

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

12 July 2024

127 North Commercial St

Trinidad, CO 81082

Opening

Began at 9:01 am. All Stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those who are POWs, MIA and on active duty.

Members Present

Sheila Scanlon, Chair

Sean Maday, Vice Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Howard Richards, Member

Board Members Absent

Longinos Gonzalez – Excused

Staff Present

Bruce Cowan, DVA Director

Angela Ingalls, Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
Administrator

Darin Collazo, WROS Property Administrator

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Eric Winterrowd, CDVA Veteran Services Supervisor

James Poteet, CDVA Appeals Specialist

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Carissa Snyder, CDVA Operations Coordinator

Glen Marciniak, Northeast Regional VSO

Ray Odum, Southeast Regional VSO

Guests Present

Jackie Allen-Benson, Eagle County Veterans Service Officer

Michael Aragon, Las Animas County Department Human Services

Marshall Bosworth, County Veteran Service Officer Association President,
El Paso County Veteran Service officer

Mary Cornum, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley

Matt Dominguez, Las Animas County Veteran Service Officer

Joseph Foster, Director of Military and Veteran services at Metropolitan State
University of Denver

Tina Garcia, DAV Legislative Chair

Karen Griego, Mayor of Trinidad Colorado

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

Tony House,

Luis Lopez II, Las Animas County Commissioner District 2

Robert Leam, Assistant Director of Las Animas County Department of Human
Services

Sarah Kelly, Cob-Web Creations, Software Engineer

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

David Sampson, Mount Carmel Veteran Coordinator, Trinidad, CO

Roxie Smith, Crowley County VSO

Marsha Unruh, Home Front Military Network, Program Director

Rick Ward, Bent and Otero County Veteran Service Officer

Dr. Amy Wilson,

Ty Winter, Representative of the Colorado House for District 47

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the draft of the June 2024 minutes were provided. Ms. Scanlon requested to review the June and July minutes at the August meeting as the minutes were missing significant portions. Mr. Richards made a motion to approve the minutes viewed with the corrections to be made. Ms. Golonka seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Mayor Griego notified the Board that this is her first meeting with the Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs (CBVA) and she is very much interested in Veteran affairs and requested the board keeps her apprised of veteran affairs and please collaborate with her if possible. Ms. Scanlon thanked Mayor Griego and reminded her that both Mr. Odum and Mr. Dominguez are both able to keep her apprised of veteran affairs and possible events for collaboration. Mr. Ward also stated that he is also willing to keep the mayor apprised of veteran affairs.

Mr. Lopez thanked Madam chair and stated he has worked alongside Mr. Odum for a number of years now and worked alongside previously with two other Las Animas County Veteran Service officers. Mr. Lopez is truly grateful for the services offered by the Colorado Division of Veteran affairs for the entire state of Colorado.

Mr. Lopez stated there is a lot more of work to do with collaborating with the New Mexico Veteran Hospital Administration (VHA) and would like to assist in any way possible including through the legislators.

Mr. Lopez welcomed Mr. Dominguez as well as Mr. Sampson for attending the meeting today. And thanked the Board for all that they do for the Veterans.

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Ms. Scanlon stated, we cannot thank you enough for what you do for the Veterans as well since the best course of action to taking care of the veterans is through the mayor's office, the commissioners, and the Veteran Service officers.

Mr. Aragon, Works with the veterans in various ways such as SNAP benefits and Medicare. Ms. Scanlon thanked him for what he does with the veterans as his work is serving a gap with food insecurity, medical and transportation needs.

Mr. Aragon, also mentioned a challenge for veterans in Las Animas County is the access to mental and behavioral health facilities. The Department of Human services works within those communities to assist as they can but the access to the facilities is the challenge. Another challenge how DHS works with the families and in the community to support the veterans who are requiring the care. Another challenge is health care and with the inflation with Medicaid and low income families will lose accesses with the communities medical facility closing.

Mr. Odum spoke on behalf of Jared and Bernice Brenard who run the VTF grant in Las Animas. The VTF grant is to assist veterans, however once the veteran passes the widows incur debt as half their income is diminished. Mr. and Ms. Brenard would like to include verbiage to include assistance to the widows. Ms. Scanlon reminded Mr. Odum, this would be a change in the statute as the statute allows VTF fund to be used by veterans only. Representative Winter could assist with this change as it will need to be changed through legislation.

