

CDVA Board of Directors Meeting
01May2015
American Legion Department of Colorado
7465 E 1st Ave, Denver, CO 80230

The meeting was called to order at 09:34 with Robby Robinson, Chairman, presiding. The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence in acknowledgement of POWs, service members who remain MIA, and in support of our troops and their families. Board members present included Mr. Robinson; Dana Niemela, Vice-chair; Rene Simard, Secretary; Christopher Holden, member; and Duane Dailey, member. Not present were board members Kathleen Dunemmn and Jack Rudder. DMVA staff members present were Mickey Hunt, Deputy Director; Ben Mestas, DVA Director; Gail Hoagland, DVA Grant Administrator; and Carissa Snyder, DVA Administrative Assistant. There was one visiting veteran BG (Ret) Mathias, present.

First item of business was the approval of the minutes from the meeting of 03 April 2015. It was moved by Mr. Dailey and seconded to accept the minutes as written. This motion carried with no opposition.

This was followed by comments from members of the board. Mr. Robinson summarized his 20 April 2015 meeting with Sloan Gibson, United States Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. They discussed access to health care, the Choice Card program, and mental health services available to veterans. Mr. Gibson acknowledged complications in all areas, all of which are currently being addressed by the VA. Of particular concern has been the emerging VA model of group care and therapy for mental health treatment, which is not suitable for all veterans and in many rural locations not accessible. Mr. Gibson described the intent to expand the existing telehealth model to help with this type of shortfall. Mr. Robinson mentioned that Representative Mike Coffman has also voiced support of allowing non-VA providers to fill service gaps, including services such as alternative therapies.

Mr. Simard reported that he attended the UVC banquet held on 19 April 2015 and intended to attend the Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon on 08 May 2015. Mr. Dailey reported on the DVA annual training conference held 28 April 2015-01 May 2015, which he attended as a representative of the Board and also as a county veterans service officer. Mr. Dailey said the conference was successful but conveyed perhaps too much information to be absorbed at once, and voiced support of the Division's plan to send state veterans service officers to do outreach in county offices. He mentioned that the Choice Card program has been problematic for Colorado veterans; the rules are unclear and veterans still have trouble accessing care.

Mr. Hunt reported that the Long Bill has been signed by the governor, changing the rate at which county veterans service officers are compensated. Mr. Hunt expressed concern over county commissioners knowing how to properly allocate the new funds. He stated that a companion bill has clarified that these funds are not expected to be matched by counties. He also reported that while the VA is fully committed to finishing the new hospital, cost continues to be a concern. It has also been acknowledged that the anticipated operating costs of the new hospital are likely to overrun the planned budget. A DOD study

to be released in June analyzes the economic impact of the DOD on Colorado, and Mr. Hunt has seen a rough draft. In his travels Mr. Hunt visited Project Sanctuary in Granby and was impressed with the program. In the coming weeks he will be in Alamosa to attend a veterans forum with Senator Michael Bennett and in Montrose as the community prepares for their "No Barriers" week. He will also attend the Governor's wildfire press conference. He recently visited the VAMC in Grand Junction and reported that the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery is under budget and filling quickly. He informed the Board that Army Command Sergeant Major Rob Lawrence will retire on 06 June 2015.

Mr. Mestas reported that the annual training conference was concluding today, with the final presenter being the CLCs. He clarified that the new funding allocated to counties for veterans service can't be spent on anything else. The bill specified that that the new funds go to county veterans service officers' operating budgets, allowing them to be better compensated or simultaneously freeing up budget allocations for other services. He explained that Colorado currently has 49 part-time and 15 full-time county veterans service officers, and that their compensation from the state is based on the submission of the CVA-26 that tracks the county veterans service officer time. If the form is not submitted the county does not receive the State funds.

Mr. Robinson then mentioned that a Board member is needed to serve as a liaison to the Commission on the Community Living Centers. As no members present volunteered, Mr. Robinson offered to attend the next meeting.

The next agenda item was the Veterans Trust Fund grant. Ms. Hoagland explained that the execution performance for FY2015 has been poor, due to new accounting software and procedures utilized by the State. There have been delays in advances and in reimbursements, some of which has impacted the funded programs. The Board prepared to review the FY 2016 proposals. Ms. Hoagland stated that Letters of Intent should be sent by the end of May, so that all grants could (hopefully) be signed and executed by the first of July.

Mr. Robinson reminded the Board that a code of ethics is attached to the bylaws and all members are obliged to disclose any conflict of interest. Mr. Robinson reported that Ms. Dunemn, while not present, did have comments to make on some of the proposals and he would be contacting her by phone during the meeting. He moved to accept the subcommittee's funding recommendations, noting any exceptions determined during the review of the proposals. The motion was seconded and carried with no opposition. Ms. Niemela was given control of the grant review process. Ms. Dunemn joined the meeting by phone at 10:30.

