

Board Minutes
May 8, 2014, 0930 Hrs.
American Legion Headquarters
7465 E. 1st Avenue, #D, Denver, CO 80230

Robby Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 0930 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for our POW, MIA, troops in battle and all service members.

Introduction of Members and Visitors

Board Members Present:

William "Robby" Robinson, Chairman
Jay Bobick, Vice Chairman
Dana Niemela, Secretary
Kathleen Dunemn, Member
Rene Simard, Member – Not Present
Chris Holden, Member
Marvin Meyers, Emeritus – Not Present

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA, Deputy Director
Ray Z. Dissinger, VTF Administrator
Rueben Mestas, CDVA Deputy Director
Tamara Edmond, CDVA Admin. Asst.

Guests Present:

Steve Rylant, UVC
Leanne Wheeler, Veterans Advocate, Wheeler Advisory Group

Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2014

Unanimously accepted

Board Member Comments

Jay Bobick: No comment.

Chris Holden: No comment.

Kathleen Dunemn: No comment.

Dana Niemela: Kathleen Dunumn and I attended the CVSO conference the last week of April. I was impressed with the passion and the heart displayed by the County Veteran Service Officers many of whom get little or no compensation. It was really great for me. I have assumed the position of VSO Liaison for the Board and have been unable to travel as I had hoped because of work commitment with my day job. To be able to be there and meet many of the CVSO's face to face, to be a part of the dialogue for the week was important for me. I was impressed by the engagement of the audience and the questions asked by the facilitators and the trainers. It made me proud of the work they are doing.

Robby Robinson: I will piggyback on that. I went to the CVSO conference part of the day on Wednesday. An observation is the number of new faces that you could see at the conference – there were maybe a third of them that were new faces. I have always thought of that as a problem. You get trained VSO's and trying to keep them proficient is difficult. Back in an earlier time, we used to conduct conferences 2-3 times per year. Secondly, we would send someone out in the field to visit the outlying counties but due to money and personnel issues we were forced to move away from that. I think the point for consideration is how to decrease the turnover with the CVSO's. Anyone can see that how experienced you are, the better you are at dealing with a complicated system.

The simple solution, I always thought would be to pay them more, but the state does that; they pay the counties \$200 a month for a part/time VSO. The counties hire a VSO for \$200 a month and expect them to stay. That dollar amount has not significantly changed. I think the broader question is what we can do to decrease turnover because we think it is a problem. During the next year we need to look at this as an action item.

-Leanne Wheeler came in the room at 9:38am.

Dana Niemela: One other comment, now that Leanne Wheeler walked in. I wanted to recognize the fact that Leanne Wheeler has been a supporter and frequenter of our meetings and very engaged in the veterans' community. She has been selected to attend the Clinton Global Initiative on behalf of veteran employment opportunities. It is an honor to be recognized on that level. It is by invitation only to be with the Clintons to discuss veterans' initiatives. She was selected for that participation based on her intense work in the veteran community, engaged in veterans from employment issues to homelessness. I think it is great to have her for such a fierce advocate for the veteran community.

Steve Rylant: What an honor!

Public Comments Non-agenda Items

Leanne Wheeler: Thank you, Dana. I am speechless after that. I have 2 grants I am working on with the veterans in Fort Lyon. So I want to connect with Ray to go over expectations. I will go back and make sure things are moving.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I appreciate that and I will do the best of my ability. I think you probably mean talk to Les Kennedy who is the administrator of the Veterans Assistance Grant.

Leanne Wheeler: Things are moving right along. There was a report that came out from the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and they said some very positive things about Fort Lyon. There will be a graduate of the program who went through from being homeless. We have small businesses interested in mentoring and offering jobs to the people coming out of the program. I also wanted to say thank you to Dana for all of your support.

Steve Rylant: The Legislative Session is finally over and there were something like 30 different Bills that were pushed through. We go the vast majority of them passed. It can't have been more than 2 or 3 that did not pass. Leanne Wheeler and I and Jay testified to the committee. It was definitely a good year for veterans.

Guest Presentations

Robby Robinson: There are no guest presentations today.

Reports

Governor's Report

Robby Robinson: Richard Sandrock is out doing a speech for the Governor and could not make it.

DMVA

Mickey Hunt: We did get \$4.6 million for the cemetery in Grand Junction so we will be building that up. The Bill for the Military Relief Fund, the Governor signed and this will allow National Guard members to apply for that in addition to the military who have had overseas service. Given the fact that we had over 1,800 soldiers called to active duty for the floods last year alone that makes it is a really important bill. The Fallen Hero License plate will be signed next week by the Governor in Colorado Springs. Also, for the state of Colorado, \$300,000 was allocated for a military economic impact study and to help with anti-BRAC data.

We also had a female soldier who committed suicide on Monday in Colorado Springs. As part of Colorado Serves, I will be doing a town meeting. I will also be doing a town meeting in Grand Junction on Tuesday and will be in Montrose for a town meeting on Wednesday.

Bill Conroy's job announcement has been posted. I have asked Robby Robinson and Vicky Manley to serve on the hiring committee with General Edwards and myself, with the four of us doing interviews.

Regarding the CVSO funding, I have asked Bill to take a stab at that so we can put together a decision to go before the Governor in August so we can ask for additional funding.

Veterans Trust Fund

Ray Z. Dissinger: We are in the normal process and will be going through the grants today.

