

**Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
October 20, 2011
10:30 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

Laysa Ward

Hyepin Im*

*Participated by phone.

Chair's Opening Remarks.

Board Chairman Mark Gearan opened the meeting by first welcoming everyone present and those who were listening as this was the first time that people would be joining the Board on the Internet via a webcast. Mr. Gearan also invited the public to comment at the end of the meeting and noted that the Board had invited two representatives from Social Innovation Fund intermediaries to make a presentation to the Board about their programs and their accomplishments, and to provide an opportunity for Board members to ask questions. Mr. Gearan thanked the Board members for their expertise, their commitment and for their dedication. He noted the time commitment that being a Board member entailed and thanked them individually for the job he had seen them do. Secondly, Mr. Gearan congratulated the Acting CEO, Mr. Robert Velasco, for his truly outstanding performance.

Thirdly, Mr. Gearan thanked the staff of the Corporation for the phenomenal execution of important programs since the last meeting. Deadlines and Performance Measures had been reached, the National Days of Service had been completed, and the staff had been very supportive of the grantees. Lastly, Mr. Gearan thanked the National Service programs and the participants who continue to do the vital work. Everyone should be proud of what Mr. Gearan believes is the powerful and lasting impact that the programs are having on some of the tough challenges that are facing society and the true difference that we are making.

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Mr. Gearan noted the President's nomination of Wendy Spencer to serve as the CEO of the Corporation. Mr. Gearan called it an inspired choice by the President. The choice reflects well on the Corporation and the critical role that the Agency plays. Ms. Spencer brings 30 years of experience in and around the service movement and people know of her outstanding leadership as CEO of Volunteer Florida. In that capacity Ms. Spencer has been on the national stage as a member of President Bush's Council on Service and Civic Participation. She has chaired the Association of State and Service Commissioners. This nomination shows the maturation of this Agency. It recognizes that by promoting from within someone who will move directly from the national service field and the first State Commission Director to be nominated for this role.

Mr. Gearan also noted that the President had nominated seven very talented individuals to serve as members of the Board of Directors and he expressed hope that the Senate will move forward in confirming them. In the interim he noted that the Serve America Act allows for board members to stay on the Board for a year after their term expires and that Julie Cummings, Stan Soloway and Jim Palmer plan to continue in the role of Board members for another year.

Mr. Gearan commented on the budget environment. He noted that the Corporation is operating under a continuing resolution through November 18, 2011. He also noted that the Senate and House Appropriations Committees have different proposals for fiscal year 2012. He shared his view that he agreed with President Obama that everyone needs to make tough choices within the array of federal government programs and agencies to bring down the deficit but that we cannot cut budgets in a way that would undermine our ability to win the future. One of the critical things in the budget is the investment in national service. Mr. Gearan noted that there are two key things that we can all do amidst the uncertainty over the budget and what could happen in the next several weeks. First, everyone needs to continue to do their best work. Secondly, everyone needs to continue to tell our story, the narrative of national service and the difference that it makes in solving some of the problems that America faces.

Mr. Gearan also commented on the positive conversations at the Board retreat. The Board engaged with staff on leadership transition, the budget, and some of the strategic issues that are impacting the agency. Additionally, the Board received updates from the Inspector General and from the employee union. All of the background information made the Board very confident that the leadership of the Corporation has the ability to execute and go forward with great success.

Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report

Acting CEO Robert Velasco thanked Mark Gearan and the Board for their outstanding leadership, vision and commitment. He noted that the Board is a shining example of what can be done when people work together to get things done. He thanked the Board members for the

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significant time and effort that they have put into the voluntary duty of being a Board member and for their wise counsel that has guided the Corporation on a successful path for so many years. He also supported the comments made by the Board Chair in strongly supporting President Obama's nomination of Wendy Spencer to serve as the next CEO of CNCS.

Mr. Velasco reported that since the last meeting of the Board in June the Corporation has continued to focus on maximizing its impact by addressing tough community problems, implementing the Strategic Plan, strengthening accountability and efficiency, and engaging more Americans more effectively in service to meet national and local needs. Some of the highlights include AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members being deployed to multiple states for disasters in Joplin, Alabama tornadoes, Hurricane Irene and tropical storm Lee, Texas wildfires and severe flooding in the South and Midwestern states. The Corporation continues to work closely with FEMA, state emergency management officials, state commissions, nonprofits, and community groups on a full range of disaster services. CNCS is leading a citizen-driven effort to provide students across the country with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in the 21st century. He saw this first hand in September 2011 when he joined Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at a Cleveland high school to learn how national service programs are having a powerful impact in helping to improve test scores, graduation rates and college retention rates. As part of the CNCS new Strategic Plan, Mr. Velasco stated that the agency is placing a greater emphasis on identifying strategies and programs that work, funding them and driving innovation in education.

