

# **AmeriCorps NCCC Public Meeting**

**July 19, 2012**

**1201 New York Avenue, NW**

**Washington, DC 20525**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Attendance:**

#### **NCCC Advisory Board**

Kate Becker, Chair

Marsha Meeks-Kelly, Vice Chair

Antonio Pérez

Pete McRoberts

Colonel David Dysart

Tiffany Zapico

Elizabeth Hartsell

Dr. Danielle Varda

John Phillips

Marty Rodgers

Max Finberg, Federal Agency Rep, Department of Agriculture

Alex Amparo, Department of FEMA

Dr. Janet Wall

Dr. Alan Gropman

#### **NCCC Leadership Team**

Kate Raftery, Director for AmeriCorps NCCC

Charles Davenport, Director for Recruitment, Selection and Placement

Kelly DeGraff, Senior Advisor for Disaster Services

Nick Zefran, Senior Advisory, Member Development

Ken Goodson, Region Director, Denver, CO

Barbara Lane, Director of Projects and Partnerships

LaQuine Roberson, Region Director, Perry Point, MD

Tom Bryant, General Counsel Liaison

#### **CNCS Staff:**

Erin Dahlin, Deputy Chief of Program Operations

#### **NCCC Staff:**

Michelle Royall, Assistant Director for Projects and Partnerships

Erma Hodge, Advisory Board Liaison

Iris Dooling, Program Associate

Sarah Reynolds, Program Associate

### **Welcome and Acknowledgement of new Board Members (by Kate Becker, Advisory Board Chair) (2:30 p.m.)**

Ms. Becker began by thanking everyone in attendance for their service and commitment to NCCC. She acknowledged the attendance of two new board members, Pete McRoberts and David Dysart, and the departure of old board members Elizabeth Hartsell, Susan Braun, Steven Sharf, John Phillips and Alan Gropman.

### **Approval of the February 14, 2012 Board Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved.

### **Director's Update (by Kate Raftery, Director of NCCC)**

Ms. Raftery recognized the current and new board members. She went on to highlight an update on NCCC FEMA Corps.

(1) This week we have our first team leaders for that program arriving at the Vicksburg campus very soon to be followed by the Vinton campus

(2) She wanted to recognize the arrival later today the new campus director on the Denver campus, Ken Goodson.

(3) She mentioned that that we have returned to a function that existed in the corporation in the past which is a recruitment selection and placement function, Charles Davenport is in charge of that division.

(4) She stated that Nick Zefran who has been a leader in terms of crafting a professional training program and looking at member support is looking at the much broader world of member development.

The Perry Point campus is not in a position to be able to expand to take on additional members that we will be seeing with the NCCC FEMA Corps program.

Since our last meeting staff has been busy and has been engaged in some what I would say cutting-edge activities that are not only important for NCCC, but I would say that they are extremely for the Corporation for National and Community Service serving as a role model for the rest of our colleagues and the rest of the streams of service within the corporation.

### **Recruitment, Selection and Placement Update (by Charles Davenport, Director of Recruitment, Selection and Placement)**

Mr. Davenport stated that the unit was formed in March 2012; that our mission statement is that the recruitment, selection and placement unit implements, processes and strategies to recruit, select and place an engaged, informed and diverse NCCC corps.

Mr. Davenport stated that we have 3,528 applicants, 510 of them have already been assigned, 536 are ready to service and the rest are in different stages of the application process.

Mr. Davenport stated that 35.7 percent of the fall 2012 members will be youth from disadvantaged circumstances.

Mr. Davenport gave special thanks to our NCCC staff lead, Ms. Katrina Mathis, who is our assistant director of recruitment and partnership.

Ms. Raftery indicated that that number is really quite significant; that this is a very meaningful statistic for us; that the next person I would like to have joins us is Barbara Lane who is the Director for Projects and Partnerships.

