

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 4, 2009**  
**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:

Alan Solomont, Chair  
Stephen Goldsmith, Vice Chair  
Julie Fisher Cummings  
Hyepin Im  
Vincent Juaristi

Jim Palmer  
Stan Soloway  
Eric Tanenblatt  
Laysha Ward

Mark Gearan participated by phone.

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held Sept. 16, 2008. (Transcript, 12).

The Board passed a resolution honoring Steve Goldsmith's service as Chair. (Transcript, 11).

Hyepin Im took the oath of office to join the Board of Directors. (Transcript 12).

The Board passed a resolution in honor of the 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service. (Transcript, 23).

The Board passed a resolution on the impact of the current economy on national service. (Transcript 74).

## **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Board Chair Alan Solomont opened the meeting by announcing that he had been elected by the Board to succeed Steve Goldsmith as the new Chair, and that Steve Goldsmith will serve as the Vice Chair. Eric Tanenblatt is the new Chair for the MAG Committee, and Stan Soloway will Chair the Strategic Partnerships Committee following the departure of Vince Juaristi. Alan Solomont offered a resolution recognizing Steve Goldsmith's contributions as Chair of the Board of Directors (Resolution 2009-02). The Board approved the resolution by acclamation. Mr. Goldsmith shared some reflections on the Corporation's progress during his time as Chair, and noted that, going forward, the Corporation should take advantage of the President's contagious enthusiasm for service but also continue to focus on nurturing a culture of service from the bottom up, be sensitive to the growing use of social media to connect people with service opportunities, and continue to find ways to decrease administrative burdens on grantees.

Mr. Solomont reported that the Board and Corporation staff worked successfully with the President Elect's Agency Review Team - including Deb Jospin, Shirley Sagawa, and Michael Camunez - prior to the commencement of the new administration, and expressed that President Obama has made a commitment to making national service an important part of his agenda. He reported that the Corporation had collaborated beneficially with the Presidential Inaugural Committee around Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service to mobilize people to serve.

Mr. Solomont gave a summary of the topics covered in the Board's Retreat, including the Corporation's budget for 2009 and 2010, the impact of the economy on the national service field, pending national service legislation in both the House and Senate, the implementation of possible program expansions, and updates provided by Gerald Walpin, Inspector General, and Kelly Daly, President of the Union. The Board appointed an ad hoc Committee to begin working with the staff on a new strategic plan for 2011-2015, including Mr. Solomont, Eric Tanenblatt, Laysha Ward, and Hyepin Im.

## **Welcome to New Board Member and Honoring Departing Board Member**

Mr. Solomont administered the oath of office for new Board member Hyepin Im. Mr. Solomont offered a resolution recognizing the contributions of departing Board member Vince Juaristi (Resolution 2009-05). The resolution was approved by acclamation.

## **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

Mr. Solomont moved to adopt the minutes of the September 16, 2008 Board meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

## **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Acting CEO Nicola Goren expressed her sorrow at the recent deaths of New Jersey State Director, Gloria Sokolowski, and Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity, and

remarked on their significant contributions to national and community service.

Ms. Goren reported that the Corporation's work with the President Elect's Agency Review Team had been productive. The Corporation is now focused on staffing, succession, preparing for the incoming administration, budget planning for 2009 and 2010, and pending economic stimulus legislation. Ms. Goren thanked the Board, the staff, and the field for their combined efforts to make the 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service the most successful ever. She noted that the incoming President's call to service and the conjunction of MLK Day with Inauguration weekend contributed to the magnitude of the response from volunteers that day, and expressed her aspiration that the momentum captured on MLK Day will continue throughout the year. She shared a video with the audience on some highlights of MLK Day.

In regards to the transition and staffing, Ms. Goren reported that 10 of the Corporation's discretionary staff left in the two months before the end of the last Administration, and several more are soon to depart. There has not been an announcement of a new CEO. Ms. Goren noted that the new Administration may send staff over in the short term, perhaps prior to the naming of a new CEO.

Ms. Goren noted the agency's ongoing focus on internal management to address several management issues that have arisen through discussions with the agency's Appropriators as well as several others, including: ensuring appropriate staffing for current operations and in the case of an expansion; budget planning and formulation, as well as having tools to monitor the budget, keep track of members, and measure impact; ensuring that the agency has the IT infrastructure in place to manage business operations, run grant competitions, award and monitor grants, recruit members, and maintain budgets; and managing programs through an expansion. She has assembled a team of staff to work on positioning the agency for a possible expansion.