Mr. Ward thanked the board for their support with the grant awarded to American Legion Post 9 La Junta, which assists veterans with transportation for the Tri County area as the population of veterans are aging and would not

be able to access medical care without this grant. Ms. Scanlon also thanked the person who wrote the grant as the grant was a well written grant.

Ms. Wilson, is a Doctor of Dentistry in Las Animas and is also a Doctor of Dental snoring and Sleep Apnea. She would like to inform the board, she is having a difficult time managing the VA to welcome veterans into her practice. She noted a sign that states, "take time and do what makes your soul happy." Treating veterans is very important to Ms. Wilson.

Veterans with PTSD are at higher risk for sleep apnea, their sleep is typically disturbed, adding the c-pap mask could increase their agitation while sleeping. After a two-year certification process, Ms. Wilson has been able to see one veteran and was able to gift him his appliance for free; as it is not about the money, its about get the veteran treated.

Ms. Wilson would like assistance to learn and understand how to navigate the VA system to assist veterans in her community. This process has become very beneficial as the one veteran was able to have the best night sleep in years within 24 hours of receiving the apparatus. Ms. Wilson also stated her husband is a veteran and a silent partner in her practice.

Ms. Scanlon thanked Ms. Wilson and mentioned Mr. Cowan would be able to assist Ms. Wilson with the VA. Ms. Scanlon reminded Ms. Wilson the Board of Veteran Affairs does not have any control with the VA however, we do have contacts with the VA to assist her with this journey.

Mr. Sampson with the Mount Carmel service center coordinates resources and assist veterans. Mr. Sampson has 10 years of experience with this in another state. Las Animas has a workforce center but does not have a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOPS) in either Las Animas or Walsenburg. The closest DVOPS is in Pueblo, which can be concerning when, a veteran has a serious barrier to employment he or she will need to go to about 100 miles way (to Pueblo) to receive assistance.

The DVOPS is a significant role for veterans living with disabilities as well as the unhoused community. Mr. Sampson's question is how would the community go about creating a DVOP position in Las Animas County?

Mr. Cowan requested to speak with Mr. Sampson after the meeting to gain a better understanding of the DVOP role and how the Division of Veteran affairs can best assist Mr. Sampson. Ms. Scanlon thanked Mr. Sampson.

Ms. Garcia would like to discuss the Colorado Comptroller report 29 September 2023 which shows Colorado failing to meet their veteran and service-connected disabled veteran contact goals. Ms. Garcia is looking for support from the board and other agencies to enforce the Colorado Statue (CS) 24-103-905. Ms. Scanlon thanked Ms. Garcia.

Legislation

Mr. Cowan reported Mr. White is not able to attend the meeting as the session has closed and he was called to active duty for the next five months. The Department of Military and Veteran Affairs is looking for a replacement for Mr. White while is on active duty.

2023-2024 was a successful session with SB24-004, Women's Veterans Day and the VAG sunset review. Ms. Scanlon asked if there was more information of the working group for SB24-004? Mr. Cowan stated this update will be addressed in the director's report.

VCLC Board of Commissioners

Ms. Hammon addressed the board, the June meeting for the VCLC Board was scheduled to be in person in Rifle, however, there was a norovirus outbreak causing the meeting to be changed to a virtual meeting. Unfortunately, the

VLC is experiencing another outbreak at this time as it can be difficult to manage outbreaking in independent living and nursing home facilities.

Currently the biggest challenge the CLC's are facing is the lack of admissions. Ms. Hammon requested the board, VSOs and other to spread information about the state nursing homes better know and Community Living Centers (CLCs) to assist with the possible increase of admissions, as they are enterprise facilities meaning they receive little funding from the state, and operated on their income. The income is either VA paying for residential care or private pay from residents. Any open beds create lost of income for the facilities. Without the income from the lack of admissions some of the facilities might be closed.

