). She is also a featured author in the new book *Beyond Their Limits of Longing*, which is about WWI and its significance and legacy.

Mr. Gonzalez said he addressed the Miami Yoder school in Rush on Veterans Day. His painting entitled “Flag Mountain” won a People’s Choice Award at the Mount Carmel Veterans Art show on November 11. On November 12 he attended a ceremony recognizing the 75th anniversary of the VFW 6461 Auxiliary.

Ms. Scanlon said the Women Marines Association will host a breakfast at Buckley on 14 December and provide presents for all members of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Ms. Golonka said she is attending her first drill with NorthCom. She will take the online course for Sergeant Major in February. She will leave her employment with Xcel Energy on December 31 and begin a new position in community engagement with Molson Coors.

Ms. Hammon said she served on the hiring panel for the northeast Colorado VSO and it was a pleasure to meet all the candidates. She congratulated Mr. Marciniak on his appointment. She served on both senate committees for academy nominations. Veterans Day was very busy with

22 school programs across all grades. One high school is engaged in a project where they record the personal accounts of veterans and send them to the Library of Congress as well as local schools. She is participating the VA's Ascend Project, which is gather data and information to help determine finding and addressing the contributing factors that may lead to veteran suicide. Housing continues to be a local crisis with a shortage that eclipses the problem of high prices.

State Veterans Issues: Ms. Hammon said issues captured at the meeting include regional lacks of Veterans Directed Care and DEERS services, a statewide shortage of shelters and housing, and gas, fuel, and utility prices.

Upcoming Meetings

The next stated meeting is scheduled for January 6 at the Denver VA Regional Office. VFW Post 1 in Denver is a possibility for the February meeting. Ms. Golonka has a contact with the post and she will reach out.

January 6, VA Regional Office, Lakewood

February 3, VFW Post 1, Denver - tentative

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.