

**STATE OF ALASKA  
COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**MINUTES OF  
CDVSA Legislative Task Force Recommendations Meeting  
March 28, 2008**

**Department of Public Safety, 450 Whittier Street  
DPS Commissioner's Conference Room  
Juneau, Alaska**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Acting Chair Rick Svobodny called the teleconference meeting of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to order at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 28, 2008. Five Council members were present at the beginning. Stephanie McFadden joined the teleconference at about 10:30 a.m., and Barbara Thompson indicated her presence on line at 10:50 a.m.

**Council members present:** **Richard Svobodny**, Department of Law (vice chair); **Colonel Audie Holloway**, Department of Public Safety, AST; **Ann House**, Public Member; **Bill Hogan**, Department of Health & Social Services; **Barbara Thompson**, Department of Education & Early Development; **Stephanie McFadden**, Public Member; **Yvonne Sarren**, Public Member

**Council staff present:** **Chris Ashenbrenner**, Executive Director; **Lauree Morton**, Program Specialist; **Jo Griggs**, Administrative Manager; **Ella Nierra**, Administrative Assistant

**REVIEW CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council members began a review of the recommendations in the CDVSA Task Force report, issued March 1, 2008. The recommendations were grouped under six separate subject headings, and the Council started with the first one.

**The Council's relationship and consultation with other state agencies.** (page 11-12 of report)

*Recommendation 1* - Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) would better equip the Council to work with various state agencies.

Mr. Hogan said this recommendation was in response to the finding that the CDVSA needs to do a better job of coordinating services among and between the CDVSA and the Departments of Law (DOL), Education & Early Development (DEED), Public Safety (DPS), Health & Social Services (DHSS), etc. He said the Task Force discussed that there has been some coordination going on, and that it is good to have representatives from the various departments and agencies involved in Council business — but it is all pretty informal, with a couple of exceptions. The

recommendation is to put something in writing that more clearly defines the role of each department and/or the responsibilities and what each department would be doing.

Ms. Ashenbrenner stated that part of the discussion was that the CDVSA has a strong mandate to coordinate all these services, but the Council has no authority over anybody. So MOUs are a way to get agreement.

Chair Svobodny asked if there were any MOUs in existence now. Mr. Hogan said there might be one related to Children's Services. Ms. Griggs indicated that she did not know of any agreements in the six years she has worked at CDVSA. [Ms. Ashenbrenner later recalled that the CDVSA has an MOU with the Department of Corrections specific to the batterers intervention program.]

Chair Svobodny asked if the MOUs were recommended with just the departments represented on the Council or if there were other departments or agencies outside of state government that would be included. Mr. Hogan said definitely the Department of Corrections.

Ms. Ashenbrenner said she thought the recommendation was directed at entities within state government. One example would be an MOU between CDVSA and DHSS about how they would work together to ensure there are standards in place for training health care providers about domestic violence and sexual assault. Another agreement could be with the Office of Children's Services (OCS) regarding how to coordinate training there. Those kinds of agreements would be workable.

For clarification, Chair Svobodny asked if the executive director was saying she viewed the recommendation as several MOUs with different agencies, rather than one global MOU. Ms. Ashenbrenner said yes.

Colonel Holloway wondered if there would be a unique MOU with each agency or a standard MOU. He speculated that it could take a lot of time, unless the agreement process was somewhat standardized.

Chair Svobodny stated that if there was a global type of MOU, it probably should follow the strategic plan, as opposed to being put into place first.

Mr. Hogan said he saw something that was broader than the example the executive director described for training. His understanding was that there could be a broader MOU whereby each of the departments could agree to coordinating certain things. Then if the CDVSA wanted to enter into more specific agreements around certain issues, like training for OCS, it could do that.

Ms. Ashenbrenner recalled that the origin of this conversation was that Legislative Budget & Audit found that the CDVSA was not living up to its statutory mandate to do certain things. She suggested tying this recommendation back to the type of work the CDVSA is supposed to be doing.

Mr. Hogan quoted from the Task Force report findings in reference to the statute that the Council shall "coordinate services..., specifically dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault, and crisis intervention and prevention, and provide technical assistance as requested by those state agencies and community groups." So he would see the major MOU somehow referencing that language and providing some specifics on how the Council might do that.

Chair Svobodny suggested that the Council make a decision after discussing each recommendation. Other Council members concurred.

