

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

June 7, 2023

Joint Forces Headquarters

Centennial, CO

CD 3

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0902. 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

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

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Amy Demenge, State Women's Veterans Service Officer

Glen Marciniak, State Veterans Service Officer-Northeast

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant/WROS Interim Administrator

Guests Present

Erin Cavit, Hinsdale County Veterans Service Officer

Destry DeWolf, Huerfano 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

Roxie Smith, Crowley County Veterans Service Officer

Sheldon Smith, Montrose/Ouray Counties Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the draft of the May 2023 minutes were provided by Mr. Taylor and Ms. Hammon.

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

Public Comments

None

State VSO Reports

Women's VSO: Ms. Demenge said that May outreach included meeting with the Women Veterans group at Mount Carmel and with the Women Marines Association in Denver and a guest appearance on the Veterans Voice podcast. Opportunities include completion of VetraSpec training, virtual attendance at the annual NACSVO conference, and progress on her VA PIV card. Accomplishments include coordinating an upcoming event for Women Veterans Day and moving into her office at the new VBA facility in Colorado Springs.

Southwest VSO: Ms. Cunningham was absent on annual leave. She provided an informational slide. May outreach included the monthly veteran collaborative, the state-tribal liaison team meeting, and the quarterly meeting of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. Opportunities included the annual NACVSO conference, training with the Women's VSO, and completion of state customer service training. Issues are no veteran directed care in the region, the lack of a

DEERS office, limited shelter, lack of transportation for homeless veterans, and staffing issues at the VA Vet Centers.

Northeast VSO: Mr. Marciniak said that May outreach included a meeting in Burlington that included VAMC Director Michel Kilmer, Community Care, and county veterans service officers, a ribbon cutting ceremony in Longmont for Veterans Community Project, the anniversary opening of the Loveland CBOC, the CCI conference, meeting with a congressional representative, and serving as the keynote speaker at the Memorial Day event in Burlington. Opportunities included training the new VSO in Kit Carson County, planning summer outreach events, and weekly Wednesday VSO meetings. Accomplishments included new staff at the Burlington CBOC and finalization of the VSO Reference Guide. Issues are difficulties with new VA PIV cards and CVSO vacancies in Lincoln, Logan, and Washington Counties.

Central VSO: Mr. Stem was absent due to veteran appointments. He provided an informational slide. May outreach included the CCI conference, the VA Resources Fair, and Memorial Day events. Opportunities included onboarding the new VSO in Adams County and continued partnerships with VBA, VHA, and the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC. Accomplishments included awards received by El Paso County Veterans Services from the National Association of Counties. Issues include difficulties with VA travel pay.

Southeast VSO: Mr. Moncibais was absent due to a veterans' fundraising event. He provided an informational slide. May outreach included meeting with the Custer County commissioners and an appearance on the Veterans Voice podcast. Opportunities included VetraSpec training and new equipment in Saguache County. Accomplishments included continued liaison with several counties in regard to VSO training and duties and with the National Guard Association of Colorado. Issues include VSO workload.

Old Business

Albuquerque VAMC: Mr. Taylor said that he is now included on the quarterly VSO call. Communications seem to be slightly improved. Travel pay continues to be a problem as do scheduling and referrals for Community Care. Mr. Callahan said he has connected with his counterpart in New Mexico and they suggested including VISN 19 in future conversations. New Mexico veterans also have difficulty getting appointments in Colorado.

Strategic Plan: Ms. Hammon said that Mr. Bruno would like to schedule a strategic planning session and that it could be discussed under Upcoming Meetings.

UVC: Ms. Hammon said that Ms. Scanlon will serve as the Board's representative to UVC.

New Business

Legislative Items 2024: Mr. Callahan said items of interest to the division for the next legislative cycle include statutory changes regarding the partnership between the state and counties as required by the audit, maintenance staffing for the VMC and the WROS, and staffing for CBVA. Ms. Hammon encouraged Board members to think of legislative goals and that this will be a recurrent agenda item.

Annual Report: Ms. Hammon recommended beginning the request process for reports from other agencies. It was decided to send a June letter to contributing agencies and follow up as needed in August, and to ask the agencies to share any issues experienced by their programs or by the veterans they serve.

