

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
June 29, 2011
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., EST

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

Mark Gearan, Chair

Jim Palmer

Eric Tanenblatt, Vice Chair

Stan Soloway

Julie Fisher Cummings*

Laysha Ward*

*Participated by phone.

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 staff of the Corporation, including those joining by phone, for the really extraordinary efforts over the past several months. Speaking for all the Board members, Mr. Gearan noted the clear record of accomplishment and the commitment that members of the staff not only in the Headquarters but across the country clearly demonstrated. Mr. Gearan specifically noted the new strategic plan, the national conference, all of the good work and the various streams of service around the country that very visibly brought to the forefront through the floods and tornadoes and other national disasters and the great quantity of good service work that was observed by all.

Mr. Gearan also thanked the former CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Mr. Patrick Corvington, for his record of service and accomplishment, including putting in a strong leadership team, putting in place a very effective strategic plan, and forging important new partnerships that will serve the Corporation very well into the future. He also welcomed President

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Obama's designation of Robert Velasco as the acting CEO. He noted that Mr. Velasco comes to the job with a wonderful record of accomplishment in the federal government and that he is the right person at the right time. During Mr. Velasco's first week he participated in the National Conference in New Orleans, and during his first month he was thrust into the national spotlight with 14 speaking engagements and on Capitol Hill he has had over 30 meetings with congressional staff and members, including testifying before Congress, in an oversight hearing that was the first such hearing the Corporation has had in six years.

Mr. Gearan gave an overview of the success of the National Conference and what a valuable effort the Conference played in promoting the work of the Corporation, highlighting the work in concert with partners around the country, and exhibiting the energy and spirit that typifies the importance of our work and the sacrifice that everyone makes to ensure that the Conference becomes a very pivotal moment. Mr. Gearan also noted that at the February 2011 meeting the Board unanimously approved the Agency's strategic plan. Mr. Gearan believes that national service will have its greatest impact if we target resources to some of the critical problems facing society and that we must carefully measure our progress. He is pleased that the Corporation staff is making notable progress on refining the performance measures, which is a key aspect of the strategic plan.

Mr. Gearan commented on the budget environment. He noted that the 2011 budget was an intense period of negotiations, and that the cuts, totaling \$75 million, included some painful changes. The cuts to RSVP and Learn and Serve are painful and visible because we know of the quality of the programs and the need in the communities that they serve. On the other hand, it is good news that the Corporation did receive 94 percent of its funding request, which compares favorably across the federal landscape, and is a testament to the hard work of our staff, the quality of our programs and the success of all of our streams of service. We need to be keenly focused on guidance from Congress and the President

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around accountability and provide the kind of oversight and stewardship of the Agency that will position the Corporation well for future budget requests. The Corporation has a highly decentralized structure for national service, but accountability is everyone's responsibility. The members of Congress feel this sense of responsibility and have expressed both praise for the value of our programs but also emphasized the importance of this heightened and ensured accountability for all the CNCS programs.

Mr. Gearan also commented that at the National Conference he heard from many grantees and stakeholders in the field who shared this culture of accountability and continuous improvement. All of those people were proud of what the Corporation was doing and the difference that the Corporation was making. He also was reminded at the Conference of the importance of the narrative. The powerful impact of national service is best felt by stories and testimonials that describe the clear difference that the service work is having on individuals and communities.

Consideration of Prior Meeting's Minutes

The Board considered and approved by voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held February 8, 2011.

Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report

Acting CEO Robert Velasco thanked the Board for their great support during his first month as Acting CEO. He reported that as a result of the Board's support the Corporation was stable, strong, and poised for greater success in the months ahead. Since the last Board meeting, the Corporation had made important progress on a number of fronts to take national service to the next level of innovation and impact. Mr. Velasco announced that two employees of the Corporation will be assuming new roles. Kim Mansaray was named the acting Chief Operating Officer and Idara Nickelson has assumed the role of acting Chief of Program Operations. Also, the former Pennsylvania State Director, Mary

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Strasser, has joined the Headquarters as the new Director of AmeriCorps VISTA, and Kate Rafferty is the new Director of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). Valerie Green, a former special assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel, has joined the Corporation as the General Counsel.