Ms. Hammon has requested for anyone who would like to assist Rose Campbell the marketing director for the CLCs to meet with Ms. Hammon. Ms. Hammon also stated the CLCs would love to have any visitors tour the facilities and learn more about the facilities. The CLCs do have community support through activities and volunteers, but not financial support.

Ms. Scanlon asked Ms. Hammon if there is any information Ms. Campbell is able to share with the VSOs, to advertise? Ms. Hammon replied the CLCs do come to the state trainings for the VSOs and Ms. Hammon is working on a flyer for the VSOs to use in addition to the information their receive at the trainings.

Ms. Scanlon asked if there are any legislative issues being requested. Ms. Hammon stated, since the session has ended, she has not been made aware of any legislation but will inquire. There has been chatter about legislative actions for assisting the CLCs to stay open.

United Veteran Coalition (UVC) of Colorado

Ms. Hammon reported the UVC recently has a meeting to review the suggest goals for the legislation, and specific goals. The next UVC meeting will prioritize the goals to be sent to the executive committee for approval. The executive committee represents all of the veteran organizations of the primary members of the UVC. The UVC is a coalition and has become known and respected with legislation as the UVC is a representation of the various veterans organizations.

The general goals are childcare, housing, health care, spouse support for veterans, Big problems for rural veterans, such as isolation, transportation, Telehealth, broadband and health care, supportive housing and transitional supportive services for veterans leaving the service, mental health care, suicide prevention and substance abuse disorder treatments, job training entrepreneurship, recruitment, training and placement for veterans transitioning to civilian life.

The UVC is hopeful with the actions they plan to present to the legislator as the word veteran can assist the bill to become a law. Unfortunately, the bills can become problems as the bills are not always written by the veterans. Thankfully the UVC does have a paid lobbyist who works closely with the legislator to use accurate verbiage for their bills and gain support for their issues.

The specific goal the UVC has for this session is to be behind the "Claims Shark" bill. This bill is due to the claims generated by the PACT ACT, representatives assisting veterans with their claims and charged high rates for the use of their services. This approach is illegal and there is legislation at

the federal level and the UVC would like to have legislation on this at the state level as well.

The UVC is also behind restoring the three million dollars, plus interest, which was swept from the Veterans Trust Fund. There is concern at the state level with any bills with a fiscal note are projected to not go too far, this would affect Veteran treatment courts, Tuition Assistance for the National Guard, and their dependents.

Ms. Scanlon stated one comment made in Trinidad was to have widows added to the VTF and VAG statutes, so the grantees can assist widows of veterans. Ms. Hammon agreed to bring the wording change to the UVC for their goals.

Ms. Scanlon also requested to have the UVC review CS 24-103-905, state procurement preference for service-disabled veteran-own small businesses. Ms. Hammon confirmed the UVC is already looking into it.

Standing Reports

DVA Director

Mr. Cowan reported that legislative updates were spoken about previously. The clearinghouse is complete. The webmasters are working to connect the clearinghouse and the state Office of Information and Technology (OIT) to work on our state website. We are hopeful the link will be ready to be announced in the next couple of weeks.

He participated in Denver Mayor Johnston's press conference on veteran homelessness. They believe they have accounted for all homeless veterans, with 52 homeless veterans in Denver. Denver is working hard to get the veterans into shelters. Denver is trying to achieve Functional Zero, which is the point at which all known episodes of homelessness are solved for a city or

county and resources are set up to ensure that future instances are addressed quickly and solved within 30 days.

Mr. Cowan would like to meet the commissioners and VSOs of the 64 counties and the supervisor for the VSO to have a conversation with all the stakeholders to ensure everyone is collaborating and working better together for the veterans.

Mr. Cowan addressed the VSO classification is a Social Service Specialist III for all the VSOs in the state. Mr. Cowan state this is not the best method as with experience there is wisdom and the ability to solve problems. Mr. Cowan would like to create differing position descriptions (PD) for VSOs to retain and promote VSOs in the state. PDs would be levels that reflect experience, skillsets and certifications that allow them to recruit and retain quality personnel.

Mr. Cowan has concerns that veterans are not being served in a uniform basis across the state. Mr. Cowan would like to understand the data and ensure that all veterans are receiving the maximum amount of benefits and service connection they have earned. This would be done through data driven decisions.

