

**Corporation for National and Community Service  
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting  
February 11, 2003**

The Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service convened at 9:27 a.m. at the Corporation's Headquarters in Washington, DC. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Stephen Goldsmith, Chair  
Amy Blankson  
Juanita Doty  
Christopher Gallagher  
Art Naparstek  
Marc Racicot  
Alan Solomont

Dorothy Johnson, Mark Gearan, Donna Williams, Tom Ehrlich, and William Schambra participated at the invitation of the Board of Directors.

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting that had been held on September 24, 2002.

The Board approved a resolution directing the Chief Executive Officer to submit, by March 14, 2003, a comprehensive action plan to strengthen management controls in connection with the National Service Trust.

The Board approved a resolution honoring the service of outgoing two-term Board member Tom Ehrlich.

## **SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS**

### **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Mr. Stephen Goldsmith opened the meeting by referring to President Bush's strong support for national and community service, expressed most recently in the State of the Union address, and by emphasizing the importance of managing the Corporation well. He indicated that the Board of Directors was committed to expanding service nationally while striving for accountability at all levels.

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Dr. Leslie Lenkowsky acknowledged the challenges associated with the pause in AmeriCorps member enrollments and praised the Corporation and its grantees for their determination to fulfill the vision of President Bush and his predecessors for the potential of national and community service. He thanked Members of the Board for their leadership and assistance during this time and anticipated a robust AmeriCorps program in 2003. He noted that the President had made three public statements supporting passage of the Citizen Service Act. Katherine Hoehn, the Corporation's new director of Congressional Affairs, is taking the lead on the effort to achieve reauthorization for the first time

Christine Benero, Director of Public Affairs, described the formation of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, announced on the one-year anniversary of the establishment of USA Freedom Corps. The Council has 25 members and is chaired by Darrell Green, with former Senators Dole and Glenn serving as honorary co-chairs. The Council, to be housed at the Corporation, will oversee a new awards program to recognize Americans who answer the President's Call to Service.

Ms. Benero informed the Board of an upcoming event, a White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service, co-convened by USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Department of Education. The Bradley Foundation and the History Channel are also supporting the event.

Dr. David Reingold, Director of Research and Policy Development, advised the Board of a process underway to update the Corporation's strategic plan. Performance indicators will be a central feature in the revised plan. Art Naparstek noted that the Board had engaged in substantial work on the plan in 2000 without completing any revision, and urged that this year's process incorporate the progress made three years ago. Ms. Dorothy Johnson encouraged the Corporation to seek meaningful input from key stakeholders to ensure the plan's effectiveness. Chairman Goldsmith designated Mr. Naparstek to serve in a liaison capacity to the Corporation on the strategic plan and invited Donna Williams' participation as well.

### **Management, Audit, and Governance Committee Report**

Mr. Chris Gallagher began by thanking Inspector General, Russell George, for his work and cooperation. He described two upcoming reports on the Corporation's Alternative Personnel System, one by Deloitte & Touche, the other by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. He spoke about progress made by the Board's grants management committee. He indicated that the Corporation may retain a management consultant to assist in these areas.

Regarding the enrollment pause, Mr. Gallagher expressed the Board's ongoing commitment to engage fully in resolving these problems and building stronger management processes in the future. More generally, the Board recognizes the need to look at the Corporation's organizational structures to put the agency and its staff in an even better position.

Mr. Goldsmith announced that the Corporation had established an email address to receive comments or make suggestions on improving the Corporation. He spoke of the Board's challenge to promote accountability without unduly hampering the flexibility of Corporation staff and grantees. He reiterated the Board and CEO's interest in making sure that the Corporation fully and fairly utilizes the Alternative Personnel System.

### **Communications Committee Report**

Ms. Juanita Doty reported on research findings concerning prospective grantees and participants in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, made on the basis of nationwide focus groups. The findings validated many of the Corporation's current strategies while providing new information to inform efforts going forward.