It was first established that the VTF had \$832,931 to allocate, with \$962,112.36 in requests. Copies of the grant proposals and the subcommittee scoring averages for each individual applicant were provided to board members in advance of the meeting. Subcommittee recommendations were weighed in conjunction with scored criteria. Final decisions are as follows:

Proposal 1516-01: American Legion Post 44 in Steamboat Springs requested \$5,600 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 84.8. This organization received the same amount last year for this program and their administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$5,600

Proposal 1516-02: DAV Chapter 48 in Durango requested \$80,270 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 86.2. Last year this chapter received a grant of \$36,000 and their administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$80,270

Proposal 1516-03: American Legion Post 103 in Littleton requested \$30,000 for veterans' assistance. The Board's average score was 69.83. This post received \$20,000 last year and their administration has been satisfactory. The consensus was to fund this proposal due to the large geographic area served by the veterans' organizations in Arapahoe County, which attracts veterans from at least two neighboring counties.

Decision: fund in full at \$30,000

Proposal 1516-04: VFW Post 5231 in Mancos requested \$10,000 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 73.7. This post received \$4,810 last year. Spending and accounting are both currently up to date although reporting has been slow. The Board concurred with the subcommittee that there is some overlap of services offered in the area, and that this post could improve in administration performance. The consensus was to fund this proposal at last year's amount.

Decision: fund in part at \$4,810

Proposal 1516-05: American Legion Post 115 in Rye requested \$5,000 for assistance. The Board's average score was 77.1. Last year this post received a grant of \$5,000. Administration has been satisfactory with the exception of the timeliness of the second quarter report.

Decision: fund in full at \$5,000

Proposal 1516-06: DAV Chapter 44 in Mancos requested \$68,900 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 69.5. While the subcommittee had recommended funding this proposal only in part, the Board considered the travel distances required to access health care in the area and decided to fund it in full.

Decision: fund in full at \$68,900

Proposal 1516-07: American Legion Post 18 in Greeley requested \$16,600 for veterans' assistance. The Board's average score was 76.1. This organization is a new applicant. The Board acknowledged the underserved area targeted by this post.

Decision: fund in full at \$16,600

Proposal 1516-08: American Legion Post 88 in Hot Sulphur Springs requested \$20,000 for assistance. The Board's average score was 84.3. Mr. Dailey did not score this proposal and recused himself from both the subcommittee and Board discussions since he is involved with this post. Last year this post received \$7,000 as a new grantee and administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$20,000

Proposal 1516-09: VFW Post 899 in Alamosa requested \$48,568.35 for transportation, assistance, and a vehicle. The Board's average score was 83.3. Last year this post received \$25,000 and administration has been satisfactory. The Board acknowledged the large geographic area served by this post.

Decision: fund in full at \$48,568.35

Proposal 1516-10: American Legion Post 127 in Westcliffe requested \$51,750 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 83.2. Last year this post received \$40,000, which has been fully expended with satisfactory administration.

Decision: fund in full at \$51,750

Proposal 1516-11: VFW Post 8661 in Bailey requested \$8,400 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 82.1. Last year this post received \$7,200 and administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$8,400

Proposal 1516-12: American Legion Post 25 in Florence requested \$25,000 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 82. Last year this post received a grant of \$15,000 and administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$25,000

Proposal 1516-13: VFW Post 4265 in Craig requested \$36,120 for veterans' assistance and a van. The board's average score was 72.7. This organization received \$10,000 last year and have expended one-fifth of those funds. The Board discussed transportation difficulties in the area and the need for a van; the one currently is use by the post has more than 300,000 miles. The consensus was to fund this proposal in full.

Decision: fund at \$36,120

Proposal 1516-14: American Legion Post 109 in Windsor requested \$60,000 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 82.4. Last year this post received \$40,000 and administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$60,000

Proposal 1516-15: VFW Post 7829 in Monument requested \$20,000 for a stand down. The Board's average score was 84.5. Last year this post received \$20,000 for the same purpose. At the time of the subcommittee review reports were lacking; by the time of the board meeting they have been submitted and are satisfactory. The Board specifically intends to fund only the food and clothing items noted in the application.

Decision: fund in full at \$20,000

Proposal 1516-16: American Legion Post 32 in Longmont requested \$50,000 for a stand down, transportation, and assistance. The Board's average score was 85. This post received \$20,000 last year and had expended all the funds by December; administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$50,000

Proposal 1516-17: The VFW Foundation of Colorado in Denver requested \$85,000 for assistance programs throughout the state. The Board's average score was 81.5. The subcommittee had recommended that the organization modify the proposal to target outreach and services to the underserved areas of the fourth congressional district. That modification had been made by the time of the Board meeting. The Board concluded that while the target outreach is unique, some of the assistance indicated in the proposal is duplicated by local posts. The consensus was to fund this application in part.

Decision: fund in part at \$53,028

Proposal 1516-18: American Legion Post 2 in Pueblo requested \$35,500 for transportation, stand down, and veteran assistance. The Board's average score was 70.2. This organization received \$18,000 last year for the purchase of a vehicle. They are currently out of compliance with reporting requirements. Ms. Hoagland explained that the post lost its authorized representative partway through the funding cycle, but the post now has a new commander who is working to get the program back on track. After discussion the Board determined that the veteran assistance program is out of compliance and does not seem to be moving in the right direction, therefore the decision was to fund only the transportation program and stand down. No funds will be allocated for veteran assistance.

Decision: fund in part at \$18,000

Proposal 1516-19: VFW Post 4663 in Clifton requested \$6,500 for a program connecting animals with veterans. The Board's average score was 72.6. This organization has not previously submitted a proposal. The board debated the proposal in terms of direct assistance and need. At this time, given limited funds, the board determined that other direct benefit programs would take priority.

Decision: do not fund

Proposal 1516-20: VVA Chapter 1071 in Denver requested \$25,000 for veterans' assistance. The Board's average score was 78.8. This organization received \$12,500 last year and is in good standing. The Board

discussed the issue of duplication of efforts. The Board determined that the applicant should be funded but encouraged to collaborate and to actively refer to other existing resources.

Decision: fund in full at \$25,000

Proposal 1516-21: VFW Post 1 in Denver requested \$5,625 for program assistance. The Board's average score was 68.2. Ms. Niemela did not score this proposal and recused herself from the discussion since she is involved with this post. Last year this post received a total \$89,000 for three different programs. There have been no expenditures on two of those programs and no reports submitted to date. The Board acknowledged the limited scope of the proposal in light of last year's administration difficulties.

Decision: fund in full at \$5,625

Proposal 1516-22: VFW Post 41 in Loveland requested \$58,000 for veterans' assistance. The Board's average score was 84.6. This post received \$40,000 last year and administration has been satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$58,000

Proposal 1516-23: American Legion Post 108 in Pagosa Springs requested \$46,500 for transportation and assistance. The Board's average score was 83.8. Last year this chapter received \$50,000 and is currently not in compliance with reporting requirements. The board however noted the extensive transportation needs in the area.

Decision: fund in full at \$46,500

Proposal 1516-24: DAV Chapter 25 in Grand Junction requested \$12,000 for veterans' assistance. The Board's average score was 78. Last year this organization received \$12,000 and reporting has been slow but satisfactory.

Decision: fund in full at \$12,000

Proposal 1516-25: The State Veterans Community Living Center in Walsenburg requested \$29,776.40. The Board's average score was 71.7. Last year this CLC received \$16,828 and administration has been satisfactory. The Board eliminated the training line item from the budget and agreed to fund the remainder of the proposal for phones in each resident's room.

Decision: fund in part at \$19,576.40

Proposal 1516-26: The State Veterans Community Living Center Homelake in Monte Vista requested \$19,462.61. The board's average score was 70.7. Last year this CLC received \$14,097 and administration has been adequate, although not all of the funds were expended. The Board eliminated costs associated with individual people from the budget and agreed to fund the remainder of the proposal.

Decision: fund in part at \$9,683.00

Proposal 1516-27: American Legion Post 143 in Bayfield requested \$96,000 for housing. The board's average score was 70. This organization has not previously submitted a proposal. The Board concurred with the subcommittee finding that the identified need is a relatively new one for the area. Due to this

and the fact that this organization would be a new grantee, the consensus was to fund this proposal at half of the requested amount.

Decision: fund in part at \$48,000.

Proposal 1516-28: VFW Post 5843 in Meeker requested \$6,500 for assistance. The Board's average score was 80. Last year this organization received \$6,000 and reporting has been slow but adequate.

Decision: fund in full at \$6,500

With the VTF decisions concluded, the next item of business was upcoming board meetings. Mr. Dailey announced that the next meeting will be held on 05 June 2015 in Granby. Daniel Warvi, Public Affairs Officer for the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, will present to the Board. Mr. Robinson reminded the board that elections will be held at the June meeting for Secretary, Vice-Chairman, and Chairman. It was decided that Ms. Niemela will secure a Denver location for the August meeting, and the Board will likely hold the following meeting in Grand Junction. With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Robinson at 12:46 p.m.