There has been interest from four counties to serve on the working group required by SB24-004 to consider the pay structure for the counties. Mr. Cowan is going to work with the state office to determine the next steps for the committee as there are several statutory steps that need to take place for the committee to meet. Once the steps are taken there will be an invitation sent to the counties to attend the committee.

Mr. Cowan is also working to simplify and create a consistent process for veterans to receive the disabled veteran plates (if they qualify). Mr. Cowan is aware that some counties require a letter signed by the state while other counties are accepting the VA Benefit Summary letter. He would like to make

it a simple process for the veteran to go to the Department of Motor vehicles and receive their plates within the first visit.

Outreach

June 3 – Denver Mayor’s Homelessness Initiative for Veterans

June 26 –VA Eastern Colorado Health Care Tele Townhall

June 28 – Sterling Correctional Facility

August 17 – 21 – National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

Ms. Scanlon asked if it is possible to have the group working on the clearing house attend the August meeting to review the clearing house. Mr.

Winterrowd stated the clearing house review was not scheduled for today and the contact states DVA will only meet with the clearinghouse team on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Aragon would like to discuss the gap in service further with Mr. Cowan as Las Animas County is facing some of the gaps in services such as cellular service and broadband. Mr. Cowan asked to continue the conversation after the meeting.

WROS

Mr. Collazo reported the WROs is 100% full with tenants. Volunteers of America has been understaffed but has fully staffed their 5 positions. This has increased the amount of foot traffic for their program. Otherwise June has a decrease in visitors to the WROS.

Vets for Vets saw 28 people at their groups. Veterans Coffee Club had 300 in attendance. R.A.N.G.E. (Cognitive Social therapy) was on the rise with 37 attendees for last month. VBA Rep Dwight Amey saw 25 veterans last month which is great as he was only at the WROS for three days last month. Gold Star families, Civil Air Patrol and Blue Star moms are starting to have an increase in attendance.

Major Calendar Items:

6/15: Signage for WROS with Fast Signs installed.

6/24: Display Case 1 of 2 set up to display memorabilia.

6/25: 28: Maintenance Visit/Repairs from HQ.

6/26: VA Assistant Director visit @ WROS: 65 Veterans in attendance.

DEERS Statistics:

June 2024

DEERS Office processed 826 ID cards since reopening, 86 for the month of June and 6 non-ID related appointments. State DEERS position closed on June 7th and Administrator receive candidates list.

RECEPTION/FRONT DESK:

June 2024

Phone Calls: 113

Walk-ins: 674

Event Attendees: 504

Total Veterans Served: 787

Total Business Days Open: 21

As of the end of June 2024, the Western Region One Source has been open 1,169 working days and has served 32,144 veterans, military members, and their families.

VMC

Ms. Ingalls, reported in June there were 348 internments this is down from last year but it is still up from the pre COVID years.

For the 2024 Fiscal Year, the Military Funeral Honors Stipend paid out \$57,800.00 with \$12,200.00 remaining. The VMC will continue to reach out to the veteran organizations that have not enrolled in the program. Ms. Ingalls stated the flyer that Mr. Maday created resulted with two

organizations reaching out to the VMC, as the flyers were sitting on the County VSO's desk.

The cemetery has received a partial payout of \$175,000 from an estate donation. The Cemetery is one of four organizations who will be receiving the funds. There will be additional funds being donated to the Cemetery. To honor the donor as well as add a female veteran presence to the cemetery, a bronze statue will be created in her image (CAPT, USAF) as an additional saluting statue. The possibility of a third statue may be added to include the USMC.

Ms. Ingalls will be using the previous sculptor to create this statue. At this time, accounting has secured the appropriate coding for the cemetery donations as decided by legislation but has yet to assign the entire donation. The Board has granted the cemetery funds for lithograph services at the cemetery. However, the funds could not be used to hire a staff member. Ms. Ingalls has been able to work with a monument company in the community to contract a veteran for \$22 per hour. He will receive 100% of the funds less the taxes which will be paid by the monument company.