Veterans Assistance Grant

Ben Mestas: Les Kennedy spent \$643,000 and that leaves a balance of \$356,000. So far the Governor's office has spent only \$46,000 of the money they were allocated. Catholic Charities still needs to spend \$30,000. Crawford House still needs to spend \$33,000 and the Samaritan House still needs to spend \$37,000.

Robby Robinson: As part of the money allocated from the Governor's Office?

Ben Mestas: The Governor's Office still needs to spend the money.

Robby Robinson: Here we are at the 10th month of expenditure and they still have that much to spend?

Dana Niemela: Do you know if they have a plan to execute the rest of the money?

Ben Mestas: Les Kennedy has informed me that they all have plans to spend the money by the 15th of June except for the Governor's Office and that is his major concern.

State Veteran Nursing Homes (State Veterans Community Living Centers)

Jay Bobick: All is well in the world of veterans care.

Discussion/Action

Robby Robinson passed out the By-laws handout.

Robby Robinson: For purposes of discussion, the By-laws amendments turn to section 7, page 3. Annually, we do conflict of interest statements. Each of the Board members signs a statement of what organizations we belong to where there might be a conflict of interest so we disclose that to the public. There are organizations of which I am a member that are applying for grants. I need to publically declare that, and I need to recuse myself and go out of the room so I don't vote and recuse myself from the discussion.

What I have tried to do is add that language under conflict of interests. The fact that you have membership is not necessarily a conflict of interest but a position of influence or leadership position would be perceived as a conflict of interest. Board members will update these conflicts of interests' statements whenever there is a change in the status in membership

in an outside organization. The Board members will do it annually for the conflict of interest discussion in July. Having said that it seemed to be appropriate to make this a public proposal and make some changes to the By-laws. This is the basis for disclosing any conflicts of interests before we go into the voting for the grants.

Let me start by reviewing mine:

I am a lifetime member of the following organizations that I think are applying for grants.

- The American Legion
- The Veterans of Foreign Wars
- The Disabled Veterans of America

Having said that, I am a lifetime member of those three organizations, I am assigned to a post but I have never been elected to a position of leadership nor have I attended a meeting of any of those organizations in the state of Colorado other than an annual state meeting where I accompanied the Adjutant General while I was in the position of Deputy Director and he spoke at the meeting.

Jay Bobick: I belong as a member to:

- The American Legion

There is one organization that could be construed as a conflict of interest. I am the Chairman of the State Veterans Community Living Center Committee. So when it comes to those nursing homes as Chairman, I should recuse myself.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have those annotated here.

Chris Holden: I am an annual member of:

- The American Legion
- The Veterans of Foreign Wars
- The Disabled Veterans of America

I think on two of them I might be a little overdue. I don't go to any of the Board meetings and I do not have any conflict. I did have a very inexpensive beer at the American Legion a few weeks ago.

Kathleen Dunem: I have pretty much the same memberships:

- The American Legion
- The Veterans of Foreign Wars
- The Disabled Veterans of America

Also, I am a member of the Women's Veterans of Colorado; I am no longer an officer and no longer go to meetings. I am a member of the Board of Commissions for Veterans Affairs Nursing Homes.

Robby Robinson: Do you feel you should recuse yourself? Why don't we talk about that? If she does recuse herself then we will not have a quorum for that particular issue with Jay out of the room as well.

Dana Niemela: For the Board members who can't vote, then we could ask for a written vote from Rene.

Jay Bobick: Kathleen could sit in, she is just a member.

Robby Robinson: Why don't we ask the public here for their knowledge? We don't want a conflict of interest? What do you think Steve?

Steve Rylant: That word, "perceived" is kind of tricky. Having it in the By-laws is kind of like asking the difference between *may* and *shall*. I wonder about it. From the stand point that you are talking about whether having Kathleen vote on the nursing home issues, I don't see why there would be a problem with Kathleen.

Leanne Wheeler: I don't agree with your definition of perception. If there is an alternative to push it and stay within the bounds of the By-laws, I would be very careful about who votes. With public perception, I would be very careful.

Robby Robinson: The By-laws as currently written don't allow for proxy votes. Here are the options and all meeting must be public. So, if I went out to get a written vote form Rene and discussed it with him that would constitute a meeting with 2 Board members present. I could send an email and just put in the vote so he could respond.

Steve Rylant: What is the difference between him sending an email with his vote and a proxy?

Jay Bobick: A proxy is actually giving your vote to someone else to vote for you and the email would be the actual party sending his own vote.

Kathleen Dunemn: What is the date Jason Crow is no longer a member of this Board?

Mickey Hunt: He is no longer a member as of 2 weeks ago.

Ray Z. Dissinger: What is the quorum since the members have changed from 7 to 6 is it now 3 or still 4?

Jay Bobick: Unfortunately it is still 4. It stays the same.

Ray Z. Dissinger: If we do this, I would like to hold the process in abeyance.

Robby Robinson: I don't think we should hold up the whole process.

Dana Niemela: I would expect to get a confirmation from Rene by the end of the week.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Is there anything other than the By-laws that say we cannot have a proxy? Is there a state law that say not to have a proxy?

Jay Bobick: The problem is well as being right you have to look right.

Chris Holden: I understand Jay's conflict. Kathleen, do you have a position of leadership or a position of influence?

Kathleen Dunemn: No.

Chris Holden: I mean it is written right here.

Robby Robinson: That is kind of the way I see it too. She shouldn't recuse herself from that since she is just a member. Is there any problem with her voting?

