

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

May 5, 2023

Bill Daniels Veterans Service Center

Denver, CO

CD 1

Opening

Ms. Hammon called the meeting to order at 0900. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was held for POWs, MIAs, those deployed, their families, and those killed in the line of duty.

Members Present

Pat Hammon, Chair

Sheila Scanlon, Vice-Chair

Lacey Golonka, Secretary

Longinos Gonzalez, Member

Sean Maday, Member

Jasmine Motupalli, Member

Raymond Taylor, Member

Staff Present

Angela Ingalls, VMC Director

Amy Demenge, State Women's Veterans Service Officer

Lisa Stamm, CDVA Grants Administrator

Kristy Cunningham, State Veterans Service Officer-Southwest

Dominic Edginton, State Veterans Service Officer-Northwest

Glen Marciniak, State Veterans Service Officer-Northeast

Drew Stem, State Veterans Service Officer-Central

Carissa Snyder, CDVA Program Assistant

Beth Maxwell, CDVA Administrative Assistant/WROS Interim Administrator

Theresa Doody, WROS Support Representative

Guests Present

Marti Crockett, UVC Second Vice President, President-Elect

Destry DeWolf, Huerfano County Veterans Service Officer

Travis Gale, Kit Carson County Veterans Service Officer
Josh Medina, Arapahoe County Veterans Service Officer
Cindy Meyer, Teller County Veterans Service Officer
Richard Nagley, Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley
Gerald Renner, American Legion Post 11, Trinidad
Sheldon Smith, Montrose/Ouray Counties Veterans Service Officer

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to the draft of the April 2023 minutes were provided by Ms. Hammon, Mr. Maday, Ms. Motupalli, Ms. Scanlon, and Mr. Taylor.

Ms. Scanlon moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Ms. Motupalli seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comments

Mr. Nagley asked if there were any updates regarding actions taken in response to the audit findings. Ms. Hammon's response is that the Board has been working on their audit findings by collecting issues faced by Colorado veterans at each meeting, which will be incorporated into the annual report. The Board is also revising the request it sends to other state agencies for information for the annual report. The new request will ask those agencies about issues and concerns in their veteran audience in addition to the traditionally provided outputs.

State VSO Reports

Northeast VSO: Mr. Marciniak said that April outreach included weekly regional conference calls, the monthly HCS call in Cheyenne County, local VFW meetings, and conferences for of the City and County Managers Association and the National Guard Association of Colorado at the end of the month. Opportunities and training include training the new VSO in Kit Carson County, VBMS training for county VSOs on 10 April, observing BVA hearings, Wednesday coffee time trainings, and planning spring and summer outreach events with county VSOs. Accomplishments include finalization of the VSO Reference Guide and good news in the appointment of an RN and CCN facilitator for the Burlington CBOC. Issues include difficulties with new VA PIV cards and health care transportation for veterans.

Central VSO: Mr. Stem said that April outreach included conferences for the City and County Managers Association and the National Guard Association of Colorado. Opportunities include the availability of veteran peer support service through the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC.

Good news includes a commitment from Denver County to add an additional VSO. Issues are VSO caseloads in the metro area and the onset of conference season, which requires more time away from the office.

Southwest VSO: Ms. Cunningham said that April outreach included the monthly veteran collaborative, the monthly women veteran meetings, and the monthly state-tribal liaison team meeting. Opportunities include training with the Women's VSO, LMS entry and management, and attendance at the Montrose Town hall. Accomplishments include the progress made on the Policy and Procedures manual and on the audit findings. Issues are no veteran directed care in the region, the lack of a DEERS office, limited shelter, lack of transportation for homeless veterans, lack of response from the Albuquerque VAMC in regard to town halls, and staffing issues at the VA Vet Centers.

Northwest VSO: Mr. Edginton said that April outreach included a Veterans Resource Tour in Delta on 12 April, BeaconFest on 20 April, and the NGACO conference.

Southeast VSO: No report

Old Business

None

New Business

Ms. Hammon said that as she has been elected as Second Vice President of UVC, she is no longer able to represent the Board at that body. Ms. Scanlon volunteered to represent the Board at UVC moving forward.

Strategic Plan

Ms. Hammon said that Mr. Bruno recommended a dedicated session to work on the strategic plan rather than spreading it over several meetings. She said the upcoming Board training and retreat might be an opportunity. The Board agreed to discuss this under upcoming meetings.

