

**Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
May 22, 2001**

The Board of Directors convened at the Jackson Hilton & Convention Center in Jackson, Mississippi. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Dorothy Johnson, Chair
Juanita Doty
Thomas Ehrlich
Toni Fay
Chris Gallagher
Carol Kinsley (via telephone)
Les Lenkowsky
Alan Solomont

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on February 27, 2001.
(Transcript, 4).

SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Chief Executive Officer Report

Wendy Zenker, Acting Chief Executive Officer, summarized the President's budget proposal, which reflects growing and continued support for the Corporation and its programs. She reported that Corporation staff had conducted a site visit earlier in the morning to the Metro-Jackson Service Coalition program, observing that nine agencies had succeeded in creating a seamless integration of service in Jackson.

Executive Committee Report

Dorothy Johnson announced that Stephen Goldsmith would succeed her as Chair of the Board, effective June 1, 2001. She reported that Juanita Doty had succeeded Art Naperstak as Chair of the Communications Committee.

Ms. Johnson indicated that several Board members, not present today, had attended Board committee meetings and a Board retreat the previous day. Those members included: Marc Racicot, Stephen Goldsmith, Bob Rogers, and Art Naperstek. Ms. Johnson also noted that several Board members were planning to attend the National and Community Service Conference in Minneapolis in June.

Ms. Johnson recognized State Representative Eric Flemming, who presented the Board with a proclamation from the Mississippi House of Representatives. Ms. Johnson accepted the proclamation and indicated it would be displayed in the Corporation's offices.

Ms. Johnson reported on a meeting held by the Corporation for community-based and faith-based organizations to help generate ideas about how the Corporation could better work with such organizations. Stephen Goldsmith and Chris Gallagher participated. Mr. Gallagher stated that the meeting was very productive and looked forward to a report to be issued by the Corporation's Office of Public Liaison.

Management, Audit, and Governance Committee Report

Chris Gallagher reported favorably on a site visit he recently conducted to the Corporation's headquarters in Washington, during which he met with department heads. He recounted that the Corporation had received its first-ever clean opinion on the audit of its financial statements, with one material weakness remaining in the area of grants management. He reported on the Corporation's efforts to develop and implement a new grants management system, which will take more than a year to complete. The new system will integrate all Corporation grants and allow electronic record-keeping and transmission of information. Mr. Gallagher noted that the Corporation has put into operation a web-based AmeriCorps recruitment and selection system, which allows

programs and applicants to communicate directly online. He praised Inspector General Luise Jordan and Acting Chief Executive Officer Wendy Zenker for their continued efforts to work through issues identified in the various audits.

Ms. Jordan reported that, according to a pre-audit survey undertaken by the Office of Inspector General, the Mississippi Commission is doing a good job and she recognized their efforts.

Planning and Evaluation Committee Report

Tom Ehrlich reported on continuing discussions with the Points of Light Foundation concerning ways to work together on leadership training, with the expectation that the Board may consider a business plan at its September meeting. He described progress on implementing a pilot project on citizen training for AmeriCorps members.

Mr. Ehrlich reported on early results from a longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members. Lance Potter and Marcia Scott of the Office on Evaluation described the study's objectives and design, as well comparisons in a variety of areas between AmeriCorps members and individuals who did not serve in AmeriCorps. Leslie Lenkowsky expressed appreciation for the work of the staff, contracts, and others. He emphasized the finding that AmeriCorps members serve not for the living allowance or education award principally but to do something for their country. Ms. Johnson stated that foundations would be keenly interested in these findings, particularly on the relationship between service and educational achievement. Mr. Ehrlich commented that the findings would help identify areas to improve national service programs.

Communications Committee Report

Juanita Doty reported on the committee's discussions relating to appropriations hearings and reauthorization. She reported that AmeriCorps bilingual television and radio public service announcements continue to be among the top PSAs in the country. The Corporation has mailed recruitment postcards to 275,000 college seniors and 25,000 high school seniors and has sent posters to 80,000 guidance counselors and others involved in youth. Ben Petrick, a Colorado Rockies catcher, has recorded a radio PSA to promote AmeriCorps programs in Colorado. Ms. Doty described donated PSAs promoting senior service and the Corporation's Leader Schools recognition program.

Reports to the Board

Mississippi Coalition of Faith-Based and Civic Leaders for Community Renewal

Representatives of the Mississippi coalition of faith-based and civic leaders for community renewal addressed the Board. They included: Ronnie Crudup, Thomas Jenkins, Hosea Hines, Isaiah Madison, Beneta Burt, Imam Muhammed Harisuddin, Bill Richter, Dolphus Weary, and Phil Reed. The coalition is focusing on building the capacity and resources of local religious congregations to equip them to take advantage of the President's faith-based and community initiatives, particularly in the following areas: ministries to prisoners and their families; substance abuse ministries; education of high-risk students; elder care; community economic development, to include housing, workforce and business development; family development, including teen parenting and health and wellness issues; and cultural awareness. The coalition has identified the need for assistance in organizational development, program development, and partnership-building; technical assistance, including dissemination of best practices; fundraising; grant-writing; and community engagement in public relations. The coalition sees collaboration between faith-based and secular organizations as crucial to improving services in communities.

