

**Board Minutes
May 12, 2017
Doubletree Hotel
501 Camino Del Rio
Durango, CO 81301**

Duane Dailey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1014 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
Robert McLaughlin, Member
Pat Hammon, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

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

Guests Present:

Rick Schleeter, La Plata County Service Officer
Raymond Taylor, Archuleta County Service Officer
Donald Wilson, Veterans for Veterans
Larry Jelinek, Veterans for Veterans
Dave Williamson, DAV
Misty Weiser, VOA
Ken Rogers, DAV
Chuck Jordan, Veterans for Veterans
John Moshec, Veterans for Veterans
Talya Fieselmann, VOA
J. King, VOA
W. Tom Zilchaver, Veterans for Veterans
Charlotte Ann Jones, Veterans for Veterans
Alvin Harvey, Fort Lewis College Veterans Club

Darla Sanders, DAV #44 Cortez
Kenneth Craig, Veterans for Veterans
John Albright, Axis Health System
George Usinowicz, FLC Vets Club
Mike Hooker, volunteer
John Reschke, DAV
Mark Sanderson, Veterans for Veterans
Butch Crim, DAV #48

Approval of Minutes from April

Approved.

Hollie Caldwell: Ms. Caldwell has been assisting nursing students at Platte College in Aurora in their outreach to homeless veterans in their community.

Pat Hammon: May is a busy time in Eagle County. Memorial flags are being placed in cemeteries, scholarships are being awarded and color guards present for area graduations.

Robert McLaughlin: Mr. McLaughlin spoke about the Mt. Carmel Center in Colorado Springs. He is also working on the Choice Program.

Rene Simard: The 41st Annual Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon was held on May 5, 2017 at the Doubletree in Denver. Hundreds were in attendance.

Duane Dailey: Mr. Dailey attended the Adjutant General of Colorado Change of Command Ceremony on May 5, 2017 at Buckley Air Force Base. A veterans' town hall meeting was held in Grand Lake last week. The VA Regional Office in Lakewood will send representatives down to the southwest corner of Colorado for a discussion by late summer.

Richard Schleeter: The Choice card is working but provider training is needed for billing and prescriptions issues. Veterans in the four corners area are split between seeing doctors in Colorado and Albuquerque, New Mexico. There currently is not enough affordable housing for the homeless in the area. Axis Health System has been a leading provider in mental health care throughout the region, covering five counties with a staff of around 250. Both Axis Health System and Mr. Schleeter's office are conveniently located in the VA clinic. It has been three years since the Federal VA has held a town hall meeting in the area. Mr. McLaughlin will coordinate a town hall meeting with both Colorado and New Mexico VA personnel. Mr. Schleeter would like to see a Veterans Community Living Center in the four corners area of Colorado. Mr. Mestas explained that is a major construction issue to build one and that the Living Centers are run by Colorado Human Services, but that he will share the concern with Robby Robinson who is a member of the board of Veterans Community Living Centers.

Raymond Taylor: A full time homeless shelter is located in Durango and a part time homeless shelter is available in Cortez. Mr. Taylor has noticed that the Choice program is sending area veterans all over the place. Enrollment is less than 50 percent. Medical transport is a huge issue with many veterans receiving treatment at the Pagosa Springs Hospital rather than travelling 125 miles to the nearest VA clinic.

W. Tom Zilhaver: As grant coordinator, Mr. Zilhaver helps homeless veterans in the Pagosa Springs community where the issue of eligibility comes up often. Mr. Zilhaver asked when grant –supporting documents can be destroyed. Ms. Hoagland explained that for audit purposes, grant information needs to be stored for at least five years but can be stored electronically. Mr. Mestas explained to Mr. Zilhaver that our office has access to DD214s with Colorado being their home of record and Ms. Hammon added that Veteran County Service Officers can request them through the VA office in St. Louis. Funding generated from yard sales, golf tournament and the annual Mountain Rendezvous is used for general expenses such as the Veterans for Veterans monthly breakfast. Charlotte Jones added that Veterans for Veterans also sponsors the fly-fishing outfit Project Healing Waters.

Charlie Parnell: The collaboration between the VOA, Durango DAV, Veterans for Veterans and VFW help provide local veterans with security deposits, rent, groceries and job placement. Mr. Parnell stated that there were over 300 veterans in attendance at the Durango Stand-down with 126 actual homeless vets. The DAV van takes around 900 people per year to Albuquerque for medical appointments. Half of the funding for transportation vans comes from grant money, the other half from DAV National Transportation.

Talya Fieselman: The Volunteers of America assist veterans with housing in the six surrounding counties. Ms. Fieselman stated that a database is needed to check for duplication of services, and one application for regional non-profits. The region's non-profits collaborate effectively to provide move-in kits, emergency housing and bus passes.

A discussion about treating PTSD and sleep insomnia with medical marijuana ensued. The Federal VA has not signed on to marijuana treatment plans.

Mark Anderson thanked everyone at Veterans for Veterans who helped him find temporary housing.

Ms. Hoagland explained to everyone that the grant money will be available once the Governor signs the Long Bill. This year the Tobacco Fund dipped by 15 percent.

Ms. Caldwell asked how the non-profits track housing sustainability for grant reporting. The veteran has to reapply for housing assistance each year. A brief discussion ensued about Hud Vash vouchers and affordable handicap apartments.

The Board recessed at 12:04 p.m. and resumed labor at 12:45 p.m.

Reuben Mestas: The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado is anticipating broken irrigation pipes following this year's thaw. The Governor still has not signed the Long Bill. The USS Colorado submarine grant will go through the department. Another fund increase for County Service Officers is in the works. Due to the spring thaw, irrigation pipes are breaking at the Grand Junction Cemetery.

Gail Hoagland: Ms. Hoagland thanked everyone in attendance and personally thanked Charlie Parnell for coordinating today's meeting.

Future Meetings

June 2 Board Meeting, Community Living Center in Rifle, 9 a.m.

Old Business

New Business

The annual Board retreat will be coordinated during June's Board meeting. It was suggested that it be held the night before the August meeting in Fort Lyons. With Mr. Simard departing, there will be a vacant slot on the Board come July.

It was suggested that the Board meets in July. Mr. Mestas stated that there is no requirement to the number of meetings the Board holds. The majority of Board members agreed to break this July.

The Board has been invited to attend a one hour presentation on aerial firefighting at an airport four miles away from the Community Living Center in Rifle. The optional presentation will be set up through Ms. Hammon to follow the June Board meeting. Ms. Hammon recommended the Hampton Inn in Rifle for any overnight stays.

Mickey Hunt is working with Senator Michael Bennett to change the veteran's percentage requirement for Community Living Centers.

Meeting adjourned 1:09pm