

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

05 December 2023

Western Region One Source

482 28 Road

Grand Junction, CO 81501

Opening

Ms. Scanlon called the meeting to order at 1300. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

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

Staff Present

- David Callahan, CDVA Director
- Darin Collazo, WROS Property Administrator
- Emily Currier, WROS Administrative Assistant
- Tina O'Dell, WROS Administrative Assistant
- Angela Ingalls, VMC Director
- Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veterans Services Supervisor
- Scott Bartee, Regional State Veterans Service Officer – Northwest
- Amy Demenge, State Women Veterans Coordinator
- Max Goligoski, Regional State Veterans Service Officer – Central West
- Glen Marciniak, Regional State Veterans Service Officer - Northeast
- Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator
- Ralph Charlip, CDVA Research Associate

- Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant
- Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present

- Marshall Bosworth, El Paso County Veterans Service Officer, CCVSOA President, NACVSO Delegate
- Ron Brown, Yuma County Veterans Service Officer
- Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
- Destry DeWolf, Huerfano County Veterans Service Officer
- Travis Gale, Kit Carson County Veterans Service Officer
- Tina Garcia, DAV Legislative Chair
- Pat Hammon, Eagle County Veterans Service Officer, VCLC Board of Commissioners
- Adam Lazaro, Pitkin County Veterans Service Officer
- Chris Maes, Douglas County Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the draft of the November minutes were provided.

Mr. Maday moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comments

None

Veterans Assistance Grant and Board Member Comments

Mr. Gonzalez provided his brief and his comments at the top of the meeting. On the morning of the 5th, El Paso County Commissioners passed a resolution recognizing Pearl Harbor Day. On 30 November he attended the local Chamber's Military and Veterans Affairs Council Christmas reception. On 03 December he attended the Fourth Infantry Division holiday receptions at Fort Carson and will attend the Air Force Academy's holiday reception on 09 December. In regard to clarifying language about the Board's role in the

Veterans Assistance Grant he covered three specific roles covered by the Board. In his review he found that while the Board has in recent years appointed one member to participate on the VAG application review and recommendations, the grant rules state that two members should be appointed, so his recommended language specified that. It also states that members of the grant review committee help assure that grants are appropriately awarded, and that the review committee forwards the recommendations to TAG’s office for final decisions. Ms. Scanlon asked if the Board also helps create the award criteria. Mr. Gonzalez said that isn’t a requirement but the Board can participate, pending a rewrite of the grant rules. Ms. Scanlon said that the rules as written will be followed until revision. She said that the Board’s final language can be included in the Division’s Policies and Procedures. Ms. Scanlon confirmed that Mr. Gonzalez will serve on the VAG review committee this year.

CBVA Logo

Mr. Maday presented both logo options to the Board for consideration. The consensus was in favor of Option 1. Option 1 was officially adopted upon unanimous vote.

Symbolism	
7 stars	One star representing each CBVA member
Colorado "C"	Colorado Veterans are at the center of everything that CBVA does
Eagle	Pay homage to the pride we have in the service of Colorado Veterans
Outstretched wings	Represents ambition and vision
64 feathers	One feather representing each county in Colorado
Color: blue	Trust and reflection
Color: yellow	Optimism and creativity



VCLC Board of Commissioners

Ms. Hammon said that the next VCLC Board meeting will be held on 08 December. She previously reported that staffing has been a serious difficulty for all of the CLCs. Rifle and McCandless are both offering CNA courses to help. Some staffing concerns have been filled by agencies, but due to cost the VCLCs have proceeded with right-sizing, in which they size wards according to the available staff. Rifle, Florence, and Homelake now have no agency staff. COVID is a continuing concern. Residents who test positive for COVID are quarantined so that the facilities can stay open. Rifle and Fitzsimons currently have residents in quarantine. Influenza and RSV are concerns as well. Mr. Maday asked if census numbers could be available at future meetings, and Ms. Hammon said she would provide them. Ms. Scanlon asked if any veterans services bodies are pursuing legislation to increase the number of spouses that can be admitted as residents, and Ms. Hammon said she would inquire.

