

**Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
September 21, 2005**

The Board of Directors convened in Washington, D.C. at the Wyndham Hotel. The following members of the Corporation's Board were present:

Stephen Goldsmith, Chair
Cynthia Burleson
Mark Gearan
Dorothy Johnson
Carol Kinsley
Mimi Mager
William Schambra
Leona White Hat
Donna Williams

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on June 28, 2005. (Transcript, 7-8).

The Board approved the five-year strategic plan's transmittal to OMB and thereafter to Congress (Transcript, 16-29).

The Board approved a delegation of grantmaking authority to the Chief Executive Officer (Transcript, 33-39).

The Board approved a resolution directing the CEO to give a high priority to Hurricane Katrina relief, consistent with building a sustainable local capacity, enlarging the Corporation's national leadership in volunteering and service, and maintaining support for existing programs and strong accountability practices. (Transcript, 66-70).

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Stephen Goldsmith opened the meeting by noting that the meeting was taking place in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and that the Board was aware of the important role national and community service has in helping the Gulf Coast recover.

Mr. Goldsmith praised the continuing improvements in efficiency, and effectiveness, and credibility under CEO David Eisner's leadership and tied that progress to positive signs that Congress will fund the Corporation at the level requested by the President, to sustain the substantial increase from several years ago. He indicated that the Corporation was pursuing the possibility of redirecting unexpended funds to the Katrina response effort, and expressed hope that supplemental appropriations would be made available to take advantage of the Corporation's ability to leverage Federal resources.

Mr. Goldsmith reported substantial progress on rulemaking and the strategic plan. He indicated that the Board was receiving high-quality metrics from the CEO to better enable it to oversee the Corporation's operations.

SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Strategy, Management, and Governance Committee Report

In Jacob Lew's absence, Mr. Goldsmith reported that the Corporation is making good progress in improving its grants management process, responding to grantees in a more timely fashion and reducing a backlog in grant closeouts. Monitoring has been increased, and the eGrants system has been improved. The Corporation has developed a common risk assessment tool to identify grantees in need of closer scrutiny. On financial management, the Corporation is now "green" in seven of nine categories, and making improvements in the remaining two areas. He praised Andrew Kleine for leading this improvement. Mr. Goldsmith reported that the National Service Trust is on solid financial footing based on changes agreed upon by Congress and OMB.

Mr. Goldsmith reported that the Corporation has developed a new performance management system for employees, designed to improve the evaluations of staff and reward outstanding performance with pay. Also, the Corporation has entered into an interchange agreement with OPM facilitating employee movement between the Corporation and other Federal agencies. AmeriCorps has strengthened its management of member positions, and the Corporation is now revisiting the conditions under which grantees may refill positions after an individual member leaves a program.

Mr. Goldsmith concluded by reporting that the overall management, audit, and governance of the Corporation was healthy.

Bill Schambra reported that the Board had followed a fruitful and productive process in developing a new five-year strategic plan that not only meets the requirements of the

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) but is also a document that connects all the Corporation's programs to a set of overriding strategic objectives. The plan includes objectives for the Corporation to achieve with its own resources as well as goals that will involve reaching out to other part of society to mobilize volunteers. The plan articulates the place of service in American national life, both in terms of a national purpose and in the kinds of smaller acts that occur within neighborhoods, local institutions of faith, and community voluntary associations of all kinds. Mr. Schambra noted the contributions of Bob Grimm, LaMonica Shelton, and Susannah Washburn in completing the plan's drafting. He related that the plan was developed through a wide-ranging, inclusive process with many stakeholders, and drew upon 700 comments from the public. He thanked those stakeholders for their contributions, and for their willingness to embrace overarching strategic goals in the plan. The final plan reflects a focus on independent living for seniors as well as the assets that Baby Boomers bring to their communities. The management section was strengthened, as well as a section describing the plan's formulation. Finally, in light of Hurricane Katrina, language was added to highlight and strengthen the plan's discussion of emergency and disaster response.

Mr. Schambra offered, and Dorothy Johnson seconded, a resolution approving the strategic plan and directing the CEO to submit the plan, including non-substantive editorial and formatting changes, to OMB and the Congress, and to disseminate the approved plan widely. Prior to the favorable vote, Ms. Johnson complimented the plan's comprehensive scope and the inclusion of annual targets. Mr. Gearan praised the language reflecting the nation's commitment to service through successive Presidents and Congresses going back decades. He spoke in support of the plan's emphases on putting local communities first, the value of service-learning in building an engaged citizenry, the lifetime experiences of all Baby Boomers, and disadvantaged youth.

Rulemaking Committee

Dorothy Johnson reported that the AmeriCorps rules, passed at the Board's June 28 meeting, are being implemented through outreach and training. The field has responded favorably. Having completed the process, Ms. Johnson indicated that this would be the committee's final report to the Board.

Program Committee

Donna Williams introduced committee members Mimi Mager, Carol Kinsley, and Dorothy Johnson. She indicated that the committee had asked the CEO to give a special report to the full Board regarding Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Regarding the Board's role in grantmaking she reported the committee had reviewed the Board Grants Task Force report from several years ago as well as the Board's practices since, and was now recommending that the Board focus on setting the general direction of grantmaking and programming while leaving the day-to-day operations to the CEO. Now that a new strategic plan is in place, the Board is in a position to step back as the staff executes the

day-to-day plan. Ms. Williams noted that the National Academy of Public Administration had recently recommended this change in Board role. Ms. Williams moved, and Ms. Kinsley seconded, a resolution directing the CEO to submit an annual plan stating the agency's programming priorities in relation to the strategic plan and delegating to the CEO operational responsibilities associated with grantmaking, with reports by the CEO on milestones on an ongoing basis. Before the Board favorably voted, Ms. Kinsley observed that the resolution reflects confidence in the CEO and staff, and the improvements made in grantmaking over the past several years. Mr. Goldsmith concurred with the expression of confidence in management, and noted that the resolution provides the means to ensure accountability in the grantmaking process.

Ms. Williams informed the Board that the Corporation was preparing to release a youth volunteering survey with important findings. Leona White Hat reported that there is a growing interest in service among youth, a very positive development. Ms. Williams concluded the committee's report by noting that the committee had been briefed by the General Counsel on a plan to strengthen background check requirements for program participants who have recurring access to children and other vulnerable populations.

Outreach and Field Communications Committee

Cynthia Burleson reported on behalf of committee chair Henry Lozano and Leona White Hat. The committee is focused on Hurricane Katrina response and the Baby Boomer campaign. On the first topic, Ms. Burleson reported that the USA Freedom Corps website has been redesigned, with a new volunteer search engine to make it easier for Americans to access opportunities to respond. The Corporation has engaged in intense outreach with Volunteer Match, United Way, Youth Service America, Hands On Network, the Points of Light Foundation, American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the state commissions. The Corporation has established a Hurricane Katrina volunteer support fund to accept donations to support volunteers in the Gulf Coast. Additionally, Home Depot donated \$400,000 to support the relief effort through national service. The National Association of Broadcasters is co-sponsoring a recruitment campaign just for this effort.

The Corporation has launched a national public service advertising campaign to increase the level of volunteering among Baby Boomers, launched in conjunction with the upcoming White House Conference on Aging.

The communications committee will work with the board and staff to develop an optimal roll-out plan for the strategic plan and its major initiatives.

Carol Kinsley praised the public affairs staff for doing an outstanding job, particularly in increasing the name recognition of the AmeriCorps program across the country. CEO David Eisner singled out Sandy Scott, Acting Director of Public Affairs, and Tim McManus, manager of communication activities, for their work in this area.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

CEO David Eisner extended gratitude to the thousands of national service participants who are helping in the Gulf Coast hurricane relief effort, both in the states directly affected and the states hosting dislocated citizens. The Corporation is working very hard to support state commissions and other national service resources to build the capacity of volunteers and the nonprofit sector at large to participate in the relief and rebuilding. The Corporation is also supporting the recruitment and coordination of national activities around volunteering and service, with the understanding that the main objective is to drive down resources to the local grassroots level. A key goal is to provide flexibility to the extent practicable to existing programs that are focusing on the relief efforts. The Corporation is pursuing re-deployment of available fiscal year 2005 funds to augment existing grants, as well as identifying other funds either through an interagency agreement with FEMA or through supplemental appropriations.

Currently the Corporation is supporting 5,761 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants in the relief effort providing social services, mass care provisions, coordinating shelter operations, managing volunteers, debris cleanup, and also supporting Red Cross, FEMA, and state and local agencies. Senior Corps volunteers are focusing on shelter operations, meal provision, public school assistance, housing arrangements and referral, blood drives, call center staffing, and general support to state agency efforts.

The Corporation is working very hard on the coordination of volunteer and philanthropic contributions as part of the National Response Plan in support of FEMA, in coordination with USA Freedom Corps. This involves managing and supporting unaffiliated volunteers through a national network, supporting companies and organizations with groups of volunteers through a national resource center linking them to volunteer connector organizations, supporting corporate in-kind contributions in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, referring cash contributors to state disaster funds or the Bush-Clinton Relief Fund. The Corporation is working to ensure that small nonprofit, faith-based, and civic organizations are incorporated into national planning, with close collaboration with America's Promise, United Way, Youth Service America, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, Habitat for Humanity, youth corps programs, and others. The Corporation is also looking more long-term at the underlying social and moral challenges highlighted in the hurricane's devastation, and the role for national and community service to address those issues.

In response to a question from Carol Kinsley, Sandy Scott reported on a collaboration involving Good Morning America to help rebuild Pass Christian, a town of 7,000 in the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In addition, the Corporation is working with the Today Show to build Habitat for Humanity homes at Rockefeller Plaza for transport to the Gulf Coast region. AmeriCorps members are involved prominently in both projects.

Dottie Johnson expressed concern that the national relief effort not minimize or reduce support for the work of nonprofit organizations that are not part of the Katrina relief

effort. Mr. Eisner reported that the Congress was expected to approve supplemental appropriations earmarked for the hurricane relief effort.

Ms. Mager expressed hope that additional funds would be used to give greater attention and utilization to programs like AmeriCorps VISTA , which is the Corporation's only full-time anti-poverty program.

Ms. Williams reinforced the need to follow sound financial management practices in connection with any influx of new funds.

Mr. Gearan expressed that the Board heartily accepts the President's challenge to the Corporation to be the lead volunteer agency in this national effort and that we have prepared for this critical moment in time by strengthening our management, policy development, and programming. At the suggestion of Chairman Goldsmith, this was formalized as a resolution directing the CEO to give a high priority to Hurricane Katrina relief, consistent with building a sustainable local capacity, enlarging the Corporation's national leadership in volunteering and service, and maintaining support for existing programs and strong accountability practices. The Board approved the resolution without objection.

Mr. Gearan public acknowledged an inspiring convocation address given recently to students at Hobart and William Smith Colleges by Rosie Mauk, Director of AmeriCorps.

Public Comment

There was no public comment offered.

Adjournment

Chairman Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.