Dana Niemela: I have a conflict of interest. I belong to VFW Post 1 and I am not only a member but I hold a position of leadership and definitely a position of influence. I shall recuse myself from that vote.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Robby, on the grants, can I make a suggestion on the conflicts of interest? Find out what the conflicts of interest are and recuse people then vote on these first and vote on the others later.

Robby Robinson: You want to start with those that have a conflict?

Mickey Hunt: Remember you have to actually leave the room.

Robby Robinson: So that completes the report section.

Discussion/Action

Conflicts of Interest

Robby Robinson: I just did the conflicts of interests.

VTF Committee Report

Robby Robinson: The VTF Committee report was passed out at the last meeting, with recommendations and the spreadsheet showing the specific amount recommended. Are there any questions?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I have one on the By-laws, page 2, where it says "should" shouldn't it be "will" in there?

Robby Robinson: If you can get your comments on the By-laws to me, then I will put it together so it can be voted on at the next meeting.

-Discussion about changing the By-laws.

Robby Robinson: They are not out publically yet because we need to vote on the changes. We will post the changes to the website.

VTF Grants Discussion

Ray Z. Dissinger: First, I wanted to let you know for #17, they have withdrawn their grant application so that changes the balance to \$26,169.12.

Robby Robinson: So for the first conflict of interest, for #15 A, B, C, D, E, VFW Post #1.

-Dana Niemela recused herself and left the room for this discussion and vote

Ray Z. Dissinger: I want to explain that the grants for #15 it is no longer A-E because for D and E they are gone. For #15 E, they are not eligible and it was not a valid request.

Robby Robinson: All we are considering is #15 A, B, and C. For **#15 A** VFW Post 1 veterans' assistance, this was at last year's level of award, and do I have a motion.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Is there any discussion?

Jay Bobick: The request is for \$40,000.

-Discussion about ledger from last year and ledger from this year, not everyone had the same grant recommendation ledger.

Robby Robinson: Are we ready to vote on that, \$40,000 recommended out of \$65,000 requested? All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, that is **unanimous**. For #15 B that is the stand down support? I put a motion to vote.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Is there any discussion?

Jay Bobick: On all of these that are stand downs, I have only worked with the homeless. I am concerned because a lot of these are repetitious. There are a lot of repeat participants that get the same equipment year after year. Are we concerned about the money that goes out to homeless veterans? At the last stand down in Denver for example there were these sleeping bags on a table and I saw veterans grab 3 sleeping bags or they will come back three times. Whatever is on the table, for example, one year they were blankets and I saw a veteran grab 3-4 blankets, rather than one per veteran. Is there any concern that we have about that?

Robby Robinson: Do you want to talk about that Ben?

Ben Mestas: Right now there is no control over how many they can take at the Denver stand down. If they needed three, then they could obtain three sleeping bags. Jay is absolutely correct.

Jay Bobick: It concerns me. Remember last year or two years ago, there were these brand new Swiss sleeping bags about 300 were given for free and I watched people walking out with 2-3 each.

Robby Robinson: Colorado Springs is a little different. They assign somebody to walk through.

Ben Mestas: Pueblo is actually different too, but Denver is not.

Steve Rylant: The one in Fort Collins, I did not see anybody saying you could only take one. At the stand down they only have a certain amount of equipment and then 2 hours later it is all gone.

Jay Bobick: You could go down to the Army/Navy Store 6 hours later and there are all these sleeping bags for sale. They go down there and they get ten cents on the dollar.

Robby Robinson: So are you suggesting that we do not approve this \$7,000 grant?

Jay Bobick: No, I am asking what specifically is the \$7,000 going to be spent on?

Robby Robinson: In the budget narrative, it specifies gift cards for \$50.00 each, Wal-Mart gift cards, hair cut gift cards, yarn for...

Jay Bobick: I have no problem with that.

Robby Robinson: Okay, then let us vote on **15B** for \$7,000 for the stand downs.

Ray Z. Dissinger: If you read that closely it specifically states that all the stand downs throughout the state, Women's Veterans provide specific veterans assistance.

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to Approve.

Jay Bobick: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, that was **unanimous**.

Robby Robinson: For **#15 C**, they originally requested \$60,000 but the recommended amount is \$42,000.

Kathleen Dunemn: Just so that it is said to the forum, when we were going through the process of reviewing all these proposals, there was only so much money. It was not that we did not think they could use the full amount but there was only so much money and it had to be considered across all of the grant applications and programs.

Robby Robinson: Alright, so is there a motion on the Comitis #15 C?

Kathleen Dunemn: Motion to Approve.

Chris Holden: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any other discussion? Alright, we will call the question, all those in favor. Okay, that was **unanimous**.

-Mickey Hunt left the room to get Dana Niemela back in. Dana Niemela and Mickey Hunt back in at 10:10am.

Ray Z. Dissinger: You know Jay needs to leave, for 29-32.

Robby Robinson: Okay, The Nursing Homes we can hold to the last. Are there any other conflict of interest items? Okay, let's go to **#1**, the American Legion Post #25, the recommendation amount is \$15,000. Do I have a motion on grant **#1**?

Jay Bobick: Is the \$15,000 based on last year's award?

Dana Niemela: From what I understood from reading it, it was based on last year's award.

Kathleen Dunemn: And the usage. I recommend a motion to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any further discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Okay, so **#1** was **unanimous**.

Dana Niemela: I am not going to argue with any of the recommendations that were made by the committee but what I would ask is when the award is given to the organization that it

explicitly says even though the award was at last year's level that we indicate what it is funding? Some of them made it very obvious, for example, rental assistance if it is at last year's funding needs to be explained. In line with the priorities, you have been granted this amount of money. If the categories are not explicit, then that needs to be explained.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We identified that and noted that type of thing was impacting the grant. It was specific in the spreadsheet.