In response to the MOU recommendation, Colonel Holloway said he thought the CDVSA should have a generalized MOU that talks about some of the standards, principles, training, etc. that the departments agree to work together on. There could be an additional clause that says that if something specific comes up the MOU allows the parties to agree to a more specific MOU relating to that subject. Once that specific subject is taken care of, then that MOU dissolves and reverts back to the general MOU. This would avoid having to do numerous MOUs about every different situation. The MOU would ensure that departments are working together: even though the CDVSA would not mandate that a department do something a certain way, the CDVSA could state that this is the desired result, so there is less incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault and more understanding of it.

Chair Svobodny queried Council members for any comments or objections. There was unanimous support for the Colonel's suggested response to the recommendation. The Chair asked the executive director about how that would be carried out. Ms. Ashenbrenner requested time to give some thought to how the MOU process would work. She added that obviously the CDVSA staff would have to take the lead to contact the other state departments, and those agencies would have to assign somebody to work with the CDVSA staff to get an MOU done.

Colonel Holloway observed that the first step is getting other departments to agree that they will sign an MOU — because it is all voluntary — but he could not see any departments not wanting to.

Ms. Ashenbrenner mentioned that the Department of Corrections is completely agreeable to getting on board with the CDVSA, so she did not see any problems there.

Chair Svobodny asked the executive director if she could have at least the structure of how this is to be done ready by the next Council meeting. Ms. Ashenbrenner said she was hesitant to commit to that on the first recommendation because ensuing recommendations could result in similar pieces of work. She preferred to look at the whole thing and then prioritize what staff could get done by the next Council meeting.

Colonel Holloway indicated he was fine with waiting until the end to see what the workload for staff would be.

*Recommendation 2 - The Legislature should provide funds to support the school health*

education specialist position as required by AS 14.30.360 to assist districts in the coordination and development of curriculum to address domestic violence, sexual assault, and interpersonal violence.

Chair Svobodny said it was obvious to him that the Council could say yes to this recommendation of the Task Force. Colonel Holloway agreed.

Mr. Hogan related that there was a bit of controversy on the Task Force about what appears on the surface to be a simple recommendation. Apparently DEED has had the school health education specialist position for a number of years but has not been able to get the funding for it. It was the feeling of the representatives from DEED on the Task Force that they needed the funding for this position, in order to really move forward on prevention activities in schools. The controversy part came from this being the only state position that the Task Force recommended funding for. He said that as the Council continues reviewing the recommendations they will see that the CDVSA will have to take on a lot of responsibilities — and there is no recommendation anywhere for the CDVSA to get additional funding to do any of these things or to meet its mandate. There is clearly a need for other funding, not only for the CDVSA, but for other programs and services.

Ms. Ashenbrenner stated that no one on the Task Force or the Council was opposed to DEED getting funding for a mandated position. However, everyone was told at the outset of the Task Force that funding requests were off the table for the CDVSA. This recommendation was added in near the end of the Task Force's work. Her initial reaction was that prevention is a huge recommendation, yet the Task Force report tells the Council to seek federal funding and other grants to do this work. So the recommendation that the Legislature fund the school health education specialist position seems disparate to her. She thought the Council could support funding the position, in addition to funding various prevention efforts across the state. The recommendation is unnecessarily narrow and limits the vision.

Mr. Hogan suggested saying that the Council supports funding the school health education specialist position but that the CDVSA's prevention efforts will require additional resources in a number of areas. The Council does not want the Legislature to believe that funding this one position in DEED is all that is needed for prevention. It is important, but it is only one component in the broader area of prevention.

Colonel Holloway agreed that it was extremely important to add that message — that just because the Legislature puts money in the budget to fund a position at DEED does not mean that domestic violence and sexual assault prevention is taken care of and they can move on.

Ms. Sarren recalled that the Task Force discussion dealt with the fact that so much money was allocated for reactive purposes and that if that was not enough the money was taken out of prevention funding. The feeling was that the CDVSA should set aside money specifically for prevention, to place more emphasis on the prevention side of things, and not so much for reacting to domestic violence and sexual assault situations.

Mr. Hogan agreed that the Council wants to reaffirm the importance of prevention but make it clear that just funding one position is not enough.

Chair Svobodny volunteered to talk to the Department of Education representative on the Council, Barbara Thompson, about this. He said the department may be prioritizing personnel within its budget, and the school health education specialist position may be at the bottom. If that is the case, the Council could ask the department to change the priority. He also suggested reporting on this at the next meeting.

