

Board Minutes
5 June 2015
Mountain Parks Electric Inc.
321 West Agate Ave, Granby, CO 80446

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0933 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 family members.

"America the Beautiful" performed by Juliet Shams.

Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
Dana Niemela, Vice-Chairman
Rene Simard, Secretary
Kathleen Dunemn, Member –Not Present
Christopher Holden, Member – Not Present
Duane Dailey, Member
Jack Rudder, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

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

Guests Present:

Juliet Shams, Grand County Vocalist
Dan Warvi, Public Relations Director of Denver VA Hospital
Merrit Linke, Grand County Commissioner
James Newberry, Grand County Commissioner
Betty Cranmer, Royal Air Force, Retired
Lloyd Palmer, WWII Veteran
Charles Illsley, WWII Veteran
Heather Ehle, Project Sanctuary
Marketing Representatives from State Veterans Community Living Centers
Various members of the community

Guest Introduction – Duane Dailey

Betty Cranmer served in England's Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain. After losing her husband, she moved to America. Betty had battled cancer and had a book written about her life.

Approval of Minutes from May

Accepted.

Board Member Comments

Duane Daily: From a young age, Juliet Shams has performed at the annual Grand County Veterans Day Breakfast and other local events. She is self-taught and a beautiful resource to the community. Duane explained that following the Board meeting and a short break, the Public Relations Director of the Denver VA Hospital Dan Warvi will talk about the Choice Card. Colorado Department of Human Services Department will discuss Community Living Centers throughout the State of Colorado. Duane thanked the veterans present and briefly discussed some of their service history. Grand County Commissioners Merrit Linke and James Newberry were introduced.

Robby Robinson: A brief explanation was given to the audience about the Board, the Veterans Trust Fund, Veterans Assistance Grant, Veterans Community Living Centers and the State Veteran Cemetery. Twice a year the Board meets in rural areas of Colorado in an effort to encompass all veteran's issues in the state.

Roll Call of Members and Introduction of Staff

Robby Robinson: The Legislative Audit Committee conducted a performance audit of the Veterans Trust Fund. Dana, Duane, Mickey, Ben, Gail and Robby testified before the Committee that all five recommendations that were brought forth last year have been made.

Dana Niemela: As Manager of Veterans Services for the City and County of Denver, Dana runs a homeless veterans reintegration project. During the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans held last week in Washington D.C., it was apparent that Colorado is on the leading edge with communities across the state uniting to benefit homeless veterans.

Rene Simard: The University of Denver has started a Military Psychology program to focus on TBI and PTSD issues. Both on-site and remote clinics will be set up. Handouts were distributed. Rene asked Board members if they would like to be involved with the program.

Jack Rudder: Having attended the San Luis Valley Veterans Coalition meeting recently, VA representatives were able to listen to Care Providers in the rural communities dealing with the Choice Program challenges.

Duane Dailey: Duane thanked the Granby Chamber of Commerce. During last year's State training, Duane asked Robby if there was rural representation on the Board. This year, two County Service Officers from rural areas sit on the Board. Based on the Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures, Grand County has 1,035 veterans and excludes the 65% of the population

who are second-home veterans in the county. Direct total expenditures that go through Grand County are \$4,450,000. Dan Warvi of the Denver VA Hospital, Golden Clinic Director Dr. Chris Johnson, an author and doctor of psychology who shall remain anonymous, and Duane toured several sites for a medical/psych outreach clinic to serve veterans. The American Legion in Grand County was recently awarded \$20,000 through the Veterans Trust Fund. Duane's office was awarded \$15,000 through the Veterans Assistance Grant.

Public Comments

A member from the audience inquired about Fort Logan Cemetery. Robby explained that Fort Logan is a National Cemetery supported by the Federal Government and any eligible veteran can be buried there. They are looking at building another cemetery in El Paso County. The State has built a cemetery in Grand Junction and is run by the Division of Veterans Affairs. About 60% of veterans are requesting that their cremated remains be placed in a columbarium. Another member of the audience asked for an explanation of the Choice Program and was told that the Federal program will be discussed at length after the Board meeting.

Dana Niemela: Dana thanked all the Navy veterans for their representation at today's meeting.

