**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

**Veterans Trust Fund Grant Subcommittee**

**Minutes April 8, 2014**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robby Robinson at 8:45 a.m. Present were subcommittee members Robby Robinson, chairman, Kathleen Dunemn, and Rene Simard. DMVA staff present included Bill Conroy, director, Ray Z Dissinger, VTF administrator, and Carissa Snyder, administrative assistant. Also present was Jason LeBlanc, legislative auditor.

Mr. Robinson distributed grant spreadsheets and a list of VTF grant priorities. Mr. Dissinger provided attendees with copies of the grant proposals. Mr. Robinson and Mr. Dissinger set up an electronic spreadsheet to track projected expenditure as funding recommendations were allocated. Ms. Snyder reminded all that the recommendation proceedings are part of the open record. The proposals were considered in numerical order with the exception of 1415-15(A-C), 1415-29, 1415-30, 14-15-31, and 14-15-32, which were tabled in sequence but were revisited before the meeting closed at 11:25 a.m. The proposal recommendations were as follows:

**Proposal 1415-01:** American Legion Post 25 in Florence requested $25,000 for veterans’ assistance. Mr. Dissinger reported that this post received $15,000 from the grant last year and has spent all but $4,000; they anticipate exhausting their grant funds by the end of the fiscal year. The consensus was to fund this proposal at the amount of $15,000. The rationale was that the amount sufficed last year, the VTF has less money available, and some of the program’s goals are not on the VTF’s priority list. **Recommendation: fund at $15,000**

**Proposal 1415-02:** American Legion Post 44 in Steamboat Springs requested $5,600 for transportation and assistance. Last year they received a grant of $5,400 and have $1,300 remaining for the rest of the fiscal year. The consensus was to fund the proposal at the requested amount of $5,600. The rationale is that 95% of the amount requested is for medical and health care transportation, which is a VTF priority; also, the transportation distance for veterans seeking VA health care is considerable from Steamboat Springs, from which veterans must travel to Grand Junction or Denver.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $5,600**

**Proposal 1415-03:** American Legion Post 115 in Rye requested $6,000 for veterans’ assistance. They received $5,000 last year and have $1,200 remaining; they expect to exhaust that amount. Consensus is to fund at $5,000, the same as received the previous year. The rationale is that the amount appears sufficient and funding at last year’s amount has been recommended for applicants with proportional expenditure.

**Recommendation: fund at $5,000**

**Proposal 1415-04:** American Legion Post 66 in Akron requested $5,000 for its transportation program. They received $5,000 last year and have $3,000 still unspent. It was noted that some of the services provided by the Akron Veterans’ Home overlap with those provided by the DAV homeless shelter in Weld County. The consensus was to fund this proposal at $3,500. The rationale is that last year’s amount may have been in excess and there are similar services available in the area.

**Recommendation: fund at $3,500**

**Proposal 1415-05:** VFW Post 3621 in Lamar requested $12,000 for veterans’ programs and assistance. Last year they received a grant of $10,000 and have $3,200 remaining. The consensus was to fund this proposal at $10,000. The rationale is that the 250 trips projected in the proposal seemed excessive, and that the VTF doesn’t have the funds available to offer increases in funding.

**Recommendation: fund at $10,000**

**Proposal 1415-06:** VFW Post 8661 in Conifer requested $8,440 for transportation and assistance. Last year they received a grant of $7,200 and have $1,600 remaining. Since the current fund does not allow for increases, the consensus was to fund at the same amount as last year.

**Recommendation: fund at $7,200**

**Proposal 1415-07:** American Legion Post 103 in Littleton requested $30,000 for veterans’ assistance. Last year’s grant was $20,000 and there is $8,000 remaining. The consensus was to fund at last year’s rate, due to VTF constraints and the fact that last year’s amount was sufficient.

**Recommendation: find at $20,000**

**Proposal 1415-08:** VFW Post 899 in Alamosa requested $27,600 for transportation and assistance. Last year they received $25,000 and have $9,000 remaining. The large service area of this post was discussed; it serves six counties in the San Luis Valley, as well as portions of two other counties nearby. Mr. Dissinger provided an example of last year’s trip log from the post as evidence that their projected 650 trips a year is accurate. The subcommittee also noted the economic circumstances of the region. The consensus was to fund this proposal at last year’s amount of $25,000 due to the need.

