

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**May 20, 2008**  
**4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m., EST**

The Board of Directors convened in Washington, D.C. The following members of the Board were present:

Stephen Goldsmith, Chair  
Vincent Juaristi, Vice Chair  
Donna Williams

Jacob Lew  
Rick Hill  
Stan Soloway

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held February 5, 2008. (Transcript, 13).

The Board passed a resolution commending the conveners of the ServiceNation Summit for bringing together leaders to focus on lifelong service and volunteering. (Transcript, 15).

## **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Board Chair Stephen Goldsmith opened the meeting by expressing the Board's appreciation for the hard work of Corporation staff and the field as the Corporation's programs continue to expand and the nation's commitment to volunteerism grows. He noted several recent successes, including: the release of a longitudinal study showing the long-term positive impact of AmeriCorps service; the Corporation's expedited grant-making process enabling awards to be made substantially earlier than in previous years; the Corporation's staying abreast of progress and trends in volunteerism as evidenced by Learn and Serve's social media grant competition; and the enthusiasm for national service demonstrated in AmeriCorps Week events around the country and the Pro Bono Summit.

Mr. Goldsmith identified two remaining management issues of concern to the Board: (1) management of the S&E budget; and (2) technology challenges.

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

David Eisner, CEO, highlighted some of the Corporation's recent triumphs, including new recruitment campaigns for national service, AmeriCorps Week, improved grantmaking practices, a strong AmeriCorps portfolio, the release of a longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members, new pathways to service such as the Web 2.0 initiative, and upcoming events, including the National Conference in Atlanta and the Learn and Serve Challenge.

He noted that IT challenges have hindered the ability of Corporation staff to make grants, but that the Corporation has a plan for addressing the issue, the steps of which will be outlined for the staff in the coming days. Likewise, the Corporation is working to overcome the budget challenges, but even as the FY08 challenges are resolved, it will need to continue to closely monitor its budget in anticipation of a probable continuing resolution in FY09. He thanked the Board for their focus on helping the Corporation to overcome these two challenges, and lauded the Corporation staff for the continued progress of the organization despite these hurdles.

## **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

Mr. Goldsmith moved to adopt the minutes of the February 5, 2008 Board meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

## **Report on ServiceNation**

Stan Soloway gave a report on a presentation made to the Board by John Bridgeland and Alan Khazei regarding a summit scheduled for September by the ServiceNation campaign. While the Board cannot endorse ServiceNation's activities, Mr. Soloway expressed that the Board is impressed with the enthusiasm associated with ServiceNation.

He offered the following resolution into the record:

*Whereas, John Bridgeland and Alan Khazei today, in a presentation to the Board of Directors, offered a vision and strategy to reinvigorate the national debate around service and volunteering; and*

*Whereas, there is growing evidence of the power of service to transform those serving and those communities served; and*

*Whereas, leaders of this country in the private sector, in education, in state houses and the Halls of Congress, in philanthropy, and in the media, are recognizing the crucial role service plays in solving critical national and global problems; and*

*Whereas, a ServiceNation Summit is scheduled for September, 2008 to convene local and national leaders to expand opportunities to serve and to debate policy initiatives relating to service and volunteering;*

*It is hereby resolved, that the Board of Directors for the Corporation for National and Community Service commends the conveners of the ServiceNation Summit in bringing together leaders from all walks of American life to focus on lifelong service as a key strategy for building citizenship, addressing our nation's most critical problems, and strengthening the fabric of our nation.*

The Board approved the resolution by acclamation.

## **Committee Reports**

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

Committee Chair Jack Lew reported that the MAG committee met on May 15, and focused their discussions on the Corporation's IT and budget challenges. He related that the Corporation faced a \$6 million projected shortfall in its Salaries and Expenses (S&E) budget at the end of the second quarter of FY08. The Committee reviewed the measures the Corporation is undertaking to resolve the issue, including reducing discretionary expenditures such as travel and the possibility of a transfer of funds pending discussions with Congress. He noted that the S&E challenges have been compounded by the expense of addressing IT needs. He expressed the confidence of the Committee that the Corporation is treating both issues with the urgency and focus they warrant.

