

Minutes for Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission

April 24, 2019 – Pocatello, Idaho

Call to Order

The quarterly meeting of the Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission was held on Wednesday, April 24, 2019, at the Idaho State Veteran Home in Pocatello. It began at 8:30 a.m. and was presided over by Chairman **Melvin Napier**.

Attendees

Commission Members in attendance included: **Melvin Napier, Jinny Cash, Leo Dub, Art Gimpel** and **Patrick Grace**.

IDVS Staff Members in attendance included: IDVS Deputy Administrator **Tracy Schaner**, IDVS Business Support Services Bureau Chief **Paul Spannkebel**, IDVS Financial Officer **Debbie Spence**, ISVH-Boise Administrator **Rick Holloway**, ISVH-Pocatello Administrator **Josiah Dahlstrom**, State Veterans Cemetery Bureau Chief **James Earp**, Veterans Education/State Approving Agency Bureau Chief **Doug Jacobson**, Office of Veterans Advocacy Bureau Chief **Bill Heyob**, and IDVS Administrative Assistant **Mitzi Cheldelin**.

ISVH-Lewiston Administrator **Mark High** joined the meeting via telephone.

Number of Citizens in attendance: 0

Announcements

The next IVAC meeting will be Wednesday, July 17, 2019 in Boise at the IDVS Central Support Office.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 10, 2019 was made by **Art Gimpel** and seconded by **Jinny Cash**. Minutes were unanimously accepted.

Division Bureau Reports

Financial Report presented by **Debbie Spence**

1. Veterans Homes continue to be the primary revenue generator for IDVS.
2. FY20 Budget Appropriation is \$78,592,100.00
 - a. \$46,602,500 (59%) Federal Funds include funds for a fourth Veterans Home in Post Falls
 - b. \$14,358,200 (18%) Veterans Recognition Fund
 - c. \$1,019,700 (1%) Endowment Funds
 - d. \$1,224,200.00 (2%) is General Funds
 - e. \$15,327,500 (20%) Miscellaneous Funds
3. Budget Changes
 - a. \$76,000 – change in benefit costs
 - b. \$98,800 – statewide cost allocation
 - c. \$556,600 – change in employee compensation (3% for classified employees)
 - d. \$871,100 – market equity salary increases
 - e. \$551,900 – additional staffing position (1 service officer, 2 education specialist technicians)
 - f. \$103,300 – new capital outlay items
 - g. \$200,000 – intergovernmental transfer (Medicaid Upper Payment Limit Program)
 - h. \$100,000 - Veterans Recognition Income Fund

- i. \$43,223,400 – Fourth Veterans Home
 - j. \$307,000 – Governor tech initiatives
 - k. Second Veterans Cemetery Reappropriation Authority
4. As of March 31, 2019, the average YTD occupancy of the Homes is running at 88.21% for skilled nursing care. Our goal is 88% or higher.
 5. FY20 Charge Change – increase private payers from \$179/day to \$188/day (other Idaho Nursing Homes average \$277/day). Last increase was 6/1/18.

Business Support Services Report presented by **Paul Spannkebel**

1. Human Resources Report
 - a. All State employees will receive \$550.00 raise or .27/hour for FY20.
 - b. Three percent CEC funding for performance.
 - c. No delegated authority for HR.
2. IT Report
 - a. The IDVS IT Department is being consolidated under with other agencies under the Office of the Governor.
 - b. We have a great IT staff, but several of our best people did not want to wait to see if they would have jobs under the consolidation and have secured jobs elsewhere.
 - c. We have huge concerns about the support our programs and residents will receive with staff migration to ITS.
 - d. All IDVS IT support will be integrated with ITS on June 17, 2019.
3. Purchasing Report
 - a. **Rusty McNeill** gave his notice – he will be moving to IDOC
 - b. Internal job posting to State employees only
 - c. Delegated authority was increased to \$500,000
4. Each of the Bureaus have Capital Projects pending or in progress.