Standing Reports

DVA: Mr. Callahan provided a written report. It included DVA's requests to the Board from the Veterans Trust Fund for FY 2024-2025 as well as updates on personnel, outreach, organizational development, and the Division's WIG and key measures for the next fiscal year. The Division requested funding for Board travel, capital improvements to the cemetery, VetraSpec licenses, and a statewide veteran identification project. These items were to be considered under VTF

funding decisions. In personnel updates, the interviews are complete for the Veterans Services Supervisor and the WROS property administrator. The announcement for the DEERS specialist closes on 05 May. The announcements for the WROS support representative and the administrative assistant vacancy at the VARO office closed on 20 March and the Division is waiting for the referral lists. The position descriptions for Training and Organizational Development, the Grants Program Assistant I, and the VMC Program Assistant II are awaiting HR approval. Beth Maxwell is continuing to serve as the interim property administrator at the WROS. The Division has provided operations overviews to the Colorado City and County Managers Association and the National Guard Association of Colorado in April, and will do so at the Colorado Counties Incorporated spring conference at the end of May. The Division conducted a strategic planning summit on 29 April. The VSO Resource Guide has a publication date of 01 June and Policy and Procedure Manual of 01 July. The WIG for the upcoming fiscal year will be DMVA WIG 1 and reads as follows:

DMVA WIG 1: Improve Veterans' service engagement experience 10% by June 30, 2025, as measured by a 5% Net Promotor Score improvement in FY 23-24 and an additional 5% Net Promotor Score improvement in FY 24-25.

- **Key Measure 1:** Increase accredited Veteran Service Officers 12% by June 30, 2025, as measured by a 6% increase in FY23-24 and an additional 6% increase in FY24-25. Baseline is 78%.
- **Key Measure 2:** Increase VBMS access 10% by June 30, 2025, as measured by a 6% increase in FY 23-24 and an additional 4% increase in FY 24-25. Baseline is 41%.
- **Key Measure 3:** DVA participates in 200 community outreach events with their federal VA, state, regional, and county partner's events by June 30, 2025, as measured by participating in 100 community outreach events by June 30, 2024 and an additional 100 community events by June 30, 2025.
- **Key Measure 4:** DVA identifies and resolves 20 gaps in service across the state by June 30, 2025, as measured by resolving 10 gaps in service by June 30, 2024 and an additional 10 gaps in service by June 30, 2025.
- **Key Measure 5:** Improve grant program execution rate by 10% by June 30, 2025, as measured by a 6% increase in FY 23-24 and an additional 4% increase in FY 24-25. Baseline is VTF-87% / VAG-88%

WROS: Ms. Maxwell said that the Western Region One Source will have a vacancy as of 01 June and is vetting a possible new tenant. They will host a legal clinic over the summer and have resumed smart phone training. The Administrator position, triage assistant, and DEERS operator are all still vacant. Mr. Maday asked if Joanne Iglesias had received the Board's letter of appreciation and Ms. Hammon confirmed that she did.

VMC: Ms. Ingalls said that the Torpedo static display at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery is in the beginning stages of repair. The repair on wall footing of the admin building has been completed. The Army Jeep went for repairs and is currently with the mechanic. The new phones are still unable to take incoming calls. The stipend program has \$2,425.00 remaining for the fiscal year. Two of the four position descriptions required for new hires and position re-writes have been submitted to Human Resources for review.

Grants: Ms. Stamm said that VTF grant review committee met on 27 April. She had a conference call with Jennifer Lockwood regarding the VAG Sunset Review on 12 April. She conducted five grantee check-ins during the month of April, Payments continue to be slow. The position description for the new Program Assistant for Grants was submitted to Human Resources.

The Board recessed from 10:35 to 10:45

Board Member Remarks

Mr. Maday had no remarks.

Ms. Golonka said she recently joined the VFW Post 1 Foundation. This foundation leads the capital campaign for the post's Veteran Community Center renovation and for community programs, including the Veterans Arts Council. She is now on the Burn Pit Registry and will begin exams.

Ms. Scanlon said that the Women's Marine Association has expended their VAG funding. They received a modification increase earlier in the year.

Ms. Motupalli said that she recently referred a spouse in crisis to a local VSO with success. She has recorded an episode of a veterans' podcast that will air approximately 30 May, featuring her experience as an academy cadet and as a black woman in the military

Mr. Gonzalez said 07 April the he attended the ribbon cutting at the expansion of the ECHSC clinic in Colorado Springs on 07 April. On April 12, he attended a press conference at Mount Carmel held by Senator Hickenlooper regarding the PACT Act and its effects, and how the federal VA can assist veterans On 17 April, local Chamber's Military Affairs Council Hail and

Farewell. The council bid farewell to Space Command Army General Dickinson and to Air Force General VanHerck.

