

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
06 April 2018
Aurora Chamber of Commerce
14305 E. Alameda Avenue, Suite 300
Aurora, CO 80012

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Jack Rudder, Vice Chair
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary
Lacey Golonka, Member
Pat Hammon, Member
Robby Robinson, Member
Norm Steen, Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Executive Director
Ben Mestas, CDVA Director
Gail Hoagland, DMVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA Administrative Assistant

Guests Present:

Sheila Scanlon, UVC Legislative Committee
Dick Young, UVC Legislative Chairman

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Opening

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dailey at 0903 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey then invited introductions from around the room.

Mr. Dailey greeted all in attendance and the Board members identified themselves for the record and for the benefit of the guests.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Steen moved that the March minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell and carried.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Golonka reported that she has been working or coordinating efforts with the women veterans coalition.

Ms. Caldwell is back in Colorado.

Ms. Hammon attended the third annual women veterans tea in Palisade. The event had more than 140 attendees, including three World War II veterans. A Vietnam veterans memorial event was held in Fruita on 29 March with approximately 75 in attendance. The Western Slope Veterans Coalition met to amplify their mission statement to include their commitment to serve as a resource for women veterans and for subjects of trauma. A list is being assembled of desired service by the Western Slope One Source, scheduled to open in 2019. A VOA office has opened in Eagle County and is providing assistance with homelessness.

Mr. Robinson said he was unable to attend the last Board meeting because he was attending the funeral of Larry Velasquez, the former resident council chair at the State Veterans Community Living Center in Rifle. A flower fund has been established in Mr. Velasquez's name to help maintain the rose garden he established in memory of his wife. The CLC in Rifle has passed two surveys and intends to start a CNA training program. The CLC at Fitzsimons has passed one of its surveys. The Department of Human Services has proposed funding in the Long Bill to enable the CLCs to pay direct service personnel under exemption from the salaries mandated by the state personnel system.

Mr. Steen said the March legislative conference of the National Association of Counties saw a meeting of the Veterans and Military Service Committee attended by James Wartski, executive director of the VA's Veterans Experience Office. VA is incorporating a commitment to veterans' engagement and experience at their facilities through utilization of Community Veterans Engagement Boards. He attended the VA Clinic Stakeholders meeting in Colorado Springs on 28 March. The wait time for an initial PCP appointment at the Colorado Springs CBOC is now 62 days. The clinic continues to struggle with its caseload as it gains approximately 500 new patients every month. VHA plans to include complementary alternative medicine to its program of care. Patients no-showing for appointments at the CBOC continues to be a problem, with approximately 30,000 no-shows in 2017. An additional \$300,000 in funding for county veterans service officers is proposed in the Long Bill. He met with Terri Clinton, the commander of the American Legion Department of Colorado, and she is interested in the role of the Board. Upcoming veterans' events include the UVC banquet scheduled for 08 April, The Vet Fest at the Sky Six Stadium on 04 August, an SBA-sponsored Veterans Small Business Conference in Colorado Springs on 05 April, and a VA Mental Health Summit and the Penrose Pavilion in Colorado Springs on 29 August. He has also drafted a letter for the Board to send the governor supporting the use of the additional \$300,000 to counties to support veterans service officers.

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Mr. Rudder was out of the country in March. A large concern in the veteran coalition in Alamosa is the disproportionately high suicide rate among veterans in the San Luis Valley. There is a persistent need for the availability of more and better mental health services.

Mr. Dailey attended the VA town hall held the Denver VAMC in March. Another is scheduled to be held in Fruita on 18 April. Kremmling's annual veterans dinner and town hall is scheduled for 19 April. Jackson County has a new veterans service officer.

Public Comments

Ms. Scanlon said she is looking forward to partnering with the board regarding issues faced by women veterans.

Mr. Young said the ticket holders for Sunday's UVC banquet will be able to tour the new hospital on Saturday. UVC has an online map available that displays where veterans resources are currently available, the intent is to use this as a starting point to encourage communication between veterans'

organizations. He also sought a commitment from the Board to collaborate with UVC's effort to support women veterans, which Mr. Dailey agreed to add as an agenda item.