Boise Veterans Home Report presented by **Rick Holloway**

1. Average daily census for last quarter was 113 nursing care residents – 95% occupancy; and 28 residential care residents – 79% occupancy
2. DPW or Major Maintenance projects taking place:
 - a. Fire/Life Safety – quarterly inspections have taken place and maintenance performed
 - b. New chimney flue for new boilers installed
 - c. One East IT room water lines moved
 - d. One West elevator lobby flooring replaced
 - e. We have an incredible maintenance staff who keep us up and running
3. **Colleen Moon** is splitting duties as Quality Improvement Director and Boise Home Assistant Administrator so give added support on the administrative side.
4. **Cathy Powell** retired from Food Service Operations.
5. Financial Specialist **Amber Goodchild** received her Administrative Nursing Homes certification. We now have 3 licensed administrators at the Boise Home.
6. VA Survey took place in March; only two recommendations were made, no citations.
7. Elevator lobby in 1W was closed while flooring was replaced. Staff from CSO and throughout the building assisted carrying trays to residents who could not leave.
8. There will be a radical change in October to the way payments are calculated by Medicare for services. We are analyzing how this change from therapy driven to diagnosis driven is going to affect our income.

9. We have changed our employee recognition from "Employee of the Month" to "Department of the Month" so whole teams can be recognized for their contributions.

Pocatello Veterans Home Report presented by **Josiah Dahlstrom**

1. Census last quarter was 83% of the 66 available beds.
2. Census has stabilized, but staffing continues to be an issue.
3. Window replacement project will be put back out to bid after a problem with the contractor.
4. Flooring and cabinet project awarded and should start in May.
5. Blackfoot Elks donated \$15,000 toward a walking path and putting green.
6. Four digital display screens will be placed throughout the building to highlight activities and inform resident, staff and visitors of happenings in the Home.
7. Dementia training on a reoccurring basis due to a donation from the Guy Lounsbury family.
8. Pinnacle Customer Experience Awards rated ISVH-P in the top 15% in the nation on a 12-month average – BEST IN CLASS in 15 of 16 categories.
9. US News & World Report recognized ISVH-P as one of 17 TOP PERFORMING nursing homes in the State of Idaho (out of 79 nursing homes).
10. Slide show was shown highlighting special resident activities over the last few months.

Lewiston Veterans Home Report presented by **Mark High** (via telephone)

1. Census last quarter averaged 87% of the 64 available beds.
2. Drawings have been approved for the Chapel and OVA office; put out for bid.
3. Using social media to keep families updated on events. Increased following on Facebook.
4. Responsibilities continue to grow for our Social Service interns. They have been a positive addition to our facility, and we look forward to working with Lewis Clark State College to provide future interns.
5. Pinnacle Customer Experience Awards rated ISVH-L as a "High Achieving Facility" in the state of Idaho as well as nationally, scoring in the top 15%.
6. Recruitment for nursing staffing is ongoing. We have hired several Senior RN's but CNA positions are difficult to keep filled.
7. **Kevin Cvitko** was honored as the employee of the quarter. Kevin is a Transportation Aide who represents our facility well in the community, is dedicated to the residents, shows great teamwork and a positive attitude.
8. **Marv & Tracy** both came to Lewiston for our Employee Appreciation. Employees enjoyed spending time with them and getting to know them better.
9. Slide show was shown highlighting special resident activities over the last few months.

Veterans Cemetery Report presented by **James Earp**

1. There were 154 internments for the third quarter of FY19 and 181 pre-registration applications.
2. Internments started this quarter in the expansion of the columbarium niches of Wall E.
3. Internment revenues for the 3rd quarter of FY19 were \$432,520.00.
4. Changes in the VA burial plot allowance submittals will most likely result in lengthy delays of our payments. The new process is clouded with inconsistency and increased staff work to facilitate the process.
5. FY21 Budget Preparations
6. Our volunteers put in a total of 581 volunteer hours during the 3rd quarter. The FY19 total is 1958 hours so far.
7. In March, we had a casual teambuilding event at a bowling alley for our volunteers and their families along with award presentations for their hours.
8. The DPW construction project to improve drainage along the upper section road should start this month.