Mr. Velasco also noted that we are working very closely with the White House Council for Community Solutions on solutions to help youth prepare to compete in the global economy. Additionally, in August CNCS announced a second group of Social Innovation Fund intermediaries. The five organizations selected represent experienced grant-makers with strong track records of success who have proposed compelling, innovative programs to tackle some of the country's biggest challenges in our most needy areas.

Mr. Velasco informed the Board that CNCS played a leadership role on the September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance which was marked by service projects in all 50 states with hundreds of thousands of Americans coming together to honor those who perished and to meet community needs. The extraordinary response to the Call to Serve on September 11 reminds us that service is essential to who we are as Americans and can help rekindle the spirit of compassion and patriotism that united our country a decade ago. Since June CNCS has released our Volunteering in America and Civic Life in America research reports and accompanying websites. The reports provide critical information about trends and demographics, volunteering and civic engagement that help government and nonprofit leaders develop strategies to expand the impact of citizens and their communities. The area that has

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been CNCS's top focus since the last Board meeting has been implementing the Strategic Plan. Mr. Velasco thanked everyone who had been involved developing the strategic plan, especially Heather Peeler and her team in the Strategy Office and the extensive involvement of the CNCS program officers.

Mr. Velasco noted that the Performance Measurement Framework provides a common focal point for CNCS across all programs and initiatives. Every program weighed in with its perspective. The result was a focused set of Agency-Wide Priority Measures derived from the priority measures in the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan. AmeriCorps State and National is the first program to operationalize the Agency-Wide Priority Measures in the 2012 Funding Notice. Other programs are in the process now of developing program guidance. He stated that we are committed to providing our grantees and sponsors with the technical assistance that they will need to be successful.

Mr. Velasco concluded his report to the Board by thanking the CNCS staff. In his 18 years of public service, he has never worked with more dedicated, mission-driven people than the workforce at the Corporation for National and Community Service. Although CNCS is a small agency in terms of staff, we have a large impact on people and communities in need. The work the Corporation does every day supports a national service field that is having a positive and lasting impact on millions of the most-vulnerable citizens and that impact is only going to grow in the future.

Consideration of Prior Meeting's Minutes

The Board considered and approved by voice vote the minutes for the public Board meeting held June 20, 2011.

Committee Reports

Oversight, Governance, and Audit Committee Report

Eric Tanenblatt, Committee Chair, reported on the Committee's meeting. The Committee was briefed by the General Counsel on the status of the CEO, Board and Inspector General vacancies, as well as the implementation of the Prohibited Activities Monitoring Action Plan. The Committee was also briefed by the CFO Bill Anderson on the fiscal year 2012 continuing resolution, fiscal year 2013 budget process, and on the status of the fiscal year 2011 financial audit. The work of the financial audit is proceeding on schedule and the process is expected to be completed in November 2011. The Acting IG, Ken Bach, also briefed the Committee on the IG Fiscal 2012 Audit Plan and the Virgin Islands RSVP Program. The CIO, Philip Clark, also briefed the Committee on the OIT system modernization efforts including interim improvements

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and the exploration of other agency grant systems. Lastly, the Chief Human Capital Officer, Ray Limon, briefed the Committee on the results of the employee viewpoint survey.

External Relations Committee

Laysa Ward, the Committee Chair, briefed the Board on the consolidation of the Public Affairs, Public Engagement and Strategic Partnership Offices into the Office of External Affairs under Jim Fetig. Ms. Ward also briefed the Board on a number of programs and partnerships. Let's Read, Let's Move, an initiative to address summer reading loss and childhood obesity by engaging youth in summer reading and physical activity and was done in partnership with the White House. Through that collaboration partners were able to distribute more than 3 million books. The Corporation was also quite active in the 10th anniversary September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance with service projects in all 50 states including the First Lady, more than 20 members of the Administration, 10 governors, dozens of Mayors, and 10 members of Congress. CNCS introduced a new initiative called the Tenth Anniversary Challenge and awarded 15 grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 for organizations to expand September 11th activities in future years. More than 150,000 people participated in volunteerism throughout the course of the remembrance week.

