

Montana Commission on Community Service Meeting Minutes
10am-3pm, December 18, 2008
Board of Investments, 2401 Colonial Drive

Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Keith Kelly, Chris Kolstad, Robert Harris, Doug Braun, John Ilgenfritz, Jack Chambers, Kim Miske, Jackie Girard, Jim Murphy, Sheila Rice (via telephone), Cedric Jacobson (via telephone)

Commissioners Absent: Chair George Dennison, James Steele, Johnel Barcus, Jim Corson

Staff Present: Linda Carlson, Andee Dunick, Kathy Bean, Tony Dean, Lorri Ward Brown

Guests: Sarah Sadowski, Andrea Vernon, Josh Vanek, Eric Cardella, Connie Roope, Dean McGovern, Amy Busch, Michelle Hauer, Holly Hill, Marcia Brown, Jessica Wilson, Laura Fellin, Jo Ann Maffit

Vice Chair Keith Kelly opened the meeting and made introductions. Two commissioners participated via telephone (Sheila Rice and Cedric Jacobson). Commissioner Corson gave his proxy to Commissioner Murphy.

With a quorum present, Vice Chair Kelly asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting, held October 2, 2008. Commissioner Ilgenfritz made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Chambers seconded. Motion was carried to approve the minutes.

The following committee reports were presented:

Executive Committee

Vice Chair Keith Kelly

- Vice Chair Kelly deferred to Linda Carlson to review the action plan for the Executive Committee. Linda Carlson reviewed the action plan items; the action plan is on task. Admin standards will be out early 09. New Commissioner training will be scheduled first quarter 09.

Program, Policy and Planning

Vice Chair Keith Kelly

- Vice Chair Kelly provided an update on the Program, Policy and Planning Committee (PPP) activities, specifically the grant review process for 2009-2010 AmeriCorps program submissions. The Commission formed a grant review committee consisting of the following members: Commissioner Harris, Commissioner Kolstad, Commissioner Ilgenfritz, Commissioner Miske and Tim McCauley of the United Way. Vice Chair Kelly stated there has been an aggressive and thorough review of all funding applications.
- Grant Program Officer, Tony Dean, asked Commissioners to refer to the handouts provided and discussed the grant review process. Tony Dean also presented an RFP update. Funding is very tight this year and the Corporation is transitioning from a 2-year funding cycle to a 1-year funding cycle. Final funding levels for AmeriCorps State grant competition is dependent upon Congress and won't be available until March. Formula funding has been significantly reduced from \$500,000 to \$251,000. This amount may be increased but we won't know for sure until July 2009.

- Executive Director Carlson stated all operational grants from CNCS have also been reduced by 20% in 2009 and that Montana is one of 14 low population states that have had funding cut.
- Vice Chair Kelly spoke to the federal and state budgeting process and the economic crisis overall. Jackie Girard stated that the Corporation is feeling the economic pinch.
- The discussion today focused only on the grant applications chosen for submission for competitive funding. Tony Dean provided a summary of the applicants along with the PPP Committee's recommendations. The recommendations were as follows:

Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) applied for an additional \$264,000 and 21 MSY (Member Service Year; the unit of AmeriCorps service) in federal funding for total federal funding of \$1,562,400. The grant review committee recommended funding MCC at the requested level.

- Vice Chair Kelly asked for comments or questions about MCC's application. Discussion took place about the merits of MCC's application and excellent program performance.
- Vice Chair Kelly called for a vote on the approval of MCC's application and the committee's recommendation. Commissioner Ilgenfritz made the motion to approve MCC application as submitted. Commissioner Miske seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried with eleven Commissioners voting.

Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) submitted an application for the Justice for Montana Project, requesting \$163,723 in federal funding and 13 MSY. (This is a new program that would enter the competitive funding process.) The grant review committee recommended funding MLSA at the requested level.

- Tony Dean stated an independent financial review was performed and the applicant received a low range risk assessment.
- Vice Chair Kelly asked for comments or questions about MLSA's application. Commissioner Ilgenfritz stated it was a solid proposal and the program has good experience administering the AmeriCorps VISTA program.
- Vice Chair Kelly called for a vote on approval of MLSA's application and the committee's recommendation. Commissioner Ilgenfritz made the motion to approve MLSA's application at the proposed funding level. Commissioner Harris seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried with eleven Commissioners voting.