Dana Niemela: Okay, so it was not always explicit in the spreadsheet that we got. I want to make sure it is that way when it goes to the grant.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We would have to have the review committee meet again. Because I can't make decision based on the information that we have, if there was a cut, then who would decide what the priority internal to that was.

Dana Niemela: I don't necessarily think that. I just want it to say...maybe when we get to it I will give an example so that way we could correct our way through it. Because otherwise it seems arbitrary as to why we are only funding to a certain level. So, I want it to be explicit for the grantee so that they understand that yes we are funding the \$1,500 for gas cards, food vouchers, and rental assistance and this is not changing the categories. It needs to be explicitly communicated to the grantees why they are getting less than they requested.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I am not sure when you say it is not changing the categories. What do you want to be explicit? If I have to go through all of the grants, get with the review committee, and then get with the Board for re-approval.

Robby Robinson: Okay we have had the motion. So the vote now is on #2. Okay, so Dana, if I understand you correctly you saying: if it is the electric bill, propane, water, work clothing, transportation, mortgage, you are saying they want 6 we are recommending 5 and you want us to tell them which category?

Dana Niemela: If we cut a category, then I want to tell them what category we cut.

Robby Robinson: If we cut a category, but you are okay with us saying to them, you asked for 6 we are giving you 5, spread it along those things anyway you want? You are okay with us saying to them due to last year's amount, we are granting this amount? Can we do that?

Ray Z. Dissinger: As far as I know we can.

Robby Robinson: So, Dana if you come to one that needs a specific category, then point it out and we will discuss it. Will that work for everyone?

Jay Bobick: No, I have the same concern as Dana has. All the way through, when we cut the amount because it appears again and we need to look right. We cut a grant by \$1,000, you

have somebody in the public is looking at this and saying what is the justification for cutting this grant? Why are we making the cut? What specifically are they going to spend it on?

Ray Z. Dissinger: We have allowed the grantee to decide what they are going to do with that. If we are going to prescribe how it should be spent after the cut then we need to specify that in the contract. We have allowed the grantee to decide where they are going to take the cut not us deciding. If we are going to do that then we need a better system and we need to start looking at them in October and November.

Robby Robinson: If I am submitting a grant and every category that I am requesting is authorized, then how I spend it if there is a cut would be on an authorized category? If you are going to cut the requested amount by \$1,000, then let me put it where I decide. Here's the problem: the committee may recommend cutting \$1,000. The whole committee may recommend cutting \$2,000. Every time you do that we now have to go back to the grantee and we have to say, "Here is where we plan to cut that, are you alright with it?" He comes back and says, No, I am not. So you renegotiate.

Ray Z. Dissinger: This is a plan. When they submit a budget narrative, then it is a plan for spending the money, for example, \$200 for food and \$1,800 for clothing, I have been allowing that. That is basically what we have done. So in their shoes with \$1,000 less then I would adjust my plan.

Jay Bobick: All I am saying is we have to look good in the public eye. If someone is coming to say why you are taking the \$1,000, what is the rationale, then?

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is the 1.6 Million that was requested and there was only \$846,000 of funds available to put in grants.

Jay Bobick: We can say we systematically went through each of the grants. But when they come back and say, why a \$1,000 from that one, what is our answer to that?

Robby Robinson: Here is the consideration. When the Board cuts the grants, we don't specify where in that grant those cuts are coming from. That is deliberate on our part to allow the grant administrators to decide where to apply the cuts. The only time that we will change a specific category is when that category is not allowed based on the priority or the statutes, etc. We will identify them as we go through.

Dana Niemela: I would also add that across the board, the grantees from last year, we funded at last year's level because none of the grantees really justified in their narrative a reason for a significant increase. None of them to my satisfaction said this is why I need \$1,000 more with any specifications in their proposal. That may be a way to capture some particular issues that we have not funded additional request and have awarded at last year's level because the grantees did not provide significant or sufficient justification for the increase. Because that is

what I saw and so I agree with last year's funding level, they did not give me a good argument as to why they needed more.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That surprises me because we did put in there that any grant requesting an increase, specifies very specifically as to why they believe they need more.

Robby Robinson: They need to justify what they will be spending the money on and justify why they deserve an increase.

Steve Rylant: Some may have asked for \$75,000 last year but they were only given \$40,000. So this year they ask for \$75,000 again. They are thinking there need is not any less. I think you need to make it clear to the ones applying that if they need more than they received the year before then they need to tell us why. If they need more than the amount they requested then they need to justify why. They already told you when they asked for \$75,000 last year, and they don't see it as an increase. They only know you gave them part of what they needed. You have not made it clear to the grantee why they were cut to \$40,000 in the first place so they think they better make it stretch rather than go back and ask for \$75,000.

Robby Robinson: They still need to justify why they are asking for an increases. For grant #2, the American Legion Post #44 in Steamboat Springs, they requested \$5,600 and the committee recommended \$5,600. Do I have a motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve

Jay Bobick: Second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor say aye. Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**.

Chris Holden: Just a reminder, I have to leave at 11:30am.

Robby Robinson: Okay, so on to #3, the AL Post #115 in Rye for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor of \$5,000 for AL Post #115? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Okay, now for #4, the request was for \$5,000, the recommendation was for \$3,500. This is for the transportation program, AL Post #66 in Akron. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is unanimous. Now for #5, the VFW Post #3621 in Lamar, for transportation and veterans' assistance, \$12,000 requested, \$10,000 recommended. Is there a motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion?