[Stephanie McFadden joined the meeting at this point.]

*Recommendation 3* - The Council and State agencies need to demonstrate greater coordination of services at the department and division level in order to strengthen service provision at the local level. Recommend this be discussed during the strategic planning process.

Mr. Hogan said recommendation #1 was about MOUs among state agencies, but a lot of what DHSS does, for example, is through grants to private, not-for-profit organizations. The Task Force discussed trying to improve the coordination that actually takes place in communities, where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. Recommendation #3 has to do with the need for greater coordination at the local service provision level.

Ms. Ashenbrenner mentioned that the CDVSA grantees already have the charge to work with entities like the police department and medical facilities, etc. within the communities. She thought the recommendation was focused on the expectation for state entities, such as law enforcement and education, to work with domestic violence and sexual assault programs and get training, etc.

Mr. Hogan said he thought Ms. Ashenbrenner's recollection was correct. He said that at funding meetings the programs have submitted letters of support from other organizations in the communities, and in some instances there have been memorandums of agreement between a shelter and other entities. Recommendation #3 takes it a step further, asking the people who work for the various state departments in the communities to be more proactive and involved in solving the issues of sexual assault and domestic violence in communities.

Chair Svobodny commented that the recommendation was to discuss during the strategic planning process that there be better coordination at the state level between departments and divisions in order to strengthen service in the community. He thought that went back to the MOU recommendation to coordinate among the state departments and divisions.

Ms. Sarren said that the Task Force was thinking more about the wide division between rural and urban areas, and about some of the rural areas not getting information about who to contact or how to get funding for their local services.

Ms. Ashenbrenner stated that Ms. Sarren's recollection was certainly part of the Task Force's general conversation. She said it was definitely an issue that the Council has to keep in mind after it develops a strategic plan. She added that the Council could probably agree to talk about recommendation #3 during the strategic planning process.

Chair Svobodny commented that it could be as simple as saying that once an MOU is signed that it is distributed to people around the state so they know who to contact about different issues in their communities.

Ms. Sarren said one example is that many Native women in larger urban centers are unaware that people who are tribal enrolled are eligible for public health care. Some of these women left their communities to live in Anchorage or Fairbanks before they were tribal enrolled. That type of information needs to be broadcast around.

The Council moved on to discuss the recommendations under the second heading in the Task Force Report.

**The statutory responsibilities and priorities of the Council.** (pages 13-14 of report)

*Recommendation #1* - The Council should be expanded to include a seat for the Department of Corrections and an additional public seat to be filled by a representative from Alaska's rural communities.

Chair Svobodny said that this seems to be a legislative decision rather than a Council decision. From discussions at the last Council meeting and today, nobody has expressed objection to expanding the Council membership or to the type of seats specified in the recommendation.

Ms. Sarren mentioned that there are five major regions in Alaska, and having only one public representative from a village on the Council is not enough. She said the main testimony the Task Force heard from the villages was that there were not enough services provided to them and that urban centers got the most money because they have grant offices and more help than rural people have.

Ms. Ashenbrenner noted that there is no current mandate that the Governor specifically appoint a rural person to fill one of the three public seats on the Council; it is completely open. So the recommendation on the table would add the only criteria in statute related to public member appointments to the Council.

Ms. Sarren said the Task Force discussed one snag, which was how to define the criteria for selecting a rural representative.

Responding to Chair Svobodny, Ms. Sarren said the average population of a rural village is 200 to 600. So she'd suggest that a rural person on the Council should come from a community of less than 750 people. Any higher than that is looking at the hub centers, such as Barrow and

Nome.

Chair Svobodny said maybe there could be one public member on the Council from a hub community and one public member from a village. Ms. Sarren drew attention back to testimony heard in Fairbanks that their villages are so small that they do not garner any notice, and they wanted more focus on what they need in their little villages.

Mr. Hogan remarked that if the Council tries to further define the rural seat on the Council, it will just make it more difficult to find a rural representative. He added that serving as a public member takes a big commitment, and limiting the rural seat to villages with under 750 population will make it hard to find someone. He advised leaving the recommendation the way it is written, because there are numerous definitions of rural — on the road system, off the road system, based on population, etc.