Ms. Ward stated that on October 3, 2011 the President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge convened to bring together faith-based and campus leaders at George Washington University along with members of the Administration. Nearly 300 people representing over 300 colleges and universities attended this event and committed their institutions to interfaith service activities. She noted that as a result of the release the Volunteering in America report we have had over 150 stories and 270 million impressions to date. In addition, the 2011 Civic Life in America Data Report also garnered a lot of media attention. Both Reports are great examples of ways in which CNCS is being proactive in leading and sharing the important work of the service community.

Ms. Ward also noted that CNCS recently had the Second Annual Senior Corps Week. It took place September 19-23 and recognized the impact and value of seniors through service projects. Ms. Ward reported that her Committee had been very active in planning for events in 2012, starting with a recent meeting that brought together over 30 organizations including nonprofits, corporations and federal agencies to ensure that we are developing a robust plan to celebrate MLK Day. Lastly, Ms. Ward wanted to recognize her Committee members for all of their hard work.

Program, Budget and Evaluation Committee

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Mr. Stan Soloway reported on behalf of the Program, Budget and Evaluation Committee. Mr. Soloway made three points regarding the Performance Measures. First, the Committee continues work to refine the measures into a focused set of measures. The objective is to make sure that they are executable, actionable, and effective to measure the tangible impact of our work. It is critically important that performance measures demonstrate impact in this environment. Second, it is important to recognize that these are intended to underscore that they are focus measures, but they're not exclusive, and that we are still looking for excellence. Finally, Mr. Soloway made the point that the staff is working on a comprehensive training and technical assistance plan for the field. Mr. Soloway concluded his Committee Report by thanking the Chair for his service on the Committee.

Public Comment

Mr. Gearan noted that Social Innovative Fund (SIF) grantees were currently in Washington convening for their annual meeting to share best practices, speaking to one another, and gaining training and technical assistance from the CNCS staff. The Board asked representatives to come to the Board's meeting to talk about some of their accomplishments and hopes for the future.

Vanessa Kirsch represented New Profit, a SIF intermediary focused on high school completion to college and through to your first really good paying job. New Profit had applied for a SIF grant to find the world-class, best organization in the country to help them scale to 20 cities across America. She shared the story of the head of the largest community college in America inviting their organization to come to that city to help. The individual said that he was trying to change the college graduation rate in his city but that he could only do it with the wrap-around services offered by New Profit. The power of SIF is not only the individual resources to help organizations to scale, but the collective impact they can have. New Profit is developing rigorous evaluation plans for each of the organizations and is creating a collective evaluation that New Profit is funding to support this process. They have brought together world-class funders and the grantees that convene quarterly to develop the plans of how New Profit is going to scale across America. There are already tremendous reports of success. The model is working.

Mike Baker, Director of the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Social Innovation Fund and the United Way, told the Board that the SIF was the right opportunity at the right time through the great work of the Strive Partnership, a multi-sector partnership, which was bringing together business leaders, nonprofit leaders and philanthropic leaders. Over the past 10 years there had been initiatives that brought organizations together, but leaders in Cincinnati felt a driving need to focus more of their resources on the most effective community solutions. They were still challenged as a community to bring funders to one table to talk about what was working and what was not and how to drive our resources toward those key programs on key issues. The SIF,

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with the requirement of matching the funds dollar for dollar that the Corporation was providing, created a catalytic movement in the community where we were able to bring 15 funding organizations together to match the \$2 million we received over the first two years of the SIF funding. Mr. Baker reported that funders now discuss issues they previously struggled with alone, such as the meaning of evidence of effectiveness and how to evaluate the work that they are doing with their funding investment. As a result, the community of funders is discussing what do we need to make sure the other \$100 million we have available for investment will be invested in the same way with the same impact that we know we're getting out of the SIF investments. The new process has created a ripple effect within the funding community and within the nonprofit community. One of the things he was most proud of was that they had put all of the applicants for the SIF through a rigorous training on the meaning evidence of effectiveness and the types of evaluation designs that show evidence of effectiveness. Organizations that ultimately decided not to apply for our funding started picking up the phone and calling evaluators and saying they really need to get on this because there are going to be other opportunities. This is a shift in the way business had been being done in Cincinnati. Mr. Baker expressed his gratitude for the energy that the SIF has brought to a community that was already moving in the right direction but is seeing that pace increase.