Mr. Richards would like to meet with Angela in the next few weeks as the Mountain, Sothern and Northern Utes have ties to Grand Junction as it was their winter homeland. The Utes have been a part of the Cemetery as they have done the blessing, groundbreaking and the black stone at the entrance is from the tribal Chairman, Veteran Association logo. Mr. Howard would like to have a tour to discuss the Ute history and current use of the Cemetery. Ms. Ingalls confirmed this would be a good meeting as there is a relationship between the Utes and the Cemetery and would like to honor the tribes in a way that is appropriate.

Mr. Maday asked, at one point you stated you would like to get a Marine Corps Jeep added to the procession vehicles, is there any chance there will be funding with the donation to the cemetery? Ms. Ingalls stated that is a great idea, however, Ms. Ingalls would like to spend the money in a way that would give back to the community for several decades, and the truck would only be able to give back for a couple of decades.

Ms. Ingalls proposed the following question. When purchasing the statues the Cemetery was looking to purchase the statues in order, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, etc. but with the donation the Cemetery thought it was timely for the Air Force Statue, so the statues will be Army Air Force. When the Marine Corps Statue is built, the idea is to include a dog with the statue, understanding that service pets are not recognized. The individual who made the donation was a social worker but also utilized pets, is it appropriate to utilize service animals at the cemetery? Please think about this as we do not honor service pets. The individual who donated this portion of the estate also donated to Roice-Hurst Humane Society. There is also a nice photo of two Marines with their dogs next to them, and we thought it might be nice for the Marine to be with a dog for the Marine statue. Ms. Scanlon confirmed the board would think about it.

Grants

Ms. Stamm reported the final payment has been made for FY 2024, this morning as this is the final day for payments to be submitted to accounting. Christina Tozzie has been very busy and has worked hard to ensure all payments have been processed prior to the end of the fiscal year. The execution rate stands at 90% for VTF and 95% for VAG, which is the highest the execution rate has been for several years.

There have been three days offering office hours this month with topics including reimbursements, end of the grant year, changes to the award letter and changes to requirements for underserved veterans. There has been a *cbva minutes July 2024*

survey issued to gather feedback for topics to be discussed at office hours in the next fiscal year, to assist the grantees with areas needed for technical assistance and additional trainings.

Ms. Stamm has been able to determine the definition for underserved veterans was finalized and approved by TAG. The definition for underserved veterans includes the following:

- Veterans of an ethnic or racial minority group
- Native American Veterans
- Women Veterans
- Veterans living in rural and remote areas
- LGBTQ+ Veterans
- Currently Incarcerated Veterans
- Older Adult Veterans 65 years of age and older

Ms. Stamm worked on survey development and grantee feedback over the past reporting period. Several surveys went out over the past reporting period gathering feedback in relation to the grant satisfaction survey. The grant satisfaction survey now includes demographic data pertaining to underserved veterans. All grantees are aware of these updates and they have been discussed at Office Hours. Ms. Stamm is confident everyone is on the same page for the grants beginning 1 July.

New for FY 2025 grantees will be submitting four quarterly reports and one final cumulative report with the totals. All reports will be done electronically through a Microsoft form starting on 1 July. Ms. Stamm is hopeful this process will become more efficient for the grantees once they are used to the new forms. This will also be more efficient for Ms. Stamm as she will be receiving the data through an excel spreadsheet which will be more efficient and reduce staff time.

Grant Staff provided 11 units of technical assistance over the past reporting year. Ms. Stamm spoke with applicants that did not receive funding, Ms. Stamm and the applicants discussed what they did well and what can be improved on if they plan to reapply in future grant years. The grant staff spoke about eligibility requirements, veteran definition status, VAG funding and family services, other grant funding and new grantee technical assistance.

Drew Stem, Carissa Snyder, and Lisa Stamm conducted six interviews on June 12 and June 26 for the VCLC Mental Health Coordinator position. Ms. Stamm is happy to announce that Joni Fernandez has accepted the position. She is a current employee with the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs as she is currently the state's Tuition Assistance Administrator. She will be starting as the Mental Health Coordinator on 12 August. This will allow her time to wrap up the application process for her current role.

