

Board Minutes
January 8, 2016
Pueblo County Housing and Human Services
2631 E. 4th Street, Pueblo, CO 81001

Dana Niemela, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0818 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle or harm's way and all service members.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff & Guests

Board Members Present:

Dana Niemela, Chair
Duane Dailey, Vice-Chair
Rene Simard, Secretary-Not Present
Hollie Caldwell, Member
Christopher Holden, Member
William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director
Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Rudy Sabedra, Pueblo County Veterans Service Officer
Virginia Jimenez, Director, Pueblo County Housing and Human Services
Pam DiFatta, of Pueblo County Commissioner Liane "Buffie" McFadyen's Office
Joy Jenkins, Peer Navigator for Mt. Carmel Center for Excellence
Terry Lake, Director of Marketing and Outreach for Parkview Behavioral Health
Dietrich Edwards, Program Director for Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition
Ann Staffelman, Posada

Approval of Minutes from December

Ms. Niemela corrected the misspelling of the Sturm family. Mr. Robinson handed his corrections to Ms. Dean. The minutes were then approved as corrected.

Jack Rudder: Alamosa did not have a homeless Stand-down this year. An interim position is available for Clinic Physician. Dave Duvall has been hired on as the PA for the clinic. No issues with the Choice Card have been reported.

Duane Dailey: The holiday season was very difficult for many of Mr. Dailey's veterans. Mr. Mestas was asked to clarify why VES scheduled a veteran for identical exams at the Golden clinic and Fort Collins clinic only months apart.

Robbie Robinson: Mr. Robinson would like Dick Young with ESGR to brief the Board.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell will tour Catholic Charities in Fort Collins and Comitis sometime in February.

Chris Holden: Mr. Holden met with the 4th Infantry Commanding General to explain what CBVA does and has planned a tour of the Peterson Air Force Base transition activities in February which is different from Transition University at Fort Carson. Mr. Holden proposed that the Board meet in Colorado Springs in July or August. Heidi Ainsworth, President of the National Veterans Village Alliance in Colorado Springs, which focuses on homeless veterans, offered to take Mr. Holden on a tour of the facilities.

Dana Niemela: Ms. Niemela recently visited the Rocky Mountain Hyperbaric Institute facility located in Louisville, CO. Though not proven to the satisfaction of the VA, the hyperbaric oxygen treatment is showing signs of effectiveness for traumatic brain injury ailments. Many patients have shown decreased anxiety, a decrease in the use of medication and the elimination of tinnitus. The cost, which includes treatment, housing and food, is \$5,280 per veteran. Through private funding and donations the Institute will cover the costs of those veterans who incurred their brain injuries while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Dietrich Edwards: The Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition provides services, such as transitional housing, to veterans who are in substance abuse treatment programs.

Rudy Sabedra: Mr. Sabedra, along with Chuck Clamon and Renee Franklin, assist 3,000 active cases out of the 15,351 veterans in the Pueblo area, with the main demographic being Vietnam veterans. Pueblo County Housing and Human Services Director, Virginia Jimenez, is very supportive of everything that Veterans Services does. Awards are logged into a database with the yearly goal of reaching over \$3mil. The 17th annual Pueblo Homeless Stand-down provided 58 homeless veterans with winter gear. Mr. Sabedra thanked the Board for their support of various grant approvals. There are 50 verified homeless veterans in Pueblo, up from 20 last year. Ms. Niemela asked if there were any additional requests for service. Many of the veterans who meet with Mr. Sabedra also ask about health services and access to healthcare providers. The vagueness of VA requested exam letters was discussed. Mr. Robinson wondered why the homeless in Fort Lyons had attended the Pueblo Homeless Stand-down when they have their own program. Ms. Caldwell asked if grant reporting requirements were difficult in which Mr. Sabedra replied that it was very easy.

Terry Lake: Parkview Medical Center is a regional provider for treatment for behavioral health, chemical dependency, psychiatric and senior cognitive disorders. The facility has 65 in-patient beds. Having adopted the Hazelden-based model for evidence-based practices, the facility provides daily programs in place to deal with behavioral issues. They assist both veterans and active duty and provide free and confidential assessments. Parkview Medical Center will hold an open-house on January 23.

Ann Staffelman: The population of Pueblo is growing due to the legalization of marijuana. Many veterans come from other states with portable vouchers. The discharge status of our homeless veteran population is an issue, since a quarter of them have a dishonorable discharge.

Joy Jenkins: Ms. Jenkins described the Mt. Carmel Center for Excellence as a veteran one-stop which will be open to the public February 1. Mr. Edwards stated that it's important for counties to support one another and work together to help the veteran. Ms. DiFatta added that while she works in the center of town, she gives out bus passes and refers veterans to Mr. Sabedra and Posada. There is no housing available to female veterans at Parkview Medical Center.

Let the record show that here the Board recessed at 9:55am, and resumed to labor at 10am.

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt toured permanent, supportive housing for homeless veterans located near 26th and Federal Blvd. That type of housing may not be compatible with State Veteran Living Centers like Fitzsimmons. Mr. Hunt will work with DOLA to acquire more suitable land. Both Ms. Niemela and Mr. Hunt toured the new Stout Street clinic that provides dentistry for both veterans and children. Medicaid now covers certain dental procedures up to \$1,000. Providers Clearing House, who works closely with the Volunteers of America, provide rents and vouchers for home furnishings.

Ben Mestas: Service Officer candidate Jake Porter accepted a counter offer with DAV. Another candidate is waiting to pass a background check. Mr. Mestas requested \$5,000 from the Veterans Trust Fund for training of the new Cemetery Director, Joanne Iglesias. It was so moved. Mr. Robinson spoke very highly of former Director Dick Gigliotti and has confidence in Joanne's ability to fill the position. Motion to transfer \$5,000 from the VTF for training was unanimously carried. Mr. Dailey asked how the State Service Officer position was advertised.

Robby Robinson: Former Board member Kathleen Dunem is chairing the State Veterans Community Living Center Commission. The Commission mainly reviews reports, but more meetings will be held at actual homes. The February meeting will be held at Fitzsimmons.

Dana Niemela on behalf of Greg Dorman: January 29 is Military Appreciation Day at the State Capitol.

Mr. Robinson asked that the Grant Administrator include the Expended to Date column in her reports. Both Gail Hoagland and Mr. Sabedra are great resources and are able to help others that may struggle with the required documentation for grants.

The Board was asked to provide input on recommendations for unused Veterans Assistance Grant funds. Suggestions include giving additional funds to the top three grantees that show compliance and have already expended their funds. The Board asked Ms. Hoagland to distribute a written synopsis for review. Ms. Caldwell and Mr. Dailey volunteered to be on the Grant Review Committee. Either Mr. Robinson or Ms. Niemela will sit on the committee. Mr. Robinson recommended Mr. Simard to be on the committee as well, though only two Board members are required for the Grant Review Committee. Ms. Caldwell expressed interest in the Community Living Centers Committee. Mr. Rudder will chair the Training Program Committee and will work with training officer Diane Ricci on the training conference development. United Veterans Committee of Colorado has commented on Ms. Niemela's lack of involvement. Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Mestas attend their meetings.

Future Meetings

05 Feb – Sterling

04 Mar – Conifer

01 Apr – Aurora

06 May – Grand Junction

03 June – San Luis Valley

05 Aug – Colorado Springs

Old Business

New Business

Mr. Dailey requested a list of all Board members cell phone numbers be distributed.

Meeting adjourned 10:56am