

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

The Board of Directors convened in Washington, D.C. The following members of the Board were present:

Laysha Ward, Chair

Jim Palmer

Eric Tanenblatt, Vice Chair\*

Stan Soloway

Julie Fisher Cummings\*

Hyepin Im\*

\*Participated by phone.

**Chair's Opening Remarks.**

Board Chair Laysha Ward opened the meeting by first welcoming everyone present and those who were listening to the Board on the Internet via a webcast. Ms. Ward also invited the public to comment at the end of the meeting and asked that they sign up in advance so that the time could be properly managed. Ms. Ward thanked the Board members for coming together for this Board meeting. She noted that it had been her privilege to have received a vote of confidence from her colleagues and peers as she assumes the role of Chair of the Board. She explained that she was looking forward to continuing to support the great mission of CNCS and to serve alongside the Board members. Secondly, Ms. Ward thanked the Acting CEO, Mr. Robert Velasco, for his truly outstanding performance. Ms. Ward explained that Robert had been an extraordinary partner to her and had made it possible for her to step into the role of Chair. She noted that Robert had shown his commitment to the Agency and to national service through his ongoing leadership while the Senate worked to confirm the new CEO.

Thirdly, Ms. Ward thanked the staff of CNCS for displaying tremendous skill and commitment to the Agency's mission. It had been her pleasure to work with many of the staff over the years that she had served on the Board and she continues to look forward to the opportunity to get to know many more of the staff better as a result of her new position. Ms. Ward also thanked the grantees and sponsors for taking on the nation's challenges. She said it was the grantees and sponsors who made service happen and their dedication and hard work was

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

definitely making a difference in our country today and at a time when so many Americans are in need. Lastly, Ms. Ward thanked every CNCS program participant and service member. She noted that they continually provide important work and boots-on-the-ground to change the lives of Americans and vulnerable citizens, whether it's Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA, NCCC, or The Social Innovation Fund.

Ms. Ward reported that she had the opportunity last month to meet with Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan. Secretary Duncan was extremely complimentary of his engagement with CNCS leadership. He had recently served on a panel with our Acting CEO and he had great examples of the power and the impact of the work that we are doing within the Agency and how service was a part of the solution in education issues.

Ms. Ward stated she was aware that other members of the Board had similar experiences to share the CNCS story, and that part of the Board's role should be to effectively advocate on behalf of the Agency. She cited the Board's meeting on February 7, 2012 with Cecilia Munoz, the new Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council as another example. Ms. Munoz joined the Board with Jonathan Greenblatt, the Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation, and they were able to hear first-hand from the Board members and staff about the great work that CNCS is doing.

Ms. Ward noted that the final FY 2012 appropriation was 98 percent of the funding level for FY 2011 which, given the austere times, was remarkable. She realized that difficult choices will need to be made with regard to the 2 percent but that the largely intact budget will give the Agency the ability to sustain and build upon the critical work that the organization is doing. Ms. Ward felt that the Agency was positioned for strength and that there was great potential in the year ahead. She recognizes there will be challenges in the year ahead, but that the team assembled will be up for those challenges and the Board stands behind that team, ready and willing for all of us to move forward very effectively.

Ms. Ward commented on the positive nature of the Retreat on the previous day and reported that the Board discussed CNCS programs with program directors and with the senior advisors for disaster services and veterans and military families. It was an opportunity for the Board to stay close to the work and to hear more about those programs, as well as the strategies and the impact of the work that is being done across the agency. The Board engaged in a robust discussion about the work. The Retreat meant time talking through everything from the service programs to the strategy to the budget implications. The Board also spent a great deal of time discussing the agency's plan for oversight and accountability. The Board met with the Deputy Inspector General and gained greater insight of the Agency's progress through the lens of strategic oversight.

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

**Consideration of Prior Meeting's Minutes.**

The Board considered and approved by voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held October 20, 2011.

**Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report.**

Acting CEO Robert Velasco thanked Laysha Ward for her support. He thanked those in the room and thanked everyone who makes national service work: the staff at CNCS headquarters, the people in the state offices across the country, the partners at state commissions, committed grantees and sponsors across the nation, the national service members, and participants serving at tens of thousands of sites. He also noted that the work of CNCS here, and across the country, is a shining example of how government, non-profits, the private sector, and everyday citizens can work together to truly make an impact. Mr. Velasco also thanked the members of the Board for their outstanding leadership and support. Because of the Board's counsel, CNCS is positioned to reach higher levels of accountability, efficiency, and most importantly, impact. Mr. Velasco especially wanted to acknowledge the new Board Chair, Ms. Laysha Ward. He noted that Ms. Ward is a national leader who brings decades of experience and a very passionate commitment not only nationally, but globally as well.