Dana Niemela: The budget narrative does not match the description in the application so I wonder if there was some other conversation that was had that was not explicitly described here. The narrative says it will be to provide medical transportation to homeless and indigent veterans to the VA facility in Prowers, also to provide gift cards to veterans on an as needed basis for basic needs, and funds to pay stipend to the drivers. All of that I am comfortable with. The breakdown says that it will be used to pay for the driver's cellphones for passenger contact and emergency contact for \$500 and volunteer drivers' stipends for \$11,000. The description does not match what the narrative says.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is listed as volunteer drivers' stipends and gift cards. It is not in the narrative but from the plan. The volunteer stipend from what I understood is that they were requesting funds for the stipends to cover meals. The gift cards are as needed but were not listed in the main plan as expenditures. During the year it is possible that they may have somebody come in that they need to assist.

Dana Niemela: I need them to say that then in the grant breakdown they are a previous grantee, correct? We have recommended \$10,000 out of the \$12,000 requested. This is one in particular where we need to be explicit about what they can spend the \$10,000 on and say in the contract that it is not appropriate to use the funds for driver's cellphones. I would not approve the driver's cellphones and that would be a line item that I think is not appropriate for this grant. The drivers' stipend, we have been doing that and I don't have a problem with the transportation to and from the medical facility. If you want to fund gift cards then that needs to be explicit in their narrative of what they want to do.

Robby Robinson: The budget narrative and the program description do not match.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Well the only place they do not match is the cellphone to drivers. A lot of the programs they provide cellphones to the drivers because they need it to contact when they are on the road, if there is an emergency or to contact the veteran.

Chris Holden: We are not criticizing the intent but we are criticizing the administrator's error because the description does not match the narrative.

Kathleen Dunemn: In order to not penalize the applicant, can we take one of those out?

Jay Bobick: Let get it resolved. Can we state that \$10,000 is allocated for the purpose of providing for the volunteer drivers stipends only? I would suggest that we approve the \$10,000 for volunteer drivers' stipends only.

Dana Niemela: I second that.

Robby Robinson: So we are voting on the original amendment?

Jay Bobick: What about a friendly amendment?

Chris Holden: Leave my motion on the floor but amend it accordingly.

Robby Robinson: We are voting on the \$10,000 that will be specified in the contract to be used for the volunteer driver's stipend only. There is a motion. All in favor say aye. That vote was **unanimous**.

Leanne Wheeler: Is that a reimbursable stipend? So they will be submitting for reimbursement of the stipend. Based on the contract language, they will know not to submit a reimbursement for cell phones or it will be rejected.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes it is reimbursable and there is an advance. But it will be in the contract that it is only for volunteer drivers' stipends. When the documentation comes in for reimbursement against the advance, then it will either be approved or disapproved based on what is specified.

Robby Robinson: For #6, VFW Post #8661, in Conifer, transportation and veterans' assistance. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Robby Robinson: For #7, AL Post #103, for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #8, VFW Post#899 in Alamosa for veterans' assistance and transportation. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunumn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: I just have one question. 650 trips is the estimate in the narrative and that is a lot.

Jay Bobick: They make a lot of trips.

Robby Robinson: Any other discussion. All in favor say aye? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #9, AL Post #108, Pagoda Springs, \$57,000 was requested and \$50,000 is the recommendation for vehicle, transportation program, and for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #10, VFW Post#7829 Monument, request was for \$17,500 and the recommendation is for \$15,000. This is for the stand down and veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Jay Bobick: I have a problem with this one. The description says for clothing and shoes \$14,000 for the stand down. I don't want to see someone pick up three pairs of shoes and go down and sell them. How do we ensure that the shoes are not being sold?

Steve Rylant: There are places where that is possible and there are places where it is not. Monument is a small community. In Denver, you may see the stuff at the pawn shop, but in Monument you can't go six blocks down and even find a pawn shop.

Mickey Hunt: They actually support the Colorado Springs stand down. However, it is definitely more controlled. They have Schriever AFB airmen who are assigned to escort each of the homeless veterans in the process and walk them through the different booths. The abuse is minimal because that one is very well controlled. That one is attended by about 150 homeless veterans and I have been to several in the last few years.

Dana Niemela: It is extremely difficult to have any influence over what the recipients do with what they get, particularly with the stand downs.

The committee recommended \$15,000, what I would like to see on all of the stand downs in general is a recommendation that they should get donations and that there is more of a community effort to get donations for the items provided. The El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalitions probably has the clout in the community pull. I am not going to have the one line item excluded from this but if there is a general statement to them it will help me

Chris Holden: I want to make sure we have solid review Board procedures.

Robby Robinson: The Board is concerned about that. We could do a letter that states our concern for the stand downs: we would like to see a mechanism in place to eliminate someone taking 3 sleeping bags and also, we ask that they maximize our dollars by making an effort to get these things from the community. This grant approval process is not the mechanism by which we communicate that and so let's vote with what we've got. We can't change the rules during the year in which it is in effect. What is the vote on **#10** with a note to ourselves that we need to do a letter expressing our concerns about the stand downs?