Mr. Velasco thanked the Points of Light Foundation and Michelle Nunn, as well as Board, staff, and program partners for making this year's Conference a resounding success. Mr. Velasco pointed out that during the Conference the Corporation announced the results of the 2011 AmeriCorps grant competition and the award of \$216 million in AmeriCorps grants to support 50,000 new AmeriCorps members to serve in communities across the country. The grants will strengthen the impact of the more than 300 grantee organizations across the nation that are engaged in tackling the most pressing challenges across the country. More than 180 AmeriCorps members deployed to Joplin, Missouri. The May 22nd tornado there killed more than 150 people and destroyed thousands of structures, leaving residents to find missing family members and immediate shelter. As soon as word came of the devastation, a team of AmeriCorps St. Louis Emergency response team members packed their equipment and drove through the night, arriving in Joplin at 2:30 a.m. The team quickly went to work to set up a missing person's hotline, which opened three hours later. Since then, AmeriCorps members have set up and managed a volunteer reception center, supported the police department with missing persons inquiries, operated the collection and sorting warehouse, removed debris, and managed a large-scale volunteer operation that has registered more than 35,000 volunteers, who have performed more than 230,000 hours of work. Mr. Velasco noted that as of that moment while he was delivering his report, hundreds of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers were providing similar assistance in other disaster zones across the country, including the aftermath of tornadoes in Alabama and Massachusetts, flooding in Vermont, and in the Midwest, and wildfires in Colorado. Mr. Velasco thanked the disaster services unit and saluted Corporation program members and

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volunteers, who are working long hours in very difficult conditions to help families and communities when they need it most.

Mr. Velasco reported that the strategic plan really defines a pivotal moment in CNCS's history, building on the foundation that has developed over the past four decades, and the bipartisan vision of the Serve America Act. The plan focuses the Corporation's efforts on a specific set of outcomes and strengthens our performance measures to ensure that we are meeting our goals. Since the strategic plan was approved by the Board in February, the Corporation has been working diligently to develop and refine a set of performance measures that will guide the Corporation's work for years to come.

Mr. Velasco pointed out that this was a critical time for the Agency and for the national service field. He noted that as social needs continue to mount and as Americans are looking for ways to give back, national service is more important than ever. Washington is taking a closer look at the budget to find ways to cut the deficit and debt. Mr. Velasco stated that while we know that national service is a critical and cost-effective investment in our future, it is vital that we always do our best work, support our field, and demonstrate our impact.

Lastly, Mr. Velasco noted that as acting CEO, his priorities would be the same as those laid out in the strategic plan. This includes increasing the impact of national service on needs in communities served by CNCS-supported programs; strengthening national service so that participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning, and opportunity; maximizing the value we add to grantees, partners, and participants; and lastly, fortifying management operations and sustaining a capable, responsive, and accountable organization. Mr. Velasco remarked that achieving all these goals will require a sustained effort with our national service network. He also stated that another of his priorities was to continue to make the strongest possible case for continuing the federal investment in national service. He said it is important to communicate with our policymakers and put forward our best case. One of the

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key elements of our case is a commitment to accountability. The Corporation has shared with Congress a new monitoring action plan that we believe will help us and our grantees do an even better job of preventing, detecting, and enforcing rules against prohibited activities. Mr. Velasco concluded by thanking the Board for their support and leadership.

Committee Reports

Oversight, Governance, and Audit Committee Report

Eric Tanenblatt, Committee Chair, reported on the Committee's meeting on June 28, 2011. The Committee was briefed on the leadership changes and the reassignment of staff as a result of the changes in Learn and Serve. The Committee was also briefed on the status of Board nominees. The Chief Financial Officer briefed the Committee on the fiscal year 2012 and 2013 budget process as well as on the fiscal 2011 financial audit. All financial work is proceeding on schedule and no issues have been identified to date. The Inspector General briefed the Committee on a number of matters. Ray Limon, the Chief Human Capital Officer, briefed the Committee on some operation metrics and all the metrics were at or above the standard and target number. They also were briefed by the Chief Information Officer Phillip Clark.

The General Counsel, Valerie Green, briefed the Committee on June's Congressional hearing on accountability in national service programs. She also provided information regarding the oversight and monitoring action plan and review of the monitoring protocols utilized by CNCS staff. Mr. Tanenblatt stated that monitoring protocols are a big priority for the Committee and the Board, and that they would be paying close attention to the monitoring action plan as the Corporation moves forward. The Committee also discussed the growing fiscal challenges that the Government is facing. Mr. Tanenblatt said the Committee challenged the staff to continue to look for possible efficiencies throughout the Agency and the Committee would continue to do the same.

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External Relations Committee

Ms. Hyepin Im, a member of the External Relations Committee, reported on behalf of Laysha Ward, the Committee Chair, who was attending the Board meeting via telephone.