Mr. Velasco began his report by discussing the Fiscal Year 2012 budget. In December 2011 the President signed a bill that contained \$1.49 billion for CNCS and its programs, about 98 percent of the FY 2011 funding level. Overall, the budget will allow CNCS to continue its critical work in communities across the country. The budget supports the Agency's strategic plan and the mission. But the budget also reflects the difficult choices that are being made at this time of fiscal constraint. The core programs, such as Senior Corps, the three branches of AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund, are funded near last year's levels. Funding at this level means CNCS will continue to engage millions of Americans and sustain service to solve problems. This level of fiscal strength means that we will be able to improve the lives of vulnerable citizens and strengthen America's non-profit sector. We will create economic and educational opportunities for those who serve. In order to expand our impact in communities across the country, we will continue to strategically focus our resources, demonstrate results, expand partnerships, embrace innovation, and increase operational efficiencies.

While the core programs are funded at levels that permit them to operate at strength, cuts in this year's budget to state commission administration, training and technical assistance, evaluation, and the Office of the Inspector General, have the potential to weaken the national service infrastructure as a whole. In response, Mr. Velasco noted that the Agency was taking a number of steps to increase efficiency and making tough but necessary decisions to support the

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

mission and make the best use of our resources. This includes stepping up monitoring and oversight activities to ensure the highest levels of accountability across all of the programs. The Agency recognizes that accountability, oversight, and program evaluation are fundamental to long-term capacity to deliver results for the American people. Mr. Velasco believes that everyone needs to be able to tell a better story about the critical investment of infrastructure to quality and impact of national service programs. He stated that the Agency was committed to fulfilling these key functions during this time of fiscal constraint.

Mr. Velasco noted that the budget was about more than just numbers. People and programs are affected by each line item. The Agency keeps in regular, on-going communications with all stakeholders about the status, results and implication of the FY 2012 budget. The Agency will continue to make the best case for a strong investment in national service. Programs will remain as strong as they can possibly be given the resources that are available. While the budget has not grown, the demand for national service has. The demand is seen in organizations, from those who want to serve, and most importantly, from communities and the people that CNCS serves. As one example, CNCS has received nearly 582,000 applications to serve through our AmeriCorps programs this year. That represented an 8 percent increase in applications from last year.

Mr. Velasco proceeded to share a few highlights with the Board members. The Agency has continued to focus on efforts to maximize the impact on tough community problems, implementing the strategic plan, strengthening accountability and efficiency, and engaging more Americans more effectively in service to meet national and local needs. Consistent with the Strategic Plan, CNCS has increased efforts to support and engage veterans and military families. In November 2011, the Agency announced a new senior advisor for Wounded Warrior and Veterans and Military Family Initiatives, and that individual is already bringing this issue to the strategic level it deserves. The Agency collaborated with the National Guard Bureau and the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America to launch an innovative veteran's program that will place 100 full-time AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members in 28 states across the country this year, and more states in future years. These members will be assisting veterans and military families access key services and support, from housing and employment to behavioral and physical health services. In January of this year CNCS announced our participation in 100 Hiring Our Heroes job fairs over the next 5 years. The first fair focused on military and veteran spouses and provided a great opportunity to share information about service through AmeriCorps and other Agency programs.

Other initiatives included putting young people on the path to a brighter future through service and other opportunities. This month, in support of the White House Summer Jobs Plus Initiative to provide pathways to employment for low-income and disconnected youth, CNCS

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

announced its commitment to provide approximately 4,000 disadvantaged youth with AmeriCorps service opportunities this summer. In recognition of National Mentoring Month, CNCS worked with Mentor, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Harvard School of Public Health, United Way Worldwide, and other organizations to hold the second annual National Mentoring Summit which brought 500 key mentoring stakeholders together to enhance the quality and impact of the field, chart the field's future, and focus the power of mentoring on measurable outcomes.

CNCS is constantly working to engage more people in the most meaningful service opportunities, and just last week, the Missouri House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring the indispensable role AmeriCorps members have played in helping the city of Joplin recover from the devastating tornado in May 2011. The first AmeriCorps members arrived within hours after the tornado struck, and more than 300 have served since then providing vital services and mobilizing more than 60,000 volunteers who have been essential to the city's recovery. That commitment to Joplin will continue in this coming year. AmeriCorps members were instrumental to mobilizing this record-breaking influx of volunteers and donations which have saved the city more than \$17.7 million that would have been required to pay, as part of its share reimbursement, for federal disaster funds.