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? That is unanimous. Okay, now for **#11**, VFW Post #5231 in Mancos for transportation in a rural community and veteran's assistance. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now, for **#12** AL Post # 113 is for transportation program in Alamosa. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For **#13** AL Post #23 is for veterans' assistance in Aurora, requested \$20,000 and recommended \$10,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. And for **#14** AL Post #2, is for a vehicle, transportation, and veterans' assistance in Pueblo. \$57,000 was requested and the recommendation is \$42,000. The note was of those funds they are required to purchase the vehicle. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: My question is on the narrative. The item says Veterans Trust Fund \$12,000. Is that a line item or is it for separate support. My assumption is that VTF includes rent, childcare, and utilities. This needs to be explicit when it goes back to the grantee. They have \$42,000 to purchase a van when on the line item; it states that \$22,000 is the costs of the van. This is not itemized correctly. We need to be explicit as to what we are allowing the additional \$20,000 dollars for. Per Diem for drivers, \$22,000 that seems like a lot. They are not itemized so I don't know.

Robby Robinson: For #14, I am assuming that \$22,000 is for the van.

Ray Z. Dissinger: It is split among the difference. The contract will say specifically that the \$22,000 is to purchase a new van then the remainder will be used for the transportation program and for veteran's assistance.

Dana Niemela: I would like this to read differently. Can I amend the motion? We can approve the recommended \$42,000 so long as it specifies explicitly that the \$22,000 is for the van, and then \$20,000 to be used for per diem for drivers, rent, food, and childcare facilities.

Ray Z. Dissinger: That is what I said and I will make sure it says that in the contract.

Robby Robinson: Is there any other discussion? So, the motion has been amended. All in favor? All opposed? That is **unanimous**. Moving on to #16 since we already voted for #15, for veterans' assistance. For #16, AL Post #1, requested \$50,000 and the recommendation is for \$15,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Ray Z. Dissinger: For #17, it was zeroed out so we will skip that one.

Robby Robinson: For #18, DAV #16 in Longmont, recommendation is \$17,500 for veterans' assistance, they requested \$35,000. This is a new grant. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Dana Niemela: Second that motion. I have to say that is a great example of a well-written grant proposal.

Steve Rylant: From what the public is going to see is this, a brand new one, and you had certain reasons only to give part of it. Now how would they know why it is only partially granted?

Ray Z. Dissinger: I send them a letter and then they call me. I explain in detail why they received what they did. The reason we have not had a problem is that I am available all the time and if any grantee has any problem they can call me.

Ben Mestas: It is also in the minutes as to what the changes were.

Robby Robinson: Let me point to this public document, the Memorandum from the Board of Veterans Affairs: The committee does not recommend any funding increase for existing grants and we also consider past performance. We also recommend funding for new grants at half the requested amount. The committee treated everybody equally. We had \$1.6 M requested and we had only \$846,000 available. The decisions were based on a list of priorities. We will post this to the website. So, for #18, all in favor? Any opposed? That makes it unanimous. So, the next one is #19, for veterans' assistance with NABVETS, Chapter 24 in Aurora, with \$25,000 requested and \$20,000 recommended. Motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Dana Niemela: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is unanimous. Now, for #20, DAV Post #25 in Grand Junction for the stand down and veterans' assistance, the requested amount \$12,000 and the recommended was \$12,000. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Jay Bobick: It think Ray, in the future, this is too specific. They say in their narrative City Market food vouchers, it would be better to just say food vouchers. We don't want some member of the public saying, well, they could get a loaf of bread cheaper at another store.

Ray Z. Dissinger: As long as I am the grant administrator, I am glad when we have somebody who knows what they want. I basically looked at this as a plan by the organization. We don't have accountants.

Jay Bobick: I think it is just too much detail.

Dana Niemela: I have a question about this one. When the line item is for \$4,000 for the stand down, then what is the \$4,000 for? That line item is not explicit enough.

Ray Z. Dissinger: When the reimbursements happen, they get the \$4,000 and then they will return to me the vouchers and statements that were used for the stand downs. There are innumerable things that could be used for.

Dana Niemela: The reason I want it to be explicit is because a lot of organizations put a lot of resources into the stand down. Denver, locally, you have the Department of Defense donating materials, the VA, DAV, and other community participants putting things in. We want to make sure we are covering all the bases and not duplicating all the efforts that are already being made. I am not going to disapprove but when it comes to the stand downs in particular, I want to make sure there is a note to the grantees. When the money requested is for providing assistance to the stand downs, I want to know what for? I want it to be explicit.

Robby Robinson: These organizations are submitting the grant application in January for an event that is held in November. Sometimes organizations back out of support so it is hard to know what specific need they will be supporting. These grants are being written at least 9 months in advance. I can't give you a detailed answer, if that is what you want, I can tell you I need about \$4,000 but guess what, I can't tell you specifically because the Red Cross can't provide meals this year but thank goodness I have this money so there will be meals. Remember, these grants are being written in January and December, I am not sure they know that specifically.

Steve Rylant: It is a plan, a budget. They only know so much. They have to submit receipts and such to Ray. Any of these can come to Ray and we can say show me what you spent your money on. The Board looks at where that money has been spent.

Robby Robinson: Okay so is there any other discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

On to #21, AL Post #32 for Longmont stand down, transportation, and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$37,800 and the recommendation is for \$20,000. This one will say specifically that there will be no clinical support. Do I have a motion?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The Committee said no on clinical support that will be in the contract, no money will be spent on clinical support.

Dana Niemela: I also questioned that, who would be doing the clinical support. How do we know who or what their

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I will make sure that the letter specifies that there will be no clinical support.

Robby Robinson: For **#22**, for Loveland VFW Post 41 asking for veterans' assistance. The request was for \$84,000 and the recommendation was for \$40,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: What is the \$5,000 for homeless veterans?

Chris Holden: There are 2 places they ask for \$5,000 for that.

Dana Niemela: They will have \$40,000 to utilize if we agree.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say aye? Any opposed? That makes it **unanimous**. Next will be **#23**, the Durango DAV Chapter 48 is requesting \$62, 128 and the recommendation is for \$36,000 which would go towards last year's level in addition to the stand down support. Do I have a motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. On to **#24**, AL Post # 88, Hot Sulphur Springs. The request was for \$15,000 and the recommendation was for \$7,000. This is a new grantee. The committee recommended that use for snow removal was a no go. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. **#25** Windsor AL Post #109 stand down and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$80,000 and the recommendation is for \$40,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. For #26, the Westcliff AL Post #170 asking for transportation program and veterans' assistance. The request was for \$60,000 and the recommendation is for \$40,000. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now #27, Craig VFW 4265 asking for veterans' assistance and the transportation program. The request was for \$10,000 and the recommendation was for \$10,000. Do we have a motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: The assumption on the budget narrative is that veterans' assistance is what – emergency assistance?

Robby Robinson: That is what we are assuming for all of the veterans' assistance. All in favor? Any opposed? That makes the vote on #27 **unanimous**. For #28, Meeker VFW asking for transportation program and veterans' assistance, requested \$8,000 and the recommendation was \$6,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunumn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Okay we will skip to #33 and come back to the nursing homes at the end so Jay can recuse himself. So, for #33, AL for Colorado, \$30,000 requested and \$20,000 recommended for veterans' assistance. Do I have a motion?

Jay Bobick: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now, #34, DAV Region with recommendation of \$18,000 for stand down support. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: That is how you write a grant proposal for the stand down. That is your model.

Robby Robinson: I have an issue with the narrative. As far as being a model, we can provide a sample of a well-written grant for next year's applicants. All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Okay, so we are at **#35**. Motion?

Chris Holden: Is this one missing something? How would we go about placing a motion to them...

Dana Niemela: The program will provide a one-time grant to individual posts to provide resources to meet critical needs. I think it is in the narrative but not in the budget narrative.

Steve Rylant: What would you want in a budget narrative?

Kathleen Dunemn: The thing of it is when they run out of money, and then they are out.

Jay Bobick: This will be covered when we send out a sample of a good grant.

Dana Niemela: Amend it pending the receipt of a more detailed budget narrative.

Chris Holden: I don't understand who will be getting the \$500?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They verify the need at a committee level.

Robby Robinson: The grant is from the Department and this is at the State level where posts can request up to \$500 to provide resources to meet critical needs.

Chris Holden: Does this organization get audited like we are being audited? How do we know where the money is spent? How does it fit in the priorities? Can we delay it and get more information?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They won't get any more information.

11:00am Ben Mestas left the room and came back at 11:05am.

-Discussion about how state level organizations are held accountable and whether or not this vote should be delayed for more specific information.

Steve Rylant: Not all of these \$500 disbursements are cash grants.

Chris Holden: Is it on a first come basis?

Kathleen Dunemn: Yes. It is based on the moment of emergent need.

Robby Robinson: Any further discussion?

Dana Niemela: Can we approve with receipt of a detailed budget narrative?

Ray Z. Dissinger: If it is approved then the grant administrator will make sure there is a request for a detailed budget narrative.

Robby Robinson: All in favor. That is **unanimous**. For **#36**, for Dolores DAV for transportation program and veterans' assistance, requested \$ 55,000 and recommended \$40,000. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion?

Dana Niemela: What do they do with the recreation center day passes?

Ray Z. Dissinger: They use these passes for therapeutic purposes.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. **#37** is VFW Post#4171 in Golden, original request was for \$30,000 and the recommendation was \$20,000 for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Dana Niemela: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. **#38 AL** Post # 29 Northglenn for veterans' assistance, requested \$11, 156 and the recommended was \$6,000. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Jay Bobick: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Chris Holden: Are the initial union dues allowed?

Ray Z. Dissinger: Yes, it is very important when someone is unemployed and they have a skill set to belong to a union to be able to pay their initial union dues.

Dana Niemela: There is also a stipend for mileage, clothing for interviews, and funds will be provided for employment development for veterans. The narrative does not match the budget description. I don't have a problem with the budget description.

Chris Holden: It really does not state that funds will be used for these services.

Ray Z. Dissinger: Those are semantics that is like saying an individual should be corrected for the way they say something. I said it was adequate to move forward. I don't think they should be penalized for the wording.

Dana Niemela: We are not being stewards of public funds if we don't know explicitly and specifically how the money will be spent. They are asking for \$10,000 for transportation for volunteer drivers. The only thing in the description is driving for employment.

Chris Holden: We could have them specify if it is a legitimate medical appointment.

Dana Niemela: That is a lot of mileage in Aurora.

-Discussion about Aurora, access to the RTD, and spending that much to reimburse drivers.

Robby Robinson: In the budget description, this is for jobs for veterans.

Dana Niemela: If there is to be \$6K approved, then we need to tell them what it is approved for.

Robby Robinson: Their original budget request was for \$11,156 and only the transportation would be for driving veterans to job interviews.

Dana Niemela: I don't have a problem with the clothing for job interviews. I don't know what kind of stipend we are paying drivers in Aurora.

Kathleen Dunemn: Could we put a stipulation in the contract?

-Discussion of how to amend this and put it in the contract.