UVC Report

Ms. Hammon said that the UVC legislative committee will meet next week to discuss potential legislation. UVC's primary membership votes on which legislation they will support and which they will monitor. Those positions can be shared with the Board once they have been published.

Veterans Services Report

Mr. Winterrowd said VSO November events and outreach included CCI, where the Division was able to make contact with more than half of the commissioners present, the Loveland Stand Down, attended by more than 125 veterans, and the Denver Veterans Day Parade as well as six different Veterans Day events in the southeast region. Accomplishments included the appointment of four new members to the Veterans Services Team; in addition to Mr. Bartee and Mr. Goligoski present at the meeting, the Division has appointed Elizabeth Mondo as the RVS0 for the Central East Region and Glen Marciniak as the Claims and Benefits Manager. Fremont County has

added a second VSO to its team. Issues included wait times for veterans to see VSOs, difficulties with monthly reporting from counties to the Division and staffing to support emerging functions such as the Veterans Information Clearinghouse and communication needs. Opportunities included the development of new relationships with marginalized veterans groups through the VSO Liaison, working with the Southwestern Veterans Collaborative on holiday event for veterans, positions opening for the Northeast and Southeast Regional VSOs, and a new three-person VSO team in Weld County. Under Training, he said that Training Officer Kristy Cunningham is continuing to serve the Southwest region as the state VSO until that position is filled. Training is working with Operations to verify accredited veterans service officers under the state's VA Power of Attorney. Amy Demenge attended a Resilience and Wellbeing veterans event in November, briefed the American Association of University Women at a meeting held at the University of Denver, and is involved with NACVSO women veterans committee regarding planning for the spring NACVSO conference. The VSO Liaison is also focusing efforts on the upcoming NACVSO conference, as the hosting state is responsible for the President's Reception. There were 39 BVA hearings in November and 66 decisions, including 14 full grants. The Appeals Assistant interviews are scheduled for 29 November – 01 December. Ms. Scanlon said the Board needs to approve the training plan and asked when changes would be made. Mr. Winterrowd said revisions would be made in the spring with the goal of publishing them on 01 July. Mr. Callahan said the Division would be taking suggestions and recommendations for Policies and Procedures in advance of the April planning, and that the current 30-60-90 training curriculum has not changed since the Board approved it. Ms. Scanlon asked that a committee be formed to review training changes prior to the May meeting and said there will also be one for recommendations to the Policies and Procedures.

Old Business

Albuquerque VAMC: Mr. Taylor said that Mr. Callahan coordinated a meeting held on 30 November between VISN 19 and 22 regarding services available to Colorado veterans served by Albuquerque. Topics were mission and vision, access to care, specialty care, transportation, travel pay, and communication with CVSOs and veterans advocates. A follow-up is scheduled for 11 January. Albuquerque is seeking information on effects on veterans to help identify what needs to be rectified. One issue Mr. Taylor highlighted is the lack of communication; since regular calls with the Albuquerque director have stopped, it is much more difficult to get attention on specific problems. Veterans are often left to rely on online systems which may be difficult for them to access and which often have long response times. Mr. Callahan said the monthly meeting should help to keep the areas that need attention within the focus of both VISN. He said that New Mexico has a rural transportation plan that could serve as a model for rural Colorado.

Strategic Plan: Ms. Scanlon asked that the Board members review the current draft, which they did page by page. Formatting corrections were provided. For SI 2, Ms. Motupalli suggested that travel be the hard metric and the other three bullets under Key Measures be North Star metrics. The destinations will be changed from Congressional districts to CDVA veteran regions. Ms. Motupalli said that the fourth bullet under SI 1 could be removed due to redundancy and recommended some changes in phrasing under SI 3 and under Next Steps. It was moved by Mr. Maday and seconded by Ms. Motupalli that the plan be accepted with the current changes. The motion carried.

