

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
February 8, 2011
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m., EST

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

Mark Gearan, Chair
Eric Tanenblatt, Vice Chair
Julie Fisher Cummings

Jim Palmer*
Stan Soloway
Laysha Ward*

* Participated by phone.

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board passed Resolution 2011-001 honoring Kristin McSwain (Transcript, 14).

The Board approved the Board minutes from the September 29, 2010 meeting (Transcript, 15).

The Board approved the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan by Resolution 2011-002 (Transcript, 58).

As approved at June 2011 meeting

Chair's Opening Remarks.

Board Chair Mark Gearan opened the meeting by inviting the public to comment at the end of the meeting. Mr. Gearan thanked the members of the Board for their ongoing work, including those members joining by phone who were attending meetings on Capitol Hill that morning, as well as Corporation staff for their public service. He made note of recent events reflecting the importance of service to the country, such as the Martin Luther King Day of Service and the passing of Robert Sargent Shriver. He thanked Chief Executive Officer Patrick Corvington, as his first anniversary as CEO approaches, for his leadership in advancing the importance of the Corporation's mission.

Mr. Gearan gave an overview of the important progress in national service over the prior year and a half, including the signing of the bipartisan-supported Serve America Act in April of 2009 with its focus on results and accountability, and the collaborative strategic planning process, with important input from the field, Corporation staff, and the Board led by Stan Soloway.

Mr. Gearan gave an overview of the constrained federal budget environment, and noted the importance of the Corporation's continued success in maintaining public faith in the Corporation's responsible stewardship of federal resources, and in demonstrating the results of service. He quoted from an opinion editorial in the New York Times by David Brooks about the best way to measure government success, expressing that the Corporation has succeeded in transforming lives and families and serving communities.

Mr. Gearan reported on his attendance at the first meeting of the White House Council for Community Solutions, with Susannah Washburn from the Corporation serving as Executive Director. Among others staffing the Council, the First Lady serves as Honorary Chair and Patty Stonesifer serves as Chair. The Council focuses on the issue of disconnected youth between the ages of 16 and 24 and what communities can do to help. The Corporation will play an important role as the work of the Council proceeds over the next two years.

Honoring Departing Chief of Program Operations

Mr. Gearan announced that Kristin McSwain, Chief of Program Operations at the Corporation, will be leaving the Corporation for a position as Executive Director of the Boston Opportunity Agenda. He praised her service at the Corporation, including her early role as Director of AmeriCorps, and offered a resolution in her honor. (Resolution 2011-001). The resolution was approved by acclamation.

Consideration of Prior Meeting's Minutes.

The Board considered and approved by voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held September 29, 2010.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO Patrick Corvington reflected on recent events that demonstrate the way that citizens engage with one another and their communities, including the shootings in Tuscon, Arizona, and the passing of Robert Sargent Shriver, and the role that national service plays in building connections.

Mr. Corvington gave an overview of events and activities since the last Board meeting. The Corporation has worked on the development of a strategic plan, which will be considered by the Board in the meeting today. MLK Day of Service 2011 was a success, with a “Luminaries” video featuring people such as Senator Harris Wofford, Rep. John Lewis, and Dr. Joseph Lowery, that received over 300,000 views on CNCS’s website, an MLK web page that received over 60,000 visits, more than 13,000 projects nationwide, and active engagement from the Board and other members of the current administration.

The Corporation recently co-hosted the first National Mentoring Summit, which emphasized the role mentoring plays in the lives of young children, and the role service plays in making mentoring successful. Many people participated in the event, including the First Lady as keynote speaker, and Attorney General Eric Holder, Secretary Arne Duncan, Secretary Katherine Sebelius, and Josh DuBois from the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives served on a panel. Mr. Corvington described the event as a milestone in implementing the Serve America Act, and thanked departing CPO Kristin McSwain for her leadership in implementing the Act.

Mr. Corvington remarked that in an austere budget environment and in a time when it is important to be able to demonstrate the importance of national service, the national service field faces the secondary challenge of being humble about its successes in using service as a solution. He expressed the commitment of the Corporation to show the impact of national and community service and to enhance accountability and demonstrate good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Corvington reported that the work the agency has done in its strategic planning process as guided by the Serve America Act provides an opportunity to think about strategies for service focus areas. He thanked the Corporation’s staff, including Chief Strategy Officer Heather Peeler, for their work in the strategic planning process. He noted that the strategic plan, once approved by the Board, will serve as a map forward, but be adjusted and modified as needed.