Mandatory Kick-off grant trainings will be held on July 15 and 18. A make-up session will be arranged if needed. New this year, attendees will be given a pre and post quiz to evaluate training effectiveness and to have the data for areas of focus for future Office Hours to assist the grantees to better manage their grants. The Board report contains a highlight from the Veterans Community Project under VAG. Ms. Stamm will have the final execution rates in next months report. This report was submitted prior to the final reimbursements.

Ms. Stamm thanked the board for their time. Ms Scanlon thanked Ms. Stamm for including the inclusive list of underserved veterans. Ms. Stamm stated the list seems to be inclusive of different underserved communities in Colorado, and used the VA's definition of underserved veteran as a guideline for the state's definition with the inclusion of grantee feedback of what the grantee believes should be the definition of underserved veteran. Mr. Odum wanted

to commend Ms. Stamm and Ms. Tozzie on the turnaround time for payments as they are arriving to the grantees in a timely manner. This is allowing grantees to assist other veterans as the grantee is not waiting for the delay in reimbursement.

Ms. Hammon wanted to comment on the terrific work done for the grantees; however, will the survey be able to handle multiple underserved populations as a veteran could be in multiple underserved groupings. Ms. Stamm stated yes, the survey allows for one or more boxes to be marked as the grantee/veteran would see as applicable.

Mr. Nagley said Ms. Stamm mentioned a Mental Health Coordinator position and that he was not able to find that position on the organizational chart. Ms. Stamm said it is a new position that was brought forth from the legislator that sets forth funds for veterans that are living in Veteran Community Living Centers to receive 12 mental health sessions from a provider.

DVA is working with the DHS to set up this position. This position will be coordinating the payments for the providers and working with DHS and the VLCs to ensure program requirements are being met. This is a new position which is why it might not be on the organization chart. Mr. Nagley confirmed this is just for veterans at the VLCs and not the community at large. Ms. Stamm said that is correct.

Veterans Services

Mr. Winterrowd reported that events and outreach included a site visit to Montezuma County. Upcoming events include the NASDVA conference scheduled for 17-21 August.

Good news and accomplishments included an increase in CVS0 support Regional VSO and County VSO interaction dues to the SB 24-004 as the

counties and state had to use a lot of coordination. This led Regional VSOs to work with Commissioner, direct leadership and VSO to ensure the CVSO is working 20 hours of more a week. In some counties the VSO was able to gain more hours creating more time veterans can meet with their CVSO. This led to more positive interactions with CVSOs, Commissioners direct leaders, and DVA staff, which lead to quality ties with the counties.

Colorado County Veteran Service Officers Association are working with DVA on Mondays to revise the Policy and Procedures (P&P) input. The P&P has about 80% of the content created. The hard part is the accessibility requirements. Ms. Snyder is working through the accessibility and is about 50% of the way through. Mr. Winterrowd is hopeful in the next few weeks he will brief the Director and have a final product to be released.

Mr. Winterrowd has worked with Kristy Cunningham to re envision the 30-60-90 into a new training model that eliminated the 30-60-90 timeframes and creates a well-rounded training program for the new veteran service officers. This new training model will be phased in and will be brought to the board in the next few months.

With the departure of one Regional VSO in June there is one vacancy and three Regional Service Officers that are fully operational capable (FOC). Meaning they have access to the VA Database (VBMS) as well as their PIV card. The two Regionals who are not FOC at this time are working towards obtaining their PIV card and access to the VBMS currently 67% of the County Veteran Service officers are able to access VBMS. That means about 1/3rd of our veteran service officers are not able to provide uniform customer service to our veterans.

The final issue this month was creating a new policy on finding office space for Regional VSOs. Mr. Winterrowd worked with the DMVA CFO, Nick Severn

to generate the new policy and guidance for the Regionals to find rental spaces throughout Colorado.

Training - Fall Training is scheduled for 17-20 September in Colorado Springs. Ms. Cunningham worked diligently to ensure VSOs were fully trained and could be accredited with hours and training for 2023-2024. On 1 July the training hours will be restarted, requiring VSOs to train for 16 hours or more in 2024-2025. This will include annual data security training.

Amy Demenge is training to be an ambassador for Reach a Vet/Teach a Vet (RATAV). This program is available at most VA medical facilities. Veterans can receive an escort to their appointments through this program.