### **Tribute to Tom Ehrlich**

Mr. Goldsmith read into the record a resolution honoring Tom Ehrlich's service as a member of the Board of Directors of the Commission on National and Community Service between 1991 and 1993, and his two terms as Member of the Board of the Corporation from 1994 until 2002.

### **Reports to the Board**

Ms. Blankson introduced Sara Braaf and Melvin Moore to the Board. Ms. Braaf is Manager of Programs for the Association of State Commissions. Mr. Moore is the Youth Commissioner for the District of Columbia Commission.

Ms. Braaf discussed the concept and work of the Youth Commissioner Network. She explained the legislative authority for youth commissioners and how the development of the Network has progressed since 2001, when a common, national vision for these youth in service was first considered. She discussed how the commissioners are untapped resources who want to get more involved in assisting the Corporation in promoting youth in service.

Mr. Moore, who is in his third year as a youth commissioner, told of his experiences as a youth commissioner in the District of Columbia. One of these experiences even included accompanying the mayor on a trip to Rome. Mr. Moore stated that Ms. Braaf has helped him with various issues by using the knowledge and experiences of other youth commissioners. Finally, Mr. Moore thanked Ms. Blankson and Mr. Brad Lewis for their work in helping to increase and enhance the roles of youth commissioners.

Ms. Braaf expressed her appreciation to several Corporation employees who have supported the Youth Commissioner Network. Ms. Blankson added her thanks by recognizing Ms. Jeannie Sanders, from the Association of State Commissions, who was also instrumental in starting up the Network. She stated that several commissioners would be attending the White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service. She concluded her remarks by emphasizing that the commissioners are a great resource for the Corporation to use in promoting its various programs.

Both Ms. Johnson and Ms. Doty expressed their appreciation to Ms. Blankson and also for the outstanding service of all youth commissioners. Both Board Members specifically mentioned youth commissioners on their respective commissions who had performed their duties superbly.

In a response to a question by Mr. Gearan concerning how this effort has been integrated into USA Freedom Corps, Dr. Lenkowsky stated that there has been a real emphasis on service-learning. This emphasis resulted in the development of a service-learning tool kit that was distributed to over 100,000 schools throughout the United States. The idea of students in service is one that is rapidly growing and one that is receiving more emphasis by the Corporation.

Karen Morison, the Staff Director of the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth, informed the Board that the Task Force is a federal inter-agency organization, consisting of six Cabinet agencies, as well as the Corporation. The Corporation is the host of the Task Force, whose mission is to examine all federal programs that involve disadvantaged youth, with an emphasis on results. The President has asked the Task force to submit two reports – the first on April 30, 2003, and the second on October 1, 2003. These reports will present the Task Force's suggestions and recommendations concerning a comprehensive federal response to problems of youth failure, looking specifically at the issues of enhanced agency accountability and effectiveness. The Task Force will also attempt to develop a more unified research plan, linking research, programs, and practices together. Additionally, the Task Force will try to define better the federal government's role in addressing the needs of disadvantaged youth.

In response to a question by Mr. Naparstek, Ms. Morison stated that the Task Force is reaching out to an extensive list of organizations who have been involved with these youth-related issues for a long time. She said that she welcomed the input of additional organizations that may have some good ideas concerning the federal government's role in this area.

Ms. Blankson pointed out that it would be a good idea for the task force to collaborate with young people when developing the reports for the President.

Mr. Todd Bernstein addressed the Board concerning Philadelphia's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Mr. Bernstein told the Board that this national holiday, unlike many of the others, has become a day of action. In Philadelphia, the number of volunteers on this day has risen from 1,000 in 1996 to 35,000 in 2003. All types of people and organizations have turned out to really make a difference. It is not only a day of service, but a day to celebrate Dr. King's legacy. Mr. Bernstein stated that he believes that Philadelphia can be used as a model for other metropolitan areas to follow.

