

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
May 9, 2012
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., EST

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

Laysha Ward, Chair

Eric Tannenblatt

Stan Soloway

Julie Fisher Cummings

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Jane Hartley

Phyllis Segal

Rick Christman

Marguerite Kondracke

Chair's Opening Remarks.

Board Chair Laysha Ward opened the meeting by first welcoming everyone present and those who were listening to the Board proceeding via phone. Ms. Ward expressed her delight in having the opportunity to engage in a public Board meeting at the conclusion of the Board retreat. She noted she was looking forward to a very open and transparent conversation with stakeholders. She introduced four out of the five new board members and said she was thrilled to have their leadership as a part of the Board. She also noted that a fifth new member, Lisa Garcia Quiroz, and a current member, Jim Palmer, were unable to attend this Board meeting. Ms. Ward also welcomed Wendy Spencer, the new CEO, to the Board meeting and noted that Ms. Spencer had hit the ground running and that CNCS was already benefitting from her leadership and experience. Ms. Ward then invited each of the new Board members to introduce themselves and say a few words about their experience.

Rick Christman stated he was from Lexington, Kentucky. He is a CEO of a nonprofit organization, Employment Solutions, and added that his organization serves many of the same initiatives that CNCS is engaged in. Employment Solutions operates postsecondary education for people who are disadvantaged and offers a number of employment-related programs for people with disabling conditions. He noted that his experience was at the ground level and that he was glad to be on the Board.

Jane Hartley stated she was absolutely thrilled to be a member of the Board. She stated she was the CEO of the Observatory Group, a macroeconomic consulting firm in New York City. She is

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also a Public Director of Heidrick & Struggles and is a long-term Director of Sesame Street and so has been very involved in early childhood education. Ms. Hartley also stated that both she and her husband are very involved in New Visions in New York City, setting up public schools in some of the toughest neighbors. She is also on the Executive Committee of the Kennedy School because she cares deeply about public service. Years ago she was at the White House and in the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Phyllis Segal stated she was also thrilled to be on the Board. She is the Vice President of an organization which is all about bringing new sources of human capital to meet the needs of communities and to work for the common good. The name of the organization is Civic Ventures. Civic Ventures is about the idea of a new stage of work after midlife, work that has a social purpose but that also provides a personal meaning and income. She said that her husband, Eli Segal, was the first CEO of the Corporation and after he died the Education Award was renamed the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award in honor of her husband. Ms. Segal said that she considered the Corporation and AmeriCorps like part of her family, and that she is eager to devote a significant portion of the next period of her life to making sure that National Service gets stronger and more vibrant in communities.

Marguerite Kondracke is currently the President of America's Promise Alliance which is deeply committed to changing outcomes for all young people, and giving them the chance to realize their own potential. They are currently focused on the high school dropout crisis. She has been interested in service since her high school and college days, having walked with the sanitation workers in Memphis when Dr. King was killed. She has worked in the Appalachian region in her home state of Tennessee as a Home Visitor, worked in the private sector in childcare, then served in the State cabinet for Governor Omar Alexander in Tennessee, and subsequently came to Washington, D.C. to work for him in the U. S. Senate when the Governor was elected to the Senate.

Ms. Ward concluded the introductions by thanking all of the new Board members and noting that the Corporation would continue to grow and flourish as a result of the expertise that their experiences will bring to the work of the Corporation. 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 went over the Agenda for the Board meeting and thanked the CNCS staff for all of their work. Ms. Ward also thanked Robert Velasco for acting as the Interim CEO and doing such a great job. Lastly, Ms. Ward thanked the National Service programs and participants. Their work around the country and their commitment to service are role models for others to follow.

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Ms. Ward then swore in the new Board members and officially welcomed them to the CNCS family. She commented on the Board Retreat held the previous day and noted that the Board members had visited the D.C. Central Kitchen and met the AmeriCorps VISTA leaders who were working there. The Board heard from several VISTA members who were in varying stages of their work with VISTA programs during the visit. Ms. Ward thanked Ms. Spencer for thinking of the site visit and the Board members for wanting to visit. She also thanked Ms. Maureen Roche from the Campus Kitchens Project for her hospitality and insights when the visit to the D.C. Central Kitchen occurred and thanked Ms. Mary Strasser, the CNCS VISTA Director, for arranging the visit.

Ms. Ward commented on the positive nature of the Retreat 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 about the strategies and the impact of the work that is being done across the Agency. During the Retreat, the Board engaged in a robust discussion about the work being performed. 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.