9. Remaining work to replace and service security cameras with the cemetery has been finalized. Most notably was the addition of a camera to provide greater coverage at the Gravesite Locator.
10. We are adjusting our operations to accommodate the State's decision to reduce IT service capabilities within IDVS. The IT staff will be greatly missed – they were a critical component to our operations.
11. We are finalizing our coordination and planning for this year's Memorial Day Ceremony.
12. NCA will make a two-day compliance inspection in May.
13. Request has been made to HR for a fulltime position to augment our administrative duties and customer service tasks.
14. Significant Actions for the Southeast Idaho Veterans Cemetery in Blackfoot (DPW 17-603/ID-13-05)
 - a. All required submittals have been made to Construction Design.
 - b. The project has been presented to the Permanent Building Fund Advisory Council and met all approvals required by the State.
 - c. Conditional Use Permit was approved by the Bingham County Planning & Zoning in March.
 - d. Formal request has been made to the Veterans Cemetery Grant Program for additional alternates to the construction design. Additions are at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million.
 - i. Public restroom facilities
 - ii. Expanded office space for private conference room for families to discuss burial plans
 - iii. Additional covered storage area to secure equipment
 - iv. Additional walkways to support the military funeral honors detail
 - e. Design and development of irrigation water infrastructure is under contract and work is being performed
 - f. Construction bids will take place in July
 - g. Contract award in August
 - h. Estimated completion and opening in November 2020
 - i. VA Project Manager retired in February. DPW project manager **Martin Santoyo** has been managing and directing the project team. Hope to have new VA project manager in May.

Office of Veterans Advocacy Report presented by **Bill Heyob**

1. OVA continues to see an increase in calls and appointments with Veterans. Home visits are down, but we are more efficient if appointments are at our offices, unless necessary.
2. The VA is clearing out all legacy appeals as quickly as possible under the new Appeals Modernization Act which went into effect in February.
3. The last Veterans Appeals Travel Board will take place in Boise in July, then there will be no more traveling appeals boards.
4. Federal Court decision grants Agent Orange presumptive conditions to Vietnam "Blue Water Veterans". VA Secretary Wilkie announced the VA will NOT challenge the decision to the Supreme Court. This could positively impact approximately 300,000 veterans.
5. VA is streamlining how annual verification of non-employment for veterans receiving Individual Unemployability.
6. The VA is experiencing issues with the Direct Upload/Centralized Mail Portal mean of electronic submissions. This problem is delaying pending claims by 4-6 weeks.
7. A new service officer will be hired for FY20 in our Post Falls office.
8. We have moved an additional service officer to Caldwell two days a week.
9. Boise VA Regional Office was named one of the top 5 offices in the country out of 54 nationwide.

Veterans Education Bureau Report presented by **Doug Jacobson**

1. The Veterans Education Bureau (VEB) operates on the Federal fiscal calendar so report information reflects that.
2. Currently there are 353 VA approved facilities in Idaho – an increase of 9 over last quarter. Categories include Institutes of Higher Learning or IHL (Colleges/Universities), Non-College Degrees or NCD (ex. truck driving schools, cosmetology, etc.), On-the-Job Training & Apprenticeship or OJT/APP (ex. Police, Fire, Plumbing, etc.) and Flight.
3. Any significant changes to the approved programs need to be resubmitted to the VA for approval so benefits can be paid. During the second quarter FY19 VEB processed 371 changes.
4. VEB is now tracking office walk in inquires and phone inquiries – listed as Technical Assist/Inquiry on reports. This is a large percentage of our workload but has not been tracked before. There were 163 of these inquiries for the second quarter of FY19.
5. Made 34 on-site visits during the second quarter FY19 to gather information or make inspections for VA approvals.
6. We have not received the 2nd quarter payout results yet. It usually takes 30 days after the end of the quarter.
7. We have had success working with CDL academies around the state to allow students to use their benefits during truck driver training, then to seamlessly transition to an OJT or Apprenticeship Programs with nearby trucking companies.
8. We have hired **Stephen Tamm** as our Veterans Education Program Specialist for Northern Idaho. He has lots of knowledge and contacts and will be a great addition to the team.

