

Board Minutes
February 3, 2017
Mt. Carmel Conference Center, Ziccardi Room
911 Robinson Ave., Trinidad, CO 81082

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 0900 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:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Rene Simard, Vice-Chair
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary-Not Present
Robert McLaughlin, Member
Pat Hammon, Member
William "Robby" Robinson, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Director
Reuben Mestas, CDVA Director
Gail Hoagland, DMVA, VAG Administrator
Claire Dean, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Al Trujillo, Las Animas County Service Officer
Cheryl and David Rogers, American Legion Post #16
Brian Chicket, American Legion Post #16
David Walker, Commander of American Legion Post #11
Ed Wolahan, American Legion Post #16
Joe Martinez, Korean War Veteran
Theresa Rudder, Jack's wife
Kim Zimmerman, American Legion Post #11
Willie Bay, American Legion Post #11
Ivan Brooks, VFW and VTF Administrator
Clayton McIndry, American Legion Post #11
Steve Block, newspaper reporter
Charles Martorano, American Legion Post #11

Wayne and John Medina, VFW
 Doug Brown, Vietnam Veteran
 James Schatzman, former Marine
 Dona Seay, Secretary for the Las Animas County Veterans Council
 Nick Vigil, CVSO Huerfano
 Chris Crow
 Orlando Blanco
 Bill Knowles, VFW
 Ignacio Gutierrez
 Jake Hyte, District 8
 Tim and Ellen Swartz of Custer County
 Doug Brown
 Charles Grego, Colorado Dept. of Labor Workforce Center
 Jess Gibson, Retired Army

Approval of Minutes from December

Approved

Jack Rudder: Currently there are around 500 people living off the grid in the Alamosa area. Mr. Rudder is not sure how many of those people are veterans. There is nearly a one-year wait for Federal VA response to aide and assistance funding requests for veterans who wish to move into the domiciliary at Homelake Community Living Center. Most of the requests are being denied.

Robby Robinson: Bids have been received for the expansion at Fitzimmons Community Living Center. Part of the expansion will service homeless veterans.

Rene Simard: The Stuer Family Clinic in Aurora has recently opened to provide mental health care for veterans and their families at their day facility.

Pat Hammon: The two biggest issues in the Eagle County area are affordable housing and mental health.

Robert McLaughlin: Mr. McLaughlin thanked Felix Lopez, Chief Operating Officer for Mt. Carmel, for hosting today's meeting. Mt. Carmel in Colorado Springs is dealing with veteran transition issues such as job placement, mentoring and internships. They also offer a free behavioral health clinic on campus.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey thanked Mr. Trujillo for his organizing of today's meeting. Both Mr.'s Robinson and Dailey recently attended the Sunset Board Review with the Colorado Legislature. If the Bill passes (likely) the Board will continue their work for another ten years.

Guests then introduced themselves and briefly described how they are related to and involved with the veteran community. It is hoped that the Fort Wooten Community Square, located in

Trinidad, can get the financing needed to operate the facility and that all of the veterans organizations come back.

Mr. Dailey explained the function of the Board and how it is different from the Federal VA. He also explained that the five Veterans Community Living Centers are run by Colorado Health and Human Services, not the Board. Mr. Hunt briefly explained the Department's hierarchy as well as the grant programs.

Al Trujillo: Currently there are no homeless shelters in Las Animas County. Mr. Trujillo thanked those in the community who donated funds for the local soup kitchen. Mr. Robinson added that the Federal VA Outreach Program could visit the community and perhaps give answers to the many Federal VA questions brought up at the meeting. Mr. Trujillo stated that many of the area veterans are seen by doctors in Raton and Albuquerque, NM.

Ivan Brooks: Mr. Brooks explained the Veterans Trust Fund and how easy it is to work with Ms. Hoagland. With the \$40k awarded, Mr. Brooks was able to service about 118 veterans. While partnering with Custer County VSO Tim Swartz, 330 veterans have enrolled in less than two years. Mr. Brooks offered to answer any questions regarding how to apply for grant funding. A brief discussion followed regarding the 2nd Amendment and incompetency. An inquiry was made about grant funding and homeless shelters in Pueblo. Mr. Dailey and Mr. Robinson briefly explained the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless located in Ft. Lyon. A reporter from the World Journal asked exactly what the Board will report to the Adjutant General this year. Mr. Hunt explained that through its travels, the Board is able to better understand the needs of that particular area's veteran's community. Last year, for example, the Board proposed a funding increase for County Veterans Service Officers, which was approved by the Governor. Currently there is a bill on the floor of the Capitol to eliminate taxes on veteran's pensions.

The Board recessed at 10:20 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:31 a.m.

Mickey Hunt: Mr. Hunt is working on a proposal to allow veterans to ride RTD transportation for free. The Veterans One-Stop in Grand Junction will remain unfunded in 2017. The Adjutant General will be retiring at the end of March. Mr. Hunt is in discussions with the Department of Human Services to allow more eligible veterans' spouses into the Community Living Centers by getting a waiver to the 75% veteran occupancy rule. Robert McLaughlin will try to get representatives from the Federal VA to hold a discussion in the Trinidad area.

Duane Dailey on behalf of Greg Dorman: Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Dailey attended the Sunset Review Hearing where it will be recommended that the CBVA continue. The General Assembly will have to approve the bill.

Reuben Mestas: Mr. Mestas stated that there are several counties that have not turned in their monthly reports and therefore will not get paid. The 2017 Conference agenda was attached to his report. Cemetery Director Joanne Iglesias spearheaded the effort to allow veterans to preregister for the State Cemetery in Grand Junction or the National Cemetery.

Mr. Trujillo asked for an update on the future State Cemetery in Colorado Springs. So far, the plot of land has been secured, and a design has been approved but no one knew if the VA has started construction.

A brief discussion followed as to where veterans can get ID cards.

Gail Hoagland: It is projected that the Veterans Trust Fund will be reduced this cycle by as much as \$200,000. This reduction in funds next fiscal year will make it even more competitive. The deadline for this year's grant applications is March 1. Two webinars will be held in February. All documents can be downloaded from the State website: vets.dmva.state.co.us and click on the Grants tab. Ms. Hoagland proceeded to discuss some of the State guidelines for the grants. She advised organizations that collaborative relationships with County Veterans Service Officers and other organizations will help to ensure a broader, fuller coverage for the community.

Future Meetings

A Strategic Planning discussion will be held during the next CBVA meeting on March 3 at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce located at 14305 E. Alameda, Suite 300, Aurora, CO.

Old Business

It's been some time since Board members have visited Ft. Lyons. Mr. Hunt will plan a future visit and offer the Board the opportunity to accompany him.

New Business

Meeting adjourned 10:58am