Colonel Holloway said he agreed with Mr. Hogan. He added that if the definition of the rural seat is left broad enough to provide some discretion for the Governor to pick somebody, over time there will be a variety of rural representatives who will add their knowledge to the equation. He thought that would be a better representation for the rural population, although he understood what Ms. Sarren was saying. He said it is not possible to capture everybody in the rural population with one rural public seat on the Council, but over time the different perspectives of people filling that seat will be healthier than limiting it to villages of a certain population size.

Ms. Sarren said that is exactly the problem that has been happening over the years, and the result is that the Council has only one rural representative, which is herself. She advocated for a representative from a village of under 750, and preferably under 500, otherwise the Council isn't going to know what the needs are in the villages.

Ms. McFadden noted that although Ms. Sarren is from a bigger community she is a strong advocate with a broad understanding of the concerns in the smaller villages. She thought that someone like Ms. Sarren was better for a rural seat.

Ms. Sarren said she was pushing for rural representation from the Northern Inuits, from the Interior Indians, from the Yupik country — at least from the five major tribal groups. She thought the search for the public seat she holds was focused on communities with under 2,500 people, and she wanted one person on the Council from a community of under 750. She agreed that there are many definitions of rural, and it appeared that it was all going to be lumped together.

**MOTION BY ANN HOUSE THAT THE COUNCIL ACCEPT THE CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION TO EXPAND THE SEATS ON THE COUNCIL TO INCLUDE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND A PUBLIC SEAT TO BE FILLED BY A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ALASKA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES. BILL HOGAN SECONDED.**

Ms. Ashenbrenner mentioned that the public seat that Ms. Sarren holds is for a member from a community of under 2,500, and it took Boards and Commissions a long time to find somebody, even from that size of a community. She added that from working with Boards and Commissions staff over the years she knows that it is really difficult to find people. If the rural category is limited too much, it could hamstring Boards and Commissions in their search. She said Ms. Sarren is a great representative for small villages, and she comes from a community of under 2,500 people. Her concern is about getting somebody good as a rural representative on the Council if the group from which to select is too narrow.

Ms. Sarren indicated she understood what the executive director was saying. She said the word still has to get out to the small villages about filling these positions, and maybe that is something she can do.

The Chair inquired if there was any objection to the motion. There was none, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Chair Svobodny said the Council understands that rural communities need to be represented, and the Task Force recommendation does not limit the Governor to appointing only one representative from Alaska's rural communities.

[Barbara Thompson informed the Chair that she had joined the meeting by teleconference.]

*Recommendation #2* - Public seats on the Council should be representative of our Alaskan communities and not be filled by employees of departments within the State of Alaska. This will ensure that the Council does not appear to represent the state department interests only, with few or no true public members.

Chair Svobodny said he read this to mean the Governor should not appoint an assistant district attorney or an Alaska State Trooper to fill one of the public seats on the Council. That could be a little tricky, because does that mean that the Governor should not appoint a teacher because there is a DEED representative on the Council, or not appoint a public health nurse because DHSS is already represented on the Council? He thought it was quite exclusive to say that department employees within the State of Alaska should not fill public seats on the Council. He asked the Council members who participated on the Task Force to explain the issue behind this recommendation.

Ms. Ashenbrenner explained that this came out during the reauthorization of the CDVSA, when the Council chair was Janna Stewart, an employee of DPS. Anybody who knows Ms. Stewart understands that she would never be intimidated by having her boss's boss's boss as another member of the Council. But it certainly set the Council up so the membership was heavy on the state employee side, skewing it toward looking bureaucratic with bureaucratic solutions. There was also the perception that not all the Council members would be able to freely act equally. The Task Force thought that was a legitimate concern, especially when a public member came from a department that was already represented on the Council.

Ms. Thompson spoke in favor of the recommendation. She recognized that Alaska has a small population and some people may also be state employees. She noted that teachers are not part of DEED. But there are some circumstances where it could be awkward to fill the public seats on the Council with state employees, especially if the employees are from departments that already have seats on the Council.

Ms. House said she agreed with the Task Force recommendation, that it was a very clear point. She said when she first came on the Council as a public member, it seemed very overpowered with staff from the State. It was her impression that the other public members during that time felt likewise.

MOTION BY ANN HOUSE THAT THE COUNCIL ACCEPT THE CDVSA LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION THAT PUBLIC SEATS ON THE COUNCIL SHOULD REPRESENT ALASKAN COMMUNITIES AND NOT BE FILLED BY EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE STATE OF ALASKA. STEPHANIE McFADDEN  
SECONDED.