January was also an important month for CNCS and its network because of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service. Hundreds of thousands of Americans made it a day on, not a day off, by joining volunteer service projects in all 50 states. Mr. Velasco noted that the work continues. CNCS will release a Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for grants to implement service activities on the September 11<sup>th</sup> National Day of Service and Remembrance the week of this Board meeting and soon will announce the third new grant competition for the Social Innovation Fund. The Agency will also be implementing a new data matching agreement between CNCS and the Social Security Administration that shortens the process that it can take to validate applicant eligibility for our programs, from up to 1 year to about 30 days.

Mr. Velasco concluded his report to the Board by thanking the CNCS staff. Although CNCS is a small agency in terms of staff, CNCS has a large impact on people and communities in need. The work CNCS does every day supports a national service field that is having a positive and lasting impact on millions of the most-vulnerable citizens and that impact is only going to grow in the future. Even in difficult financial times, CNCS is poised for greater impact on the future.

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

**Board Reports.**

Ms. Ward thanked Mr. Velasco for his report and then turned the floor over to Board member Stan Soloway. Mr. Soloway started by acknowledging the staff at CNCS and the great work that they do, and stated that he felt the Board was very privileged and honored to be able to work with such great people. Mr. Soloway first commented on the budget and noted that the plan for implementing the 2012 budget really reflected the priorities of the programs across the Agency. He stated that the work remains rooted in the Kennedy Serve America Act, and in the Strategic Plan that the Board and Agency recently completed. Both focus the Agency's work on the strength of grantees, national service participants across the programs, staff, and state partners to build a great network of programs that offer effective solutions in six principal focus areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and, of course, veterans and military families.

Mr. Soloway noted a few highlights to emphasize the Agency's priorities. AmeriCorps will be looking to support 82,500 members across state and national, VISTA and NCCC. For the grants process, there will be greater emphasis on areas such as program design, evidence-based intervention, the member experience, and the engagement of previously under-represented populations. There will be a higher priority for programs working in disaster service, education, and those seeking to both engage and serve veterans and military families. For the Social Innovation Fund, competition will be focused on three principal areas: economic opportunity, youth development, and healthy futures. All applicants will need to demonstrate that they have effectively met the program requirements, especially those related to the use of evidence and evaluation. The program will be giving priority to proposals that are likely to generate significant measurable improvements in the economic well-being of individuals and the families served, and focus their work in low-income communities that are significantly, philanthropically underserved. There will remain a strong commitment to Senior Corps. One highlight is the Notice of Funding opportunity for the first cohort of competitive grants in RSVP since the passage of the Serve America Act will open in August. That competition will result in an estimated 250 RSVP grant awards with an estimated total funding of over \$26 million.

Mr. Soloway noted the evaluation agenda was a critical part of what the Agency does. One of the ways that CNCS is looking to increase efficiency and make the best use of resources is by maintaining the most cost-effective and needed research programs. The Agency has taken a very critical look at the research program and submitted a revised Evaluation plan and Agenda to the Board for consideration. Fortunately, most of the longer-term, more rigorous evaluations were forward-funded for FY12 with FY11 dollars, and thus the framework for the research agenda remains much the same.

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

**Approval of the Resolution Supporting the 2012 Evaluation Plan.**

Lastly, Mr. Soloway stressed the importance of the evaluation plan and that he had been impressed by the fact that the Agency was so intentional about the Evaluation Plan, focusing on the most important questions that will make national service stronger, distinguishing between what works and what doesn't. Mr. Soloway asked for any comments from the Board and with no further discussion read the proposed Resolution into the record. The Resolution supporting the FY 2012 Evaluation Plan was approved by the Board of Directors by voice vote.

Julie Cummings, who participated by telephone, was invited by the Chair to discuss updates on the Agency's external affairs and public engagement activities. Ms. Cummings focused on the outstanding success of the 2012 Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service. On January 16, hundreds of thousands of Americans made this a day on, not a day off, by joining in volunteer service projects across the country. The theme for this year's Day of Service was economic opportunity. Elected officials from every level of government participated. At the federal level, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama participated, along with Vice President Biden and Dr. Jill Biden. More than a dozen cabinet secretaries and other high ranking administration officials also participated. More than 40 Members of Congress also participated in the Day of Service by speaking at events, serving or issuing calls to service. Twenty-six governors, five lieutenant governors, and two secretaries of state also participated. Another highlight this year was the Drum Majors for Service program which recognized more than 2,000 volunteers with Drum Majors for Service Awards, more than double last year. Several of the Board members shared their personal stories about service on MLK Day and emphasized the special feeling that came with working side-by-side with other dedicated volunteers.