Division Headquarters Report presented by **Tracy Schaner & Paul Spannkebel**

1. The legislature approved our FY20 budget proposal.
2. IDAPA Rules
 - a. Every year the Legislature is tasked with reauthorizing and reestablishing current Fiscal Year Administrative (IDAPA) Rules to be effective through the next legislative session. This year, the legislative session ended without passage of the "Reauthorization" Bill. This means all IDAPA rules (including IDVS) will expire effective July 1, 2019.
 - b. The Division of Financial Management (DFM), at the direction of the Governor's Office, met with Marv, Kevin and Paul to provide direction on how to address moving forward.
 - c. In conjunction with Governor Little's Red Tape Reduction Act, IDVS is tasked with going through our IDAPA Rules, and identifying those rules that should expire, along with those rules that will be temporarily reauthorized until FY21 session starts.
 - d. Any rules that are identified specifically in Statute are to remain in effect, and fee-based rules will be addressed and published in a sperate bulletin by the Governor on June 19,2019.
 - e. IDVS was encouraged to remove rules (let expire) that could be administered and managed through IDVS agency policy. Any rule we recommend expiring, requires us to create and implement policy by July 1, 2019.
 - f. We are required to submit our rules to DFM no later than May 10, 2019. IDVS will focus on letting grant program rules expire (replacing with policy), while ensuring statutory and federally driven rules remain intact.
 - g. Kevin will be working with Tracy and other IDVS Bureau Chiefs to identify which rules can expire and which ones we need to keep.
 - h. The Governor's Red Tape Reduction Act instructed agencies to set a goal of 5% reduction in rules. IDVS has 55 pages, which would be approximately 2 ½ pages of rules to eliminate. We believe IDVS will far surpass this percentage, especially if we look to turn granting rules into policy.

- i. The IVAC Commissioners do advise on IDVS agency rules, however, by Statute the Chief Administrator has overall authority to promulgate and abolish rules per IC65-202.
- 3. The plans for the potential Post Falls Veterans Home are moving forward
 - a. We are #46 on the VA priority list for Veteran Home projects
 - b. On that list we are #2 for NEW builds
 - c. IDVS is moving forward with plans and deliverables so we are prepared if we move to the top of the list. That is the main reason projects are knocked off the list – they are not ready when the VA gives them the opportunity.
 - d. If the grant opportunity comes through this year, we are on track to break ground in June 2020 with an opening date of January 2022.
 - e. The Jacklin Family donated 7.3 acres of land for the Post Falls Home – equivalent to approximately \$800,000.
 - f. IDVS will make a presentation to the Land Board Commission asking that this donation be accepted on behalf of the State of Idaho for the Post Falls Veterans Home
 - g. Originally, we were planning for a 57-bed home, but the VA has approved us for 64 beds. We have redesigned the Home and it will be a small home concept which will make it more efficient for staffing and more of a home-life environment for residents. All rooms will be single bed with a private bath.
- 4. Replacement Building for the Boise Home
 - a. The current Boise Home is 54 years old.
 - b. Maintenance costs are escalating on the aging building.
 - c. The Department of Administration has designated 20 acres on the new State Campus (old HP Campus) at Ustick and Five Mile in Boise for a new home.
 - d. Design plans would be similar to Post Falls.
 - e. The current Home property was deeded by the Secretary of Interior in the 1960's and requires that it be used for Veterans or be returned to the Department of the Interior. We are looking at options for that building – possibly an adult daycare facility.

Commission Discussion on Chief Administrator Compensation

1. The commission is looking for input so a recommendation can be made to the Governor's Office regarding a compensation increase for Chief Administrator Marv Hagedorn.
2. **Tracy Schaner** – In our budget planning, we have calculated Marv into our compensation plan, based on an exemplary review, but his review status is not yet determined. We have also added a "buffer" if the commission decides on a higher than average increase. He did have a Tweet he put out that came under scrutiny, but he took ownership and apologized, and we have moved on. He has accomplished so much and that needs to be recognized. Our Division is growing – we have the additional Cemetery, the Post Falls Home, the potential replacement of the Boise Home, the growth of the Advocacy Office and Education Bureau – we are moving and shaking, and Marv is leading the charge through outreach and public awareness.
3. **Paul Spannkebel** – There are a lot of agency administrators that you can "feel" are supportive, but with Marv you can "see" he is supportive. In the short time I've been with IDVS I've seen the impact Marv has had. He is engaged with the veteran community and committed to the cause. His background in the legislature has been a huge benefit to our agency. Compared to other State Administrators, Marv's current salary is on the low end – especially considering he is running a 24/7/365 operation.
4. **Mel Napier** – You can tell Marv has a passion for what he is doing and thoroughly enjoys it. I see that he will often post on Facebook an event he is attending at one of the Homes or the Cemetery.
5. **Leo Dub** – I feel he is doing a hellava job! Let's do it!

