

Board Minutes
January 16, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters
7465 E. 1st Avenue #D
Denver, Colorado 80230

Robby Robison, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
Dana Niemela, Secretary – Not Present
Kathleen Dunemmn, Member – Not Present
Rene Simard, Member
Jason Crow, Member
Chris Holden, Member
Marvin Meyers, Emeritus

DMVA Staff Present:

Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
Reuben "Ben" Mestas, CDVA Assistant Director
Tamara Edmond, CDVA Administration

Guests Present:

Richard Sandrock, Governor's Office
Capt. Brock Peters, Fort Carson Representative
JoAnne Cohen, Rocky Mountain Human Services
Shawn Young, Bootstraps, Financial Health Institute
Geneva Templeton, Project Sanctuary
Jason Strickland, Project Sanctuary

Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2013

Unanimously accepted with amendments.

Board Comments:

Chris Holden: He and Capt. Peters have been working hard to set up the agenda for February meeting held in Colorado Springs.

Marvin Meyers: UVC 42nd Award Banquet, March 30th, 2014 at the Renaissance Denver Hotel, 3801 Quebec Street, Denver, Colorado, with possibly Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson (19th Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy) as speaker.

Robby Robinson: He spoke with Mindy Gates about update on the audit for Veterans' Trust Fund and he would email the confidential update with instructions for follow through.

There were no other comments.

Public Comments Non-agenda Items (limit 3 minutes)

No Comments

Guest Presentations (Shawn Young, Bootstraps – Financial Health Institute and JoAnne Cohen, Rocky Mountain Human Services)

Shawn Young: Bootstraps

Bootstraps focuses on asset building education with emphasis on 3 life skills: civic education, workforce education, and financial education. As an educator, teaching how to do budgets surfaced. Other financial curriculum were developed with basic assumptions that individuals would have an income, be willing to do a budget so they could save and invest to retire. He found that working with individuals in homeless shelters they did not have the resources available. Bootstraps offer training to empower individuals to have the tools to make new choices around money, health, and stress. He works with Rocky Mountain Human Services, and JoAnne Cohen. Their goal is to break down paradigms about resources available and how to control and reduce financial stress. When people are under stress they sometimes have maladaptive coping techniques particularly with financial stress. 75% of individuals surveyed said their stress was due to money, and 80% of medical issues were attributed to stress. Medical debt is the number one cause of bankruptcy. He presented an informational brochure on the "Asset Building Continuum" and said they were trying to break down the paradigms to help homeless veterans understand that they do have resources available and how to control or reduce financial stress.

JoAnne Cohen: Rocky Mountain Human Services

They get their clientele through referral agencies such as OTF, CTAP, and Rocky Mountain Human Services. They have a collective vision to get the program into military installations. They presented written testimonials from clients who experienced transformation and "ah-ha"

moments when they realized they do have resources available and can learn behaviors to control or change their financial realities. She emphasized they are not financial planners but are educators. The classes they offer are facilitative where they create a safe environment to be open and learn from each other's experiences. They may ask a soldier to tell them what their benefits are and then through discussion connect the benefits to resources. They help individuals identify their values and goals. Then, help them get these in alignment to help individuals understand what money/assets they do have. Once a quarter, they hold classes. She said they have a class from 1pm to 5pm on 17 January, 2014 and another class next Friday, 24 January, 2014. The classes will be held at Rocky Mountain Human Services, 9900 East Iliff Avenue, Denver, CO 80231. Their vision is to help individuals have choices, gain confidence, and control over their lives. This can be life changing, transformational.

There were questions and answers from the Board. Shawn Young stated they received their funding by selling the program. They were a new venture and did not have results as of yet – just testimonials from participants. The term “bootstraps” was not originally intended for veterans but from the expression “pick yourself up by the bootstraps.”

Robby Robinson: We appreciate the information and thank you for coming.

Standing Reports

Governor's Office

Richard Sandrock: No new data on Fort Lyons.