Ms. Goren reported that the agency's conversations with the new White House have thus far been open, collaborative, and positive. The new Administration is focusing on transparency in all areas, and in measuring impact. The Corporation will be examining how to measure the value that the Corporation's resources, programs, members, and volunteers add in the communities in which they operate to address the needs the nation is facing – particularly in the context of the current economic crisis and the possible availability of stimulus funds for Corporation programs.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service**

Mr. Solomont commended the Board and the Corporation for their work in collaborating with and engaging the private sector around MLK Day. He thanked Steve Goldsmith for his work with Facebook and Laysha Ward for her work with Target. Ms. Ward offered a resolution in honor of the 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service (Resolution 2009-03). The Resolution was approved by acclamation.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Management, Audit, and Governance Committee**

Eric Tanenblatt reported that the Committee has held two meetings in the last two months, during which staff provided the Committee with updates on the Corporation's annual financial audit and semiannual report, the budget, the development of a management action plan, staffing and resource challenges, technology issues, the strategic plan, staffing through the transition, and the impact of the economy on the field. The Corporation received a clean opinion on its annual financial statement audit with no compliance findings; one significant internal control deficiency related to the Corporation's business continuity controls over information technology has been resolved through the Oracle upgrade to 10g. In regards to the impact of the economy, he reported that the Committee has been speaking with the Corporation about what the agency can do to alleviate some of the burden grantees are currently experiencing.

Mr. Tanenblatt reported that, at the request of the Board, the Corporation has eliminated a backlog of overdue management decisions, issued a fraud policy, and finalized several open questions from the Inspector General. The Corporation has been operating under a Continuing Resolution in 2009, resulting in constrained spending levels; the MAG Committee has asked the Corporation to keep them apprised of the impact of the spending levels. The Corporation's FY 2010 budget will be announced as part of President Obama's budget request. Both the House's and Senate's stimulus packages currently being debated in Congress include funding for the Corporation; during the retreat the Board heard from staff on the development of implementation plans should either stimulus bill pass. On the topic of internal management, Mr. Tanenblatt reported that Amy Mack will be preparing a management action plan to address a number of management issues in anticipation of a potential agency expansion.

The Committee continues to focus on technology issues, with particular focus on two items: (1) a managed services contract, proposals for which are due in March; and (2) the next release of the My AmeriCorps portal, which will be of critical importance as the Corporation envisions significant program expansions. The Board has asked the Corporation to begin work on the plan immediately with input from the ad hoc Strategic Plan Committee, which includes representatives from each of the Board's standing committees. Completion of the updated plan is scheduled for the end of the summer.

### **Program and Evaluation Committee**

Jim Palmer noted that the 2009 National Conference, which will be held on June 22-24 in San Francisco, CA, will be reformatted in light of the nation's current economic condition to focus on the use of service as a solution to community problems as well as specific skills conference attendees can apply to their own programs. The Committee has discussed Board involvement in promoting and participating in the conference, and suggesting possible speakers.

Mr. Palmer announced that the Committee is delaying the approval of annual program plans for three reasons: (1) a new strategic plan will be developed with the incoming administration; (2) there will soon be new administration priorities; and (3) as of yet, there is no annual budget. Annual plans for 2010 will be approved at the May Board meeting.

The Committee discussed proposed legislation to expand AmeriCorps, including the Serve

America Act, and the capacity of CNCS and the field to handle an expansion and possible constraints to that expansion. The Committee also reviewed ways in which the AmeriCorps program could be simplified, including changes to timekeeping requirements and the merits of fixed-amount grants.

Mr. Palmer reported that the Corporation has held calls with Learn and Serve, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps National, and State Commission grantees to give them an opportunity to share how the economy is impacting their ability to run national service programs and to make suggestions on how the Corporation could alleviate some of the pressure. As a follow-up, the Board has invited members of the grantee community to discuss the impact of the economy at today's meeting. Mr. Palmer noted that the Research and Policy Development office has provided the Committee with updates on ongoing studies and data collections, including the 2008 national volunteering data, the longitudinal study of programs using the Youthcorps model, the American Customer Satisfaction Index, and an evaluation of the impact of service-learning.

### **Strategic Partnerships Committee**

Vince Juaristi reported that in the Committee's recent meeting they had discussed the Corporation's successful collaborations surrounding the MLK Day of Service, including integrating efforts with the Presidential Inaugural Committee, the King Center, and others. In planning for the National Conference, the Committee has discussed focusing the message of the conference on the nation's current economic challenges and how nonprofits have been affected.

Mr. Juaristi reported on the Committee's discussion on technology, including working with the new administration to support a new portal that helps harness the public's response to the President's call to service. Mr. Juaristi suggested that the Board form a new committee or sub-committee focused primarily on the development and implementation of technology advancements, particularly in light of the possible expansion of the Corporation's programs.