**Recommendation: fund at $25,000**

**Proposal 1415-09:** American Legion Post 108 in Pagosa Springs requested $57,000 for a vehicle, transportation, and assistance. Last year they received a grant of $46,500, although that amount did not include a vehicle. The subcommittee noted that this post’s transportation program is well-established and that Archuleta County has pledged $5,500 toward the vehicle purchase. It was also noted that the post wants to purchase a four-wheel drive vehicle to replace the two-wheel drive they currently have, which is needed in the winter months. The subcommittee agreed that the need is legitimate and the purchase well planned. Members then addressed the limits posed by available funds. If this post received a grant in the same amount as last year, it would decrease the funding given to the other programs by $20,000. The consensus was that while the available funds might not allow VTF to grant the full amount requested, the board might increase the amount from last year’s grant to lessen the impact on program operations.

**Recommendation: fund at $50,000**

**Proposal 1415-10:** VFW Post 7829 in Monument requested $17,500 to help for a stand down and assistance. This is a new post that has not previously applied for a VTF grant. The subcommittee discussed the fact that the impact of stand downs cannot be well measured, although VTF has supported them in the past. It was mentioned that the $14,000 allocated for shoes and clothing might be excessive. The consensus was to fund this request at $15,000. The rationale is that this is a new post and program whose outcomes have not yet been measurable, and many grantees are receiving less than their requested amounted due to fund constraints.

**Recommendation: fund at $15,000**

**Proposal 1415-11:** VFW Post 5231 in Mancos requested $4,810 for transportation and assistance. Last year they received $5,500 and have provided excellent records of the expenditures. The subcommittee noted that the request is nearly $700 less than what was granted last year.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $4,810**

**Proposal 1415-12:** American Legion Post 113 in Alamosa requested $2,000 for transportation. Last year they received a grant of $3,000 and it was noted that they have reduced their request this year by 30 percent. Mr. Dissinger commented on the effectiveness of this community program.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $2,000**

**Proposal 1415-13:** American Legion Post 23 in Aurora requested $20,000 for veterans’ assistance. They received $10,000 last year and have $4,000 remaining. The consensus was to fund this proposal in the same amount as last year due to its apparent sufficiency and fund limits.

**Recommendation: fund at $10,000**

**Proposal 1415-14:** American Legion Post 2 in Pueblo requested $57,000 for a vehicle, transportation, and assistance. Last year this post received two grants from VTF: $12,000 for assistance with $6,000 remaining, and $19,000 for transportation. The subcommittee noted the reasonable price provided on the vehicle invoice and the necessity of the purchase. The consensus was to fund this proposal at $42,000 with a stipulation that the $22,000 indicated on the vehicle invoice be used to purchase the vehicle.

**Recommendation: fund at $42,000**

**Proposal 1415-15:** VFW Post 1, Denver Main Program, initially requested a total of $171,180 to fund five programs. Mr. Dissinger explained that the subcommittee could disregard two program requests, 15D and 15E. Request 15D will redirect to the Veterans Assistance Grant. Request 15E was for a vehicle, but no invoice was provided. The remaining requests include $65,180 for veterans’ assistance, $7,000 for WVOC stand down support, and $60,000 for Comitis Crisis Center, for a total request of $132,000. Mr. Dissinger commented on the reliable accounting provided by this post. Last year this veterans’ assistance program received $40,000 and has $8,000 remaining; the consensus was to fund that program in the same amount. The subcommittee discussed the number of women veterans served by WVOC and decided to fund that section in the requested amount of $7,000. It was noted that the Comitis Crisis Center received a VTF allocation last year that they were unable to use, and they also receive VAG funds. The consensus was to fund this program at $42,000 due to the aforementioned reasons and funds available.

**Recommendation: fund 15(A), veterans’ assistance at $40,000**

**fund 15(B), WVOC stand down support, at $7,000**

**fund 15(C), Comitis Crisis Center, at $42,000**

**Total recommendation: fund at $89,000**

**Proposal 1415-16:** American Legion Post 1 in Denver requested $50,000 for veterans’ assistance. This post received $15,000 last year and has $3,000 remaining. The consensus was to fund this proposal at the same amount as last year, as it seemed to suffice and to remain consistent with other awards.