The coalition is organizing a 40-member steering committee, including members appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House of Mississippi. The coalition plans five education forums throughout Mississippi to inform the public about the federal faith-based and community initiative and mobilizing community involvement. The coalition plans to use the Corporation for National Service as a vehicle to coordinate and channel federal funding and fiscal management support to participating faith-based and community organizations.

Senior Corps Project Director Associations

Richard Tate, President of the Association of Senior Companion Project Directors, advocated for a change in the Senior Companion income guidelines, which restrict participants to 125 percent of the poverty line. He said his association will likely support an increase in this ratio without eliminating the program's emphasis on low-income participants. He also urged a reduction in the service requirement of 20 hours per week without eliminating the requirement. His association supports making the program open to those 55 and older as compared with the current age minimum of 60. His association views the Corporation's state offices as a real benefit to the senior programs. The association is concerned that annual recompetition of grants might hurt the ability of programs to improve long-term and to recruit volunteers. He urged greater cooperation with the Administration on Aging's caregiver initiative. He praised the President's budget proposal as it relates to the Senior Corps programs.

Betty Ruth, President of the Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors, stated that the association favors retaining flexibility in service assignments and wants RSVP to remain a nonstipended program. She praised the Administration's commitment to increased funding for senior service and supported the proposed Silver Scholars program. She urged State Commissions to include a Corporation State Office representative as a member. Ms. Ruth also supported a reduction in the age minimum to 55 for all senior programs, an increase from 125 percent of the poverty line to 150 to 200

percent for participants, and regular communication between the Corporation and the Senior Corps directors associations.

Jane Watkins, President of the National Association of Foster Grandparents Program Directors, expressed her association's support for: increasing the amount of the hourly stipend provided to volunteers from \$2.55 to \$2.80 per hour; increasing income-eligibility up to 200 percent of the poverty line; maintaining the current delivery system; allocating one-third of any budget increases to programs of national significance to allow expansions of existing programs.

Alan Solomont remarked that the demographic trends and the Administration's commitment to growth present opportunities for expanding and improving senior service. He supported reviewing the current delivery systems to look for better ways to administer programs. He raised the issue of whether means testing was a barrier to making senior service available to all seniors.

Leslie Lenkowsky's seconded Mr. Solomont's praise for the work senior corps programs are doing, noting that one study recently concluded that the overall increase in volunteering in the United States over the last decade is almost entirely attributable to the growth in volunteering among people 55 and older.

In response to Mr. Lenkowsky's question about the prospects for increasing the percentage of senior volunteers serving with faith-based organizations, Ms. Watkins indicated that this was possible particularly in light of the Administration's initiative.

Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service and other Mississippi State representatives

Perry Green, Chair of the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service, described the Commission's efforts to promote service, including a volunteer car tag and an income tax check-off to raise funds for the Commission, and introduced a video presentation on service initiatives in Mississippi.

Clarence Lovelady of the Mississippi Department of Education, and Richard L. Thompson, Superintendent of Education, welcomed the Board and expressed support for partnerships between the Corporation and the State.

Lighthouse Partnerships

Tom Schnaubelt described Lighthouse Partnerships, a project of the Mississippi Commission and the Center for Civic and Community Engagement that is building a state-level infrastructure for service-learning and after-school programs. Other partners include the Mississippi Attorney General, Campus Compact, the Foundation for the Mid-South. The initiative receives support from the Corporation's Learn & Serve and AmeriCorps VISTA programs.

Teach for America

Ron Nuremberg, of Teach for America, described the national teacher corps of recent college graduates who commit to two years teaching in under-resourced urban and rural schools. Emily Harris recounted her experience as a second-grade teacher and her success in helping to raise her students' reading levels.

Mid-South Promise Partnership

Beverly White introduced the Mid-South Promise Partnership, a new regional initiative through which the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism, the Louisiana Serve Commission, and the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service share ideas, provide peer support, and work together on furthering the goals of America's Promise. The Kellogg Foundation has provided funding for this initiative.

Marsha Meeks Kelly, the Mississippi Commission's Executive Director, on behalf of Rod Risley of Phi Theta Kappa, expressed the commitment of community colleges in Mississippi to work on the goals of America's Promise. She praised the work of the Corporation's staff office director Roktabija Abdul-Azeez, Board member Juanita Doty, and Inspector General Luise Jordan.

Adjournment

Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting.