

Montpelier Community Fund Board
Minutes, December 3, 2018
City Council Chambers, City Hall
39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Christine Zachai called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Present: Amy Cunningham, Judy Stermer, Michael Sherman, Ron Wild, Christine Zachai

Agenda: Delete discussion of grant criteria. Approved

Appoint recorder of minutes and actions: Michael Sherman

Minutes of meeting September 26, 2018: Amy, motion to approve; Judy, second. Approved

Public Comment: None

Review and determination of submitted FY2020 grant applications:

1. Review of previous year MCF grants (FY2019) totals:

Requests= \$143,282; grants= \$115,500.

The board noted that in FY 2019, in addition to Montpelier Community Fund grants, three nonprofit organizations received funding by the city totaling \$26,000 as separate items on the 2018 ballot submitted “by petition” (Articles 20, 21, and 22),

2. Total grants by City of Montpelier to nonprofits in FY2019 (MCF+ ballot items) = \$141,500.
3. Goal for FY2020: With the increase in the number of proposals and the total amount of funding requested, the committee is increasingly prioritizing clarity of data and strong explanations of impact. The progress and final reports from returning applicants are useful in helping the board to understand if and how this was a good investment of funds.
4. The board reviewed and made recommendations on the following applications for FY2020:

All Together Now. Request \$1,000. Project. Funding for All Species Day. This is a realistic and practical budget for a well-known and much appreciated program.

Recommendation: \$1,000

American Red Cross. Request, \$1,000. General Operating. The board was unable to determine with clarity how the total number of Montpelier citizens served was determined. The application provided evidence of only minimal funding from other Central Vermont communities.

Recommendation: \$500

Another Way. Request: \$5,000. Project. Good application from organization that provides important services. Focused on capital improvement.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Capital City Band. Request: \$1,000. General Operating. There was inconsistency in the application about amount requested. The board noted that the organization is now doing some fundraising.

Recommendation: \$500

Capital City Concerts: Request: \$3,000. General Operating. The board noted that the organization is doing some more outreach to schools and attempting to reach new audiences. While the board acknowledged CCC's good track record, it concluded that they did not present a compelling case for the need for increased funding.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Capstone Community Action. Request: \$2,000. General Operating. The board continues to be impressed by the breadth and depth of Capstone's services and the large number of Montpelier residents served.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Center for Arts and Learning. Request: \$5,000. Program. This application did not make a good case for increased funding. It was not clear how new programming described in the application will coordinate with programs and activities of tenant institutions. There was no explanation of how the applicant arrived at its number for "low income" people served. The application was unclear about how grant funds would be used.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. Request: \$6,000. Program. The board noted that the population served has increased. However, the board would like to see more and clearer reporting on outcomes of services as justification for increased funding.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Central Vermont Council on Aging. Request: \$7,000. General Operating. Reporting of progress in the use of FY2019 grant is inadequate considering size of organization and the size of the current grant.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice. Request: \$20,000. Program. The board noted that service revenue is a significant portion of operating budget. The application shows a significant unbudgeted surplus for FY2018, far more than anticipated. Board members respect the service provided to the community, and noted that this level of funding is consistent with the MCF's last grant to this organization and is one of the largest grants for FY2020, as has been the case since 2014. The MCF Board's grant recommendation reflects the board efforts to create a greater degree of parity among the large pool of applicants.

Recommendation: \$13,500

Circle. Request: \$3,000. General Operating. The board noted its concerns that the final report for FY2018 is sparse; that the applicant submitted no progress report on FY19 funding, as requested on the application form; that it is difficult to understand budget/actuals for FY17/18; and that there was no budget submitted for FY20, as required. The board also appreciates the critical nature of the organization's services

Recommendation: \$2,500

Community Connections. Request: \$5,000. General Operating. The board acknowledged the organization's important service provided to the community and that it is working hard to improve its program. The board discussed whether a grant to Community Connections would be going to a not-for-profit entity and was able to determine that CC was formerly associated with Friends of Washington Central Supervisory Union, then, three years ago, became part of Washington Central Supervisory Union. A supervisory union is a tax-exempt entity, just like a nonprofit. The City has been making MCF grants to CC via Washington Central Supervisory Union for two years with no objections.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Community Harvest of Central Vermont. Request: \$5,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Downstreet Housing & Community Development. Request: \$5,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Family Center of Washington County. Request: \$3,500. General Operating. The applicant submitted a brief and insufficiently informative final reports and progress report. No budget was submitted with the application. The board concluded that it needed better data reporting for the number of Montpelier residents served.

Recommendation: \$3,250

Friends of the Winooski River. Request: \$750. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$750

Girls Boyz First Mentoring/Washington Central Friends of Education. Request: \$2,000. General Operating. Board members agreed that the final report for FY2018 and progress report for FY2019 should be more substantial and clearer, e.g., number of matches, more data and anecdotal information about outcomes and impact of funding

Recommendation: \$2,000

Good Beginnings of Central Vermont. Request: \$1,000. Program. Good progress report. Explains impact of services.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Green Mountain Youth Symphony Orchestra. Request: \$1,500. General Operating. The application did not present a strong case for increasing funding.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Green Up Vermont. Request: \$300. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$300

Home Share Now. Request: \$1,200. General Operating. The board concluded that the organization provides significant service and a good model for addressing the problems of aging in place and the shortage of affordable housing, but noted that the application does not present clear data concerning numbers served, matches and duration of matches, leading to concerns about the efficiency of this model.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Just Basics, Inc. Request: \$14,100. Program and some General Operating expenses. The board noted that the demand for the services provided by this organization has doubled in recent years and that this is one of its largest grant recommendations for FY2020.

