

VETERANS RECOGNITION FUND COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES, WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 2014, MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: David Brasuell, Administrator
H. Melvin Napier, IVAC Chairman
Leo Dub, IVAC Vice Chairman
Arthur L. Gimpel, IVAC Commissioner
Thomas Prewitt, IVAC Commissioner
Joshua Callihan, Committee Member
Allen Niksich, Committee Member

Committee Members Absent: John A. Spurny, IVAC Commissioner

Guests: Senator Marv Hagedorn, Idaho State Senate
Tamara Mackenthun, Deputy Administrator
Debbie Spence, Financial Manager
Kevin Wallior, Admin Asst II – Minute Taker

I. WELCOME – INTRODUCTIONS – ORIENTATION

- Introductions around of all attendees.
- David Brasuell provided a brief background about the fund
 - The Veterans Recognition Fund was established by Idaho during the 62nd Legislature in House Bill 222. The history and text which can be found at <http://legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2013/H0222.htm>
 - The Veterans Recognition Fund is governed by the rules set out by IDAPA 21.01.08 and can be accessed at <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/21/index.html>
 - The Veterans Recognition Fund came to be through excess funds that were set aside after IDVS bills had been paid. Revenue exceeded our expenditures in excess of what was required to care for Idaho's veterans.
 - The excess was set aside to be reserved for future veteran support.
 - The funds built up over time until it was the \$20 million that currently sits in the fund.
- Debbie Spence provided more specific financial information regarding the fund
 - The \$20 million was initially transferred into the State Treasurer's account.
 - At that time all of it was kept in the idle investment, which is the normal investment where all the cash the agencies use immediately is kept.
 - IDVS worked with the State Treasurer to determine an account that can earn higher interest.
 - The idle fund earns interest at 0.0392%
 - The State Treasurer has an account called the diversified business fund, which is an investment fund
 - Money placed in that account must remain for 3 to 5 years
 - This account earns 2.24%

- \$18 million of the Veterans Recognition fund was placed in the diversified business fund, the remaining \$2 million was left in the idle fund to be allocated by the Veterans Recognition Fund Committee.
- The \$2 million dollars has earned approximately \$284,000 as of the end of February 2014.
- Per statute, we cannot use more than 5% of the average balance to give out to projects. At end of July, when the new fiscal year begins we have to verify with the State Treasurer's office how much that amount is.
- Strong recommendation that we not use any of the principal, and only use interest.
- Anticipate \$300,000 to be available based on these restrictions.
- Not all available funds have to be utilized.
- Senator Marv Hagedorn suggested that the committee consider rolling unused interest into the diversified business fund to encourage growth of the \$18 million above and beyond what it is earning. The majority of the funds in the diversified business fund are understood to be earmarked for contribution to an additional State Veterans Home or second State Veterans Cemetery sometime in the future.
- David Brasuell explained the logistics
 - Proposals for funds from the Recognition Fund will be solicited in December or January privately and publicly from non-profit and service organizations to be returned no later than April.
 - Those proposals will be discussed by the Recognition Fund Committee in mid-April
 - May is when the budget process begins for the next Fiscal Year
 - The recommendations made in April or May will be a line item on the budget submitted to the Governor's office in late summer.
 - Determinations made during this meeting will impact the FY16 budget.
 - Proposals will be reviewed and weighted based on the legislative intent.

II. GRANT PROPOSALS

Formal Requests

- Bravehearts Emergency Grants
 - Mel Napier recused himself from discussion on this grant due to his involvement as chairman of the Bravehearts Foundation.
 - Amount Requested: \$15,000
 - A minimum of 30 Veterans will be able to receive aid from this grant.
 - Bravehearts provides small (no greater than \$500) one-time grants to veterans suffering from financial hardship.
 - Program was started in 2008 and to date as provide help to over 200 veterans
 - The grants are paid directly to the individuals/organizations owed money not to the veteran directly.
 - Some examples of aid: providing rent money, paying utility bills, vehicle repairs, etc.
 - \$15,000 is approximately the amount required to fund it for a year, based upon historical precedent.

- Higher Ground Military Therapeutic Recreation Program – Adaptive Sports Equipment
 - Amount requested: \$20,000
 - Organization is based in Sun Valley
 - They provide recreational activities such as skiing, hiking, biking, and water sports in the form of year round camps for veterans suffering from PTSD and recovering from physical injuries.
 - The camps are targeted to specific groups; e.g., women veterans, veterans and their significant others to ease transition post-deployment, young male veterans, etc.
 - This organization primarily serves veterans of the recent conflicts.
 - This specific grant would purchase 4 adaptive hand-pedal bicycles for amputees. The bicycles will remain with the organization to be utilized over multiple years by many veterans.
 - This grant will serve approximately 120 veterans.

- University of Idaho: Operation Education
 - Amount requested: \$25,000
 - This program honors and assists Veterans who have sustained severe and permanent disability while serving our country post-9/11 by providing the opportunity to attain a college degree.
 - This was one of the first programs in the nation for disabled veterans in higher education.
 - The program provides aid beyond the GI Bill. It can provide therapy, transportation around campus, transportation from campus to therapy, financial assistance to cover short falls.
 - The program caters to the specific needs of each veteran. The program does everything possible to ensure disabled veterans are successful and able to achieve their educational goals.
 - Serves approximately 20 Veterans annually.