#### **Project and Partnership (by Barbara Lane, Director of Projects and Partnerships)**

- (1) Ms. Lane stated that the NCCC Project and Partnership unit is formed to support effective, timely partnership development, to create diverse and engaging projects that meet local community needs as well as measure, impact and inform internal and external stakeholders.
- (2) Ms. Lane indicated that over the class year 18 which spans 2011 and 2012, we have worked with six federal agencies to develop over 82 projects or project leads so that our teams are out in the community and we're developing partnerships with federal agencies on an increasing basis; that the other role that we play is in oversight and monitoring and since the last board meeting have been working very diligently on developing some NCCC specific and agency wide performance measures that integrate the strategic plan requirements for CNCS and to make sure that our teams that are doing great things in the community are measured correctly and that we can tell an appropriate story.

#### **Policy and Operations (by Kate Raftery, Director of NCCC)**

Ms. Raftery indicated that Gina Gross left for leave this afternoon.

Ms. Raftery stated that we are closing out fiscal year 2012, indicating that we find ourselves just about where we should be in terms of expenditures and each one of the campuses is looking at making frugal but necessary expenditures to allow us to wrap up the fiscal year on a good footing

Also indicating that in 2012 we are executing a \$31.8 million budget with \$3 million that is set aside for the relocation of the Perry Point campus; that there is a \$30.1 million request in the FY 2013 president's budget; that there is a \$30.7 million request in the Senate markups.

Stating that there is a zero dollar mark in the House markup.

Stating further that we are working as the corporation put together our formulation for the 2014 budget; that we also are at this point looking at how resources that FEMA will be contributing to our work will then be joined with the appropriated funds that we receive for our members; that as for Member Development, Nick Zefran has taken on a senior adviser role to have us look at member development in its totality.

And that he is joined often over the course of the year by his colleague Janet Wall.

**Member Development (by Dr. Janet Wall, Board Member):**

Dr. Wall began by stating that the primary goal of member development and training is to provide a meaningful experience to the corps members and also to provide them with skills that they can leverage as they go into further education or the world of work subsequent to their NCCC experience.

- (1) Dr. Wall continued by indicating that this has been a multimonth if not multiyear effort on Nick's part and also his colleagues to develop the specific objectives, outcomes and goals for the corps members as they move through the NCCC service year.
- (2) Dr. Wall mentioned that the second area that I'd like to focus on is professional development opportunities that NCCC provides to its corps members; that there is an opportunity to gain three undergraduate credits for the following courses, supervisory skills, introduction to service learning and diversity in service, stating that there is also an opportunity to achieve both the presidential and congressional award for service and several hundred have achieved the congressional award up until this point; that there is a certificate in nonprofit management that can be obtained and over 150 members have achieved this certificate; that also life after AmeriCorps training which is related to job search and accessing higher education which is very, very important to set the launching pad for people to go into further service, to education or the world of work; that as for the FEMA effort, there is a special training effort that's involved with that as well.

Ms. Becker indicated that everybody can hear the breadth and depth of the work that is happening with the NCCC staff here at headquarters as well as in the field; that the startup of the FEMA program alone is a tremendous amount of work and I want to commend everyone who is employed by the NCCC for the work that you're doing; that earlier today we also had the opportunity to be joined by an NCCC team from the Atlantic Region and I want to thank Moose 3; that I want to thank them for sharing their story and LaQuine Roberson as well for facilitating their spending time with us this morning; that we also had Wendy Spencer join us this afternoon and she also joined us last night for a dinner along with Bill Basl who is the Director of AmeriCorps; that this year is the twentieth anniversary from when the NCCC legislation occurred; that 2 years later after President Clinton was in office and NCCC had been rolled into the AmeriCorps program, the first campuses were stood up and that was in 1994; that we're hoping to engage project sponsors, alums, current members, parents, cities that have been impacted, et cetera, in some type of a celebration; that we are joined by a new member of the board, Colonel David Dysart.

