



UNITED VETERANS' COALITION OF COLORADO

ZOOM UVC General Membership Meeting, 9:30am

May 14, 2024

Call to order – United Veterans Coalition President **Marti Crockett**, Moment of Silence for POWs and MIAs & Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – **Dick Wilson** – eight primary members are present.

Financial Report – **Tom Yagley** – not on the agenda but **Tom Yagley** provided a copy. As of 04/01/2024, there was a beginning balance of \$52,897.52. There were no deposits. There were withdrawals in the amount of \$1,350.00. On 04/30/2024, there was an ending balance of \$51,547.52 .

UVC State Legislative Update – **Shelly Kalkowski** – she wants everyone to get lists of concerns to her. They had a wrap-up and went through the goals of 2023 and 2024. Three out of six bills were passed. They were HB-1273: Sunset Continue Veterans Assistant Grant Program; HB24-1076: Purple Star School Program; and HB24-1236: Women Veterans Appreciation Day. They are tracking twenty-one different bills, eighteen of which were signed by the Governor.

UVC Federal Legislative Update – **Steve Kjonaas** – there was only one senator who didn't sponsor yet. No companies will give a chance of disability to veterans. It is up to the VA. He spoke about HR 2955 – Suicide Prevention Act. He also talked about veterans applying for benefits when getting off active duty. There is not much to talk about from the American Legion. **Grace Sweeney** also spoke. She discussed whether staffing was a problem due to high turnover. In Colorado Springs, there is no good presentation system. Everything is all spread out for services. **Karen Hone** will be co-sponsoring a job and resume fair on 09/25/2024 at Mount Carmel.

Dr. Tina Garcia, DAV/PVA Legislative Chair spoke. There will be a convention held in Aurora 05/14/2024 until 05/18/2024. She spoke about the DAV Resolution 3%. The VA is continuing to improve their services. The bill will increase the number of veteran services officers. She also introduced **Fred Downs, Jr.**, who is a Vietnam paralyzed veteran.

Tom Lindahl, MOAA, had no updates. On 05/16/2024, Moffatt County will be at the VFW Post in Craig starting at 5:00pm for one hour.



CO Board of Veterans' Affairs – **Sheila Scanlon** – there will be a community meeting on 06/07/2024 in Monte Vista. They approved the trust fund grants. She is tracking veteran homelessness and veterans getting in touch with VSOs.

ECHS Director – **Amir Faroqi**, one of their responsibilities is processing patients for surgery. They are making sure the patients are being taken care of. Their highest priority is their patients. There is no hiring freeze at the VA. The VA has high standards. He had a lot of updates to discuss. On 05/17/2024, there is an arts festival. The DAV has been improving their transportation. He spoke about numerous projects at length.

Regional Director – no report.

1st Vice President – **Rick Lewis** (substituting for Bob McLaughlin) – no report.

Homefront Military Network – **Kate Hatten**, Executive Director – her office is in Colorado Springs. The company connects military service members, and veterans and their families to quality resources.

State Veterans CLC – **Pat Hammon** – not present.

New Business – **Dick Wilson** – there are four new members. They are:

AMVETS of CO – **Todd Miller** (not present) – provides support to veterans of CO.

Rise of Lions – **Rob Decker** (not present) – builds mental health and recovery centered around softball teams.

Mount Carmel Veterans Service Center – **Bob McLaughlin** (not present) – provides transition and employment assistance to veterans.

Red Rocks Community College – **Heather DeSpain** – administers VA and DOD education benefits.

Announcements: The next general membership meeting date is TBD.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Golding, Secretary