- Legacy Corps Caregiver Support
 - Amount requested: \$30,000
 - Legacy Corps is a national volunteer-powered caregiver support program, operating within the Mountain States Group, which provides assistance to veterans needing help in their home and a veteran's family caregiver. Legacy Corps volunteers provide caregiver respite, caregiver education, linkages to other community support resources, and other services that help veterans' families.
 - Legacy Corps serves family members who provide live-in care for veterans and veterans or military family members who care for an adult at home.
 - Legacy Corps can provide:
 - 3-5 hours of caregiver respite per week
 - Transportation to medical appointments/grocery shopping for care receiver
 - Information sharing about community and veteran resources to help family caregivers
 - Peer-to peer support networks
 - This grant will benefit over 200 veterans.
 - The grant will be used to increase the number of caregivers and care receivers served, veteran volunteers, target geographic areas they are not already visible, and overall expansion of the program.

- IDVS Veterans Support Fund
 - Amount requested: \$30,000
 - Serves tens to hundreds of veterans.
 - Will be used to fund small-scale grants of less than \$5,000 to be used to serve veterans interests.
 - The rules covering the Fund are at <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/21/0103.pdf>.
- University of Idaho: Operation Military Kids
 - Amount requested: \$35,575
 - Up to 200 children and 65 families will be served
 - Program supports children impacted by military deployment. Helps children reconnect with deployed parent or parents.
 - Provides sports days, family camps and creative activities days for children who have deployed or recently returned from deployment parents.
 - This program operates events across the state. The events have really high turnout and receive positive recommendations.

Additional Grants to Consider

- DAV Vans at VAMC -- \$10,000
- Homeless Veterans Programs -- \$10,000
- Wyakin Warrior Program -- \$50,000
- Veterans Court Expansion -- \$50,000
- Veterans Crisis Hotline -- \$100,000
- Set aside funds down the road for counties to apply for building or upkeep of veterans memorials.

III. DISCUSSION AND VOTING

- The committee decided not to provide \$100,000 to the Veterans Crisis Hotline.
 - It is already a line item in the IDVS budget, and since it has not received push back, the group agreed that it was best to continue to have IDVS provide the funds separate of the Recognition Fund.
- Stipulate the bikes purchased with Recognition Funds for Higher Ground must remain in the state of Idaho providing recreation to veterans within the program.
- Reduce the amount requested by Operation Military Kids to \$10,000.
- Stipulate that all recipients of Grant Funds must provide the Veterans Recognition Fund Committee with a report on how the funds were utilized.
- Set aside \$15,000 for Veterans Homelessness Programs
- Increase request of Operation Education to \$35,000
- Set aside \$15,000 for Disabled Veterans Transportation Programs
 - Put out feelers to organizations to make proposals for providing rural transportation to veterans.
- Increase Bravehearts program request to \$25,000
- Provide \$50,000 to Wyakin Warrior Program
- Provide \$50,000 to Veterans Court Expansion statewide
- Set aside \$15,000 for discretionary Higher Education Support

- The committee set equal priority level for Veterans Adaptive Sports Equipment, Operation Education, Homelessness grant, and Wyakin Warrior Program. In the event there is not enough funding to cover all of the grants those four grants will have priority over the others.
- If there is more money to disperse than expected the committee agreed that they would discuss what to do with it during the month of July.
- The Committee noted that per the Legislature's initial intent the recommendations primarily support disabled Veterans.

Received formal request:			
Bravehearts	Bravehearts	\$ 25,000	Grants up to \$500 to assist Veterans in dire financial need.
Veterans Adaptive Sports Equipment	Higher Ground	\$ 20,000	Therapeutic programs for Disabled Veterans.
Operation Education	University of Idaho	\$ 35,000	Education scholarship program for severely disabled Veterans
Legacy Corps Caregiver Support	Friends in Action, Mc	\$ 30,000	Serves three populations of Veterans; caregivers, care receivers, those who volunteer; since 2012 has Fund smaller projects to support veteran requests per the rules.
Veterans Support Fund	IDVS	\$ 35,000	Program for military kids to build resiliency; youth activities, family activity day or camp statewide.
Operation: Military Kids	University of Idaho	\$ 10,000	
subtotal formal requests		\$ 155,000	
Did not receive formal request, but would like the Committee to consider:			
Transportation	IDVS	\$ 15,000	Disabled Transportation Programs
Homelessness	IDVS	\$ 15,000	Veterans Homelessness/Shelter
Wyakin Warrior Program	IDVS	\$ 50,000	Wounded Warrior Education
Veterans Court Program-Statewide	IDVS	\$ 50,000	Help expand Veterans Treatment Courts
Veterans Crisis Hotline	IDVS	\$ -	Veterans Crisis Line
Higher Education Support	IDVS	\$ 15,000	
subtotal no formal request:		\$ 145,000	
Grand Total:		\$ 300,000	

Art Gimpel made a motion to accept all grant proposals, as a whole, as annotated in the table above, including the stipulations discussed.

Josh Callihan seconded.

All committee members voted unanimously in favor of funding the programs as annotated in the table above, including the stipulations discussed.

The Committee talked of working with the VSOs about getting the word out about this grant program and urge Veterans Service Organizations to get involved with building infrastructure in communities to serve disabled veterans.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:45 PM MST.