Veteran Status of CVSO and Deputies: Mr. Callahan said he has been in conversations with the Office of State Auditor and their legislative contact. The intent is to recommend that the word "assistant" in regard to county veterans service officers be stricken from the statute. Thus while the appointed county veterans service officer will still be required to be a

veteran, assistant and associate VSOs will not have to be. This decision is not final but is anticipated to be proposed in the upcoming legislative session. Ms. Scanlon asked how many VSOs are assistant or associate VSOs, and Mr. Callahan said currently 22. Ms. Scanlon asked if hours worked by assistant VSOs will be counted for state reimbursement, and Mr. Callahan said that they will as long as the individual is accredited. Ms. Scanlon said that the Board will consider legislation if proposed.

Discussion of Upcoming Legislation: Mr. Callahan said that Mr. Bruno asked him to convey that the department is currently involved in a large number of briefs, which makes prospective legislation hard to determine. He said that the Division will ask for an additional \$250,000 of spending authority from the Veterans Trust Fund. Ms. Scanlon said she would reach out to Mr. Bruno regarding whether prospective legislation can be addressed in executive session.

Annual Report: Ms. Scanlon said that the Board's address in the annual report has been drafted. It was created in consultation with former chair Pat Hammon and Vice Chair Sean Maday. The Board then reviewed the address in full. Ms. Motupalli offered to draft an executive summary, which will be completed in December. Ms. Ingalls suggested wording changes to reflect that the lithograph needs at the cemetery should be considered part of perpetual care. Ms. Scanlon invited a motion to approve the annual report with the current corrections. Ms. Motupalli so moved and Mr. Taylor seconded. The motion carried.

The Board recessed from 1445 to 1455

Veterans Information Clearinghouse: Mr. Winterrowd said that discussions are underway to decide whether the clearinghouse can be incorporated into the current web site or will be a standalone site. He shared a sample of what the eventual products could look like, using examples from Arapahoe County and Joining Community Forces. Ms. Motupalli asked what the current cost

cbva minutes december 2023 - final

estimate is. There is an estimate currently available for one example, which is roughly \$15,000-\$20,000. Mr. Maday asked how the current options were identified. Mr. Winterrowd said the two vendors were identified through the Statewide Internet Portal Authority, which is comprised of vendors who currently have state price agreements. Mr. Maday asked if there was any way in which the Board can assist with the process. Mr. Winterrowd said not at this time.

Policies and Procedures: Ms. Scanlon said she had made notes on the Board's portions of the Division's Policies and Procedures, other than the grant portion which are otherwise assigned. She asked to assemble a committee to complete the review. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Motupalli volunteered to serve. The committee will plan to meet prior to the next meeting.

Women Veteran SME Interviews: Mr. Charlip said he interviewed 10 subject matters experts about women veteran issues. Detailed findings are in the slides attached to these minutes. Ms. Scanlon asked Mr. Charlip if there are areas in which the Board can assist, which can be discussed at the next meeting.

New Business

Bylaws Committee: Ms. Scanlon reviewed suggested changes from the Bylaws Committee. She reminded the Board that any changes recommended by the Board will be forwarded for legal review. The recommended changes were each reviewed. The committee questioned the need for a VTF report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Ms. Stamm said she was not aware of such a requirement. Ms. Scanlon said the VTF Report reference will be edited to show its inclusion in the Board's annual report. Another question was whether the VAG committee members would be appointed by the Chair or by the Board, and it was decided to leave it as written. Ms. Scanlon will make the updates discussed and submit the document for legal review.

VTF Subcommittee: Ms. Stamm said the committee should be appointed by March, as the committee will meet in April.

VCLC Board Representative Per Diem: Ms. Scanlon asked the Board to consider an inquiry whether per diem could be extended to Ms. Hammon for her attendance at CBVA meetings. Ms. Motupalli so moved. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried. Mr. Callahan will inquire with Finance.

Standing Reports: Mr. Maday suggested that Standing Reports be moved up on the agenda, so that those who need to reports can be released after the meeting if necessary. This met with consensus and the adjustment will be made.

Standing Reports

DVA/DMVA/Legislative: Mr. Callahan said prospective legislation is currently confidential. On behalf of the Division he reported that he is retiring from DMVA and relocating to Alabama. The announcement for his successor has closed and the department is waiting for the referral list. Referred candidates will interview with the Deputy Executive Director, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Division Director, a 360 interview with Division personnel, and the decision will be made by TAG. Ms. Scanlon thanked Mr. Callahan for his service.

