

There were 72 participants on the call.

United Veterans Coalition of Colorado
General Meeting by ZOOM
Tuesday, May 11, 2021
9:00am

MINUTES

Call to Order – President Dennis Orr called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Invocation – Dr. Diane Ricci, Chaplain, Jefferson County VSO

Pledge of Allegiance – 1st Vice President Dick Young

1st Time Guests – Russ Miller, U.S. Marine Corps, Anthony Archer, Veteran Sheepdogs of America

Roll Call – Dick Wilson 12 of the 13 primary member organizations were present; Jewish War Veterans was absent

Dick introduced a new associate member, Mike Wheaton from Helping Heroes. He will be voted on next month.

ECHS & VARO Director Reports – Chris Holly, no report. Director Kilmer will join the meeting later.

Treasurer's Report – No report

State Legislative Committee – Shelly Kalkowski reviewed the bills that UVC is supporting or monitoring. Robby Robinson said they are hoping to restore the monies taken from both the Veterans' Trust Fund and the Veterans' Assistance Fund, which was done to stem the shortfall due to COVID. He noted that there is money available for the grants.

Federal Legislative Committee – Dennis Churgovich – A summary report emailed out before the meeting.

Banquet – Karen Hone

- 175 people have registered to date
- Ticket price increases May 21 from \$75 to \$95
- Dress rehearsal with the hotel A/V staff and Cliff Lawson was very successful; this is for the virtual (zoom) component that evening
- Silent auction items are needed; Marti Crockett is chairing it this year
- The new keynote speaker is Brigadier General Scott Sherman (BG Clellan called to active duty)
- Encourage everyone to buy their tickets, publicize that we are seeking sponsors and advertisers

ECHS – Director Michael Kilmer

- Announced construction is about to begin on the new PTSD clinic; it should be finished in July 2022
- It will be 18,000 square feet, and next to the Fisher House

- The de-commissioning of the old VA facility has been approved; the GSA will partner with the VA to sell it, but keep 5 acres for the VA
- With unprecedented growth for healthcare in Colorado Springs, the Union Boulevard clinic has opened
- As a result of veteran input, the VA is scheduling several calls to “listen” to veterans about their care; the first one is May 20 at 1:00pm
- Vaccinations are still only 2/3 done, and they are starting to make personal calls to schedule appointments for veterans
- Spouses and caregivers can be vaccinated as well

Fundraising Committee – Steve Estle reported that they have been counting on \$15,000 from Bellco, but now it is uncertain. He stressed again the importance of personal contacts in the fundraising process, and encouraged people to pass on contact information on possible donors.

Nominating Committee – Jim Craig presented the following nominations:

- President – Dick Young
- 1st Vice President – Open seat
- 2nd Vice President – Marti Crockett

He noted that there was a candidate for 1st Vice President who dropped out just recently. He asked for nominations from the floor for 1st Vice President, and these people were nominated:

- Larry Carroll nominated Steve Kjonaas, who declined
- Dennis Churgovich nominated Shelly Kalkowski, who declined
- Ida Tholen nominated Bernie Rogoff, who said he would think about it

Jim Craig moved (and Les Kennedy seconded) that further discussion on this topic be postponed until the June meeting. Motion passed.

Regional Vice Presidents

Sen. Larry Crowder – No report

Pat Hammon

- Western Slope is busy planning Memorial Day activities
- A company called Ascend is surveying community risk factors that contribute to possible suicides. There is a higher rate of veteran suicides who are outside the VA system. This survey may help provide some useful information.

Richard Nagley – He reminded everyone of the listening call(s) that are scheduled.

Communications Committee – No report

CBVA – Pat Hammon said the grant money is definitely going out.

DMVA - The “Tiger Team” has been disbanded and they are hiring a new director. They have a new map showing 5 field offices.

Senior Lobby – Bob Epstein encouraged everyone to watch the webinars on aging, found on their website: www.coloradoseniorlobby.org

Congressional Staffers

Sen. Bennet – Brenden Konczal

Sen. Bennet, along with Sen. Hickenlooper and Rep Lamborn, are looking at the data used to move the Space Force to Alabama

He is also following the sexual harassment bill titled the Vanessa Guillen Act

Sen. Bennet is also interested in getting veterans into energy jobs

Rep. DeGette – Jack Murphy

May 15 is Armed Services Day, and they are opening their academy nominations then

Rep. Crow – Emily Amador

He hopes people will support the bill to name the Amache Detention Center a National Park

VCLC – Rose Campbell Following up the needs assessment, CDHS has assembled teams to prioritize efforts going forward. All homes now have in-person visits available.

There is a new administrator in Rifle, Ashley Trujillo. All homes are taking admissions at this time.

Western Colorado Healthcare – Kayla Holst They are getting a substance abuse treatment center in their building and are ready to hire at least 20 staff. Shelly Kalkowski

Asked when the crisis hotline will be active; Kayla will check and get back to her.

Resolution on Hyperbaric Treatment – Robby Robinson noted that any action on such a resolution would have to go to the State Legislative Committee, and to date, No information has been available.

President Dennis Orr commented that the June meeting may be in-person, as well as having a Zoom component. That is when the new officers will be elected and installed, taking over their offices as of July 1.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Karen A. Hone
Secretary

