

**Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
February 3, 2010
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., EST**

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

Stephen Goldsmith, Interim Chair
Julie Fisher Cummings
Mark Gearan
Hyepin Im

Jim Palmer
Stan Soloway
Eric Tanenblatt
Laysha Ward

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held Sept. 16, 2009. (Transcript, 10).

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Steve Goldsmith, Interim Chairman for the Board of Directors, opened the meeting by giving an overview of the Corporation's accomplishments in fiscal year 2009, including funding through the Recovery Act, the bipartisan passage of the Serve America Act, and President Obama's focus on national service. He expressed to the staff that the Board is sensitive to the increased workload resulting from this growth, and commended their proficiency in responding to these demands, producing substantial new service opportunities for Americans, including efficiently allocating extra AmeriCorps members under the Recovery Act.

Mr. Goldsmith praised Nicola Goren's accomplishments as Acting CEO during an unexpectedly lengthy and challenging transition. Mr. Goldsmith lauded Robert Grimm, Director of Research and Policy Development for CNCS, for his role in increasing the professionalism and notoriety of the Corporation's research and publications, which have been acclaimed in academic communities and have affected the programmatic direction of the agency. Mr. Grimm recently accepted a position to establish a Center on Philanthropy at the University of Maryland.

Mr. Goldsmith highlighted some challenges for the Corporation in the coming year, including: layering on additional work when staff and technology resources are already stressed; managing additional scrutiny on accountability and performance; demonstrating results in a more focused manner both on the community served and the national service participant; developing performance goals for grantees that are realistic, measurable, and connected to national priorities; and maintaining an efficient grants process during an expansion.

With regard to the Corporation's strategic plan, covered in more detail in the Program and Evaluation Committee update, Mr. Goldsmith noted that the Board has become more involved in planning than in the past, helping to guide the work of the agency in a substantial way. The Board has also discussed how the Corporation is managed, and ways management can be improved to prepare for future challenges – including implementing new programs authorized in the Serve America Act and facilitating a response to the President's Call to Service - in a way that will be fulfilling for Corporation staff.

Mr. Goldsmith reported that he was encouraged by the Volunteering in America Report's finding that service in America has gone up, despite the nation's current economic situation, but would like for the number to be even higher. He noted on behalf of the Board and CNCS that CNCS's responsibility is broader than expanding opportunities for participants in Corporation-funded programs: CNCS seeks to increase service opportunities for all Americans, and to support an American tradition of service.

Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Mr. Goldsmith moved to adopt the minutes of the September 16, 2009 Board meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Acting CEO Nicola Goren provided an overview of the Corporation's activities in 2009, including directing Recovery Act resources into communities, the passage of the Serve America Act, the most successful national service conference in history, the launch of United We Serve and Serve.gov, and the approval of a historic budget at the end of the last calendar year. She predicted more success and progress going forward with the strong leadership of President Obama, and bipartisan support from Congress.

She reviewed some of CNCS's activities since the September Board meeting. CNCS played a central role in supporting the first official September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, marking the end of the United We Serve summer campaign with a day of service projects in all 50 states such as food drives, home repairs, neighborhood cleanups, disaster preparation, and supporting veteran soldiers and first responders. On that same day, a coalition of mayors led by New York Mayor Bloomberg, launched "Cities of Service," an effort to find innovative ways to harness the power of volunteers to address local challenges.

On Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service the President and First Lady, a record number of Cabinet Secretaries, members of Congress, governors, mayors, civil rights leaders, and celebrities – many of whom had been designated as "Day of Service Ambassadors" - served alongside Americans at over 10,000 projects in all 50 states. CNCS developed a robust online campaign using a variety of social media outlets to promote participation, and received extensive media coverage reaching more than 100 million Americans.

The FY 2010 Budget, signed by the President at the end of 2009, provides \$1.149 billion for CNCS and its programs – the greatest increase and largest budget in CNCS history, and fully funds the President's request, enabling CNCS to move forward with implementation of the Serve America Act. The President has requested \$1.4 billion for CNCS in 2011, a testament to the Administration's support for national service and an affirmation of the quality of work being done in this field.