The Chair, Mr. Mark Gearan, invited members of the Board to ask questions of the two guests. Mr. Soloway asked both guests if there was anything the Board could do better to attract more people and to make the process less onerous but still rigorous. He added to these two questions by asking where they could improve the process.

Ms. Kirsch stated that the process has been better than others she had been through as a first-time process. She also addressed the question from the perspective of an intermediary. The people at the grassroots level who need to do the work in the communities are not being put through the rigor because there is no FOIA because it is the intermediary who gets the FOIA. The intermediary is the one who is being put through the hard work. Those at the grassroots level are already struggling and don't have the resources to do what they need to do. The money comes from the intermediaries and that model is being replicated by state governors. It is the future of government funding because, one, there's a required match, and two; we're using the model of intermediaries which are stronger institutions. Intermediaries have more resources generally and can have evaluators on their staff and they can do a lot of things sometimes more efficiently than the government can. It's a really great public-private partnership. Ms. Kirsch stated that she would continue to enhance that partnership between the government and intermediaries.

Mr. Tanenblatt had a follow-up question for Ms. Kirsch: How do we expand the number of intermediaries geographically?

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Ms. Kirsch responded that New Profit, based in Boston, is an intermediary for 20 states. She stated that you can use national intermediaries to do multiple states. She also hopes that we build a stronger intermediary system. There are other entities that can be intermediaries. SIF is currently touching 31 states. She thinks SIF can get to every state in the next year or two.

Mr. Baker added that it is important for the Corporation to make sure that the story of the SIF is being told to potential applicants and to other communities, and that the story is the flexibility of the funding. You can really make the funding fit what your community's needs are focused on. There are issue areas but they're broad enough that you can define what youth development means in your community, you can define what economic opportunity means given the specific needs and challenges of your community. Mr. Baker thought the challenge of geographic distribution is finding the communities that have the resources necessary to meet the match. The match requirement creates a real challenge, but through specific outreach to potential funders you can use it as a catalyst with additional resources to get the job done.

Ms. Kirsch commented on an example she was aware of where a SIF grantee could not find the matching grant and individuals in the small community each contributed to create the match.

Ms. Ward asked the guests what they saw as the greatest challenges as the Corporation looks to grow the number of programs funded by SIF.

Ms. Kirsch commented that she believed the emphasis on growing the number of programs is going to pay off in the long run but that initially everyone is in a one-year evaluation plan and many are in a three-year evaluation plan. It will take time to pick winners and losers and find programs that work based on evaluations of effective results.

Mr. Baker noted that it is the balance between the responsibility to tell the stories of success while managing the expectations of how the pace of the selections occur. As intermediaries, we are still building trust with sub-grantees that we had not had prior relationships with. Mr. Baker agreed with Ms. Kirsch that over time this investment will pay off.

Mr. Gearan asked if the Corporation is associated with any of this. Ms. Kirsch responded that she believed the Corporation was associated. She believed we are challenged with telling the story of the relationship between service and social innovation. There is much more emphasis on raising private dollars in order to qualify for the federal funds. There is also much more emphasis on community solutions and the government's role is to help catalyze and support those community solutions because people have confidence in solving problems at the community level. Social innovation is driving a new kind of capital market and service is driving the human capital market, and for us to truly solve the kinds of social problems we have we need both.

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The next presenter was Ms. Kate Raftery, the Director of the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) who read into the record three comments from sponsors working with the NCCC teams in the Southwest Region and also in the Pacific. The three comments were very different, reflecting the diversity in the service opportunities that NCCC is providing members and the ability to contribute to small organizations around the country. One was from the Faith Communities for Disaster Recovery in Texas, Donna Gibson, the case manager/supervisor, who stated that the disaster recovery work in the Rio Grande Valley had been greatly enhanced by the participation of NCCC. The second comment was from the Land Institute near San Antonio, Texas who thanked the NCCC team for their assistance in building quality trails over great expanses of land. The last comment was from the CEO of the Oregon Coast Community Action who recognized NCCC for their exemplary work in accomplishing an impressive array of projects during the winter of 2011. Among their efforts was receiving, inventorying and distributing 250,000 pounds of food to partners on the south coast, providing 166,000 meals to over 8,000 people, organizing 302 volunteers for volunteer hours and conducting 17 trainings at food pantries for 167 volunteers in Food Safety and Civil Rights. All of those projects and many more would not have been possible with just internal staff. The projects were able to happen because of the dedicated work of NCCC staff.