Mr. Taylor referred the Board to Ms. Cunningham’s report on difficulties with the Albuquerque VAMC. Veterans in his area are affected because of the long commute for health care and C&P exams; early appointments can be difficult to accommodate. The Farmington Vet Center has no counselors. There are a few in Pagosa Springs but their services were offered through the Vet Center, so it is not known whether that will continue. The continuing issues are transportation and cost of living.

Ms. Hammon said that she recently met with Frank Lahtinen from Operation Veteran Strong has been visiting various counties. They have created a dashboard of veterans; services that may fill the need for an information clearinghouse in Colorado. She continues to be active with the ASCEND project. Data from the project has been released and she shared some key details with the Board, including: one in four veterans has experience suicidal ideation, suicidal ideation is more frequently reported by women veterans than by men veterans, the suicide rate among women veterans is 37% and among men veterans it is 23%, and the highest number of attempts is among younger veterans, in the 18-49 age category.

Veterans Issues

Ms. Hammon said issues captured at the meeting were difficulties with VA PIV cards and VBMS access, transportation for veterans to access health care, staffing issues at the Vet Centers in Farmington and Grand Junction, nexus statements from VHA, access to mental health providers, internet access at the Division office at the VARO, and prompt payments to grantees.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for June 2 at the La Quinta Inn in Limon (CD 3). It will be the election of officers. For the July meeting, Ms. Hammon recommended flying into Steamboat Springs and renting a vehicle for the trip to Craig. Ms. Snyder will get a price quote.

June 2 – Lincoln County (Limon) - elections	CD 4
July 7 –Moffatt County (Craig)	CD 3
August 4 – Pueblo County (Pueblo)	CD 3
September 7-8 –Eagle County (Eagle) – retreat	CD 3
October 6 – Mesa County (Grand Junction)	CD 1
November 3 – Denver County (Sobriety House)	CD 1

The Board recessed from 11:30 to 12:15.

VTF Grant Funding Decisions

The Board was advised that the VTF Grant has \$1,191,658 available to award. They first considered the funding requests submitted by the Division:

1. Board Travel - \$15,000

This amount has been used for Board travel annually since 2020. The Board unanimously voted to approve this amount.

Decision: Fund at \$15,000

2. VMC improvements (upper pond fencing, west shop concrete addition) - \$61,500

The Board acknowledged one of the statutory missions of the VTF Grant is to fund improvements to state veterans' cemeteries. The Board unanimously voted to approve this amount.

Decision: Fund at \$61,500

3. VSO claims management system (VetraSpec) - \$42,000

The Board acknowledged the difficulty experienced by some county offices in providing funds for these licenses. The conclusion was to pay for county licenses only and let state licenses be paid from the Division's operating budget. The Board unanimously voted to pay for 89 county licenses, to support the 85 current licenses and to account for four vacancies.

Decision: Fund at \$39,512 for county licenses only

4. Statewide Veteran identification project (phone, address, email) - \$187,000

The Board expressed concern over privacy issues for veteran who might not wish to be identified and sought clarification on what would be done with the information once obtained. The conclusion was to refer these questions to the Division and not to fund the project at this time.

Decision: Do not fund at this time

The Board next considered the applications from the VCLCs:

VTF24-16 VCLC Fitzsimons

Recommended Funding: \$28,150

Amount Requested: \$28,150

These grant funds would fund 75 chairs for activity rooms. The VTF committee recommended funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund it at \$28,150.

Decision: Fund at \$28,150

VTF24-17 VCLC Homelake

Amount Requested: \$92,210

These grant funds would fund a park pavilion for residents and guests. Due to the amount of the request, the VTF Committee has asked Ms. Stamm to ask the applicant whether the project could be accomplished with partial funding. Ms. Stamm reported to Board that according to the application it could not. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application at \$92,210.

Decision: Fund at \$92,210

VTF24-18 VCLC McCandless

Amount Requested: \$36,269.19

These grant funds would fund an outdoor railroad garden, items for the coffee bar, the annual Scandent subscription, and training of a certified therapy dog for the facility. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund it at \$36,269.

Decision: Fund at \$36,269

VTF24-19 VCLC Rifle

Amount Requested: \$63,407

These grant funds would fund tabletops, bases and chairs for dining room tables. The VTF Committee had asked Ms. Stamm to ask the applicant whether the items could be purchased over multiple grant years. Ms. Stamm reported that the applicant said that was possible. With funds available the Board unanimously voted to proceed with funding the application in full.