Committee Reports

External Relations Committee

Laysha Ward, Committee Chair, reported that the MLK Day of Service 2011 was a success, with an estimated 13,000 projects, events in all 50 states, ranging from as small as 10 volunteers to 75,000 people volunteering in 1,200 projects in Philadelphia, PA. President Obama and his family participated in a service event for the third consecutive year, as did Vice President Biden and 11 agency and office heads. CNCS developed guides for designing

and implementing projects for each of the strategic focus areas. She shared some of the key messages of MLK Day of Service, that it should be a “day on and not a day off,” to use MLK Day as a springboard for service the rest of the year, and that service is a solution to community problems. She spoke about the important role of social media in the success of MLK Day, including 375 print and online articles this year, record numbers of visitors to the MLKDay.gov website, a fourfold increase in the number of Facebook fans, and more than 230,000 views of the anniversary video.

She reported on new initiatives this year. 2011 marked the inaugural year for “Drum Majors for Service,” an opportunity for organizations, including faith-based organizations, to use the opportunity of MLK Day of Service to recognize an outstanding volunteer by awarding the President’s Volunteer Service Award. More than 600 awards were given at ceremonies across the country. In honor of the 25th anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, the Corporation launched the MLK 25 Challenge, an initiative designed to encourage Americans to commit to 25 acts of service throughout the year, beginning on MLK Day.

Ms. Ward reported that Mr. Corvington volunteered on MLK Day of Service in Atlanta with Eric Tanenblatt, and that all Board members had participated in a service event that day. She invited the other Board members to reflect on their service. Stan Soloway shared his experiences volunteering at Stuart-Hobson Middle School alongside the First Family, including meeting children and their mentors from the Greater DC Cares program, as well as from the Kennedy Center program that evening featuring Dr. Joseph Lowery. Julie Fisher Cummings reported on her experience volunteering at a middle school in the Anacostia neighborhood alongside Director of AmeriCorps John Gomperts, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and numerous City Year AmeriCorps members. Eric Tanenblatt reported on his experience putting together food packages for families for Second Harvest alongside Mr. Corvington.

Ms. Ward provided an update on the 2011 National Conference on Volunteering and Service, scheduled for June 6-8 in New Orleans, LA. She reported that the three goals of the conference are to provide a forum for strong cross-sector conversations on confronting social issues through service and innovation, to empower national service leaders and cities to build their skills and share ideas, and to foster a deep connection and strong network in the national service field.

Ms. Ward spoke about the Corporation’s focus on communicating its value, maintaining effectiveness, including through engaging more citizens in service to address the challenges of local communities. The External Relations Committee has and will continue to work on the development of communication that best articulates the value of national service.

Oversight, Governance, and Audit Committee Report

Eric Tanenblatt, Committee Chair, reported on the Committee’s meeting on January 6, 2011. At this meeting, the Committee was briefed on the status of filling key senior positions including the Chief Communications Officer and General Counsel. The Committee

also discussed the CEO review, required by law to be conducted by the Board and reported to the President, and a timeline for the review. Board members have received an assessment from the CEO that they will review and discuss during the Board's retreat. The Committee was also briefed on the proposed management goals for the Strategic Plan, including proposed performance measures reflecting objectives in the areas of human capital, grants management, and information technology – areas within the OGA Committee's purview.

Mr. Tanenblatt reported that the Committee discussed the Continuing Resolution for FY 2011, which has been extended to March 4, 2011, and the Corporation's budget request for 2012. The Committee was briefed on the Corporation's financial statement audit, clean for the 11th year in a row. There were two significant deficiencies identified in internal controls with fund balance, and information technology; the Corporation is on track to resolve these issues.

Mr. Tanenblatt reported that the Committee was briefed on the provision for freezing statutory pay adjustments for all executive branch pay schedules for the next two years, as announced by the President. The Committee has requested advance notice for proposed performance award guidelines. The Committee was briefed on the electronic performance review system, which moves towards a paperless environment for performance management. Additionally, the Committee received updates on the organizational structure including the completion of the strategy office and the establishment of the department of the Chief Operating Officer, led by COO Robert Velasco, II.