Reports

Mr. Hunt said that he is enacting an organizational change at the Division of Veterans Affairs. The division will be split geographically along the continental divide and there will be a Division of Veterans Affairs East and a Division of Veterans Affairs West, each with its own division director. Ben Mestas will continue to serve in his role as the director of the east division and Dave Callahan, the DMVA strategic planner, will service as the interim director for the west division. The current version of the Long Bill includes funding for three FTE for the Western Slope One Source, namely a VSO, a facility manager, and an ID staff person, the last of which has —already been filled. The groundbreaking for the One Source is scheduled for June 2018 with an opening date in the summer of 2019. The department has reallocated a position to include a webmaster.

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New Business

The Board here entertained a motion by Ms. Hammon to sign and submit to the governor the letter written by Mr. Steen in support of funding for county veterans service officers. This was seconded by Mr. Robinson and carried.

Reports

Mr. Mestas said the division has hired three new state veterans service officers. Jaclyn Murrietta is the division POC for women veterans and has been in the contact with the coalition. The division annual training conference will be held 10 April-13 April and in addition to county veterans services officers will be attended by representatives from CLCs, VOA, the American Legion, and the VFW. Guest presenters include a law firm that represents cases at the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals.

Ms. Hoagland invited questions on her written report. Mr. Robinson inquired whether there are any concerns about the rate of spending by current grantees. Ms. Hoagland said that there have been but contract modifications have resolved most of the issues. Mr. Robinson also asked whether it is typical for the CLC's to be slow to spend their funds. Ms. Hoagland said that it is because the CLCs are usually funding projects and will submit for reimbursement when the project is complete. Mr. Steen asked if the Board has a process for controlling risk in regard to advanced funds and Ms. Hoagland explained the internal guidelines that are part of the grant rules. Ms. Hoagland then presented a reallocation request for the Board's considerations. Ms. Caldwell to reallocate the funds as recommended and Ms. Hammon seconded. The motion carried.

Recess

The Board recessed at 10:25 a.m. and resumed labor at 10:36 a.m.

Action Item: UVC Collaboration

Mr. Robinson moved that the Board resolve to collaborate with the efforts of UVC in regard to support of women veterans. Ms. Hammon seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Action Item: Veterans Trust Fund Grant

Ms. Hoagland told the Board the written subcommittee summary should be set aside as it has arithmetic errors. She reminded the Board that as applications are considered the decisions made by Board must be consistent and with clear justification. The recommendation of the subcommittee is that the applications of current grantees that are compliant be funded. If grantees have moderate compliance issues the recommendation is that they be funded with monitoring stipulated, and that those who are out of compliance not be funded.

Ms. Hoagland said that several applications scored below the required minimum of 60. There were more of these than in previous grant cycles, located in critical geographic areas. They included:

- VT 19-04, American Legion Post 108, Pagosa Springs
- VT 19-13, American Legion Post 74, Meeker
- VT 19-14, American Legion Post 92, Cortez
- VT 19-17, American Legion Post 62, Craig
- VT 19-20, American Legion Post 22, Northglenn

Ms. Hoagland said a key factor in the low application scores is probably low attendance at the grant application webinars. The applications changed this cycle and some applicants who did not attend the webinars may not have understood how to complete it. She then asked the Board if it would consider any of the applications that scored less than 60. Scores would need to be adjusted to make any of those applications eligible for consideration.

The applications with eligible scores were first considered in numerical order, followed by discussion on the applications whose scores fell below 60. The final group of applications considered was the applications from the state veterans community living centers, which had been prioritized by CDHS. The decisions on all of the applications are listed numerically below.