Mickey Hunt: A proposal will be presented to the Governor to convert the State-owned Grand Junction Armory to a Veteran One-Stop. Mickey, TAG, and senior leadership will tour the Veterans Community Living Centers on September 22 and 23 via Blackhawk helicopter.

Ben Mestas: Ben acknowledged the Grand County Commissioners for having a full-time County Service Officer. Only Alamosa, Grand Junction and Durango have full-time Service Officers in rural communities. Service Officers were hired for both Kit Carson and Adams Counties. Cemetery construction will wrap up the first week of September. With heavy lobbying from both Mickey Hunt and Greg Dorman, House Bill 1315 was passed which increases money given from the State to the County Service Officers. In two weeks Ben will distribute a Memorandum of Understanding to all County Service Officers to demonstrate how to use that additional money in their budget. A draft of the Board minutes will be distributed to all the Board members within one week of the meeting. Board members will then have one week to submit all comments and corrections.

Robby Robinson, on behalf of Kathleen Dunemn: There is not much to report on the State Veterans Community Living Centers. Betty Mendetti from the Rifle Community Living Center has been honored as the State Employee of the Year. A comment was made by a member of the public who said that he was very impressed with the Rifle Community Living Center. He shared how the Denver Community Living Center staff made special efforts to unite a couple who had been apart for some time. Fox31 recently covered the 70th wedding anniversary of a couple in the Fitzsimmons Community Living Center.

Gail Hoagland: Contracts for the next fiscal year Veterans Trust Fund were sent out. We had a great response for the Veterans Assistance Grant. The majority of Colorado is covered in terms

of Grantees. Project Sanctuary has completed the first ever Peer Support Specialist Training with aid from Veterans Assistance Grant money. Fifteen former homeless veterans are now certified and will be able to work for the VA as a Peer Specialist. Mickey reported that the families at Project Sanctuary looked genuinely happy. A handbook will be provided and webinars available to all Grantees detailing the requirements and changes to the Grants.

Robby Robinson, on behalf of Richard Sandrock: The two Board vacancies have been filled. Army veteran Chris Holden has been reappointed by the Governor. Air Force veteran Hollie K. Caldwell has been appointed and will join the Board in July. Robby nominated Rene Simard for Secretary of the Board, Duane Dailey for Vice Chairman and Dana Niemela for Chairman. The Board voted and unanimously approved the recommended slate. Dana will be the first female and youngest to serve as Chairman of the Board.

The entire Board has to review each application for the Veterans Trust Fund Grants. Robby asked if the subcommittee was essential in reviewing all grant applications prior to the Board reviewing them. Ben commented that the Board would not have enough time to screen all the applicants as in-depth as the subcommittee and that entrusting someone to assist the Board is very important. The subcommittee is very valuable in exchanging ideas and understanding both rural and urban issues. A request was made that the applications no longer be emailed but printed out and mailed to each Board member three weeks ahead of time. Of the 28 applications the Board had to review and score, seven applications were not unanimously voted on and had to be revisited. Rene requested that previous awards be included in the information. Grant money should be for solving problems, not simply given away with no accountability. Grantees will be required to provide a satisfaction survey to each veteran they serve. They need to think about the outcome. Dana would like to be involved in the webinars. Robby mentioned that he would like to see more emphasis on question eight, previous administrative performance on prior VTF Grants and questioned the possible 20 points awarded for State-wide and/or regional/local need for the service provided when he may not be sure of programs in the rural areas due to the fact that he lives in the city. Gail said that during the audit process, we must rely upon what the needs are in a given area in order to determine the priority. Dana explained that question number one, with regards to need for the service provided, aids in not duplicating services in an area. If administrative performance is not properly reported, it will weigh heavily on Dana's scoring and even possibly result in the denial of funds. Duane stated that it is a very subjective item and rural areas, which have fewer staff, get overwhelmed with so many reports to provide various organizations. Gail would like to clearly define each criteria for next year's applicants. During the Board meeting prior to scoring, the criteria will be discussed.

Future Meetings

No meeting in July

7 Aug – VOA Veteran Service Center, 1247 Santa Fe, Denver, CO

11 Sep – Welcome Home Montrose

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Meeting adjourned 11:02am