Decision: Fund at \$63,407

VTF24-20 VCLC Spanish Peaks

Recommended Funding: \$27,842

Amount Requested: \$27,842.76

These grant funds would fund vital sign monitors, wheelchair scales, a barbecue grill, and patio furniture. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full. Several Board

members questions why The Department of Human Services was not funding medical equipment, such as vital sign monitors and wheelchair scales. The consensus was that this should be part of the agency budget. The Board voted unanimously to fund this application in the amount of \$11,209, to pay for the barbecue grill and patio furniture.

Decision: Fund at \$11,209

The applications from veterans service organizations were then considered in numerical order.

VTF24-01 American Legion Post 0009

Amount Requested: \$25,000

Area Served: Bent, Crowley, Otero Counties

Average Score: 81.7

These grant funds would be used for transportation and financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full, due to the facts that it performs well and provides an essential service. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in the amount requested.

Decision: Fund in full at \$25,000

VTF24-02 American Legion Post 11

Amount Requested \$31,668.05

Area Served: Las Animas County

Average Score: 74.2

These grant funds would be used for medical transportation and for financial assistance including housing, emergency assistance, utilities, and behavioral health. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application at \$26,000. The current grant award is \$20,000, and the committee said that while the application supports additional funding, a modest increase might be more manageable. They also noted that there are other applicants also serving Las Animas County. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$26,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$26,000

VTF24-03 American Legion Post 12063

Amount requested \$60,200

Area Served: Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Pueblo counties

Average Score: 86.3

These grant funds would be used for emergency financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application at \$60,000, the amount of the current grant award. The committee noted that the budgeted costs may have some supplication with other applications, but that the area served has a high cost of living. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$60,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$60,000

VTF24-04 American Legion Post 170

Amount Requested \$100,000

Area Served: Custer, Fremont, Pueblo, and Huerfano counties

Average Score: 67.7

These grant funds would be used for emergency financial assistance. This is a new applicant. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in part at \$40,000. There are other grantees serving this area and the amount requested might be high for a new grantee. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$40,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$40,000

VTF24-05 American Legion Post 2

Recommended Funding: \$30,000

Amount requested \$43,375

Area Served: Pueblo, Huerfano, Las Animas Counties

Average Score: 68.3

These grant funds would be used for emergency financial assistance and a local Stand Down. This is a returning applicant. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in part at \$30,000, with \$5,000 designated for the Stand Down. The application indicates a lack of relationship with the local VSO, and there is a VAG applicant also requesting funding for the same Stand Down. The committee's recommendation was designed to foster collaboration between the two agencies in regard to the Stand Down. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$30,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$30,000 (\$5,000 for Stand Down)

VTF24-06 American Legion Post 22

Amount Requested \$60,000

Area Served: Adams, Jefferson, Weld, Boulder, Larimer

Average Score: 74.2

These grant funds would be used for housing and financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in part at \$50,000. The committee and the Board noted that the application lacked detail, including the omission of a breakdown of expenses. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$40,000.

Decision: Fund in part \$50,000

VTF24-07 American Legion Post 44

Amount Requested \$4,161

Area Served: Routt, Hayden, Oak Creek, Steamboat Springs, Moffatt, Jackson counties

Average Score: 81.8

These grant funds would be used for medical transportation and financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full. The consensus of the committee was to recommend funding this application in full at \$4,161. The Board unanimously voted to fund it in the round amount of \$4,200.

Decision: Fund in full at \$4,200

VTF24-08 American Legion Post 62

Amount Requested: \$8,000

Area Served: Moffat County, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties

Average Score: 70.3

These grant funds would be used for transportation and financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full, with a caveat to the applicant that funds can only be used to serve Colorado veterans. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in full at \$8,000.

Decision: Fund in full at \$8,000

VTF24-09 American Legion Post 67

Amount Requested: \$40,000

Area Served: Larimer, Berthoud, Estes Park, Loveland

Average Score: 69.7

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, food assistance, retreats, and the Loveland Stand Down. This is a returning applicant. The VTF Committee made no

recommendation on this application, having asked Ms. Stamm to follow up with the applicant to verify that the retreat funding would contain only eligible costs. Ms. Stamm was able to confirm. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$32,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$32,000

VTF24-10 American Legion Post 75

Amount Requested \$51,000

Area Served: Montezuma, Dolores, La Plata counties

Average Score: 68.8

These grant funds would be used for transportation, financial assistance, car repairs, medical and dental expenses, and mental health care. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in part at \$45,000. The application was missing the required attachments and did not mention survey data or participation. The Board unanimously voted to fund this application in part at \$45,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$45,000

VTF24-11 American Legion Post 88

Amount Requested \$35,000

Area Served: Grand, Summit, Jackson, Chaffee, Eagle, Routt, Park Counties

Average Score: 78.3

These grant funds would be used for transportation, financial assistance, and health care. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current award is \$35,000. The VTF Committee recommended funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund this application in full at \$35,000.