Ms. Im stated that the Committee had been working hard on sharing, through the various Committee initiatives and through the communication channels, the unique added value that the Corporation brings to the nation. Ms. Im stated that the 2011 National Conference in New Orleans was a resounding success. Over 4,600 people went to the National Conference from all parts of the country, and over 2,000 were individuals who were connected with the Corporation through our various programs, including AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, and the Social Innovation Fund. Ms. Im commented upon how impressive it was to hear the many speakers at the National Conference comment on the positive impact that the AmeriCorps members made in their communities. She was particularly struck by the comments of the Mayor of New Orleans, and found it impressive that the Corporation had the opportunity to engage a lot of different stakeholders to promote and highlight the work of the Corporation, including the corporate community and the foundation community as well.

Ms. Im invited fellow Board members to share their thoughts and impressions of the National Conference. Mr. Stan Soloway offered that he was impressed by the positive energy of all the attendees at the National Conference. Everyone was about the business of getting to work and everyone was so energized, even knowing the challenges that the Corporation was facing in Washington. Mr. Tanenblatt offered that he found the Conference inspiring. He had the opportunity to see firsthand the work that AmeriCorps members did in New Orleans, and he was impressed by the storytelling throughout the Conference, including by elected officials. He thought the words of Governor Barbour, having experienced the good work of AmeriCorps members in Mississippi after Katrina and some of the other natural disasters, were very inspiring. Mr. Tanenblatt was

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complimentary toward Mayor Landrieu and the First Lady as they both did a spectacular job, as did the Points of Light Institute. Mr. Gearan added that he thought the Conference was perfectly timed, and it was a straightforward approach to discuss leadership, budget issues and generally reminding people of the challenges ahead. Despite the challenges, he did concur that people were rolling up their sleeves and were ready to get to work.

Ms. Im noted the very positive relationship the Corporation has with the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and observed that over 500 religious and faith leaders were in attendance at the pre-conference meeting, and that the meeting was well received. Ms. Im thanked the Corporation staff for all of their work and that such work reflected well on the Corporation and the national service movement. Going forward, she said that the Corporation had asked the Points of Light Institute to take operational responsibility for the National Conference. She envisioned that this would not take away the Corporation's commitment to the Conference as well as sharing valuable information with the field. She was also very excited by the fact that the External Affairs Committee is looking at various concepts of how we can take the message of service and other information out to the field. She noted that the Corporation is continuing to redesign the website and hoped to have that completed by the middle of 2012. The website redesign will provide a better platform on which we can share good news.

Lastly, Ms. Im described two projects that the Corporation will be very involved in. The first is the Let's Read, Let's Move initiative, where the Corporation will be looking at some of the challenges that affect America's youth – childhood obesity and learning loss over the summer. Secondly, this is the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and groups are working hard to change that day, as not a day of grief and fear, but one of transformation and empowerment and of service. The Corporation has great plans to encourage that continuing transformation of 9/11 into a day of remembrance and service. The Serve America Act has designated the

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Corporation to lead those service activities for 9/11. The Corporation is working hard in this area and would ask the Board for their commitment to make this day one that's memorable and that would send a loud message not only to our country but to the world that we are united as a people and we are here to stay.

Program Budget and Evaluation Committee

Mr. Stan Soloway reported on behalf of the Program Budget and Evaluation Committee. Mr. Soloway reported that with the approval of the strategic plan, much of what the Committee has been doing is around implementation and strategic guidance relative to the plan, budget, and program priorities. Mr. Soloway thanked not only the acting CEO for his leadership during this important time, but also the program leaders John Gomperts, Nicole Gallant and Erwin Tan for all of their contributions in determining how the Corporation best meets the challenges that lie ahead. During the National Conference Mr. Soloway was involved in about six sessions where performance and evaluation were either the sole issue or the only issue people wanted to talk about, whether it was on the agenda or not. Mr. Soloway noted that in some cases the field was enthusiastic about measuring and demonstrating what they do and in other cases the field was concerned about the burdens and challenges of tracking many different kinds of measures.

The Committee focused yesterday on the question of training and technical assistance. Mr. Soloway said that the Committee discussed how to optimize the resources to ensure that the Corporation can deliver the accountability needed as a Corporation without overly burdening either the staff or the field. The Committee also discussed making sure the performance measures were the right ones and the correct number of measures. The Committee wants the performance measures to be achievable and balanced.

Public Comment

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Mr. Gearan invited members of the public to address the Board, and there being no one wanting to address the Board, Mr. Gearan moved to closing remarks.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Gearan thanked the Board members for attending and recognized their balance of stewardship and governance.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.