Robby Robinson: Can we come back to this, Chris is going to have to leave and we want to be able to vote on the Nursing home. So let's table this vote.
So on to #39 for veterans' assistance. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? That is **unanimous**. Now for #40, VVA Chapter #1071, requested \$25,000 and recommended \$12,500 for veterans' services. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: I second that.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Dana Niemela: I approve within the budget narrative but I have an issue with, "in addition we will provide counseling and psychiatric services."

Kathleen Dunemn: I believe we said no on the psychiatric services.

Robby Robinson: None of this money should be used for psychiatric services.

-Discussion of not allowing psychiatric services for any of the grant applications and the problems that could arise with that aspect of providing funding.

Robby Robinson: All in favor say aye. So, that is unanimous with the explicit understanding that none of the funds may be used for psychiatric services.

Jay Bobick recused himself from voting on #29, #30, #31, and #32 which all were requests from Colorado State Veterans Community Living Centers.

Robby Robinson: #29 for wall mounted televisions for Homelake SVNH. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #30, for residential furniture for Florence SVNH Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #31, for beds with mattresses for Rifle SVNH. Motion?

Kathleen Dunemn: Move to approve.

Chris Holden: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion? All in favor. That is **unanimous**. Now for #32, for security cameras for Walsenburg SVNH. Motion?

Chris Holden: Move to approve.

Kathleen Dunemn: Second that motion.

Robby Robinson: Any Discussion?

Chris Holden: Are the security cameras the norm at these locations?

Kathleen Dunemn: Security cameras are mainly for the individual residents to ensure patient safety, not so much to keep the outside criminal elements out, but specifically for patient care. This is particularly useful with Alzheimer's and patients with dementia, to make sure someone does not try to leave the facility. At Walsenburg, these are necessary for health and safety of the patients.

Robby Robinson: All in favor? That is **unanimous**. Okay can someone go and get Jay back in the room so we can finish these votes.

Chris Holden left the room to go and bring Jay Bobick back.

Steve Rylant: When you have him leave the room or recuse himself, it is sort of a disservice because he could add a lot of value to the discussion on the State Veterans Nursing Homes.

Robby Robinson: We have to consider what the public perception is and avoid any perception of a conflict of interest. Thank you for that comment, as a member of the public, it is good to get the input.

Leanne Wheeler: The public does have the opportunity to send in a representative body to have a voice before the Board if they want to add to the discussion. I don't see many of the public here today. It is better that he leave the room, to keep the voting clean.

Ray Z. Dissinger: of Executive Order 009 on the By-laws.

Jay Bobick and Chris Holden back in the room at 11:30am

Robby Robinson: #38 was tabled and now we are back to it.

Dana Niemela: I approve of the \$9,100 being spent on clothing for interviews, for employment education for veterans to get jobs, and for transportation for medical appointment.

Leanne Wheeler: I live in Aurora and there are two facilities in Aurora which are both on the bus lines.

Ray Z. Wheeler: It says for job interviews.

Dana Niemela: If it is for transportation and gas cards that would be okay but I can't see reimbursing volunteer drivers for that amount.

Kathleen Dunemn: Can we move forward and then in the contract state exactly what it is for?

Ray Z. Dissinger: The argument is we have cut it too much.

Dana Niemela: I am okay with \$4,000 but I want to know how it is paid. At .50 cents a mile, that is a lot of mileage in Aurora. Are the veterans getting to appointments for medical needs or for job interviews? This looks like we are paying the employees of some member's private business.

Leanne Wheeler: Are we subsidizing someone's private bus service? It sounds sketchy to me. I like the idea of stipulating that the \$4,000 can go toward an individual veteran's own gumption to use a bus token and then ride the bus to his or her job interview.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I think we are making a lot of assumptions here.

Dana Niemela: So what exactly is transportation for veterans? I don't support extensive stipends and reimbursement.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We can say, "The Board does not wish to provide transportation through drivers but through bus tokens and gas cards."

Robby Robinson: Do we have a motion on the question? Okay all in favor say aye.
[It was a 3-2 vote with Kathleen Dunemn and Dana Niemela dissenting.]

Robby Robinson: Okay, well that passes.

Kathleen Dunemn: So would the motion be amended with a friendly amendment?

Robby Robinson: We ask them for information on how it will be spent and we will need more information.

Ray Z. Dissinger: We should request an explanation.

Jay Bobick: We approve \$1,500 for the purpose of clothing and for union dues, and then \$4,500 will be held in abeyance until a proper explanation of how it will be used for transportation is supplied.

Ray Z. Dissinger: I think you should delay the entire award. We have to do a contract but they are local. We should wait because...

Steve Rylant: If I was a requester, I would ask why I submitted it in March and then no one asked me these questions until now.

Kathleen Dunemn: I move to delay for more information or for additional justification.

Dana Niemela: I second the motion.

Robby Robinson: All in favor of delaying until we receive more information? That is unanimous to delay the vote until further justification can be provided.

Ray Z. Dissinger: So that leaves \$26,169.12 in the balance and we still have the cemetery, CDVA, and SVCLC who may need that in the coming year.

Robby Robinson: Are there any objections?

Future Meetings

11-12 June, Las Animas and tour of Fort Lyon facility on Wednesday, 11th of June and 9:30am meeting on 12th June, place tentatively at Fort Bent's Inn, 10950 U.S. 50, Las Animas, CO 81054

Motion to Adjourn by Robby Robinson, seconded by Dana Niemela at 12:15pm.

Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.