VT 19-01, VFW Post 8661, Conifer

Score: 81.4

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Steen that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$8,400.00

VT 19-02, VFW Post 12063, Westcliffe

Score: 86

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Mr. Robinson mentioned the comparatively low number of veterans served, a concern shared by Ms. Caldwell. Ms. Hoagland said that while census is lower in rural areas, there are also fewer resources available to veterans. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Steen that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$55,000.00

VT 19-03, American Legion Post 09, La Junta

Score: 81.4

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Ms. Hammon and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that the recommendation be enacted. The motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$14,275.00

VT 19-04, American Legion Post 108, Pagosa Springs

Score: 57

Noncompliant

Recommendation: Do not fund

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland asked whether any of the members of the Board wished to adjust their application scores and make this application eligible for consideration. Mr. Dailey said that the previous year's funding had a stipulation of a site visit from Ms. Hoagland due to a history of noncompliance from this grantee. Ms. Hoagland confirmed that the site visit took place but the grantee's performance did not improve. She said this has been three consecutive years of noncompliance from this grantee, at which point the Board's precedent has been not to fund the application. The grant administrator has demonstrated a persistent unwillingness to adhere to the grant rules despite coaching. It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that the Board decline to fund this application.

Decision: Do not fund

VT 19-06, VFW 7829, Colorado Springs

Score: 90.8

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Robinson that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$99,050.00

VT 19-07, American Legion Post 32, Longmont

Score: 67.9

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Ms. Caldwell noted the increased amount in the application request over last year's funded amount. This grantee had compliance issues earlier in the grant cycle but is now compliant. Ms. Hoagland said that the organization will have a new grant administrator in the upcoming grant year. This grantee has received some unusual requests for emergency assistance and the current budget is constructed to allow for flexibility. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Rudder that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$59,200.00

VT 19-08, American Legion Post 88, Hot Sulphur Springs

Mr. Dailey recused himself from review of this application.

Score: 80.3

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Steen that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$30,200.00

VT 19-09, VFW of Colorado, Lakewood

Score: 77.9

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Robinson that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$40,000.00

VT 19-10, DAV Chapter 48, Durango

Score: 82.8

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Mr. Robinson inquired whether the amount requested is fully justified due to the population census and presence of other grantee organizations in the geographic area. Ms. Hoagland said the higher number and grantees and applicants in the area can be attributed to a lack of other resources in rural areas. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Steen that the recommendation be enacted. The motion carried with six in favor and one opposed.

Decision: Fund in full at \$92,620.00

VT 19-11, American Legion Post 16, Huerfano

Score: 82.1

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Steen that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$10,000.00

VT 19-12, VFW Post 41, Loveland

Score: 68

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Mr. Steen said the amount of the request was not well justified in the application, and Ms. Hammon agreed that in particular the large increase in the amount of the request was not validated in the application. Ms. Hoagland said the grantee served a college population among others and the need for emergency assistance can be high. Ms. Hammon also said a large increase in funding may not be justified with the organization using a new grant administrator in the upcoming cycle. Ms. Hoagland said that the incoming grant administrator has experience administering a VTF grant. Mr. Robinson called for the question to accept the subcommittee's recommendation and the motion failed. Ms. Hammon moved that application be funded in the amount of \$69,000.00, which is an increase of \$10,000.00 over last year's funded amount but is also more than \$10,000.00 less than the amount of the request. Mr. Robinson seconded the motion. The motion carried with four in favor and three opposed.

Decision: Fund in part at \$69,000.00

VT 19-13, VFW Post 5843, Meeker

Score: 52.6

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Do not fund

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland suggested funding this application in the amount of \$5,000.00 rather than the requested amount \$8,200.00. This grantee was new in the previous year and has been very slow to spend the current funds. Ms. Hammon noted that the application is requesting a lower amount that was funded in the current grant cycle. Each Board member increased their application score to bring the application to the required level of 60 so that it could be considered for funding. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Ms. Hammon that this application be funded in the amount of \$3,000.00 based on the organization's current rate of spending. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$3,000.00

VT 19-14, VFW Post 5231, Mancos

Score: 54

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Do not fund

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland said this is a rural area with few resources for veterans in need. Ms. Hammon said that the application asks for an increase in the currently funded amount even though his grantee has been very slow to spend its current funds. Ms. Hoagland explained that the post has a committee that decides the amount of the grant request each year, which is often determined in spite of the advice of the grant administrator who is aware that the post is unlikely to expend large amounts. Each Board member with the exception of Mr. Rudder increased their application score to bring the application to the required level of 60 so that it could be considered for funding. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Robinson that this application be funded in the amount of \$4,000.00 based on the organization's current rate of spending. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$4,000.00