Chair Svobodny indicated he agreed one hundred percent with the spirit of the recommendation, but he saw some problems with it. As an example, a person working at a youth home in Nome ought not be excluded as a public member of the Council because they are an employee of DHSS. It is difficult to fill public positions on boards, and State employees in general should not be excluded.

Colonel Holloway voiced his agreement with the Chair. He suggested that using the words "should" or "may," rather than "shall" or "will," gives more flexibility.

Ms. House said she agreed with what both the Chair and Colonel Holloway were saying and was willing to rescind her motion.

Chair Svobodny suggested that public Council members not be part of decision-making personnel in the departments that are already represented on the Council.

Mr. Hogan proposed that the CDVSA response to the Task Force include the example that the Chair used. So the Council agrees with the recommendation but believes that it is unnecessarily limiting.

Council members indicated their support for the Chair's suggestion about decision-making versus non-decision-making personnel, and for Mr. Hogan's proposal to add the example to the response for the record.

Ms. Sarren spoke further, saying that people in the villages wear many hats, and it would be hard to find a person working specifically for one agency.

Chair Svobodny said he would draft something for the next meeting that states the Council agrees with the public policy in the recommendation but does not mean to exclude state employees who are not in policy making and decision-making roles in departments already represented on the Council.

*Recommendation #3* - Staff of the Council should have non-exempt status to increase staff retention.

Ms. Ashenbrenner explained that this stemmed from reauthorization of the CDVSA in 2001. Previously, the executive director was the only exempt staff member, and the other staff were classified employees. That was changed so that CDVSA staff are not members of unions, and any position over range 16 has to be approved prior to recruiting and then the selected candidate must be submitted to the Governor's Office for approval. It is an involved and long process to get anybody hired. On the plus side, it is very easy to change job classifications and descriptions, because it is not part of the state's personnel system. She said the Task Force thought that the CDVSA positions would be more competitive if they were classified jobs, and that staff would be more inclined to leave an existing exempt position to take a classified position elsewhere in state government. She added that she discussed this with staff and was told that they did not see it as a problem. However, that could just be the current circumstances.

Ms. Thompson recalled that when the positions were changed to exempt status someone who had accepted a job at CDVSA withdrew their acceptance. She said that to some people "exempt" sends a message that it is not a stable job and they could be let go. So at the very least there is a perception issue. She thought that at the time the CDVSA positions were all changed to exempt it was done more in a punitive way than because it made sense.

Jo Griggs stated that she was employed when the change to exempt status occurred. The only thing she recalled hearing about at that time was that an exempt person had no rehire rights if they were laid off. In the many interviews she has been part of since then, the rehire rights have been a concern with some prospective employees, but she did not know if anybody turned down a position because of that. Having been in other exempt positions, she did not have any strong feelings about it.

Ms. McFadden suggested that the Council support what the executive director and her staff want — because it affects them, not the Council.

Chair Svobodny asked if the Task Force discussed how the change to non-exempt status would happen, if it were to happen.

Ms. Ashenbrenner said it would have to be a statute change.

Chair Svobodny asked if the jobs would have to be reclassified to move to non-exempt status. Ms. Griggs said the CDVSA jobs are fairly in line with the state's classified jobs. Ms. Ashenbrenner interjected that the CDVSA positions are exempt job descriptions so that would

require some work with state personnel.

Mr. Hogan inquired if making the jobs classified would mean that staff would have to reapply for what would become open positions. Ms. Griggs said it did not happen that way when the positions became exempt (employees were let go in writing one day and invited back to that position as an exempt employee the next day), but she didn't know the process for positions going from exempt to classified. Mr. Hogan said he thought it would be different, because classified positions have to follow the personnel rules.

Ms. House stated that every time she has met privately with someone working at CDVSA she has heard that the exempt status affects their philosophy of work. She suggested that the Council look at what employees would lose and what they would gain by being either exempt or non-exempt. But she supported staff having non-exempt status.

Chair Svobodny said the Council needs to know whether employees have to go through the union contract for hiring, if the positions go from being fully exempt to being classified service. He suggested putting this recommendation on hold while the executive director researches that. He mentioned the 1.5% salary difference as of July 1, 2008, and asked the executive director to verify that and to query staff on what they think about it. The Council should be doing what is best for the employees, but he needed to know what that would be.