1:00-2:00PM South High School January 16, 2014 Dedication and Plaque Ceremony honoring Maj. Gen. Keith Ware.

January 27th-31st, 2014 Metro Denver Homeless will be conducting the “Point in Time Survey” as a requirement from HUD. Metro Denver Homeless used grant money to hire formerly homeless veterans to find and note homeless veterans in Denver. Anyone interested in volunteering for a shift, please contact Richard Sandrock.

Division of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)

No Report

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z Dissinger: Executing the VTF and getting new applications. We are going into a new Colorado Operations Accounting System.

- Strategic Plan-priorities for handling the VTF
- Provide money for immediate needs

- 1st grant requests- 1 out of 5 did not have all the required documents so he is emailing or calling them to complete the application. They need to have W-9 and Statement of Good Standing Certificate.
- Under the new system, the W-9's need to be reentered and electronic funds transfer set up.
- Grantees will have to register in the system to get any contract with the State and it can be difficult to get them registered.
- The deadline for grant applications is 1 March 2014.
- Review of grant packets will be in April and recommendations will be voted on in May.

Veteran's Assistant Grant

Ben Mestas: \$600K still needed to be spent – Les Kennedy is contacting them. The largest concern is \$150K requested by the Governor's Office for Homeless Outreach facility with only about \$30K expended.

Division of Veteran Affairs Report

Ben Mestas:

- 1.) New Hires: Carissa Snyder started January 7th, we are now fully manned.
- 2.) Report
 - Walk-ins: 272 (265)
 - Phone Calls: 1676 (1039)
 - New POA's: 371 (365)
 - New Claims: 746 (723)
- 3.) Cemetery: Total as of this date: 2,725 (2,031 veterans, 689 spouses, 5 dependent children). Governor Vanderhoff interment- resident of Glenwood Springs, he owned a sporting goods business there. The frost line remains at 6 inches.
- 4.) VA
Bill Kane retired 01/10/14 anticipate 7 months to fill the slot. Melanie (Renee) Murphy is acting Director.
- 5.) Training Conference
Invited speakers include: State Community Living Centers, Delta Dental, VA Mental Health/TBI Counselors, as well as other speakers from the Division and VA Staff

State Veterans Nursing Home (SVNH) Update

Jay Bobick: Following Veterans Assistance fund authorization bill- the Long Bill Addition, discussion with legislature to make this a statute, sponsor- Su Ryden (Arapahoe) working with co-sponsors. If the statute passes then it will be a good move forward, there would be not dollars on the bill.

- The State Veteran's Nursing Homes official name change will be to State Veterans Community Living Centers. There will be a bill going before State Legislature to have this official name change.
- Annual Report has been submitted. We are now operating 8-9 months in the black. Every Colorado State Home is solvent.
- Eden Alternative is to make a home as homelike as possible and tailor services to individual residents. Nationwide, 8 nursing homes are Eden Alternative certified and in Colorado, 4 of our state nursing homes are Eden Alternative certified.

Discussion/Action

Strategic Plan

There was consensus on CBVA that there is a need for a strategic plan and the development of the strategic plan is a valuable process. Also, there was consensus that an outside entity would be beneficial for development of strategic plan, setting goals and objectives.

Veterans Survey

Robby Robinson: He shared email from Kathleen Dunemn voicing concerns with validity of the Veterans Survey, electronic access to the survey, and representative population.

Points to consider:

- Assessment of needs – data is either readily available or it is not relevant.
- Identifying data gaps and how to connect these needs with the Veterans Trust Fund Grant
- Challenge of reaching a wider audience since the responses came from a narrow sector even though the results were statistically valid
- Getting a true random sample of veterans is a huge challenge

Future Meetings

1. **0930 AM on 20 February 2014** to be held at **Exelis**, 655 Space Center Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80915
2. VA Regional Office Update on March 13, 2014 or March 20, 2014 (TBA)

Motion to adjourn by Jay Bobick, seconded by Rene Simard and Chris Holden.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