**Presentation (by Colonel David Dysart, Board Member).**

Colonel Dysart indicated that he is a Colonel in the United States Marine Corps Reserve; that he had been brought to New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina as part of Marine

Forces Katrina to help assist with the reestablishment of critical infrastructure and governmental services as a civil/military adviser and to provide whatever assistance that the military could to the local governments to help stand them up. After the process of being there for about 2 months, the most devastated community as a result of Hurricane Katrina which was St. Bernard Parish asked him to stay on and assist with the leadership of their recovery; that one of the things that we needed to do immediately was remove the health and safety hazards internal to all of the residential structures because no one would be capable or willing to return back to the community if all of every street was filled with this trash and debris that had been left in the wake of the hurricane.

So we began dealing with FEMA in the process of trying to identify a plan for the removal of this debris, and after several months of deep negotiations and getting to the point where we were at the final level of approval, unfortunately FEMA had to deny the plan because it was mixing public assistance funds with individual assistance funds and left us with no recourse or method by which we could begin this process of removing these health and safety hazards; that he went back to his office and was in deep distraught over how far back this was going to place this community in their area of recovery, almost wondering whether or not this was an endgame at that particular point. He was approached by several nonprofit corporations regarding their desire to look at turning this process into a voluntary process by which we would use volunteers throughout the country for the purposes of getting these homes.

He solicited at that point the assistance of the Louisiana National Guard. After having served numerous times on a division command staff, he realized the amount of expertise that was going to be required to command the logistical support network for an operation of this size and magnitude, everything from moving meals to moving the sanitary equipment, establishing a safety net, a security net, moving all of the personnel, the equipment, and the list goes on and on, the housing, the securing of the rights of entries from all of the homeowners, that this particular process required professional planners. So he solicited the National Guard for the purposes of establishing this program and it took literally a month to establish all of the processes to include the training that would involve OSHA standards being met. As we started to get this process set up, we moved from 15 volunteers a week to over 1,300 per week that were coming down into St. Bernard to perform these actions; that In the middle of this just as we were getting off the ground, the National Guard came and said we have bad news. Our orders have changed and we have to leave immediately. It was as if his entire world had been dropped again. Without the National Guard there, there would be absolutely no mechanism for him to control and to conduct this operation which was bringing such incredible hope and a positive feeling in the community that there were those that cared and those that could make a difference in their future and their ability to survive and overcome this incredibly traumatic experience in their life. So as he sat in his room, an AmeriCorps team that had been assigned to us came in and said, sir, we can do this. And he had to be honest. His vision of allowing these young 18- to 20-year-old people to have my destiny in the palm of their hands to control and operation of this magnitude actually was bringing far more fear to him than the hurricane itself. As he began to talk to them about this matter, they pulled out their Twitter pages and their Facebook pages and their phones and showed him how they had the electronic boards by which they were monitoring all of this activity anyway. He was sitting there looking at the Army's arcane pencil boards up on the walls

and the kids are corresponding faster than the speed of light with their mechanisms of communication. Reluctantly he gave them the responsibility to handle this particular project, and said much to his amazement and astonishment they performed this activity with aplomb. They were perfection in motion. But more importantly than the fact that 2,500 homes were gutted as a responsibility of their direct action and involvement, they were a force multiplication. They were those supervisors and those leaders for the rest of the spontaneous volunteers that came down who had no skills, who had no idea of what they were going to be doing, these AmeriCorps volunteers trained them, organized them, implemented them, executed them flawlessly and accomplished this task and mission. As a result, this entire community came back and has now led the Gulf Coast Region for the last 4 years in a recovery that would not have been possible but for their efforts; that you can take all of those accolades and expand on them. Those are insignificant in the value that they add in the lives that they touched. The personal nature and the giving that each of the AmeriCorps people with each of the families that they touched, that they assisted, brought back that personal hope that there were those that really cared and really needed a difference in their lives. Colonel Dysart thanked the board for allowing him to be a part of a board that has so much meaning and value to the rest of the country.

**Chairwoman Becker adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.**