Montana Campus Compact (MTCC) recently merged with Community Partners and submitted an application requesting a total of \$764,391 and 288.13 MSY. The PPP committee recommended submitting the application at a reduced amount. Vice Chair Kelly asked for questions or comments. Discussion included the following:

- Commissioner Ilgenfritz stated one aspect that was determined during the review process was a need to show where members are serving to have a better sense of geographic coverage.
- Commissioner Harris stated the importance of community need; identifying the areas around the state that have the greatest need for program support and proposing the efforts to address identified needs. Linda Carlson stated that OCS will work with the program to address these issues.
- Vice Chair Kelly called for a vote on approval of MTCC's application and the committee's recommendation. Commissioner Ilgenfritz made the motion to approve MTCC's application at the level recommended by the PPP Committee. Commissioner Kolstad seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried with eleven Commissioners voting.

For the competitive continuation grant funding, the grant review committee recommended **Western Literacy Support Corps (WORD)** be submitted to the Corporation at the same level of funding as 2008/2009 (total of \$220,500 and 17.5 MSY).

- Tony Dean stated the current enrollment rate is low, but the Office of Community Service has received an action plan from the program listing their plans to fill the remaining slots before the end of the year. The program plans to fill all member slots within the first 4 months of 2009. Additionally, the committee recommended this funding submission be contingent upon WORD's compliance with recent audit findings and that all financial obligations to the Montana Commission on Community Service be up to date.
- Vice Chair Kelly asked for questions or comments about WORD's application and the committee's recommendations. Hearing none, Vice Chair Kelly called for a vote to approve the grant review committee's recommendation to submit WORD under the competitive continuation grant at \$220,500 in funding based on the meeting the conditions outlined by the committee. Commissioner Miske made the motion to approve the committee's recommendation. Commissioner Chambers seconded the motion. Commissioner Ilgenfritz voted against the motion clarifying his position. The motion carried with ten out of eleven Commissioners approving the motion.

Additional discussion for the PPP Committee included:

- Tony Dean stated that formula grants will not be submitted until after competitive decisions have been made in May or June and the amount of formula funding has been determined.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated the Program, Policy and Planning Committee will regroup in June or July to make formula grant recommendations for 2009/2010.

Public Comments

- Vice Chair Kelly asked for public comments and program representatives asked about match and revising the number of MSY if requested funding is reduced. The timing and procedure of the funding process was also discussed. Vice Chair Kelly explained that programs will be evaluated year by year and there is no guaranteed commitment of continued funding as it is based on performance and other factors. Commissioners were thanked for their time spent reviewing proposals.

Sustainability, Action and Accountability Committee

Commissioner Sheila Rice

- Kathy Bean presented a report on disability inclusion and discussed the success of the scholarship program.
- Linda Carlson reviewed the grant budgets and OIG audit corrective action plan. Vice Chair Kelly reiterated the responsibility of subgrantees to comply with all regulations.
- Tony Dean provided copies of the new progress reports and went through each page of the report. Commissioner Ilgenfritz asked if information pertaining to geographic disbursement could be added. Commission Murphy agreed that the information would be beneficial. OCS will form a group to work on this issue to see if there is a way to capture this information. Commissioner Girard volunteered to work on this effort. Tony Dean said he would follow up with the programs in regards to when the first progress report will be due using the new format. See below, SAA Committee will work on this issue also.

Marketing Information and Technology committee

Commissioner Jim Murphy

- Commissioner Murphy reviewed the action plan. The action plan is on task.
- Training & Marketing Officer, Andee Dunick reported on the planned activities for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a national service day.
- Andee reported Survey Monkey results regarding Commission times and locations. The majority chose Helena as a meeting location. The 2009 schedule will be determined and posted in January.
- Andee Dunick also polled Commissioners about the monthly reports from the Office of Community Service staff (highlighted staff activities). It was determined these reports were not necessary.

Public Comments

Vice Chair Kelly asked for public comments. A suggestion was made to conduct training for Commissioners on performance measurements. Vice Chair Kelly stated the Sustainability, Accountability and Assessment Committee would work with Tony Dean on performance measurements and reporting format documentation.

Vice Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m. The Commission meeting schedule for 2009 will be determined in January and will be posted on the Commission Web site.