Consideration of Prior Meeting's Minutes

The Board considered and approved by voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held February 8, 2012.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The Chief Executive Officer Wendy Spencer thanked Robert Velasco for all of his hard work as the Acting CEO. She thanked President Obama for nominating her and said she felt very honored to accept this great opportunity to serve the country along with the Board members and everyone across the country. She expressed gratitude to the U. S. Senate for confirming her and thanked Ms. Ward for her support. Ms. Spencer welcomed the new Board members as well as the previous Board members. She singled out Ms. Segal for praise and also everyone around the country who supported her throughout the confirmation process.

Ms. Spencer shared with the Board and the public her vision for the future and what is important to her. She said that the Serve America Act and the strategic plan of the Agency were very important to her. She called the strategic plan a fabulous blueprint and foundation to build upon and that continuing to build the foundation was going to be her priority. She wanted to combine

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the strategic plan with leadership ideas and opportunities, as well as input from stakeholders, to move the Serve America Act forward. One of the most significant and special moments in her first days as the CEO came on her third day on the job when she introduced the President of the United States, President Obama, who spoke on the telephone to thousands of AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps volunteers, NCCC members, VISTA members, and Social Innovation Fund participants. Everyone on the call was able to hear firsthand from the President how important the work is and what the work is accomplishing. It was a very emotional moment when the President thanked everyone personally for the work we are doing.

Ms. Spencer also related that in her first couple of weeks she had the opportunity to participate in the first anniversary of Joining Forces with the First Lady and the Second Lady and to hear about the work of citizens who were supporting military personnel, family members of military personnel, and veterans all over the country in the fabulous initiative called Joining Forces. Ms. Spencer also participated in a unique event called the White House Summit on Expanding Opportunity Through Volunteerism. The Labor Secretary, Hilda Solis, and the Council of Economic Advisor's Chair, Alan Krueger, both spoke passionately during the event about how volunteering can help unemployed people develop skills and make contacts for jobs through their volunteer service. Ms. Spencer stated that she was happy to be working with every Cabinet agency on every level to recognize how important service is.

Ms. Spencer stated that she has been very busy. In her first twenty-two days as the CEO she has had over 72 meetings, events and calls as part of her listening tour. Every one of those meetings had a prep meeting first. Ms. Spencer stated that her schedule was all part of the first 100 days plan for her. She has reached out to VISTA members, Senior Corps volunteers, and the associations aligned with Senior Corps programs, AmeriCorps programs, AmeriCorps members, and the State Commissions. She has been able to speak with the national directs' leaders, Social Innovation Fund grantees, NCCC members and their leadership and the state offices of the Corporation. Ms. Spencer also stated that she has reached out in Congress to the Senators and Representatives who supported her nomination and are supportive of the Corporation and the work that CNCS is doing with volunteers and National Service participants. She travelled to Philadelphia and met with the CNCS satellite office there and also met with Mayor Nutter in Philadelphia. She met with VISTAs, with Senior Corps members, and with AmeriCorps members during the trip to Philadelphia. She also met with some Foster Grandparent Program volunteers and she approached one volunteer and asked if the volunteer was making a difference. The volunteer told her about teaching English to a child in the classroom and in a matter of weeks how much progress the little girl had made. Ms. Spencer said that those types of stories speak volumes to her. What we are doing on the ground is where the real work is performed Ms. Spencer stated. This story grounded Ms. Spencer very quickly and reminded her of how

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important our work really is. She also celebrated National Volunteer Week, the week of April 15. During National Volunteer Week Ms. Spencer celebrated Make a Difference Day and recognized the Prudential Spirit Community Award winners. Prudential brings 102 young people who are doing significant volunteer work to Washington and they then select 10 young people for the award winners and recognize them with a cash award for themselves and for the charity to which they have been donating their time. Ms. Spencer joined the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, in recognizing those 10 young people.

Ms. Spencer also noted that currently it was Senior Corps Week and that she really embraced intergenerational volunteerism. She noted further that this week was also Public Service Recognition Week. Ms. Spencer then read a message from the President of the United States to all those observing Public Service Recognition Week 2012. Ms. Spencer announced two awards. The first award was from the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters organization (National VOAD), and CNCS was recognized with the Partner of the Year Award. Ms. Spencer recognized Kelly DeGraff who is the senior advisor for the CNCS Disaster Services unit and who accepted the Award the prior evening on behalf of Ms. Spencer and CNCS. Ms. Spencer also wanted to recognize this award on behalf of CNCS partners such as National VOAD, the faith-based organizations, the relief organizations, our local governments, the state governments and our emergency managers, all of whom work with NCCC, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and VISTA to deploy resources and volunteers to disasters throughout the country when called upon.