Recommendation: \$13,000

Lost Nation Theater. Request: \$7,500. Program. The Board acknowledged the expanded scope of the youth theater programs, the number of collaborations, and the value that Lost Nation provides in curating the theater space for the city. The Board noted, however, that the scholarships supported with MCF funds in FY19 were significantly higher per student than those for other grantees and that the application for FY20 did not make a strong case for increased funding. The grant recommendation for level funding reflects the board's efforts to create a greater degree of parity among the large pool of applicants.

Recommendation: \$6,000

Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association. Request: \$10,000. Project. Judy Stermer recused herself. The application presented no data to support its claims of user numbers. The organization already receives significant support from the City of Montpelier Public Works and Parks departments and does not appear to need MCF funding to complete this project.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Montpelier Chamber Orchestra. Request: \$2,500. Project.

Recommendation: \$2,500

Montpelier Community Gospel Choir. Request: \$1,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$750

North Branch Nature Center. Request: \$5,000. General Operating. The board noted that the application included no final narrative or progress reports for previous grants.

Recommendation: \$4,500

OUR House of Central Vermont. Request: \$1,000. Program. The application suggested that the applicant might or would expect to receive funding as a separate ballot item. The organization must acknowledge that application for MCF funding precludes the option for submitting a petition for a ballot (See GUIDELINES: Eligibility). No report for the organization's FY18 grant was submitted as part of the application.

Recommendation: \$500

People's Health and Wellness Clinic. Request: \$2,000. General Operating. Good application.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont. Request: \$1,200. General Operating. The application should describe in greater detail and specificity what services are provided to Montpelier residents.

Recommendation: \$1,200

Project Independence Adult Day. Request: \$2,000. General Operating. The application does not make a good case for support from Montpelier by describing what the organization is doing for the Montpelier community, stating that only 4 Montpelier residents are currently being served, and presented insufficient financial information specific to their program.

Recommendation: \$0

Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County. Request: \$2,500. General Operating. The application should present more and better information about service to Montpelier residents. Board members were concerned about the small number of board members. The application should present clearer financial data reporting; a progress report for the current grant; a final report for the previous year grant.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Turtle Island Children's Center. Request: \$7,500. General Operating. The board was concerned about the small number of low-income Montpelier families currently served by the applicant. The board would be more receptive to a proposal in the future that increases affordable access to high-quality early childhood care.

Recommendation: \$0

T. W. Wood Gallery. Request: \$11,570. Program. The board is impressed by the increasing quantity and quality of programs at this organization. However, the board did not see the clear case being made for an increase. The grant recommendation is for level funding.

Recommendation: \$ 6,000

Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Request: \$500. Program.

Recommendation: \$500

Vermont Center for Independent Living. Request: \$5,000. Program.

Recommendation: \$5,000

Vermont College of Fine Arts. Request: \$3,500. Project. The board supports the efforts of VCFA to bring the program to the public; however, the application provided no clear or detailed information about the impact and attendance at last year's events, which were supported by an MCF grant. The board noted the high cost per person and judged the project budget to be out of scale for the number of Montpelier residents served by it.

Recommendation: \$ 0

Vermont Family Network. Request: \$1,000. Program.

Recommendation: \$500

Vermont Fiddle Orchestra. Request: \$750. General Operating. The application did not present a current budget. The applicant should adopt a clearer format for presenting its annual budget for evaluation.

Recommendation: \$500

Vermont Historical Society. Request: \$2,500. Project. Michael Sherman recused himself.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Vermont Philharmonic. Request: \$500. Project.

Recommendation: \$500

Washington County Diversion Program, Inc. Request: \$2,000. General Operating.

Recommendation. \$2,000

Washington County Mental Health Services. Request: \$10,000. General Operating. Final report for FY 2019 is meagre and inadequate. The applicant needs to provide more information for accountability.

Recommendation: \$3,500

Washington County Youth Services Bureau. Request: \$18,000. Program (+ some general operations). The reduced grant recommendation is not a reflection of quality issues in this application, but, rather, an issue of parity in the applicant pool and reflects the board's effort to bring the grant award more in line with other grants.

Recommendation: \$17,000

Summary: Applications: 44

General fund: 31

Arts fund: 13

Categories:

General operations: 25

Program: 12 (+2 w/gen. ops.)

Project: 7

Total requests: \$190,870

Arts fund: \$ 41,320

General fund: \$149,550

Total grants recommended: 41

Total grant amount recommended: \$133,250*

(* includes grants to three organizations that went to the ballot by petition in FY2019—Articles 20, 21, 22 = \$26,000)

Montpelier residents participating: 16,922†

(†duplicated number based on numbers provided by applicants)

Christine Zachai will clarify and confirm nonprofit status or nonprofit sponsor of Community Connections. If necessary, MCF Board will reconvene Thursday, December 6, 2018, 6:30 P.M., Police Dept. Community Room. Christine will draft and circulate to board members a draft memo to the Mayor, City Manager, and Finance Director outlining results of MCF board proceedings.

Adjourn 2:05 P.M.

Submitted,

Michael Sherman