Ms. Ashenbrenner said she would put together the pros and cons of changing staff to non-exempt status and include a recommendation from staff to bring back at the next meeting.

*Recommendation #4* - The only member of the Council's staff that should be either exempt or partially exempt is the executive director.

Chair Svobodny said that the preceding discussion pertains to this recommendation as well, and that the Council has to know what it means for the employees and for the executive director.

Colonel Holloway suggested adding another recommendation related to a finding on the previous page of the Task Force Report. The finding states that the CDVSA has 14 statutory mandates, which the Task Force thought was overly ambitious and demanding. He said the Council should review those 14 mandates and prepare an updated recommendation about whether those are still valid or need to be updated. It probably should be done periodically, anyway.

Chair Svobodny said he made a note of that to include in the Council's response to the Task Force.

The Chair called a short break from 11:20 to 11:25 a.m., after which the Council took up two matters that the executive director had asked to be addressed.

## **CDVSA BUDGET**

*[Council members had received a memorandum from the executive director on this topic, which is on file at the CDVSA offices.]*

Ms. Ashenbrenner expressed confidence that the CDVSA would get the full budget increment requested, or at least some portion of an increment. The last time the CDVSA received an increment in the second year of the two-year funding cycle, the Council had programs reapply for the additional funding. Her recommendation was to increase the current grants by the amount of the increment because the rationale for requesting the increment was to help shelters offset the rising costs of doing business, not to procure new services or do anything different. If the Council wished for programs to rebid for the additional money, staff needed to begin developing the request for proposal (RFP) right away. Another scenario would be to give an across-the-board increase of the 5.2% increment. (The increment request was based on the Anchorage Consumer Price Index of 3.2% plus another 2% for higher rural costs.) Or the Council could opt to give a 3.2% increase to the urban programs in Anchorage and Fairbanks and divide the rest of the money among the other programs.

Ms. Thompson said the CDVSA should not issue an RFP for this amount of increase, and she would probably do a straight across-the-board increase to the programs because of the size of the increment.

Colonel Holloway indicated his preference for doing an across-the-board increase. There will be times when the Council will be in a position of trying to favor rural because of the higher costs there, but all the agencies at this point are struggling with increased costs. The urban agencies are always impacted by rural anyway, so it seems fair to go straight across for this particular increment — understanding that there will be plenty of other situations where the Council will have to treat urban and rural differently.

Mr. Hogan said he agreed with dividing the 5.2% increment among the programs equally.

Chair Svobodny mentioned that a little-known provision of the changes for the partially exempt and exempt wages is elimination of the bar on longevity, and each department will have to pick up that additional cost. He asked Ms. Ashenbrenner if she had factored in that potential additional personnel cost in the CDVSA budget.

Ms. Ashenbrenner clarified that the requested increment is in the grants line.

Chair Svobodny said that in that case he agreed with what his fellow Council members had said.

**MOTION BY BILL HOGAN THAT THE COUNCIL ALLOCATE WHATEVER INCREMENT IS RECEIVED IN THE BUDGET ACROSS THE BOARD TO ALL CDVSA GRANTEES. COLONEL HOLLOWAY SECONDED.**

The motion passed without objection.

## **VAWA EARMARK FOR SECOND AND THIRD YEAR**

*[Council members had received a memorandum from the executive director on this topic, which is on file at the CDVSA offices.]*

Ms. Ashenbrenner reported that last year CDVSA received money through a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) federal earmark, a large part of it for victim services. The CDVSA put out RFPs and awarded one-year grants that will be up the end of September. There are still two more years' worth of that funding to award through proposals. Last year the Council appointed a subcommittee of staff and Council members to decide what to ask for in the proposals, which was approved by the full Council. The subcommittee also did the RFP evaluation process. At that time, the Council discussed that this year the RFPs might be for two years. Ms.

Ashenbrenner said she recommended doing that. There is about \$940,000 to award over two years, and the RFPs will have to go out this summer. The Council will have to decide whether to keep the same funding criteria or make changes, and if it wants to appoint another subcommittee to do some of the work and report back. Some programs may want to re-apply for existing projects, and the Council would want to keep those projects going, if they are approved. Lastly, the Council will have to decide how much of the VAWA discretionary funding to include in these proposals and how much to set aside for projects the Council might want to do. For example, there is a pressing need to do some cross-training in domestic violence with the Office of Children's Services. The goal is to have this VAWA earmark money awarded the first part of September, so development for the RFP should begin by next month.