Ms. Spencer recognized Kelly DeGraff and her team as a finalist for the very prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals. The awards are called the Sammie Awards and are awarded to federal civil service participants. It is one of the highest honors for civil service work in America. This announcement for Kelly and the Disaster team includes the work with our partners throughout the country for responding to disasters, but in particular for the work with Joplin, Missouri, and the survivors and family members of that disaster.

Finally, Ms. Spencer promised to be the ambassador and the champion for all who are involved in volunteerism and national service. She is trying to get the right tools to everyone across America so that all can do their job well. Ms. Spencer informed the Board and audience that she is now tweeting and invited everyone to follow her on Twitter at @wendycncs. She already had 400 followers in the first three weeks as the CEO. Her goal is to get 1,000 followers very soon. It is her opportunity to communicate what she is doing every day, recognizing events that are going on and recognizing those in the field. Ms. Spencer ended by thanking the Board members for their pledge of support not just to her but to the entire CNCS team and to everyone across the country in service to America.

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Board Reports

Ms. Ward thanked Ms. Spencer for her report and then turned the floor over to Board member Stan Soloway to report for the Strategy and Programs Committee. Mr. Soloway began his report by reporting on the grant competitions. Beginning with the AmeriCorps State and National grant competition, CNCS is wrapping up the FY 12 grants review and selection process. This has taken a lot of time and Mr. Soloway thanked the staff for the continued great work they are doing on the grant review. Mr. Soloway stated that on May 31, announcements will be made for awards to the State Service Commissions and national organizations. AmeriCorps will continue to support strong nonprofits across the country, working in areas that align with the strategic plan and are included in the Serve America Act. For FY 2012, the focus for AmeriCorps investments was in three areas: improving academic outcomes for children, youth and young adults; serving veterans and military families; and increasing community resiliency through disaster preparation and response, recovery, and mitigation. Also as part of the FY 2012 competition, CNCS would be implementing the third and final year of the National Performance Measures pilot and using the lessons learned and data from the pilot to assess the appropriateness in implementation of the measures at the grantee and sub-grantee levels.

Mr. Soloway noted that there was important work coming up in RSVP in Senior Corps. He noted that there have been discussions around the most effective ways to link our competitive grants to impact quality on the ground in communities across the country. The RSVP program has great value in the Senior Corps portfolio. It has the largest rural footprint of any of the CNCS programs and CNCS sees some fantastic new and innovative work from RSVP grantees, especially around serving veterans who are returning home. For the last three years the staff has been working hard to meet the statutory requirements laid out in the Serve America Act, aimed at helping prepare existing grantees in the RSVP program for their first open competition in 40 years. This competition will take place in stages over the next three years, with a third of the portfolio taking part each year in the competition between FY 2013 and 2015. CNCS is planning to release the NOFO in August of this year, with just under \$16 million available for awards. All applications will be due in the fall, and the Agency expects to make funding decisions sometime next spring, pending final appropriations.

Mr. Soloway also noted that in the wake of the unexpected budget cut to RSVP in 2011, there were about 70 grantees who relinquished their grants, meaning that they ended their grant voluntarily. These relinquishments returned about \$4 million to CNCS that CNCS is now looking to reinvest in communities. CNCS released a NOFO last month which closes May 15. CNCS is focusing on two things: first, the focus is on supporting new grantees in about 30 states where the grants were relinquished; and secondly, CNCS wants to support existing grantees who want to start to expand their work in the veterans and military families space.

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Mr. Soloway then briefed the Board and public on the status of performance measures. CNCS is continuing to work on implementation of the new performance measures. CNCS has adopted 16 cross-program performance measures aimed at focusing the Agency's work. Mr. Soloway said that since some of the CNCS programs are governed by legislation that required them to engage in activities that are not included in the 16 Agency-wide priority measures, the staff worked to develop what the Agency is calling complementary program measures that will capture data and outcomes specific to each program. For example, the Foster Grandparent Program has a child welfare mandate that's not reflected in the Agency-wide priority measures on education or healthy futures. However, the staff developed a specific measure to capture the number of children served by child safety, welfare, and health programs. OMB approved these additional performance measures in April 2012, and they will be effective starting in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Soloway stated that on a related note the staff from the Strategy and program offices, as well as the IT office, have been working together since last fall to develop a data collection reporting system that our grantees and partners will use to tell us which performance measures they will adopt, the targets they've set for their performance and then eventually, how well they have done. Lastly, Mr. Soloway wanted to emphasize what Ms. Spencer said about the FEMA Corps project. He believes it is an enormous opportunity for the Corporation and was pulled together with remarkable speed.