The next presenter was David Stern, the Executive Director of Equal Justice Works, an organization that mobilizes law students and lawyers to engage in service in communities. They have had an AmeriCorps program since 1993, and currently have 80 AmeriCorps Equal Justice Works Legal Fellows who are working in communities around the country, and 650 law students who get an education award only program during the summer. They also have 10 lawyers in the field working on behalf of homeless veterans and trying to help them get back on their feet, and two lawyers who are working currently in Joplin. Lastly, Mr. Stern introduced Lan Diep to the Board. Mr. Diep was in Washington, D.C. for leadership development training that Equal Justice was doing in connection with their twenty-fifth anniversary. Mr. Diep had been recognized as a leader at the White House as one of the Champions of Change. He is doing extraordinary work in Mississippi at the Mississippi Center for Justice.

Mr. Diep, one of the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Legal Fellows, spoke to the Board. He is currently assisting claimants on the Gulf Coast in the regions of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama. The economic effects of the oil spill are continuing and many of the claimants have limited proficiency in English and are in real danger of falling back on public assistance. He has personally helped 77 clients recover about \$200,000 through the claims process and he believes he has helped countless others through education outreach, especially helping those in the Vietnamese community avoid falling into the trap of predatory practices by some attorneys who trick the claimants into signing legal retainers without letting them know that they are being

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represented by legal counsel. Mr. Diep thanked CNCS and the AmeriCorps program because none of this work would be done without the funding currently provided.

The next presenter was Ms. Abby Simons from the AmeriCorps St. Louis Emergency Response Team and wanted to share her narrative of Joplin and her experience down there. She first got the call at 7 pm and was in Joplin by 6 am the following morning. Her team had a call center set up by 8 am and was instrumental in helping thousands of people looking for loved ones. Ms. Simons had 30 people on her team and they had been trained in volunteer management as well as wild land fire-fighting and chain sawing and all of the direct service as well. She stayed in Joplin for 77 days and it was a fantastic experience. She is planning on joining AmeriCorps St. Louis in January for another year of disaster relief work.

The last presenter was Gene Sofer, representing the National Association of RSVP Directors. The first issue he presented to the Board was that of the continuing relinquishments on the part of RSVP programs. To date 35 programs have given up their sponsorship. This was the direct result of the 20 per cent reduction in the 2011 Continuing Resolution. Mr. Sofer urged the Corporation if there are additional relinquishments to use those funds to strengthen existing programs rather than to compete those funds to fund new programs. The National Association is concerned that if the programs are competed, the end result will be more under-resourced weak programs.

Mr. Sofer also stated that the National Association was concerned about the performance measures, although he was pleased to hear Mr. Soloway state that the measures were not intended to be exclusive. However, Mr. Sofer was concerned that the Corporation would still tend to promote certain activities over others owing to the performance measures, and that CNCS needed to make sure a consistent message went to the state directors so that they all understand that the measures are not intended to be exclusive but suggestive. Mr. Sofer was also concerned about the 20 percent cut in RSVP programs and its effect on the fact that competition in RSVP is supposed to start in 2013. Local and county prospective sponsors may find themselves in the position of deciding whether to hire the staff necessary to administer a program knowing that they may only have the program for three years. The National Association wants to work with the Board to ensure that competition happens as smoothly as possible consistent with the terms of the Serve America Act. Finally, Mr. Sofer called attention to the Corporation's website and noted that the highlights did not include highlights from every program. He thinks it would be helpful if every national service program was included in the highlights and further, if programs in rural areas were highlighted. The rural programs often do not get the attention of other programs and with tight budgets it is important to highlight the criticality of such programs.

Resolution

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The Board recognized the Chairman, Mr. Mark Gearan, and thanked him for his many years of dedication and service. A proposed Resolution honoring the work and leadership of the Chairman was read into the record and was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Gearan stated that it had been an honor to serve three administrations on the Corporation Board, starting with the Bush administration. It had been exciting to watch the maturation of CNCS and what it has meant for the service movement, to observe the professionalism of the staff and to see its impact in the field. Mr. Gearan noted that as a former Peace Corps Director and as a current college president, it was tremendous to listen to the public speakers at this Board meeting who articulated so well the sense of spirit inherent in national service. He noted that the Corporation was a unique federal agency and in many ways the mission was to bring about the very best of the American character and ethos of service which will indeed strengthen our nation. He remained very enthusiastic about the future of the Corporation and it had been the privilege of a lifetime to be part of it. He thanked the Board for the Resolution, the friendship and all of the courtesies that had been extended to him over the years.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.