Standing Reports

DVA/DMVA: Mr. Callahan said that DMVA and DVA presented at the CCI conference to an audience of 35 commissioners. DMVA is hiring a Title 5 DEERS operator. The state DEERS position closed on 01 May. Eric Winterrowd has been appointed Veterans Services Supervisor and will begin work on 12 June. Darin Collazo has been selected as WROS Administrator and will begin on the same date. The administrative assistant positions in Lakewood and in Grand Junction closed on 20 March and the Division is waiting for the referral lists. New legislation provides funding for mental health services at the VCLCs and this function will be staffed by the Division. With the addition of two new Regional VSOs, the Central Region will be split into three. Denver will be its own region and the others will be Central East and Central West. Those positions are ready to be announced. He will provide additional information to the Board about the veterans identification project. The Division is piloting a program to assist other veterans service organizations by cross-accrediting service officers from other organizations. Ms. Hammon and Mr. Taylor expressed caution about extending accreditation to individuals outside of the state and county organizations. Mr. Callahan said cross-accredited VSOs will be subject to the same training and continuing education standards as state and county VSOs. He shared the Division's WIG for the next fiscal year, which is to raise the current Net Promoter score to 50 and is supported by five key measures. A temporary employee currently in a doctoral program

will be assisting with a needs assessment for women veterans, and the Board will receive an update on that program in July.

VMC: Ms. Ingalls said that the Memorial Day wreath laying was well-attended and successfully attended. The cemetery's spending of VTF funds is on schedule. They had a flagpole failure and the resolution is in progress. There has been recent difficulty reconciling reimbursements received by VA. The funds for the military honors stipend have been expended but the program has been funded at \$70,000 for next year. Both program assistant positions have closed and she is waiting for the referral lists. Staffing is the largest current difficulty.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said that VTF award letters have been sent and the kickoff training sessions have been scheduled. The VAG decisions are complete, with nearly twice the amount in requests than available funds. Payments continue to be a significant concern. The position description for the new Program Assistant for Grants is still waiting for review at Human Resources.

UVC: Ms. Scanlon said she was asked at UVC if they can receive a list of who the grantees are and what the amounts are. Ms. Stamm said it will be published on the web site in July. The Ute tribes are struggling with broadband issues and with VA medical care and are open for suggestions on both issues.

The Board recessed from 10:45 to 10:55

Board Member Remarks

Mr. Maday said that Google has a new DOD Skillbridge cohort, employing 14 fellows for 13 weeks.

Mr. Taylor said that there has been a high demand for honors at funeral services. Over the last 12 months Archuleta County has lost 34 veterans. There were two local events for Memorial Day, both of which featured flyovers. Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County raised \$20,000 for veterans assistance through their golf tournament.

Mr. Gonzalez said he appreciated the presentation at the CCI conference. He read the county's Memorial Day Proclamation at the Pikes Peak Cemetery National Cemetery at the Memorial Day observation and attended an observation at the local VFW.

Ms. Motupalli said the podcast episode she is featured on has dropped. Details will be sent to Board members. She will be the keynote speaker at her hometown's senior scholarship event.

Ms. Golonka extended thanks to Parker White for his recent facilitation of a capitol tour for her National Guard unit. Her Northern Command unit recently executed a volunteer project for the American Red Cross. She will be at Fort Carson for the 440th Civil Affairs change of command on June 3.

Ms. Scanlon said the Women Marines Association has expended their VAG grant. She attended the UVC meeting in May. Amy Demenge attended a recent meeting of Women Marines Association.

Ms. Hammon said a solar light is being installed on the top of the flagpole at the local veteran's memorial. 14 VFW scholarships were presented as well as six color guards for graduation ceremonies. The Memorial Day ceremony was well attended and can be seen on Eagle County's Facebook page. PACT Act claims continue to keep the veterans service office very busy.

Veterans Issues

Ms. Hammon said issues captured at the meeting were workloads for VSO, DEERS needed in the southwest, the need for shelter, transportation, and vet center personnel, difficulties with VA Community Care referrals, and delays with travel pay for veterans from VA and payments to grantees from the state.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for June 7 in Craig (CD 3).

July 7 –Moffatt County (Craig)	CD 3
August 4 – Pueblo County (Pueblo)	CD 3
September 7-8 –Eagle County (Eagle) – retreat	CD 3
October 6 – Mesa County (Grand Junction)	CD 3
November 3 – Denver County (Sobriety House)	CD 1
December 1 – Arapahoe County	CD 4

For future scheduling Ms. Golonka suggested selecting locations according to scheduled veterans' events to promote attendance by Board members. Mr. Taylor also suggested the San

Luis Valley as a meeting location. Mr. Callahan suggested connecting meeting locations to the seven regions of the Division and allowing the regional VSO to help facilitate.

Election of Officers

Mr. Callahan informed the Board that Ms. Hammon term on the Board expires 30 June. A new member has been appointed by the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions. Board member Frederick Korb will begin on July 1.

Due to the expiration of offices per the bylaws, election of officers was held and the following officers were unanimously elected:

- Sheila Scanlon, Chair
- Sean Maday, Vice Chair
- Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Appreciation for Pat Hammon

Mr. Callahan thanked Ms. Hammon for her years of service to the Board, including her dedicated leadership and consistent advocacy for veterans across the state. She was presented with a plaque from the Division acknowledge her service and contribution. The Board members also thanked her for her mentorship, leadership, and guidance.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.