Next, Ms. Julie Cummings was recognized by the Chair to provide an update on External Affairs and Public Engagement. Ms. Cummings stated that activity in External Affairs has been significant since the last Board meeting and that she wanted to mention just a few of the more significant items. Ms. Cummings noted the very positive start by the new CEO and she thanked the Senate for confirming the new Board members. Ms. Cummings reported that this week was National Senior Corps Week and that there were so many fascinating Senior Corps stories on the Senior Corps website and on the Facebook page. Ms. Cummings thanked Dr. Erwin Tan for sharing his research on the health benefits that accrue to older people from volunteering in service and for speaking to the news media this week about Senior Corps.

Ms. Cummings also commented on AmeriCorps Week which was celebrated March 10 through March 18, 2012. The primary purpose was to develop a sense of community among members and alumni and to link those two groups together using a combination of social media and traditional media. CNCS used Facebook and our blogs were posted on the White House website. Regarding news media, across the nation there were more than 400 stories on AmeriCorps Week, and a White House blog by Jonathan Greenblatt was published in the Huffington Post.

Next, the Chair recognized Eric Tanenblatt to report for the Governance, Oversight, and Audit Committee. Regarding governance, Mr. Tanenblatt stated that the Committee had been

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preparing the onboarding process for some time for the new Board members and he hoped it had been effective to date. He was also pleased to welcome the new CEO as her arrival obviously added to the overall governance of the Agency. Regarding oversight, at the last Board meeting the Board passed a resolution requesting CNCS review its plan for oversight given the reduction in the Inspector General's budget. In response to that Resolution, the Agency developed an accountability action plan that further increased its activities for stewardship and oversight. The Board requested the Agency to provide updates on the status of the plan at each Board meeting, and based on the Agency's most current update to the Board, the Agency had made progress on all elements of the plan, including increasing monitoring visits for fiscal year 2012. As part of its commitment to improve accountability and efficiency, Mr. Tanenblatt noted the Agency recently announced the establishment of an Office of Accountability and Oversight that merges existing units focusing separately on external and internal oversight into one integrated unit that will holistically address accountability across CNCS. On the audit front, Mr. Tanenblatt stated that the Agency's annual independent financial audit will be initiated at the end of the current week, with final audit conclusions available after the close of the fiscal year, in accordance with federal timelines.

Public Comment

Ms. Ward began the public comment session by thanking the staff who works alongside Eric Tanenblatt to ensure that CNCS has the appropriate accountability and oversight. She then recognized the panel of Senior Corps volunteers who are in the Washington, D.C. area to share their stories. Ms. Ward stated that the Board was very eager to hear about their work, and looked forward to the examples that they were going to provide. She noted that for more than four decades, Senior Corps volunteers have used their lifetime of skills and experiences to meet community needs. Today, more than 330,000 volunteers, age 55 and over, are serving through Senior Corps's three programs: Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP. The work of these volunteers is having a great impact. Last year, Senior Corps volunteers served more than 96 million hours. They provided independent living services to more than 700,000 elderly persons. Additionally, they tutored and mentored more than 300,000 young people, serving through more than 65,000 nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations around the country.

Ms. Ward introduced the first public presenter, Ms. Cynthia Ashtonahmed. Ms. Ashtonahmed stated that she was representing the 175 foster grandparents who are serving in the District of Columbia. They serve in 70 early educational centers, 18 public and charter elementary schools, four youth programs and three hostels. Ms. Ashtonahmed noted that each year the foster grandparents in D.C. log about 175,000 volunteer hours. Ms. Ashtonahmed then introduced three volunteers she had with her: "Grandpa" Taylor Cunningham who is at Jobs Corps in the

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culinary art vocational training section; “Grandma” Phyllis Heiser who is serving at the Children’s National Medical Center; and Ms. Renee Jefferson, who volunteers at the M.C. Terrell Public Elementary School. Ms. Ashtonahmed concluded by giving the volunteers a round of applause and stated to the Board that if the Board members had any questions she and the volunteers would answer them.

There being no questions from the members of the Board, Ms. Ward told the volunteers the Board appreciated their service and was honored to have them visit during Senior Corps Week. Ms. Ward concluded by thanking them for their service.