Mr. Tanenblatt reported that the Committee discussed information technology progress based on reviews of new metrics, including the progress of the management services contract. The Committee discussed the MyAmeriCorps portal security issues, and will provide an update in response to the October notification letters on the vulnerabilities of that system. Approximately 20,000 individuals, less than 5 percent of those potentially affected, registered for the credit monitoring services. About 1 percent of affected individuals contacted the help desk. The Committee was briefed on the Corporation's continued efforts to make contact with those potentially affected individuals with whom initial efforts to make contact were unsuccessful. The vulnerability testing on systems is near completion with final analysis concluded in late February. To date, no new vulnerabilities have been reported.

Mr. Tanenblatt reported that the Committee was briefed on a new contract to consolidate the e-grants and member helpdesks for greater efficiency. The consolidated helpdesk was scheduled to be operational as of the end of January. The Committee also received a report from Acting Inspector General Ken Bach, who briefed the Committee on the audit of grants to American Samoa.

Program, Budget, and Evaluation Committee

Stan Soloway, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee has been working closely with the Corporation on both the current and future year budgets. The Committee has also

reviewed the agency's draft evaluation plan and the annual plans for funding the AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and Social Innovation Fund grant competitions. The Board approved those plans by notational ballot.

Mr. Stoloway gave an overview of the proposed Strategic Plan. The Plan has four key goals: increase the impact of national service on community needs; strengthen national service so that national service participants consistently find satisfaction, meaning, and opportunity; maximize the value the Corporation adds to grantees, partners, and participants; and fortify management operations and sustain a capable, responsible, and accountable organization. Mr. Soloway described each goal in greater detail.

Mr. Soloway remarked that some key elements of the Plan will need to be flexible to meet the realities of the budget environment. The Plan focuses on key priorities and provides a rigorous set of performance measures that the Corporation can use to effectively demonstrate its return on investment and the important leveraging capacity that it provides.

Mr. Tanenblatt expressed on behalf of the OGA Committee his approval of the inclusion of information technology systems and financial management oversight in the Plan. He expressed his belief in the value of local community input, and shared his experience meeting with elected officials, including Rep. John Boehner, in Hamilton, Ohio, at a Strategic Plan listening session. He acknowledged governors, including Gov. Nathan Deal of Georgia, Gov. Sam Brownback of Kansas, and Gov. Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, for incorporating service in their inaugural celebrations, demonstrating commitment at the local level for service.

Ms. Ward noted the significance of the Plan's comprehensive set of performance measures to guide the agency's work, including specific measures in each focus area. The Board discussed the targets for specific metrics, which will be a phased-in process as the Corporation and the field develop capacity and competency around the kinds of measures needed and as data management systems improve. The Corporation is working on these targets with a plan to produce an addendum to the Plan in June, 2011, with specific targets and a calendar for implementing those targets. The Board discussed the relative ease and challenge of identifying targets depending on the focus area in question.

Ms. Fisher Cummings shared her perspective on the collaborative process that went into developing the Plan, including her participation in the listening sessions in Detroit and Flint, Michigan and her conversations with local elected officials about how service can be used to solve local problems. She remarked on the need to reach out to these individuals to inform them of national service resources. She talked about the Council of Michigan Foundations, the important role of foundations in supporting national service programs, the need to inform these groups about national service, and the important acknowledgement in the Plan that success in national service cannot be achieved by the government alone.

Mr. Gearan talked about the role of schools, colleges, and universities in the civic engagement of students in relation to Goal 2 on participant experience and expanding opportunities to serve, and the longterm benefits of student civic engagement.

Mr. Gearan offered a resolution to approve the Strategic Plan (Resolution 2011-002). The Board approved the Plan by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Gearan addressed the formation, implementation, and continuous improvement of the Plan, including future annual updates.

Public Comment

David Quackenbush, Chairman of the Community HealthCorps Steering Committee, submitted written comments in advance of the meeting. (Attachment 1).

Closing Remarks.

Mr. Gearan went over the Board's plans for its retreat. He reported that many schools host service events on and around MLK Day, and used tools and materials provided by the Corporation. He gave an overview of upcoming events and activities, including the National Conference in June, the 2011 and 2012 budgets, and implementation of the Strategic Plan. Mr. Gearan extended his sympathy on behalf of the Board to Corporation staff members Marco Davis and Debra Cooper on their recent losses.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.