In October, 2009, Patrick Corvington was nominated by President Obama to be the next CEO of CNCS. While this confirmation is still pending, CNCS is working to support a speedy confirmation and a smooth transition for Mr. Corvington.

Looking forward, Ms. Goren noted that the economic downturn continues to cause hardship for Americans and non-profits are facing increasing demands with decreasing resources. Volunteering and service is on the rise, with over 1.5 million Americans reported to have volunteered last year, and AmeriCorps applications three times higher than in previous years. Social entrepreneurs are redefining service, and technology is providing new ways for citizens to engage and connect. She noted that national recovery could not be done by the government alone, and that CNCS must play a role in renewing America's spirit of voluntary service, innovation, and local initiative – elements that help sustain communities in difficult times, and help bring service to scale to achieve national priorities. She highlighted three focus areas for CNCS in 2010: (1) building on a momentum of the Administration's successes in 2009; (2) boosting the President's goal of increasing service and volunteering among all Americans; and

(3) positioning the Corporation for expansion moving forward.

Ms. Goren thanked CNCS staff and management – particularly those staff serving in acting roles - for their skill, dedication, and grace through a challenging year and an unexpectedly long transition period. She expressed gratitude to the Board for their leadership and support through the transition, particularly thanking Mr. Goldsmith for his leadership as Interim Chair over the past few months.

Committee Reports

Oversight, Governance, and Audit Committee (OGA)

Eric Tanenblatt, Chair of the OGA Committee, gave an overview of the Committee's recent meeting, including a discussion of the seven vacant Board positions and ways to ease the transition and orientation of new Board members once they are nominated and confirmed. The Committee also discussed the status of Mr. Corvington's nomination as CEO, which has cleared the HELP Committee and is pending before the full Senate. The Committee discussed the timeframe for putting in place an annual performance review of the CEO, as directed by the Serve America Act.

The Committee heard a report from the CEO on the Management Action Plan, which is on track, and discussed the outside review of CNCS's management and organizational structure by Accenture, as well as how CNCS can better meet stakeholder needs and achieve our strategic priorities. The Committee was briefed by Deputy CFO Bill Anderson, who reported that CNCS received a clean opinion on the agency's financial statement audit for the 10th consecutive year. The audit identified no material weakness, significant deficiency, reportable condition, or compliance issue. Mr. Anderson reported to the Committee that a separate management review identified 16 lower level items at CNCS, which have been incorporated into the corrective action plan overseen by the Senior Assessment Team. The Committee also learned from Mr. Anderson that there has been progress in addressing several program issues identified in the OIG's most recent semiannual report, and was briefed on several other ongoing matters that have received the attention of the OIG.

The agency's financial metrics show that the majority are green, a small number are yellow, and one is category red at the year's end. The red metric is the percentage of late payments on individually-billed travel card accounts. Management is following up on those specific matters, which in the aggregate are relatively modest in amount. In the near future, many payments will be made directly to vendors, substantially reducing the amount of funds flowing through employees.

With regard to Information Technology, CIO Mary Cadagin reported to the Committee that the conversion to offsite data management is progressing well. The Committee also heard a report from Acting Inspector General Ken Bach on several matters, including that the OIG has completed its investigative report concerning a public outreach call conducted last August; the report found no violation of law or policy, but recommends that the agency adopt a more robust policy regarding supervising temporary employees. Mr. Bach also reported to the Committee

that the Information Security evaluation was positive. Acting Deputy IG Bob Walters reported to the Committee on work involving the 2009 Recovery Act grants, specifically fraud awareness briefings and reviews of grantee accounting systems being conducted by OIG teams.

Program, Budget, and Evaluation Committee (PBE)

Stan Soloway, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee has been focusing on three areas in recent months: (1) the Budget; (2) Serve America Act implementation; and (3) the next Strategic Plan for the agency.

With regard to the Budget, Mr. Soloway noted that the Administration's budget request is a demonstration of its support and enthusiasm for national service, as well as a testament to the dedication and delivery of results by CNCS and the national service field.