Decision: Fund in full at \$35,000

VTF24-13 DAV Chapter 44

Amount Requested \$78,900

Area Served: Montezuma, Dolores, La Plata counties

Average Score: 83

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, employment, and rec center passes. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current award is \$61,364, including a modification increase of \$11,364. The VTF committee recommended this application

in part at \$62,000. Due to the need in the area, the Board agreed to increase funding and voted unanimously to fund this application at \$65,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$65,000

VTF24-14 DAV Chapter 21

Recommended Funding: \$22,500

Amount Requested \$22,550

Area Served: Denver Metro

Average Score: 77.7

These grant funds would be used for housing, transportation, electric wheelchair lifts, and canteen books for VA patients. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current award is \$26,364, including a modification increase of \$11,364. The consensus of the committee was to recommend funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund this application at \$22,550.

Decision: Fund in full at \$22,550

VTF24-15 DAV Chapter 48

Amount requested \$59,250

Area Served: La Plata, San Juan, Archuleta, Mineral counties

Average Score: 68.5

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, mental health, rec center passes, and transportation. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current award is \$20,000 including a modification decrease. The consensus of the committee was to recommend funding this application at \$40,000. The Board expressed concern about the size of the requested increase. The members unanimously voted to fund this application at \$35,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$35,000

VTF24-21 VFW Post 2788

Amount Requested: \$15,000

Area Served: Fremont, Custer, Pueblo counties

Average Score: 72.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, housing, mental health, medical, transportation, and a Stand Down. This is a new applicant. The Board acknowledged that while there are other grantees in the area, the applicant sufficiently detailed how partnerships are

employed to avoid duplications of service. The VTF committee recommended funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund this application at \$15,000.

Decision: Fund in full at \$15,000

VTF24-23 VFW Post 3571

Amount Requested: \$4,500

Area Served: Delta County

Average Score: 57.8

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance. This is a new applicant. The application was not complete or submitted correctly and the narrative section had gaps. The Board noted that there are no other applicants from Delta County. The consensus of the committee was to recommend funding this application in part at \$3,500. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund at that amount.

Decision: Fund in part at \$3,500

VTF24-23 VFW Post 4031

Amount Requested: \$25,000

Area Served: La Plata, Archuleta, Dolores, Mineral, Montezuma, San Juan counties

Average Score: 81.6

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance and for the post relief fund. This is a new applicant. The Board observed that while there are several applicants from this geographic area, the applicant appears to have good partnership to avoid service duplication. The VTF committee recommended funding this application at \$20,000. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund at that amount.

Decision: Fund in part at \$20,000

VTF24-24 VFW Post 4051

Amount Requested: \$50,000

Area Served: El Paso County

Average Score: 60.4

These grant funds would be used for financial assistance, mental health, substance abuse, transportation, and health and well-being. This is a new applicant. The Board expressed concern about a lack of supporting detail in the application. The VTF committee recommended funding

this application at \$20,000. The Board considered the large veteran population in the area and unanimously voted to fund it at \$25,000.

Decision: Fund in part at \$25,000

VTF24-25 VFW Post 5843

Amount Requested: \$3,850

Area Served: Northwestern Colorado, Rio Blanco County

Average Score: 77.6

These grant funds would be used for transportation and financial assistance. This current grantee is compliant with good performance. The current award is \$3,750. The VTF committee recommended funding this application in full. The Board concurred and unanimously voted to fund this application at \$3,850.

Decision: Fund in full at \$3,850

VTF24-26 VFW Post 5231

Amount Requested: \$70,000

Area Served: Montezuma, Mesa, Montrose, Dolores, La Plata counties

Average Score: 83.4

These grant funds would be used for a Stand Down, transportation, financial assistance, health and well-being. This current grantee is compliant with excellent performance. The VTF committee recommended funding this application at \$60,000. The Board concluded that the increase was warranted to the documented need and the grantee's performance. It unanimously voted to fund this application in full at \$70,000.

Decision: Fund in full at \$70,000

Total Awarded: \$962,307

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.