

There were 82 participants on the call.

**United Veterans Coalition of Colorado  
General Meeting by ZOOM  
Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
9:00am**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order** – President Dennis Orr called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

**Invocation & Moment of Silence for POWs and MIAs** – Dr. Diane Ricci, Lt. Col. , Chaplain, Jefferson County VSO

**Pledge of Allegiance** – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Dick Young led the Pledge.

**Roll Call** – Dick Wilson read this. These primary organization members were absent: American GI Forum, Gold Star Wives, Jewish War Veterans, PVA, TREA.

**Rocky Mountain Regional Medical Center** – Teresa di Bella reported that two off-site clinics were open for vaccinations: Colorado Springs and Aurora. Paul Gremse inquired about installing a call-back feature given the volume, and Teresa will look into this idea.

**VBA** – Chris Holly introduced the new director of the VBA: Michael Rohrbach 202-209-4787.

**VA Western Colorado Health Care System** – Kayla Holst introduced herself and reported that they have given ten thousand doses of the vaccine to veterans. All are now eligible to get the vaccine.

**Honor Bell Foundation** – Chris Boyer, Executive Director, made a brief presentation about the operations and mission of the Foundation. The bell is 1,000 pounds, American made with artifacts from all wars embedded in the cast. The bell tolls at memorial services by and for veterans; their goal is to get a bell in every national cemetery. It is headquartered at Ft. Logan National Cemetery. By rendering honors such as tolling the bell, they represent dignity, honor and respect for veterans. Chris Boyer then asked for help in these ways: fundraising, invite them to give a presentation to your organization, like them on Facebook, and perhaps volunteer to participate in the tolling service. Chris Boyer can be reached at 303-241-9980.

**State Legislative Committee** – Dan Jablan, Shelly Kalkowski and Robby Robinson all participated in this report. Dan Jablan noted that the session is half over, and that they will probably have a special session as well. Rep. David Ortiz is being extremely helpful with bills that UVC is supporting. Shelly and Robby briefly reviewed the bills that interest UVC, ones which the organization is supporting. A complete list can be found on the web page, [www.uvcoc.org](http://www.uvcoc.org) Robby reported that they are trying to get funds restored for veterans' accounts; 7.9 million was taken from the Ft. Logan land sale, 3 million from the veterans' trust fund and 1 million from the veterans' assistance grants funds. The legislature took these when it appeared that the budget shortfall was going to be much greater than it turned out to be. Robby would like to see the money restored with interest.

**Federal Legislative Committee** – Dennis Churgovich had emailed out an update, which indicated his group is tracking over 300 bills. Dennis thanked Maria Secrest for her help; she is now an aide to Congressman Ken Buck, and was formerly with Senator Cory Gardner.

**Update on UVC Banquet** – Dick Young announced the following:

- Tickets are easy to purchase on the web
- We are starting to offer a \$40 discount on the purchase of 4 tickets to American Legion members, plus UVC associate members and VFW members
- The flyer has been distributed to all UVC members and is hopefully being passed on to their membership
- Sponsors are still being solicited
- Donations greatly needed for Silent Auction
- Kristen Born suggests inviting district judges and the chief judge of the veterans' treatment courts.

**Treasurer's Report** – Paul Gremse reported that the checking account balance as of March 31, with the additional deposits he had of \$3200, was \$44,889.37.

**RMR Director** Michael Kilmer – Mr. Kilmer reported that they are actively identifying people who got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to track any side effects.

**Fundraising Committee** – Steve Estle asked the group's help in connecting his committee members with good contacts, e.g. perhaps veteran-owned businesses that you might frequent. He was not asking members to do the solicitation, but merely to be the "connectors" to possible donors and/or sponsors. He noted that they are working on a video about UVC that could be posted on the web page to tell what UVC does.

**Communications Committee** – Geri Adams reported that the UVC Clearinghouse Calenda is up and running. This will allow UVC member organizations to post registration and program information about their events. This will cut down on their time and expense in publicizing events. The web developer that had promised pro bono work on the page has been let go, and improvements are now being done in-house.

## **Regional Vice Presidents**

Sen. Larry Crowder – no report

Pat Hammon – They are dealing with some negative attitudes about getting the vaccine, especially now with the Johnson & Johnson situation.

Richard Nagley – The "Tiger Team" for the DVA re-organization finished their mission, but are now being called back to work on regionalization of the department. The suicide prevention committee will be presenting their report to the Executive Committee.

Bob McLaughlin – No report

**CDVA** – Joanne Iglesias described the new structure of the department, which will be regionalized in order to provide better service to each portion of the state. No specific locations have been selected to date, but they plan to add three additional field offices besides Denver.

**VCLC** – Robby Robinson said they (VCLC commission) went to the Joint Budget Committee to try to persuade them not to take veterans' programs operating funds. They are still awaiting a verdict on this. Robby also noted:

- Homelake is 100% vaccinated, and 70% of staff across the board are vaccinated
- They can take admissions if the person is 2 weeks out from their last shot
- There is no requirement to have served either in wartime or in a foreign land
- Veterans with a 70% disability are admitted free of charge
- Residents do not have to stay forever; they can do short-term rehab

**Congressional Representatives** each gave a very brief report:

Brendan from Sen. Bennet's office

Maria Secret from Cong. Buck

Gabriel Ballejos from Cong. Lamborn

**Benediction** – Lt. Col. Diane Ricci

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25am.

Karen A. Hone  
Secretary