Ms. Demenge also participated in LGBTQ courses for Pride Month Presented at Women Veterans Recognition Day- Canon City. She participated in the Wounded Warriors Round Table for the Women's Warrior Initiative. Results will inform WWP's 2025 Women's Warrior Report.

NVLSP Semi-Annual Update, 82 total eligible cases, 25 of the cases have won the disability claim. 25 veterans declined NVSLP Representation. 24 cases are still pending in court. Seven are awaiting the veteran decision to continue the case and one client requested dismissal. This program assists veterans and their families to continue fighting their appeals after the denial is received.

Mr. Nagley asked if there is a count of vacant CVSO positions in Colorado. Mr. Winterrowd he does not have that information in front of him at this time. Ms. Snyder stated Morgan County is currently vacant, Elbert County has been vacant but has a new VSO starting 15 July. Mr. Nagley asked about Saguache County. Carissa confirmed the current incumbent is using annual leave and assisting veterans as needed. Saguache is planning to replace the incumbent after they officially leave.

Colorado County Veterans Service Officers Association

Mr. Bosworth apologized for the technical dilemmas during attendance. Mr. Bosworth reported the CCVSOA did not have a lot to report in June as there were vacations. The Association is planning to meet at the Annual Training and hold the General Membership Meeting at the Annual conference. There will be some elections taking place at the General Membership Meeting.

An email was sent to remind CCVSOA members to nominate full time VSOs for the Nardini Award and Part-time VSOs for the Conway Award. The deadline is due within the next couple weeks to have the award at the annual meeting.

Mr. Bosworth was in a meeting earlier this week with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) membership committee. Mr. Bosworth is focusing on the membership at both the National and State County Veteran Service Officers Associations. In Colorado the dues for member are 25 dollars, however a number of counties are not enrolled in this Association. NACVSO is also looking at increasing the amount of members and not their cost. NACVSO's conference was in May so the Board is in a bit of lull at the moment. Mr. Bosworth thanked the Board. Ms. Scanlon thanked Mr. Bosworth.

The Board adjourned for a 10-minute break at 10:51.

Old Business

Bylaws

The Attorney General's Office responded regarding the bylaw changes suggested by the board. There are some that they could not approve. This can be discussed in an executive session under legal advice. Ms. Snyder has

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reached out to LEEANNE to see if a representative can attend a future meeting. Ms. Scanlon said that when she is able to join the board for the meeting, that meeting will close and then the board will stay for the executive session.

VTF - Riffle Veteran Living Centers Request

Ms. Stamm asked the board if they received the information. Mr. Maday confirmed he received it via email. Ms. Stamm reported at the boards request the VTF did receive an additional request to install three towel warmers, install new cabinets and counter tops, three wardrobes, two stand alone cabinets next to the shower and some cubbies. The also requested new lighting and ceiling tiles and three televisions for their recreational areas. The additional request is for \$21,590.00 and the current award is for \$10,061.25.

Ms. Scanlon asked Ms. Hammon if she had any information on this new request. Ms. Hammon stated after working in the field as a training professor and nursing aid for several years, she would like to add that the bath house and shower homes are incredibly important for all patients at a nursing home facility. As this can be a deep comfort and relaxing part of a good bath or shower. This has to be accomplished with an incredible amount of safety as the highest number of accidents for the elderly are from slips trips and falls in the bathing area. Ms. Hammon has visited the bath houses in Riffle the buildings are older and to update the bathhouses would add comfort to the veterans living in the Riffle living center. Ms. Hammon stated all of these items requested are appropriate for a nursing home.

Ms. Scanlon called for a discussion. Mr. Maday asked Ms. Stamm if all these requests were allowable expenditures for the grant. Ms. Stamm confirmed they are. Ms. Scanlon asked for other discussion items. None being asked Ms. Scanlon called for a vote. The award was approved.

Albuquerque supports rural veterans

The status is neutral at the moment. Communication has not been reduced but there have not been changes with Mr. Taylor and senior staff; for example, he has not met with the director or had an opportunity to. There is a VSO congressional town hall on July 26 from 14:00-15:00 which Mr. Taylor has already accepted to be a participant in, hopefully this will reduce the inroad and increase the communication with Albuquerque at that point.