WROS: Mr. Collazo said that all tenants' leases were renewed this year, including VA HUDVASH and VA Caregivers, Volunteers of America, Rocky Mountain Human Services, Medicare Mentors, Spectrum Sound, Reserve Component Transition Assistance Advisors, and the Veterans Benefit Administration. The WROS served 918 veterans and family members in November among events, appointments, phone calls and walk-ins. New events include Gold Star Spouses and Families and TAP. A Purple Heart ceremony was also hosted at the WROS in November. Outreach included the Montrose County Veterans Resource Tour, the Vietnam Veteran's War Memorial in Fruita and the Veteran's Day Parade in Grand Junction. The

DEERS office is operational and is scheduling about two weeks out. Ms. Scanlon asked what the biggest challenge is for the WROS. He said trying to engage with new groups and reach beyond Mesa County to support veterans throughout the region is a long-term goal.

CCVSOA/NACVSO: Mr. Bosworth said the association has been working to have each region elect a representative to serve on their board. They will hold a membership meeting on 13 December to install the new board members. He is assisting Drew Stem in coordinating the NACVSO conference in May. NACVSO will hold a leadership conference 4-8 February during which delegates will meet with the VA Secretary and Undersecretary as well as Congressional representatives from Colorado.

VMC: Ms. Ingalls said November was a slower month, probably due to families deferring interments until after the holidays. They are currently booking 48 hours out. A full winterization is complete. The DAR is working on a memorial walk for the cemetery and VFW Post 3981 is in the beginning stages of designing an OEF/OIF memorial as well. Federal reimbursements have been timely and a current focus is on filling vacancies. They have recently lost their Honor Guard Commander. She asked if the Board might supply a condolence letter for the spouse.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said that the applications and instructions for both grant programs have been posted. There is a new requirement asking for the entity's eligibility policies and a new narrative question asking how the entity intends to serve underrepresented veteran populations. Those new aspects will be emphasized in the application webinars. The dates and meeting link for all of the application webinars are on the web site. The Grant Specialist position has closed and she is waiting for the referral list. Office hours have been successful and well attended.

Board Member Remarks

Ms. Motupalli said that the Emily's Way Foundation supports resiliency programs and mental health support for women veterans. They reached out to her because they hope to hold a program in Colorado in 2024. Mr.

Winterrowd said he would help them connect with Ms. Demenge.

Mr. Taylor said the school district's veterans breakfast was attended by about 350 veterans. Korean War veterans were honored and two were in attendance. Another attendee had two grandfathers who were Navajo code talkers. This is the 22rd year for this event, which began in recognition of 9/11. There were flyovers for the Veterans Day ceremony the following day with a traditional warrior blessing from an indigenous participant. Local veterans have been hosting veteran events in conjunction with Veterans Day and the Marine Corps birthday.

Mr. Maday said he has been working on a VAG advertising flyer and he will have a draft to share within a few weeks.

Ms. Scanlon said that she attended a town hall held by Representative Jason Crow in November. She asked what the Board could do to assist in the state and he said that taking care of VSOs is important. In December she will address the legislature regarding the audit report and its recommendations. On 13 December she will attend the Women Marine's Christmas breakfast for Navy and Marines. Mr. Korb has resigned from the Board due to relocating for his job.

Veterans Issues

There were no new issues reported at the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

There will be no meeting in January. After discussion it was decided that February meeting will be held in Arapahoe County. Due to the availability of Board members, the March meeting will be scheduled for 08 March and will

cbva minutes december 2023 - final

be held virtually. The April meeting will be held on the afternoon of 09 April in Pagosa Springs, to align with the scheduled meeting of Vets for Vets of Archuleta County. The May meeting may be held in Chaffee County, if the Cars for Coffee event has resumed by that time.

Currently scheduled:

- January – no meeting
- 02 February – Arapahoe County
- 08 March – Virtual
- 09 April – Archuleta County (1:00 p.m.)
- 05 May – Chaffee County?

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.