

Type of Meeting: Administrative Matters

Name of requestor: Jacob Castillo, Economic and Workforce Development Director,
970.498.6605

Department: Economic and Workforce Development

Preferred appearance date: 1/28/2020 Time required: 15

Date decision needed: 1/28/2020

Objective: Appointment of Lee Cooper to the Veterans Service Officer position for a two year term beginning January 30, 2020.

Situation: Mr. Cooper was appointed for a six month term as the Larimer County Veterans Service Officer in June of 2019. At that time the Veterans Service Office, part of Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development Department, was undergoing a process improvement project with assistance from Larimer County Business Analyst Team. The process improvement project is complete. A key recommendation was that the Veterans Officer Position would work with local veteran support groups to evaluate and connect veterans to support.

Proposal: Larimer County recognizes veteran services as a top priority. To best serve veterans and their families, we are requesting the BOCC appoint Mr. Lee Cooper, as the Larimer County Veterans Service Officer for a two--year term.

Mr. Cooper served eight years in the U.S. Army Reserves, 324th Psychological Operations Company, Aurora Colorado. His service included deployments to Iraq and to East Africa. Mr. Cooper will work approximately 20 hours per week focusing on outreach to veterans.

Additional funds required: No

Advantages: Provide continuity of service with the Veterans Service Office, comply with Colorado State statute, and help maintain our high level of service provided to veterans and their families.

Disadvantages:

Requested action: We request the BOCC appoint Mr. Lee Cooper as the Larimer County Veterans Service Officer for a two year term effective January 30, 2020.

Potentially Affected Interest: Veterans and their families
Veterans organizations

Level of Public Interest and Participations:

Audio/Visual/Computer Needs: Will share a PowerPoint presentation.

LEE COOPER NEW LARIMER COUNTY VSO



Lee Cooper in Iraq

After the attacks on 9-11, Lee Cooper felt a strong compulsion to contribute and participate in whatever was going to happen next. He went from recruiter to recruiter, but kept hitting the same road block; that he was too old to enlist. He finally resigned himself to that fact. In 2005 though, he read a news item announcing that the Pentagon had raised the upper age limit for a narrow category of potential recruits for the Army Reserve. Still driven by a strong desire to serve, and not wanting to reflect on this period of his life regretting lost opportunities 20 years later, Lee received the blessings from his wife and family and enlisted in the U.S. Army

He could only go in as an enlisted man, despite having a college degree, and trained for one of the few occupations available for Army Reserve units headquartered reasonably close to his home in Fort Collins: Psychological Operations, or PsyOp. After extensive training, he did a combat tour to Iraq in 2007 and deployed to East Africa in 2010. Lee received his Honorable Discharge in 2013 and is very proud of his service.

With the combination of his service, experience, and education (BA in International Relations and an MBA), a number of people approached Lee about applying for the vacant VSO position at the

county. Liking the idea of continuing on with and for those people he considers part of his "tribe" and help get them what they have earned and deserve, he applied and was offered the position by the county commissioners.

Lee believes that anyone who has served, regardless if it was in combat, support, or peacetime, equally deserves the benefits and help that are out there. He also believes that by helping veterans, it also helps veterans' families, loved ones, and everyone whose lives are touched by veterans, thus causing a positive ripple effect across the community.

Lee said he plans to focus on outreach, both with outside service organizations and businesses developing partnerships. He also wants to attain accurate assessments on how well the county's Veteran Services Office is doing from the perspective of the veteran community.

"I want to pay homage to Debbie Pierson and build on what she achieved, along with Trisha Reynolds's hard work, experience and astonishing wealth of knowledge in continuing this legacy, and strive to continue making it even better for our veterans," Cooper says. ★

**If you have questions or need
assistance, please call the
Larimer County Veterans Service
Office at (970) 498-7390.**