Mr. Hogan said he generally agreed with staff's recommendations, but he wanted to know if there was enough data from the first year's grant projects to determine if they have been effective in what they proposed to do. If the projects have been generally effective, he wondered if it would be possible to literally extend the majority of what the existing grantees have been doing, rather than go through issuing another RFP and evaluating the proposals.

Ms. McFadden asked what percentage of projects were funded versus the number of proposals submitted.

Lauree Morton addressed the questions from both Mr. Hogan and Ms. McFadden. She said there were 16 proposals for VAWA discretionary funding last year, and the Council funded six of them. For the victim services funding, there were 16 proposals, and eight of them received funding. Regarding effectiveness, she said most projects started in October 2007 but there were a few slow start-ups. January-March 2008 is the second quarter for the funding, and the CDVSA should be receiving the narrative reports toward the end of April. She believed that most of the programs have been able to do what they thought they were going to do with the money. A couple of the programs are not as far along with their projects, either because of staffing issues or because needs have changed. It is a little too early to tell how effective the projects are.

Mr. Hogan said he was trying to streamline the process for proposals that were performing well and that programs could conceivably continue in subsequent years. Ms. Ashenbrenner expressed doubt about that because the Council was specific last year about it being one-year grants. Mr.

Hogan reflected that in that case programs probably crafted projects that they expected to accomplish in one year.

Colonel Holloway supported issuing two-year grants if it could be done, and he backed dividing the projects into victim services and discretionary. He recalled that last year prevention issues were a big focus of the grant proposals, and that is a big part of what Rep. Fairclough talked to the Council about at the March 13 meeting. So he was in favor of keeping the funding criteria for the RFPs about the same but expanded a bit to allow for more prevention projects.

Ms. Ashenbrenner clarified that last year the Council found out after issuing the RFP that the VAWA earmark could not be used for prevention. Colonel Holloway said he had forgotten that.

Ms. Ashenbrenner verified that the Council wanted to have a subcommittee review last year's funding criteria and return with a recommendation, and that the Council favored a two-year grant this time for both victim services and discretionary money.

Colonel Holloway, Ms. McFadden and Mr. Hogan volunteered to sit on the subcommittee.

Ms. Ashenbrenner made it clear that the discretionary money does not have to go out to bid, that the Council can use it for identified needs, such as strategic planning and training.

Chair Svobodny asked the executive director to contact the subcommittee members, including some members of staff, by email to set a meeting date.

### **FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS**

Ms. Ashenbrenner stated that she was very worried about potential federal funding cuts, which she reported on at the March 13 meeting. She explained that she has been unable to pin down what a \$2.8 million earmark is intended to be used for, and she may have to go to Washington, D.C. to meet with Senator Stevens' staff for clarification. She said she wanted that \$2.8 million for prevention in the state.

Ms. Thompson suggested that the executive director first call John Katz in the Governor's Office in Washington, D.C. for help in tracking things down. Also, Karen McCarthy in Senator Murkowski's office has been helpful to DEED in pinpointing recipients of earmark funding when it is not clear. Ms. Ashenbrenner said she has made those contacts, as well as with Senator Stevens' office, and it is still a big question mark.

Mr. Hogan recommended asking the executive director to draft a letter on behalf of the Council expressing concern related to the proposed federal funding cuts.

Chair Svobodny asked if the CDVSA was prohibited from lobbying for federal grants. Ms. Ashenbrenner said she did not know, but she could find out. Chair Svobodny said the Council could still send a letter but the tone of it might have to be different.

Ms. Thompson said she was not trying to discourage Ms. Ashenbrenner from going to Washington, D.C., but she thought it was premature to make a trip without further information. Chair Svobodny said he agreed that she might just go from office to office without accomplishing anything unless some groundwork is done by John Katz and others. He asked the executive director to contact him and Ms. Thompson when she returned to Juneau so they could work together on the best strategy.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting to continue reviewing the CDVSA Task Force Report recommendations was set for April 10, 2008, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. A discussion on whether to procure services for a strategic planning facilitator was added to the agenda.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Note: The summary minutes are extracted from staff's tape recording of the meeting and are prepared by an outside contractor. For in-depth discussion and presentation details, please refer to tapes of the meeting and staff reports on file at the CDVSA office.

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