The Committee discussed the Billion + Change initiative, including Capital One's recent pledge to substantially increase its commitment to pro bono service to nonprofits over the next three years. Mr. Juaristi noted that the Corporation is exploring ways to find a loaned executive or recent retiree with experience in corporate social responsibility to advise the Corporation on how to better use skilled volunteers for pro bono services. The Committee also discussed the Corporation's plans to award a strategic communication and a creative marketing contract in the Spring; a request for proposals was released in 2008 and there has already been a strong showing of interest. Mr. Juaristi thanked Stan Soloway for his assistance in this matter.

Mr. Juaristi thanked staff, particularly Jonathan Williams and Shannon Maynard, for their support to the Committee.

### **Panel on the Impact of the Economy on Grantees and the Nonprofit Sector**

The Board invited representatives from the Association of State Service Commissions (ASSC), Voices for National Service (Voices), and the State Education Agency K-12 Service Learning

Network (SEANet) to provide public testimony on the status of their constituents in light of reduced private, local, state, and federal resources.

**Bill Basl**, Executive Director of the Washington Commission for National and Community Service, Chair of ASSC, and Vice Chair of Voices for National Service, spoke on behalf of ASSC and Voices. Mr. Basl recalled a 2009 report prepared by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities showing that 45 states are facing a deficit in 2009 or will face one in 2010. All but a few states are facing challenges in balancing their budgets and finding remedies while revenue collections continue to go down as citizens spend less. An ASSC survey last year revealed that 73% of Commissions indicated that funding and finding match was their biggest challenge; Mr. Basl predicted this figure will increase when ASSC conducts the same survey in 2009.

Mr. Basl interpreted the intent of match requirements as a means of showing local investment in and commitment to the service programs. He expressed his sense that match has become a strictly financial calculation, while state and local discretionary funding from other Federal agencies has become unavailable as a source of match to Corporation grants partly as a result of the ban on grants to Federal agencies. Mr. Basl made four suggestions for how the Board and the Corporation could assist State Commissions. First, he recommended that the Corporation redefine match to capture community contributions and commitment in non-monetary means as well as financially. He offered as examples of community contributions evidence that the community is serious about supporting a program, supervising AmeriCorps members, providing a place to serve, and showing outcomes. Mr. Soloway and Mr. Juaristi asked for clarification on how community contributions could be measured in a non-monetary way, and how that commitment could be maintained or increased. Second, he recommended eliminating or freezing the progressive match requirement. Third, he recommended that the Corporation absorb more of the hard costs of running an AmeriCorps program, such as the costs of the living allowance and health insurance, similar to the way the Corporation handles VISTAs. Lastly, he recommended that the Corporation collaborate with other Federal agencies receiving stimulus dollars in order to use AmeriCorps members to help carry out national service programs whose missions align with those of the other agencies. For example, he pointed to the Department of the Interior's work in the national parks as a place where AmeriCorps members could be used. He reported that he has encouraged governors to request language in the stimulus bill to enable other Federal agencies to use their funds as match for national service grants. He identified a need for an interagency liaison to help build relationships between agencies.

Mr. Solomont noted that national service funding did not appear to have been identified as a priority by States when Governors approached Congress for assistance, and identified a need to engage state governments and governors more to demonstrate national service's ability to address critical needs. He expressed an interest in exploring relationships with other Federal agencies. Mr. Goldsmith noted that these relationships could be developed through the White House.

**Kristen Henry**, Executive Director of Serve D.C., spoke on behalf of SEANet. Ms. Henry reported that most school districts are dealing with cutbacks in staff, travel, program budgets, as well as a lack of incentives for professional development and poor partner retention. She recommended that the Corporation ensure adequate communication and guidance on how to

navigate challenges meeting match requirements with less available local support. She noted that any flexibility and support for professional development of teachers would go a long way towards sustaining learn and serve programs. She suggested that school and community partners be included in all discussions regarding the grants, matching funds, and judicious use of federal dollars, and recommended that the Corporation assist grantees in holding forums with their partners around the use of funds and match issues. She suggested that the Corporation increase baseline funding for formula grants to at least \$250,000; at least 13 states at present receive less than \$100,000, and some small states opt not to take the funds rather than take on administrative functions for such small grants. She recommended that the Corporation increase funding for professional development, lift the 20% cap on planning and capacity building, sustain efforts of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, and continue exploring ways to collaborate with the Department of Education. Ms. Henry identified the top priority areas for funding in Learn and Serve are building infrastructure, professional development, and using research and evaluation to demonstrate the impact of service-learning. She noted that documentation and monitoring can be burdensome without additional administrative support.

The Board has asked the Corporation to investigate strategies for how it can temporarily mitigate burden on sponsors and grantees. Mr. Solomont offered a resolution acknowledging and demonstrating the Board's commitment to finding ways to support grantees who have been impacted by the nation's economic challenges (Resolution 2009-04). The resolution was approved by acclamation.

### **Public Comment**

Vince Meldrum from Earth Force offered comments on the challenges facing community-based service learning grantees, including raising match when private donations are down.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.