In good news, MyHealthVet came to Pagosa. At the Vets for Vets meeting over 60 Veterans were briefed on My HealthVet and signed up for my HealthVet. Six of the veterans have completed the sign-up including Mr. Taylors upgrade tova.gov using VA ID. Moving forward she would like to have a second person and bring their own computer as there was an issue with uploading the My HealthVet application on the county computer, Mr. Taylor and the Coordinator stayed an extra three hours signing up applicates as the process was so tedious. This being said, Mr. Taylor is excited to see the momentum moving forward with My HealthVet.

The VA will have a Townhall in August for a two-day event in Durango. It's helpful since Denver is coming down to look at how to improve relationships with the Mountain, Northern and Southern Ute. Mr. Taylor is disappointed that it is not with Albuquerque.

Project Sanctuary is now in Pagosa. Mr. Taylor is excited for this new program.

Mr. Odum asked if county VSOs in the New Mexico VHA system have meeting with Mr. Taylor as he is the Albuquerque liaison before each of the meetings. Mr. Taylor stated he was working with the southwestern VSOs on a monthly basis but has now changed to a quarterly basis. However, Mr. Taylor will include other counties to his calls.

CVSO Flyer
No updates this month

Policy and Procedure update
Ms. Scanlon has one section left to do which is the VFT and VAG. Ms. Stamm has shared the information required with Ms. Scanlon. Ms. Scanlon just needs to change a few words before it will be sent to Ms. Snyder and the board. There is not a vote required the document just needs to be viewed.

Women Veteran Subcommittee
Meeting on 28 July at 10:30 at the VA Hospital to talk with women veteran organizations at that meeting.

Members Directory
Final information has been received; Ms. Snyder will be emailing out.

IBM
No update this month. The group Mr. Maday is working with is pushing a listening session with the VA.

New Business

Departmental Annual Reports
Have received a note from the Department of Natural Resources stating they are working on their report. Other Departments have not replied as expected since departments are closing out FY 2024.

Legislative Cycle
None

Board Member Remarks

Mr. Maday said that he is moving from the Michigan Air National Guard to the Air Force Reserves.

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Ms. Golonka said that she is also looking to transition from the Colorado Army National Guard to the Army Reserves. Ms. Golonka has worked with the Veterans Community Project in Longmont. This is similar to Habitat for Humanity but it is for veterans. Corporations and volunteers work together to work on wraparound services to get veterans in their own housing. They are completing their capital campaign. Ms. Golonka would like to invite them to a meeting when the board is in Northern Colorado. Or she would like the board to tour their worksite when the board is in Northern Colorado.

Mr. Richards said that would like to have more training on how to score grants. Due to internet difficulties Mr. Richards will be changing his email and internet provider. Mr. Richards would like to meet with Mr. Taylor to discuss the issues with the Albuquerque VA this has further issues with the tribal traditions. Mr. Richards would like to have a board meeting with the Ute tribes with a cultural understanding of traditions with the tribes.

Mr. Taylor Participated with the Color Guard in the Fourth of July Parade. One of the marchers was in uniform an 88-year-old Marine who is an in-country Korea veteran. There were three passes on the parade route over head with 12 planes with smoke. Ron Gustafson, US Air Force retired, from Homelake passed away one week after his 90th birthday. He was a resident at Homelake for over two years. Mr. Taylor has seen a increase of death with service members this year compared to the past. Mr. Taylor's daughter is out of the hospital; they are looking at a new treatment at the end of July.

Ms. Scanlon just returned from Italy. She worked on the letter to the VCLC Board of Commissioners to review the grant requests before they come to the board. Ms. Scanlon has been working on the P&P and with the VA on women veteran issues.

Veterans Issues

Access to prescriptions

Veterans on the fringe or with limited contact to VSOs.

Homeless

Mental Health visits

Lithographs – would like to keep this on the new business for now.

Upcoming Meetings

The September meeting will be held on 13 September in Greeley. Mr. Nagley requested CBVA to purchase an OWL for easier remote viewing.

Currently scheduled:

13 September – Weld County (Windsor Readiness Center)

04 October – Eagle County (?)

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn. Mr. Maday seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.