

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
June 12, 2000

The Board of Directors convened at the Westin Seattle, in Seattle, Washington. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Amy Achor
Victor Ashe
Juanita Doty
Thomas Ehrlich
Chris Gallagher
Dorothy Johnson
Les Lenkowsky
Art Naparstek
Marc Racicot
Alan Solomont

The following person was present and invited to participate by the Board:

Bob Rogers

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on March 3, 2000, as amended to reflect an accurate record of the Board members in attendance. (Transcript, 3-4).

SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Introductory Remarks

Chris Gallagher, in his capacity as Acting Chair for the purposes of the meeting, called the meeting to order.

Swearing-in of New Members

The following new members were sworn in: Amy Achor, Juanita Doty, Marc Racicot, Alan Solomont, Chris Gallagher, and Les Lenkowsky.

Executive Committee Report

Mr. Gallagher reported on the executive committee's involvement in Congressional testimony and in transition issues. Mr. Rogers noted that the committee also discussed committee assignments for incoming members, all of whom have agreed to serve as follows:

Governor Racicot: Communications
Amy Achor: Communications
Alan Solomont: Planning and Evaluation
Juanita Doty: Planning and Evaluation

Mr. Gallagher explained that the Management, Budget, and Governance Committee would be taking on a new role of facilitating communication within the Corporation on issues relating to the audit process and would be renamed to reflect this. Mr. Rogers noted that the change would enable the Board to be more proactive in dealing with issues surrounding the Corporation's internal control system.

Management, Audit, and Governance Committee Report

Mr. Gallagher stated that the committee would meet with the Inspector General and the Corporation's Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer at least monthly to respond to developments and keep abreast of audit issues. He directed the Board's attention to a summary chart in the Board meeting materials listing audits on which the Corporation had not yet completed final action.

The committee also received a report from Corporation management on improvements in financial management and progress in addressing material weaknesses identified in the Inspector General's audit of the Corporation's 1999 financial statements. Mr. Gallagher noted that the new Momentum system was working well, and that staff were continuing their systematic efforts to address the weaknesses noted in previous audits.

Inspector General Luise Jordan welcomed the changes related to audit oversight and stated that the auditors in her office, as well as the outside auditors, would be

available to brief the committee. She also added that her office is responsible for investigation of fraud, waste, and abuse in any of the programs funded by the Corporation.

Mr. Rogers commented that the progress on improving internal control systems in the last year was outstanding.

Planning and Evaluation Committee Report

Mr. Ehrlich reported on the committee's work in developing revisions to the Corporation's strategic plan, which currently covers 1997-2002. The committee expects to offer several draft revisions at the Board's September meeting.

Mr. Ehrlich discussed the Corporation's progress on meeting the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), particularly in light of a recent GAO study suggesting improvements in measuring outcomes related to Corporation activities.

Mr. Ehrlich reported on evaluation efforts now underway, including a longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members, a study of outcomes in the America Reads program, and a project that helps AmeriCorps members become more actively engaged citizens. He emphasized the leadership training that the Corporation's senior staff plans to attend next July.

Mr. Lenkowsky noted that the baseline results of the longitudinal study will be available soon and that early information suggests that the conclusions of the study will be very helpful in recruitment. Ms. Doty emphasized the importance of incorporating the full Board and the national service field in connection with the strategic plan and the evaluation studies.

Reports to the Board

Sue Donaldson, President of the Association of State Service Commissions, welcomed the Board to Seattle and introduced a report on service activities in the State of Washington. Bill Basl, Executive Director of the Washington Commission on National and Community Service, gave an overview of AmeriCorps activities. Carolyn Bush, Governor Locke's executive policy advisor on education, spoke of the Governor's interest in increasing reading scores statewide. The State initiated a program that combines high-quality instructors with volunteer tutors, with AmeriCorps members playing a crucial role in recruiting and making effective use of volunteers. Barbara Neilsen, a principal, described the critical importance of AmeriCorps members providing a consistent presence in the schools. Ving Daht, an AmeriCorps member with the Washington Reading Corps, described his experiences tutoring and administering an after-school program, as well as his plans to pursue an advanced degree in special education. Carrie Albion, an AmeriCorps VISTA member, recounted her experience coordinating tutors, including 30 investment bankers. Ben O'Connell, an AmeriCorps VISTA member, described his involvement with a project in which fifth graders serve as tutors.

Kurt Marsh, the executive director of The Neutral Zone, Debra Cox, the former executive director, and Jean Smart, a Neutral Zone board member, described this program as providing an after-school and evening place for youth to receive mentoring and other support. AmeriCorps members are now involved in expanding the program to younger children. There has been a dramatic reduction in youth crime and in school suspensions and expulsions and an increase in basic skills test scores in the area served by this program.

Dorothy Dubiet and Jim Adams, of Intergeneration Innovations, described three programs: (1) KinderCorps, which matches K-3 children with caring seniors; (2) Caring Communities, which brings together schools and senior centers around projects in the arts, history, and science; and (3) Computer Pals, which is an e-mail program that fosters intergenerational communications. AmeriCorps members Sarah Johnson and Mary McCormick, and senior volunteer Bill Christiansen, recounted their experiences with the program.

Marilyn Smith, Director of Service-Learning, reported that the National Service Learning Leader School awards ceremony was scheduled for later in the week in Washington, D.C., with more than 400 individuals expected. The President's Student Service Scholarships have doubled in number over the past year. The President's Student Service Awards are also growing in participation.

Dr. Smith reported that the Corporation had completed its review of applications for Learn & Serve America grants. Because service-learning has been level-funded by Congress for many years, there were not enough funds to approve all the high-quality proposals.

Deb Jospin, Director of AmeriCorps, reported on the just-completed 2000 grants selection process, which will support approximately 50,000 AmeriCorps members, up from approximately 45,000 last year. She introduced Matt Dunne, the Corporation's new Director of VISTA and noted the departure of General Andrew Chambers as Director of the National Civilian Community Corps.

Communications Committee Report

Art Naparstek summarized a communication plan that includes a national service video; a close working relationship with the Points of Light Foundation, America's Promise, and United Way; a public service announcement initiative eligible for free air time under the Office of National Drug Policy Media Watch program; and a recent outreach agreement with General Mills.

The Corporation's website now has more than 10,000 visitors a day, with potential AmeriCorps members now able to download an application. The recruitment section received an award of distinction from the Communicators Award 2000 media competition.

Mr. Naparstek reported that a bipartisan reauthorization bill was gaining co-sponsors.

Christine Benero, the Corporation's Director of Public Liaison, introduced Larry Cellar of 3Com who described Urban Challenge, a program that, with the help of AmeriCorps members, addresses the digital divide in cities in conjunction with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Ms. Benero spoke about collaborative efforts with Yahoo, America Online, Sun Microsystems, Gateway, Cisco, Intel, the Magic Johnson Foundation, the National Basketball Association, General Mills, Nantucket Nectars, Coca Cola Foundation, Scholastic, and others.

John Gomperts described the Continuing Service initiative, which connects former AmeriCorps members with service opportunities.

Mr. Ehrlich, Ms. Johnson, and Mr. Lenkowsky stressed the importance of proceeding with care in choosing partners in these collaborations. Ms. Doty emphasized the need to connect national initiatives to local organizations and communities.

Report of the CEO

Mr. Wofford noted the upcoming Senior Conference, Youth Summit, and National and Community Service Conference, all to be held in Orlando later in June. He expressed optimism concerning reauthorization efforts.

Adjournment

Mr. Gallagher adjourned the meeting.