Ms. Ward thanked Ms. Cummings for her report on external affairs and public engagement and then invited Eric Tannenblatt to discuss updates on the Agency's oversight and accountability work. Mr. Tannenblatt stated that the Board had been in regular conversation with management at CNCS about accountability at the Agency generally, and specifically, in relation to the Agency's Oversight and Monitoring Plan. Recent discussions have focused on the cut in the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriation for the CNCS Office of the Inspector General. Further, the discussions also focused on any cuts to the CNCS salary and expense line, as those budget lines provide the resources for which all CNCS relies to ensure accountability of its programs. The Board of Directors, like management at the Agency, is very concerned about the cuts and is determined that the impact of these cuts on accountability be mitigated to the fullest extent possible. Mr. Tannenblatt stated that the commitment to eliminate waste, fraud, and

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

abuse remains intact. He is pleased to report that CNCS leadership acted quickly to develop and begin to implement a plan to bolster its monitoring and oversight capacity and activities.

**Approval of the Resolution Approving the Oversight and Monitoring Plan.**

Mr. Tanneblatt stated that CNCS leadership had discussed an Oversight and Monitoring plan with the Board, and the Board is of the view that the plan will indeed achieve the goals of the Board and that of CNCS management. In light of the Board's continued commitment to accountability and oversight, the significance of the budget cuts and the Board's genuine concern about the potential impact of these cuts, Mr. Tannenblatt introduced a Resolution for the Board's consideration which directed the CEO to continue to implement the plan referenced in the Resolution and to apprise the Board regularly of the progress of the implementation. The Resolution was approved by the Board by voice vote.

**Approval of the Resolution Honoring Mr. William Anderson.**

The Board recognized Mr. William Anderson, the Chief Financial Officer, and thanked him for his many years of dedication and service. Mr. Anderson is leaving CNCS to become the Controller for the Government Accountability Office. A proposed Resolution honoring the work and leadership of the CFO was read into the record and was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**Public Comment.**

Ms. Ward began the public comment session by acknowledging that some questions and comments from stakeholders had come in via email. The Board takes comments and questions from stakeholders and the public generally very seriously, and the Board follows up on these questions with the appropriate CNCS staff members who have the most knowledge on the particular topic to ensure we are getting back to those who ask questions in a timely manner with the right information.

Mr. Alan Lopatin was the first public presenter. He serves as the Director of the Washington Office of the National Senior Corps Association. He wanted to introduce himself and offer the assistance of the Association. The National Senior Corps Association (NSCA) is a membership organization that promotes, represents, advocates for, and enhances the power of Senior Corps programs nationwide. NSCA is the nationally recognized leadership organization representing the combined interests of Foster Grandparents, RSVP, and Senior Companion programs. Mr. Lopatin stated that you can visit the website at [www.nscatogether.org](http://www.nscatogether.org). NSCA also serves in a leadership role with the Leadership Council on Aging Organizations where Mr. Lopatin serves as Chair of the Council's budget committee and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 8, 2012**  
**10:30 a.m. – 11:38 a.m., EST**

on the Presidential Election. He wanted to thank Dr. Erwin Tan and his team for working with Senior Corps members, volunteers, and directors. Senior Corps volunteers contribute to the health and independent living of thousands of older adults and caregivers striving to remain independent. NSCA also takes part in education and disaster services, and on issues involving veterans and military families. Many volunteers enrolled in Senior Corps programs are veterans themselves. Mr. Lopatin noted that last year, despite the 98 percent funding for CNCS, the loss of over 100,000 RSVP slots as part of the debt limit deal was and remains tragic. The cost effectiveness of the work is proven, the human impact renowned and the need ever so great.

Mr. Glen Odenbrett presented next. Mr. Odenbrett was representing the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement at the Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. He was in Washington, D.C. because the Secretary of the Interior had asked him to serve on the advisory board of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conservation Service Corps which met the day after the CNCS Board meeting. Mr. Odenbrett noted that the vision for the Service Corps was aligned with the CNCS-funded project that he directs at the Center, the Great Lakes Innovative Stewardship through Education Network, or GLISTEN. Thanks to CNCS's Learn and Serve America Higher Education Program, since 2010 college and university students enrolled in GLISTEN undergraduate course work from Duluth, Minnesota to Rochester, New York have been assisting governmental and non-profit environmental agencies with restoration and stewardship of the Great Lakes, which contain over 80 percent of the nation's fresh surface water. The key to the success of GLISTEN has been the role of undergraduate stewardship liaisons. CNCS has been instrumental in fostering these types of academic programs that allow young people to acquire skills needed in various career paths and that enable real world problems to receive scientific data for environmental purposes in an efficient and economical way. He expressed the hope that CNCS will continue to take an active interest in the future for these types of efforts.

**Closing Remarks.**

Ms. Ward thanked all of the individuals who had signed up to make public comment. She emphasized that the Board wants to make sure they have a participatory meeting. Ms. Ward concluded the meeting by thanking the Board members for their service and thanked the leadership team at CNCS and the program partners all over the country for the great work they are doing.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.