6. **Patrick Grace** – It is difficult to find qualified people to serve in State government. Looking at any objective criteria, Marv is doing a tremendous job and that should be recognized. I understand the state evaluation system, in my opinion, Marv is at an exemplary level.
7. **Art Gimpel** – Marv should be considered exemplary. He makes a point to talk with me and I appreciate that. (Art asked what others are receiving and when the next increase would take place?)
8. **Jinny Cash** – It is refreshing to see how much time he spends in the Panhandle. We no longer feel forgotten and we appreciate the attention to our issues.
9. **Bill Heyob** – Marv has taken the time to come to OVA and wrap his head around what we do. When I tell people how busy we are, most people don't understand what that truly means, but Marv has taken the time to find out. He doesn't dictate what needs to be done – he asks how he can help and what do we need? He understands not only the benefit Service Officers bring to our Veterans, but the amount of money they bring into the State via VA benefits.
10. **Rick Holloway** – Marv visits the Boise home frequently. He always engages staff and residents in conversation and is very comfortable spending time with them. He will come over and help serve meals or jump in where needed. We have big events at the home, at least every other month, and Marv has let it be known he is available to help or speak at these events. What has impressed me most is that Marv does not make it about "him" – it is about the Veterans, the families, and the Mission and Vision of IDVS. He does not call attention to himself – it is about the people we serve and our staff who care for them. Marv has a tremendous amount of responsibilities at our agency and his salary does not reflect that.
11. **Josiah Dahlstrom** – Marv jumped right into the job – not only talking with members of the staff and getting to know them but talking with our residents. I have seen him give people his personal phone number and say – Call Me if you need anything. He is very approachable. I have had many phone conversations with him when he has just called to check in and see how things are going. We feel very supported by Marv and his staff at the Central Support Office and that is due to Marv's leadership. Sometimes we "get by" with equipment that needs replaced (due to inefficiency, not safety concerns) but Marv encouraged me to move forward to replace items that will increase productivity and morale. He has helped give me an understanding of the effect a small investment can have on the big picture. We are feeling the support from Boise and I feel he can take credit for a lot of our successes in the Homes. He has encouraged the use of social media to get the word out about the great things we are doing. Marv has provided an excitement to our mission that we didn't have before. We feel it here in Pocatello, but I see it across the Division in our dealings with the other Bureaus. There is a growth and momentum that we are excited to be a part of.
12. **James Earp** – Marv has created an energy in the Division that we didn't have before – we were flatlining. He has brought forth a humble appreciation for what we do as an organization. Marv understands how our budgets work from his time as a Senator, but he is digging deeper to learn the responsibilities of each Bureau and how he can convey the importance of our mission to the legislature. He has raised the level of motivation for the mission with our employees. He encourages the use of technology and social media which has added a rejuvenation to our work. His connections in the community, the legislature and with individuals makes him a huge asset. He reaches out to other agency administrators and collaborates on projects that are mutually beneficial. Marv has been a very positive addition to the Idaho Division of Veterans Services. I support a decision to recognize how much he has contributed to our organization in a short amount of time.
13. **Mitzi Cheldelin** – Many times when the head of a public or private entity is given a substantial raise or bonus there is public scrutiny and people asking, "why do they deserve that". I don't think you will find that to be the case with this administrator. I am involved in a lot of veteran organizations

outside our agency. There is nothing but respect for Marv in the veteran community and a sense that the man looking out for Idaho Veterans really cares for and about them.

14. IVAC Recommendation: 10% Raise

Adjournment

Commissioner **Patrick Grace** moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Commissioner **Jinny Cash** and was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Mitzi Cheldelin

Administrative Assistant
Idaho Division of Veteran Services

7/3/2019

Date Completed