Ms. Ward then introduced Mr. Bill Jones, a volunteer for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman with Montgomery County of the Maryland RSVP Program. Mr. Jones began by congratulating the new CEO and the new Board members. He told the Board that he had worked in human services in various capacities for almost 50 years and was a PhD psychologist in his earlier life experiences. When he retired he thought that golf would fulfill him and for a while it was fun. However, after a time he felt that something was missing from his life so he looked around and found the Ombudsman Program in Montgomery County. In the county they have almost 8,000 residents in nursing homes and in assisted living facilities. There are 34 nursing homes and 138 licensed assisted living facilities. The Program only has a staff of 5 paid individuals and last year they had 55 volunteers. Mr. Jones said that in fiscal year 2011 they had a contribution of 14,000 volunteer hours with a value of over \$300,000. This was just in Montgomery County. Mr. Jones personally works as an advocate in an assisted living facility with 100 assisted living residents and 25 people with dementia. His biggest reward from the work is being able to work with the residents. He concluded by saying that he has a great passion for the program and the people, and he asked the Board to help him recruit volunteers.

Ms. Ward invited Ms. Leslie Roberts of the Montgomery County RSVP Program to join Mr. Jones and to provide a few words about her experience. Ms. Roberts thanked everyone. She told the Board that yesterday she had been honored for serving 20 years in the Tax Aid Program. The program was originally an AARP program and then the IRS joined in the program. They now serve anybody needing tax assistance and not just seniors. During the last several years Ms. Roberts said she had worked at 3 different sites during the tax season for 3 full days a week. She is also an ombudsman. Ms. Roberts felt that her work had a great impact on people who really needed her assistance.

Ms. Ward thanked the presenters and told them what an honor it was for the Board to recognize their leadership and service not only during National Senior Corps week, but for their efforts throughout the year.

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The next member of the public recognized by Ms. Ward to present to the Board was Alex Wirth. Mr. Wirth is an 18 year old freshman at Harvard University. He works with a number of national youth service organizations to get more young people involved in government and community service. Mr. Wirth had a proposal to present to the Board, and he noted that currently CNCS lacks a program that demonstrates the quality solutions and contributions that young people can bring not only to their communities but to the nation as a whole. Mr. Wirth stated that based on a poll released by the Harvard Institute of Politics, of 3,000 young people ages 18 to 29, only 20 percent of them felt the country was headed in the right direction. Only 11 percent thought the elected officials had the same priorities that they did, and only 29 percent believed they had a say in what the government does. He stated that his generation was not happy with the way that things were going and that his generation does not feel they have the ability to change it at the national level.

Mr. Wirth stated that the same poll found that almost 70 percent of young people consider community service an honorable thing to do and this is seen in the work of 400 youth councils in cities all across the U.S. Young people want to have their voices heard, but at the national level they are not being given the opportunity. Mr. Wirth said that over the past year he has worked with a team of 20 young people and the Forum for Youth Investment to put together a policy proposal. The proposal has been endorsed by over 100 leading youth-serving organizations because it gives young people a voice at the national level.

Mr. Wirth's proposal is to have a federal advisory council for young people. He outlined his proposal to the Board. He believes that CNCS is the best place to host such a council as it aligns directly with the mission of highlighting community solutions and recognizing people for that, and for working with young people all across the country. Mr. Wirth concluded by stating he hoped his proposal would eventually be a White House Presidential Initiative, and that the first council might be appointed in the summer of 2013.

Ms. Ward thanked Mr. Wirth and told him that the Board would take his proposal under serious consideration and would continue to dialogue internally with the CNCS staff. Ms. Ward then introduced Mr. Tom Branen from America's Service Commissions.

Mr. Branen introduced himself as the Executive Director of America's Service Commissions. It is the national association for the 53 Commissions across the country. Mr. Branen congratulated Ms. Spencer and the new Board members and stated that he wanted to give them an update about the Commissions. State Service Commissions date back to the creation of CNCS. They are state Governor-appointed public agencies or nonprofit organizations made up of more than 1,100 commissioners – private citizens helping to lead the nation's philanthropic movement. He noted that approximately two-thirds of AmeriCorps grant money goes to State Service Commissions.

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Each Commission determines the social needs in their state, sets policy and program priorities, competitively awards grants to local nonprofits and agencies, and monitors grantees to ensure quality compliance with federal and state law.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Ward thanked the people who had presented and commented on what an extraordinary honor it was for the Board to have them there to recognize their leadership and service not only during National Senior Corps Week but throughout the year.

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 11:30 a.m.