Mr. Soloway reported that the Committee has been working with staff to ensure effective implementation of the Serve America Act. In recent months, a draft NOFA for the newly-authorized Social Innovation Fund was published, the AmeriCorps NOFA was closed, and the NOFA for 2010 RSVP funds – which included some new competition rules and procedures – was released. In the coming weeks, CNCS expects to publish a final SIF NOFA, a NOFA for the newly-authorized Volunteer Generation Fund, and a proposed rule implementing changes to the National Service Trust directed under the Serve America Act.

The Committee is in the process of revising the agency's Strategic Plan. The Committee has discussed a draft mission statement, some strategic goals, and guiding principles. The Committee has engaged the full Board on Strategic Plan discussions, including at a full day retreat in November and during the Board retreat yesterday. The Committee is working on identifying and defining those focus areas that will guide grantmaking and performance measurement for CNCS in the coming years, in large part based on focus areas defined in the Serve America Act. The Committee expects to have a document ready for staff and public comment in time for the May Board meeting, and plans to take advantage of the National Conference to hold public hearings and discussions on the strategic plan.

Once the Strategic Plan has been developed, the Committee will work with the Office of Research and Policy Development on an evaluation plan for the agency. In addition to the Volunteering in America study and other customer service surveys in the coming years, RPD will focus on in-depth studies of CNCS's programs.

Mr. Soloway thanked CNCS staff that support the Committee's work, including Kristin McSwain, Angela Roberts, Susannah Washburn, Emily Samose, and Bob Grimm.

External Relations Committee (ER)

Laysha Ward, ER Committee Chair, reported that the Committee has been focusing on building and managing stakeholder relationships, developing resources through strategic partnerships, enhancing communication efforts through branding, marketing, and information dissemination, and promoting strategic initiatives.

Ms. Ward echoed Ms. Goren's comments on MLK Day, adding that CNCS is the lead agency to execute MLK Day, and has witnessed a growth in involvement each year. From the perspective of the Committee and its goal of developing relationships with stakeholders, she described the event as a springboard to garner support of national service and amplify the voice and impact of CNCS activities. She reported that the CNCS communications team was able to generate more than 14,000 broadcast stories and 300 print articles covered by USA Today, MSNBC, the Washington Post, and others, ensuring that the American public and others are hearing the national service story. 2011 will mark the 25th anniversary of MLK Day, and the Committee is planning to maximize that event.

She reported that CNCS continues to innovate and enter into new spaces to tell the national service story, and has been branching out into new uses of social media, including using Twitter and blogs to share messages and engage Americans in service.

With regard to the National Conference, Ms. Ward reported that 2009 was the largest and most successful, and that the Committee hopes to build on that momentum. The 2010 conference will be held in NYC June 28th – 30th. This year's conference will focus on the themes of learning, connecting, and inspiring. There will be a national and local dialogue from leaders across sectors to push the service agenda forward. Additional information can be found on the National Conference website at volunteeringandservice.org; registration will be open by mid-March.

Ms. Ward shared some information on the Cities of Service initiative, which she identified as another opportunity to build relationships with leaders in the communities national service participants are serving. Since the initial inaugural event in New York, the Cities of Service coalition has grown to include more than 80 members. The Rockefeller Foundation has awarded \$2 million in grants to 10 cities, to be announced shortly, to hire Chief Service Officers. She thanked Rhonda Taylor and other staff for their rapid response in joining the Cities of Service initiative and providing leadership and capacity-building support for those cities. CNCS hosted a multi-day training session called "Building Your Blueprint" for the representatives of those mayors' offices to ensure they had the resources and tools so that they were positioned for success in carrying out the initiative. CNCS will continue to assist those cities to help further this initiative.

Ms. Ward thanked the CNCS staff who help support the ER Committee, including Rhoda Glickman, Ranit Schmelzer, Jackie Norris, Peachy Myers, and others, as well as Committee members Hyepin Im and Julie Fisher Cummings.

Adjournment

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.