Dr. Lenkowsky told the Board that he has visited Philadelphia and seen the success of the program and the outpouring of volunteers. We need to figure out how to make every city look like Philadelphia on MLK Day. Ms. Doty expressed her appreciation for Philadelphia's outstanding commitment to this day, and added that her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, had taken this on as a national project. She encouraged other national organizations to get involved. Mr. Bernstein told the Board that after September 11, 2001, he made a special effort to bring together Muslim and Jewish communities to perform service projects. In response to questions by Mr. Naparstek and Mr. Gearan, Mr. Bernstein stated that it would be a good idea to target approximately 10 cities to follow the Philadelphia model for promoting and celebrating MLK Day.

Ms. Sally Prouty addressed the Board on behalf of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC). She told the Board that NASCC is a direct descendent of the Civilian Conservation Corps. NASCC was established in 1985 by several corps directors in order to provide a voice for all corps at the national level. NASCC operates an AmeriCorps awards program with approximately 3,400 AmeriCorps members enrolled last year. It is a diverse membership and is often a "second chance" for many of its members. In spite of its many successes, the current fiscal situations in state and local governments threaten the existence of these corps. Notwithstanding these challenges, NASCC fully supports USA Freedom Corps and the President's goal of growing AmeriCorps. Ms. Prouty then introduced Mr. Jesus Santiago, a member of the Ohio Conservation Corps.

Mr. Santiago told the Board that he had grown up in a very rough environment and had used drugs and alcohol at a very young age. He had continued down a destructive path and eventually was imprisoned by the time he was 17. He learned about the Ohio CCC while he was in prison. Upon his release, he enrolled in the Ohio CCC. While the first six months were difficult, the staff never gave up on him. Eventually, he learned that the CCC was a safe place for him and that he had to leave his past behind him. He is now enrolled in a community college and wants to become a social worker. He thanked the Board for its past support of these types of programs and asked its continued support so that other young people will have the same opportunities that he had received.

Mr. Goldsmith asked Mr. Santiago to tell the Board what a typical day is like for him in the Ohio CCC. Mr. Santiago stated that while there are some educational classes, he primarily takes a crew of 5 to 6 people out to work in a forest, opening up trails, and trimming and cutting down trees. He also told the Board that the Ohio CCC has mentoring teams that help with portfolios, resumes, interview techniques, and cover letters.

Mr. Gearan asked Mr. Santiago what the message was that caused him to be interested in the Ohio CCC. Mr. Santiago responded that it was the opportunity for personal growth and development. His social worker told him about the program while he was in prison.

Ms. Prouty told the Board that she appreciated Dr. Lenkowsky's time and interest in helping her identify effective methods of keeping these programs alive and vibrant.

Ms. Johnson thanked Dr. Lenkowsky for his leadership and told Mr. Santiago that she applauded his ambition and personal fortitude, and hoped that it was affecting his family in a positive manner.

Mr. Solomont thanked Ms. Prouty and Mr. Santiago for providing testimony that validated the work that is being done on many levels. He stated that with so many fiscal cutbacks, it is important that those who are committed to service promote citizen service in ways that will allow many others to be able to have the same type of success story that Mr. Santiago shared with the Board. Mr. Naparstek said that when he first came on the Board seven years ago, there were a series of public hearings. He said that perhaps the Board should consider organizing a few public hearings in order to get the message out as to what is being accomplished by so many volunteers.

### **Public Comments**

While there were no public comments, Chairman Goldsmith informed the gathering that individuals who have comments or suggestions can submit them to [yourideas@cns.gov](mailto:yourideas@cns.gov)

Mr. Goldsmith concluded the meeting and again thanked Mr. Tom Ehrlich for his longstanding service.

### **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Mr. Goldsmith informed the Board that the next Board meeting would be on May 20, 2003, in Cleveland, and the following ones will be on September 23, 2003, and February 10, 2004, both in Washington. He then introduced Ms. Michelle Guillermin, the Corporation's recently confirmed Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 11:13 a.m.