VT 19-15, American Legion Post 1980, Woodland Park

Score: 68.4

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Ms. Hammon that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$20,000.00

VT 19-16, American Legion Post 25, Florence

Score: 60.8

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$15,000.00

VT 19-17, American Legion Post 62, Craig

Score: 58.9

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Do not fund

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland said this is also an underserved rural area but the grantee has struggled with spending and with documentation requirements. Mr. Dailey and Ms. Hammon both increased their application scores to bring the application above required level of 60 so that it could be considered for funding. It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded in the amount of \$5,000.00 based on the organization's current rate of spending. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$5,000.00

VT 19-18, American Legion Post 113, Alamosa

Mr. Rudder recused himself from review of this application

Score: 70.6

New applicant

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: This is an established program, formerly administered through a VTF grant to the VFW post. It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that the recommendation be enacted. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$33,000.00

VT 19-19, American Legion Post 103, Littleton

Score: 72.3

Current compliance: Moderate

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland recommended funding this application in the amount of \$25,000.00. The current funded amount is \$30,000.00, and while this grantee is compliant with grant rules, they are spending very slowly and may not expend their funds this cycle. It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded in the amount of \$25,000.00. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$25,000.00

VT 19-20, American Legion Post 22, Longmont

Score: 56.8

Current compliance: Moderate

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland said this is a returning grantee this year. The grant administrator has had difficulties with documentation due to technology challenges. Spending has been slow. Ms. Caldwell, Ms. Hammon, and Mr. Rudder increased their application scores to bring the application to the required level of 60 so that it could be considered for funding. It was moved by Ms. Hammon and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded in the amount of \$2,000.00 based on the organization's current rate of spending. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$2,000.00

VT 19-21, DAV Chapter 44, Cortez

Score: 75.9

Current compliance: High

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland said that two line items would have to be removed from the proposed budget. There is a line item for a van but the required bid sheet was not included with the application. Snow removal also had to be removed as it is an administrative cost. This brings the amount eligible for funding to \$60,000.00. It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded minus the ineligible amount of \$25,000.00. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$60,000.00

VT 19-22, VFW Post 4172. Golden

Score: 62.6

New applicant

Recommendation: Fund in full

Discussion: Ms. Hammon said there is some duplication of services as the geographic area is urban. Mr. Robinson said the need justification was vague. Ms. Hammon moved that this application be funded at \$10,000.00 rather than the requested \$15,000.00 and Mr. Robinson seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in part at \$10,000.00

VT 19-23, American Legion Post 44, Steamboat Springs

Score: 69.3

Current compliance: Low

Recommendation: Fund with stipulations

Discussion: Ms. Hoagland said this grantee has had ongoing issues with compliance, including following the grant rules, spending rates, and being argumentative when corrected. If this application is funded it will require a stipulation that a new grant administrator be appointed. It was moved by Ms. Caldwell and seconded by Mr. Robinson that this application be funded in full with this stipulation. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$4,500.00 with administrator replacement stipulation

VT 19-24, SVCLC Rifle

It was moved by Mr. Steen and seconded by Mr. Robinson that this application be funded in full. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$21,385.00

VT 19-25, SVCLC McCandless

It was moved by Ms. Hammon and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded in full. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$20,000.00

VT 19-26, SVCLC Homelake

It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Hammon that this application be funded in full. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$69,029.92

VT 19-27, SVCLC Fitzsimons

It was moved by Mr. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Caldwell that this application be funded in full. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Decision: Fund in full at \$19,731.40

The total amount of VTF funds allocation was \$737,291.32 with \$37,000.00 remaining. Mr. Mestas said he will bring a funding request to the Board to utilize the remaining funds for the division and the cemetery.

New Business

Mr. Dailey invited discussion on whether any changes to the bylaws are necessary to accommodate call-in attendance at meetings and whether or not call-in attendance affects the existence of a quorum. The consensus was that a required number present in person is not necessary at this time unless required by the bylaws. Ms. Hoagland said the bylaws state that electronic votes are valid. It was concluded that call-in attendance counts toward the quorum and no additional action is needed at this time.

Upcoming Meetings

04 May Westminster
01 June Walsenburg

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Rudder made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Ms. Caldwell. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.