

**Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
February 27, 2001**

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

Dorothy Johnson, Chair
Amy Achor
Juanita Doty
Thomas Ehrlich
Toni Fay
Chris Gallagher
Mark Gearan
Carol Kinsley (via telephone)
Les Lenkowsky
Bob Rogers
Alan Solomont

Stephen Goldsmith participated at the Board's invitation.

OFFICIAL ACTIONS

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on September 27, 2000.
(Transcript, 10).

The Board approved the Corporation's annual operating plan for fiscal year 2001.
(Transcript, 42-49).

The Board approved in principle a concept paper concerning the National Service Leadership Institute, with the understanding that the Planning and Evaluation Committee would develop an actual plan for subsequent review by the Board. (Transcript, 72).

SUMMARY OF BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Swearing-in of New Members

The following new members were sworn in: Toni Fay and Mark Gearan.

Chief Executive Officer Report

Wendy Zenker, Acting Chief Executive Officer, recognized the contributions of Board members and staff during the transition period and reported on (1) upcoming decisions on applications for Learn and Serve America and AmeriCorps grants, and (2) the National Conference on Community Volunteering and National Service scheduled for June 28-July 1.

Executive Committee Report

Dorothy Johnson reported that Art Naperstek will be stepping down as Chair of the Communications Committee. She described the Executive Committee's interest in reviewing the faith-based initiatives engaged in by the Corporation and, to that end, supported the convening of a group of faith-based organizations to gain their perspectives.

Management, Audit, and Governance Committee Report

Chris Gallagher began by noting that the Corporation has made enormous progress toward resolving past financial reporting difficulties. He described the capabilities of Momentum, the Corporation's new financial management system. He noted that the Corporation has implemented a Web-based recruiting system. He described the progress made on State Commission administrative standards as a means of devolving authority to the local level while maintaining accountability. He updated the Board on the Corporation's progress in implementing a new grants management system and invited Luise Jordan, the Inspector General, to report on the audit of the Corporation's 2000 financial statements.

Ms. Jordan said that, while the final audit report would not be issued until March 1, it looked like the Corporation had made significant progress in correcting many of the past problems. The audit found significant improvements in internal controls, with the Corporation having corrected many of the material weaknesses previously identified. Grants management was likely to be the sole material weakness in the final report. She thanked the Board's audit committee and Corporation management and staff for their work.

Mr. Gallagher detailed the Committee's close involvement in the audit process over the past year and thanked Ms. Jordan for her contributions and cooperation.

Ms. Zenker expressed her thanks to Ms. Jordan and to KPMG, the firm that conducted the audit. She reinforced Mr. Gallagher's point that improved communications among all involved contributed to the improved audit outcome. She pledged continued progress on grants management, particularly by using technology to address challenges in that area, and continued high performance in the area of financial management.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Bob Rogers, the past Board chair, and Ms. Johnson, the present Board chair, for their leadership of the Board and for their participation as members of the Committee. He noted that the Committee would like Ms. Jordan's input in developing the new grants management system.

Ms. Johnson recognized the work of the Committee over the past several years in helping to achieve the improvements in financial management.

Communications Committee Report

Amy Achor reported on a briefing provided by Kevin Avery, the Director of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, noting changes in the leadership of several Congressional committees as well as upcoming appropriations hearings. She described a new public relations campaign, using public service announcements on television, radio, and elsewhere, to increase awareness of the Corporation's website and its new web-based recruitment system.

Ms. Zenker added that the Corporation is undertaking a national marketing strategy to increase public awareness of the Americorps.org website. Juanita Doty noted that the fact that PSAs could be tailored to a particular State was very useful to State Commissions. Toni Fay asked that specific information be shared to ensure that the solicitation of PSA opportunities is coordinated.

Planning and Evaluation Committee Report

Tom Ehrlich reported that the longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members is progressing well. He mentioned the Committee's discussion of the new silver scholarship program for seniors and other new Presidential initiatives.

He described the upcoming National Conference on Community Volunteering and National Service, which the Corporation is hosting along with the Points of Light Foundation, America's Promise, United Way, Communities in Schools, and the American Association of State Service Commissions. The Corporation is also planning a gathering on research on national service.

Mr. Ehrlich reported on the Committee's discussions around ensuring that AmeriCorps members receive training in citizenship and that they remain active, engaged citizens after their experience in AmeriCorps.

He presented the Corporation's annual operating plan for fiscal year 2001. Ms. Fay asked for a summary of the top three or four objectives in the plan. Mr. Ehrlich noted that each of the Corporation's three program areas (AmeriCorps, Learn & Serve America, and the Senior Corps) lists its major objectives, with the Corporation's overarching theme of using the relatively limited federal funds to leverage resources to increase the impact of national service. Mr. Gallagher added that this year's plan incorporates some flexibility given the change in Administration. Ms. Fay urged that image building or branding be a top priority objective.

Alan Solomont suggested that continued attention be given to expanding participation in the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs by eliminating income testing for participants, and more generally, to policy changes that would expand service opportunities for seniors.

Mr. Ehrlich related that the Board had presented a set of recommendations to the Congress and the new Administration.

Mr. Ehrlich described a concept paper involving the increased role of the Points of Light Foundation in supporting leadership training. The Corporation developed the National Service Leadership Institute, which has served more than 6,000 individuals in leadership roles. The concept paper envisions a cooperative venture with the Foundation. An expansion would likely require private support. Bob Goodwin, Chief Executive Office of the Foundation, stated that leadership training can make the difference between effective and ineffective programming, and that involvement in this endeavor would advance the Foundation's mission in conjunction with volunteer centers nationwide. Mr. Ehrlich and Mr. Goodwin discussed issues about managing and securing financial support for such a cooperative venture.