**Recommendation: fund at $15,000**

**Proposal 1415-17:** American Legion Post 5 in Colorado Springs requested $70,000 in support of a veterans’ homeless shelter. The subcommittee agreed that the smoking gazebo featured in the proposal does not meet the VTF priorities. It was also noted that the monies requested for Crawford House utilities and operation could be applied for under the VAG. The subcommittee concurred with the need to fund the food, bus passes, and fuel specified in the proposal. The amount for those items was separated from the total and it was agreed to fund food, bus passes, and fuel, specifically in the amount of 25,435.11.

**Recommendation: fund in the amount of $25,435.11**

**Proposal 1415-18:** DAV Chapter 16 in Longmont requested $35,000 for veterans’ assistance. The subcommittee noted that the projected continuation of this program at the new post intends to rely on VTF funding. It was also noted that there are a variety of services available along the front range. The consensus was to fund this program at $17,500, for the aforementioned reasons and also because this is a new grantee.

**Recommendation: fund at $17,500.**

**Proposal 1415-19:** NABVETS Chapter #24 in Aurora requested $25,000 for veterans’ assistance. This program received $20,000 last year and has $8,000 remaining. The subcommittee members examined the need for working tools and were assured by Mr. Dissinger that it promotes employment. The consensus was to fund this request in last year’s amount of $20,000. The rationale is that this amount did suffice and the VTF does not have additional funds to spend.

**Recommendation: fund at $20,000**

**Proposal 1415-20:** DAV Chapter 25 in Grand Junction requested $12,000 for a stand down and veterans’ assistance. Mr. Dissinger pointed out that this request in the only one from that area, and the amount requested is lower than previous grant amounts have been for the area. The subcommittee also noted that the area is underserved. While this post is new, Mr. Dissinger explained that the program manager is not new to the field or the area and has stand down experience. The consensus was to fund this proposal in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $12,000**

**Proposal 1415-21:** American Legion Post 32 in Longmont requested $37,800 for a stand down, transportation, and assistance. This post received $18,000 for transportation last year and has $600 remaining. This post also received a VTF grant of $20,000 last year for assistance, which Mr. Dissinger reported was not executed in a timely manner. The individual responsible has decided not to participate in the future. The subcommittee noted other services currently available in northern Colorado, particularly the new DAV Chapter 18, which is also receiving VTF funds to help with transportation. The subcommittee discussed the impact and possible liabilities of the proposed wellness clinic, and due to the latter decided not to fund it. The subcommittee concluded the group therapy mentioned in the proposal was sufficiently served by VA resources in Cheyenne. Removal of those two elements reduced the proposal amount to $20,000 and the consensus was to fund the request in that amount.

**Recommendation: fund at $20,000**

**Proposal 1415-22:** VFW Post 41 in Loveland requested $84,000 for veterans’ assistance. This post received $40,000 last year and has $5,000 still remaining. The consensus was to fund this program in last year’s amount, as it did suffice and the fund does not have extra money to allow for increases.

**Recommendation: fund at $40,000**

**Proposal 1415-23:** DAV Chapter 48 in Durango requested $62,128 for transportation and assistance. Last year this chapter received $30,000 and has $6,000 remaining. Mr. Dissinger clarified that the rec center mentioned in the proposal is for surgical rehab. He also mentioned that the chapter wants to do a stand down this year; last year they requested $56,000 and the $6,000 increase in this year’s proposal is to fund the stand down. The subcommittee agreed to fund this proposal in last year’s amount of $30,000 with the $6,000 additional for the stand down.

**Recommendation: fund at $36,000**

**Proposal 1415-24:** American Legion Post 44 in Hot Sulphur Springs requested $15,000 for veterans’ assistance. This is the first VTF proposal from this post. The subcommittee agreed that the portion of the proposal regarding snow removal was not within VTF guidelines. With that segment disregarded the remaining request was $14,000. The consensus was to fund this proposal at $7,000 due to fund limits and this year’s funding pattern.

**Recommendation: fund at $7,000**

**Proposal 1415-25:** American Legion Post 109 in Windsor requested $80,000 for a stand down and assistance. Last year this post received $40,000 and has $8,000 remaining. The consensus was to fund this proposal in last year’s amount since it **sufficed and the** fund does not have extra money to allow for increases.

**Recommendation: fund at $40,000**

**Proposal 1415-26:** American Legion Post 127 in Westcliffe requested $60,000 for transportation and assistance. This post received $40,000 last year and has spent it all. The subcommittee expressed concern about the lack of accounting of last year’s expenditures. The consensus was to fund this proposal at $40,000.

**Recommendation: fund at $40,000**

**Proposal 1415-27:** VFW Post 4265 in Craig requested $10,000 for transportation and assistance. Last year this post received $12,000, of which $6,000 remains unspent. The subcommittee noted the reduction in the requested amount in response to the projected need, and the consensus was to fund this request in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $10,000**

**Proposal 1415-28:** VFW Post 5843 in Meeker requested $8,000 for transportation and assistance. The subcommittee concurred to fund this proposal in the same amount this post received last year due to fund constraints.

**Recommendation: fund at $6,000**

**Proposal 1415-29:** SVCLC Homelake in Monte Vista requested $14,097 for wall-mounted televisions. The subcommittee noted that grant criteria for CLCs allows the board to prioritize amenities, and requests from CLCs are a priority for VTF. The consensus was to fund this request in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $14,097**

**Proposal 1415-30:** SVCLC Bruce McCandless in Florence requested $15,170 for furniture. Requests from CLCs are a priority for VTF. The consensus was to fund this request in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $15,170**

**Proposal 1415-31:** SVCLC in Rifle requested $14,085.88 for beds and mattresses. Requests from CLCs are a priority for VTF. The consensus was to fund this request in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $14,085.88**

**Proposal 1415-32:** SVCLC in Walsenburg requested $16,828 for security cameras. Requests from CLCs are a priority for VTF. The consensus was to fund this request in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $16,828**

**Proposal 1415-33:** American Legion Department of Colorado in Denver requested $30,000 for veterans’ assistance. This department received $20,000 from VTF last year. The consensus was to fund this program in last year’s amount, as it did suffice and the fund does not have extra money to allow for increases.

**Recommendation: fund at $20,000**

**Proposal 1415-34:** DAV Regional in Denver requested $18,000 for a stand down. The subcommittee noted that VTF has been a consistent supporter of this program and its wide audience. The consensus was to fund this program in full.

**Recommendation: fund in full at $18,000**

**Proposal 1415-35:** VFW Department of Colorado in Lakewood requested $75,000 for veterans’ assistance. This department received a grant of $40,000 last year and has $20,000 remaining. Mr. Dissinger assured the subcommittee they are projected to spend it. The subcommittee noted the statewide service provided by this department and decided to fund the proposal at last year’s amount due to fund constraints and funding patterns.

**Recommendation: fund at $40,000.**

**Proposal 1415-36:** DAV Chapter 44 in Dolores requested $55,000 for transportation and assistance. This chapter received $40,000 last year and has $18,000 remaining. Subcommittee members questioned whether some aspects of this year’s proposal suit the grant criteria, including rec center day passes, travel housing and emergency prescriptions. The consensus was to fund this program in last year’s amount as some of this year’s additions do not meet grant guidelines.

**Recommendation: fund at $40,000**

**Proposal 1415-37:** VFW Post 4171 in Golden requested $30,000 for veterans’ assistance. Mr. Dissinger informed the committee that this grantee experienced execution difficulties with last year’s grant of $20,000 due to the illness of the grant administrator. Mr. Dissinger has been in communication with the new post commander throughout the application process and he does not foresee similar problems this year. The consensus was to fund this program in last year’s amount of $20,000.

**Recommendation: fund at $20,000**

**Proposal 1415-38:** American Legion Post 29 in Aurora requested $11,156 for transportation and assistance. The subcommittee discusses the need for transportation funding, due to the proximity of Aurora to the VA hospital in Denver. The consensus was to fund this request at slightly more than half the requested amount, consistent with this year’s funding pattern.

**Recommendation: fund at $6,000**

**Proposal 1415-39:** American Legion Post 22 in Northglenn requested $31,000 for veterans’ assistance. This post received $25,000 last year and has $2,000 remaining. The consensus was to fund this request in last year’s amount due to fund constraints and funding patterns.

**Recommendation: fund at $25,000**

**Proposal 1415-40:** VVA Chapter 1071 in Denver requested $25,000 for veterans’ assistance. This is a new post with no grant history with VTF. The subcommittee noted the geography of the target service area, west of Denver and including the southern foothills. The consensus was to fund this new program at $12,500, as other new grantees have received approximately half of their initial request.

**Recommendation: fund at $12,500**