Mr. Lew reported that the Committee met with the Inspector General and reviewed the status of a number of issues, including some outstanding items awaiting close-out in the audit process. The Committee has directed the CEO to prioritize close-out of outstanding audit items.

Mr. Lew related that the Committee reviewed the government-wide financial metrics and the status of the strategic plan, and that there did not appear to be any issues with either. The Corporation is currently reviewing the strategic plan's measures with OMB, and the Committee

anticipates that any recommendations regarding the plan will be developed prior to the September Board meeting for the Board to consider.

### **Strategic Partnerships Committee**

Committee Chair Vince Juaristi reported that in the Committee's meeting they discussed the Committee's mission and goals, and compiled performance metrics to measure their success. He identified three objectives for the Committee: (1) facilitating partnerships, including promoting pro bono participation to the magnitude of \$1 billion; (2) positioning the Corporation as a leader within the volunteer community, especially during the upcoming transition of administrations; and (3) encouraging citizenship, including encouraging volunteerism through viral messaging using social networking technologies. In accomplishing the first goal, the recent Pro Bono summit helped to secure commitments of approximately \$118 million from the corporate sector.

Mr. Juaristi reported that the Committee has been working on consistent messaging for the upcoming conference, and will be focusing on three themes: (1) optimism regarding the benefits of service, as recently confirmed by the longitudinal study's findings; (2) the Board's commitment to a smooth transition to the next administration to ensure that the programs can continue to progress; and (3) praise for the hard work of those engaged in national service through Corporation-supported programs.

Mr. Juaristi related that the Committee will be considering going forward the many assets offered by Freedom Corps, and the development of a plan should Freedom Corps not survive the administration change on how and to what extent the Corporation would be able to potentially adopt some of the efforts it currently manages, such as volunteer.gov and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

### **Program and Evaluation Committee**

Committee Chair Donna Williams reported that in the Committee's May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting they were given updates on Learn and Serve America, including the Corporation's plans to bring in a consultant to advise on repositioning Learn and Serve, strategies for integrating service learning into the other CNCS programs, and three new Learn and Serve grant competitions: the Indian Tribe grant competition, the school-based grant competition, and the higher education social media grant competition. She noted that the higher education social media NOFA had a good response, and that the Committee is pleased with its potential to bring in new partners to help the Corporation discover innovative ways to encourage college students to serve through social media.

She congratulated the programs for properly implementing the Board's annual plans, particularly noting AmeriCorps State and National's success in moving the grant application and review process forward by several months as encouraged by the Board. She reported that AmeriCorps grant announcements were made on May 16<sup>th</sup>, and that the quality of the applications have improved. She noted one variation from the annual plans: due to unanticipated challenges,

NCCC was unable to meet the originally-scheduled deadline for the opening of a new campus in Vicksburg, MS, which is being delayed until March of 2009.

The Committee was briefed on several issues by the IG, including the prohibition on outside employment for VISTAs. They were also briefed on efforts to ensure full-time AmeriCorps members receive appropriate health care coverage during their terms of service. The Committee discussed the new Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, and the potential benefits it may offer to AmeriCorps members.

She gave a summary of the findings of the Corporation's scientific longitudinal study on the long-term impacts of AmeriCorps service on members, which found that AmeriCorps generates civic leaders, is a pipeline to careers in public service, and that AmeriCorps service has an even greater impact on minority members and those from disadvantaged communities.

Mr. Goldsmith echoed the significance of the findings of the longitudinal study, adding that the Corporation should continue to focus on leveraging volunteers so that more Americans will engage in and benefit from sustained volunteer activities. He reported that Rick Hill has agreed to serve as Board liaison for the health care discussion. He commended the Corporation for their work in having AmeriCorps included in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, and encouraged further work on outreach to the field to ensure members would understand their options under this program.

### **Panel on Highlights, Impact, and Future Potential of AmeriCorps Week**

**Millicent Williams**, Executive Director of the D.C. Commission on National and Community Service, gave an overview of the goals of the Commission through the AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve Programs, and their goals for AmeriCorps Week. During AmeriCorps Week, the Commission hosted the D.C. Conference on Service and Leadership, which included a component called "Our Life After AmeriCorps" in which members completing their terms of service could plan their next steps. They closed AmeriCorps week with the All-Corps Service Day, an opportunity for AmeriCorps members and community volunteers from other programs to join together in service. She related that the Commission has been increasingly successful in the District. She expressed that AmeriCorps week is a good opportunity for a community to demonstrate the many ways to serve and the many benefits a community may receive through service.

Ms. Williams stated that there are three groups who will benefit the most from learning the results of the longitudinal study: (1) elected officials, who are increasingly aware of the benefits of service as national service alumni are taking jobs in government offices and educating their colleagues on the benefits of government partnering with the service community; (2) school systems; and (3) the for-profit community, which can help sustain programs with non-federal support. She emphasized that AmeriCorps alumni typically indicate their AmeriCorps experience on applications to work in the D.C. government.

Ms. Williams, based on her experience as a former Community Emergency Response Team

("CERT") manager, reported that in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita she observed that people had been unprepared for a disaster. She worked to increase CERT training in the community. She related that the D.C. government is supportive of CERT efforts, and that CERT training will soon be available in some public schools.

**Sally Prouty**, CEO of the Corps Network, gave an overview of the history, size, status, and goals of the Corps Network, a national member association of 122 Corps programs based on the Civil Conservation Corps programs of the 1930's, including the central goal of Corps programs to reengage young people through service. Many, but not all, members of Corps programs are AmeriCorps members. She spoke in greater detail about the Civic Justice Corps program, a demonstration project engaging formerly incarcerated people.

She related the activities of some of the Corps programs during AmeriCorps Week, and noted that AmeriCorps Week was an opportunity for state and community leaders who are not usually involved in service to witness the benefits of the Corps programs, engage in service, and interact with members. Additionally, it was an opportunity for communities to honor the work of Corps members who may otherwise feel unrecognized.

She noted that the Corporation's longitudinal study showing the long-term benefits of service will help Corps Network programs become more sustainable by enabling them to garner more non-federal support, however, she stated that evaluation and study results generally have more impact when the audience understands who is performing the service, the service they're performing, and the impact on the community. She noted that potential employers of AmeriCorps alumni may benefit from learning the findings of the longitudinal study.

### **Public Comment**

**Kelly Daly**, representing the CNCS Employees' Union, AFSCME Local 2027, related the frustration of the staff dealing with the IT challenges. She reported that staff are concerned that they are unable to perform their duties for grantees and members because the IT systems repeatedly shut down. She expressed that while plans may be in place to repair the problems, there is insufficient communication to staff on what those plans are, and when they will become effective. Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Lew emphasized that both the executive team and the Board understand the urgency of resolving the IT challenges and are devoting considerable time discussing and generating solutions.

She stated on behalf of the union the hope that reductions in force, furloughs, or eliminating the cost of living adjustment do not play into the Corporation's plan to resolve budget challenges, particularly in consideration of the country's economic state. Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Eisner confirmed that should reductions in force, furloughs, or the elimination of the cost of living adjustment become necessary, the CEO would first consult with the Board. Mr. Eisner clarified that the \$6 million figure articulated as the projected shortfall reflects the difference between what FY07's services would have cost and what the Corporation was appropriated for S&E in FY08; to reach the budget mark for the year, the Corporation must make up a \$3 million gap. Ms. Daly offered the services of the union to reach out to Congress.

**Anita Barrett**, Executive Director of SEANet, the national network of the directors of Learn and Serve America K-12 school-based programs, addressed the Board-approved strategic goal of engaging 5 million college students in service and having service-learning components in 50% of all of America's schools by 2010. She related that this goal had led state education agencies, among others, to strive to sustain and expand service learning, giving examples of one state that now requires service-learning to be part of the social studies curricula and another (Florida) that has declared April to be "Service Learning Month." She discussed details surrounding the upcoming Learn and Serve Challenge, and encouraged the Board to accept the challenge on Oct. 6-12. She stated that to make Learn and Serve more effective, they would need additional funding and more publicity.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 5:16 p.m.