The Board discussed the following in connection with the concept paper: (1) the importance of making scholarships available for those unable to afford leadership training; (2) the specific niche that this training would fill; (3) the specific target audiences; (4) how the training would accommodate differences in what works in different communities; (5) the need to complement rather than duplicate existing leadership training; (6) the importance of considering the financial aspects of this proposal; (7) the need to ensure that expanded leadership training would not detract from efforts to provide training in other areas, such as youth commissioner development;

Mr. Goodwin stated that the planning was in the preliminary stages and that he expected that a more detailed business plan -- developed with input from collaborating organizations like America's Promise -- would be upcoming. Mr. Ehrlich said that, given the constraints on Corporation employees, the Foundation would be responsible for securing funds for its portion of the activities, beginning with funds to support the development of a business plan to be subsequently presented to the Board. Mr. Goodwin stated that the expectation was that the Corporation would maintain its level of commitment for leadership training and that the Foundation would raise, and be responsible for, additional funds, but that the financial details would be detailed in future proposals.

Mark Gearan asked whether there had been any discussions with Congress on this. Ms. Zenker advised that the Corporation had deferred such discussion until the Board had considered the proposal; Mr. Ehrlich noted that Congress had generally supported public-private partnerships involving the Corporation and would likely support this initiative as well. Mr. Goodwin observed that a critical mass, including foundations, was coming to the same conclusion that leadership training merits support. Mr. Rogers noted that a new organization, Learning Community for Leaders, will serve as a clearinghouse to help make sure that these types of initiatives complement each other.

Reports to the Board

Stephen Goldsmith reported that the President's transition team had received a great deal of information about the Corporation and that the Board's plans were consistent with the President's vision. He alluded to the President's inaugural address which recognized a role for government but also the need for citizens to help each other to address the needs of those whom prosperity has left behind. The Corporation's programs, particularly its outreach to faith-based and other nonprofit organizations, help to accomplish this. He described the objectives of the White House Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives as (1) eliminating discrimination against faith-based organizations in competing for federal funds; (2) developing a compassion capital fund to increase support for programs focusing on after-school activities, literacy, and the needs of children of prisoners; and helping small grassroots organizations leverage government funds to increase their capacity. National service can play a crucial role in extending the capacity of grassroots organizations by increasing their ability to recruit and use volunteers. He supported the idea of convening a group of faith-based and small community-based organizations to draw lessons from the experiences with the Corporation.

Ms. Doty expressed her support for reaching out to local organizations who have not been able to access federal resources and thanked Mr. Goldsmith and the President for their leadership.

Mr. Goodwin described the Points of Light Foundation's mission to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service that addresses serious social problem, through three strategies: (1) advocacy; (2) building and supporting the infrastructure of nonprofit organizations; and (3) developing model programs. He praised the relationship between the Corporation and the Foundation and said that there was now a seamless coordinated effort to maximize their resources in the overall campaign of citizen engagement.

Peter Gallagher spoke on behalf of America's Promise and its mission of ensuring that all young Americans have (1) caring adults in their lives as parents, mentors, tutors, coaches; (2) safe spaces and structured activities in which to learn and grow; (3) a healthy start and a healthy lifestyle; (4) an effective education; and (5) an opportunity to give back to their communities. America's Promise and its 600 private commitment makers

help to leverage resources and have worked closely with the Corporation, in particular through the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows program.

Bill Milliken spoke on behalf of Communities in Schools, which is now working with 1,500 schools nationwide. Lt. Col. Reginald Beaty, also of Communities in Schools, spoke about his dropping out of school before Communities in Schools street workers brought him back to school. He went on to graduate first in his class, earn an Army ROTC scholarship, serve as a Lieutenant in the Army, teach at Middle Tennessee State University, and receive recognition as the best ROTC instructor in the country. In 1995 he was selected as Oklahoma's Civic Man of the Year. He now works for Communities in Schools and credits the program with turning his life around.

Rosie Mauk spoke on behalf of the American Association of State Service Commissions (AASSC) and presented its paper For All to Serve. She introduced Eric Bing, newly appointed Chair of the Texas Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. AASSC now has 42 States that are members or in the process of becoming members.

Marc Freedman of Public-Private Ventures began by reinforcing the benefits of organizations like Communities in Schools, referring to a study of the Big Brothers-Big Sisters program which demonstrated substantial benefits to the children in reducing drug use, school truancy, and violent behavior. He described the nation's changing demographics, with an ever-growing number of Americans over the age of 65. He praised the Corporation's leadership in tapping this resource for the benefit of communities and described the Experience Corps Project, which supports innovative approaches to fostering senior service. He added that while the United Kingdom is earmarking \$300 million into an Experience Corps in that country, there has been some resistance in this country based on fears that existing programs might lose resources. He urged the development of more innovative approaches, such as the President's proposed Silver Scholarship program.

The Board discussed the upcoming meeting in Jackson, Mississippi in May.

Public Comment

Mike Meneer, a former AmeriCorps member and now director of AmeriCorps Alums, Inc., spoke about that organization's efforts to keep alumni of AmeriCorps engaged in service. He described a planned summit of national alumni leaders. Alan Solomont noted that the organization has created an award given annual to an AmeriCorps member in the name of former Corporation CEO Eli Segal. Mr. Rogers suggested that the Corporation consider ways to work with AmeriCorps Alums to leverage their respective resources.

Adjournment

Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting.