

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**September 16, 2008**  
**4:00 p.m. – 5:00 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  
Eric Tanenblatt  
Laysha Ward

Mark Gearan  
Julie F. Cummings  
Alan Solomont  
Jacob Lew  
Stan Soloway

**OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

Chair Stephen Goldsmith swore in new Board members Eric Tannenblatt and Laysha Ward. (Transcript, 3-5).

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held May 20, 2008. (Transcript, 10).

The Board passed a resolution to make technical changes to the Strategic Plan's metrics. (Transcript, 20).

The Board passed a resolution in honor of the Corporation's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. (Transcript, 25).

The Board passed a resolution recognizing Jack Lew. (Transcript, 36).

## **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Chairman Steve Goldsmith opened the meeting by swearing in new Board members Eric Tanenblatt and Laysha Ward.

Mr. Goldsmith remarked on recent events featuring national service, including the ServiceNation summit September 11-12, an event hosted on September 8 by President Bush at the White House honoring USA Freedom Corps and volunteering, and a Time magazine feature story on national service. September marked over a million individuals having received the President's Volunteer Service Award, as well as the introduction of the Serve America Act by Senators Kennedy and Hatch. Mr. Goldsmith noted that as the Corporation nears its 15-year anniversary, there is evident enthusiasm and bi-partisan support for the agency's mission.

Mr. Goldsmith observed that this meeting will be the last under the current administration, and the last for CEO David Eisner. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Goldsmith praised Mr. Eisner's service as CEO and the progress the Corporation made under his leadership, including improved employee morale, customer satisfaction, and financial management. Mr. Eisner announced his plans to resign from his position as CEO in November following the election. The Board has asked Nicola Goren, the Corporation's Chief of Staff, to assume the role of Acting CEO upon Mr. Eisner's departure.

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

Mr. Goldsmith moved to adopt the minutes of the May 20, 2008 Board meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

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

David Eisner, CEO, welcomed the new Board members. Mr. Eisner reflected on the Corporation's progress during his tenure, as well as its strength and preparation for the next administration. Mr. Eisner recalled that when he joined the Corporation, he emphasized a three-tiered approach to improving the agency: (1) restore trust and credibility; (2) focus on managing to accountability; and (3) focus on customer service. Crediting a strong customer base and a mission-driven work force, he noted advancement on all three fronts, leading to improved trust and credibility among grantees, stakeholders, and in Congress, as evidenced by the nearly unopposed passage of a reauthorization bill in the House Education Committee and the introduction of the Kennedy-Hatch Serve America Act. He expressed further pride in the Corporation's having been recently listed in the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government publication. In regards to managing to accountability, he reported that the Corporation had tied for the cleanest audit of any federal agency in D.C. in the prior year. On cross-government financial metrics, the Corporation has moved from almost all red to almost all green.

In regards to customer service, Mr. Eisner noted the strength and integrity of the competitive grants processes, the transparency of which has been noted by those who have gone through it,

and which have been evidenced in a steadily diminishing number of reconsideration requests. Despite the complexity of the Corporation's programs, the Corporation's significant streamlining efforts have reduced unnecessary burden on grantees, and customer service marks have been high. He recognized the increasingly high quality of the portfolios across the grant programs as a result of the continually improving competitive grant-making and grant oversight processes. Mr. Eisner reflected that part of the strength of the Corporation comes from its multi-layered collaborations with the field; in areas of training, technical assistance, policy, and basic understanding of the national service sector, the agency's intellectual capital stems both from within the agency and from the accumulated knowledge of the field.

Mr. Eisner remarked that the single most challenging issue for the Corporation approaching the transition is the lack of staff. He advised that, going into the transition, the Corporation should focus on three areas to enhance transparency: (1) customer service; (2) accountability; and (3) credibility. He articulated his confidence in Nicola Goren to lead the agency effectively, praising her past experience at the Corporation as an attorney who shepherded the agency through AmeriCorps rulemaking, and as his Chief of Staff.

In his final two months at the Corporation, Mr. Eisner plans to focus on preparing for the transition, and budget and technology issues. The Corporation recently undertook several technology upgrades, and is making plans to ensure that its servers and systems are hosted in a professional managed service environment.

### **Recognizing the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Corporation for National and Community Service**

Mark Gearan offered a resolution in honor of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Corporation of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps program (Resolution 2008-09). The Board approved the resolution by voice vote without objection.

### **Committee Reports**

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

Committee Chair Jack Lew reported that in the Committee's recent meeting they reviewed the Corporation's year-end budget situation and the implications of having moved from two-year to one-year funding. He related that the Corporation had managed one-year funding well, with minimal lapse. Looking forward, the Committee is focused on the impact of a likely continuing resolution; he forecast a difficult year for the Corporation financially in terms of projecting beyond the cost of living adjustment.

He reported that the FISMA information security audit showed improvement from last year. He recounted that the financial statement audit also revealed no major issues. In regards to government-wide financial metrics, the Corporation has improved to almost all green, one yellow.

Mr. Lew gave a summary of the Inspector General's meeting with the Committee. Based on the IG's recommendation, the Corporation has issued an anti-fraud policy consisting of policies and

procedures previously articulated in several different documents. The IG also addressed the Corporation's enforcement of the prohibition on VISTAs' working or enrolling in school during their period of service. The Committee has reviewed the IG's concerns and has taken his comments under advisement.

Mr. Lew reported that the Committee determined that the Corporation's Strategic Plan could be improved by making some technical changes to the plan's metrics in those areas where the Corporation exceeded its expectations. These technical amendments, while not policy changes, require a formal resolution by the Board. The Committee also determined that any policy changes in the strategic plan should be made in the context of the transition and in light of the next administration's policies. The Board considered a resolution to adopt the technical changes to the Corporation's Strategic Plan metrics (Resolution 2008-08). The Board adopted the resolution by voice vote without objection.

Mr. Lew reported that the Committee discussed the Corporation's ongoing technology issues and continues to pay close attention to the availability of physical facilities and the quality and reliability of the services we provide to the field. Mr. Lew noted that the Corporation has a plan in progress to address these issues which the Committee will continue to follow.

### **Strategic Partnerships Committee**

Committee Chair Mark Gearan summarized the Committee's discussion of the launch of the Billion + Change campaign, which has already raised about \$400 million in pledges of pro bono service to nonprofits in the United States. The campaign, which was recently mentioned at a White House event, will continue to work towards its goal of a billion dollars in commitments of pro bono service to nonprofits. Mr. Gearan thanked Shannon Maynard, Executive Director for the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, and other staff for their assistance in promoting the campaign.

Mr. Gearan reported that the Corporation has been working on developing a partnership with Google for Learn and Serve America. He related that the Corporation's upcoming National Conference in San Francisco was given prominent note by Governor Schwarzenegger at the ServiceNation summit. He reported that in August President Bush extended the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to June of 2009, appointed three new members – Jordan Sparks, Betsy King, and Bo Derek – and made a number of reappointments to the Council.

### **Program and Evaluation Committee**

Committee Chair Donna Williams reported that the Committee reviewed expected variances from the FY09 Board-approved annual plans. The Committee looked at the timing of the grant cycle for Learn and Serve America and discussed the possibility of changing it in FY09. She reported that the Vicksburg, MS, NCCC campus opening has been delayed beyond March and expressed the Committee's commitment to following that issue.

Ms. Williams reported that, in cooperation with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Learn and Serve America (LSA) awarded grants totaling \$1 million to six tribal nations to engage tribal youth in a variety of anti-meth efforts, including participating in a local methamphetamine task force. LSA also awarded approximately \$2 million in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) grants to support projects that prompt students to use knowledge and skills learned in school to address community challenges. She related that LSA also awarded a total of \$2.3 million in grants to facilitate the engagement of college students in service through the use of social media. Ms. Williams provided information on the Learn and Serve Challenge, scheduled for October 6-12, which supports the national goal of engaging 5 million students in service and ensuring that half of America's K-12 schools are using service-learning in their curricula by 2010.

Ms. Williams reported that VISTA staff are currently working on a rulemaking to move several decades worth of policy into regulation. The Committee has asked VISTA staff to re-examine the current policy of restricting employment and enrollment in school outside of VISTA service. VISTA staff will use the rulemaking process to consult the field and other stakeholders to gather the broadest input to inform this discussion.

Ms. Williams shared some information about the Corporation's new Strategic Advisor on Native American Affairs, Ronald Lessard. Mr. Lessard's appointment fulfills the promise made to tribal leaders four years ago by David Eisner. She reported that the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service is scheduled for Jan. 19, 2009, and will present a tremendous opportunity to welcome the new administration. This year the goal is to engage 600,000 people in service on MLK Day, a 20% increase over 2008. Ms. Williams reported that the AmeriCorps Final Rule is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on September 17, and that the National Conference is scheduled to occur June 22-24, 2009.

### **Honoring Departing Board Members**

Mr. Goldsmith announced the departure of several Board members, including Richard Hill, Tom Osborne, and Leona White Hat, and the upcoming expiration of Jack Lew's term. Prior to the meeting, the Board passed resolutions honoring Ms. White Hat, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Osborne, none of whom were in attendance at the meeting. Mr. Goldsmith offered a resolution in honor of Jack Lew (Resolution 2008-10). The resolution was approved by voice vote without objection.

Mr. Lew expressed pride in the success of the Corporation, AmeriCorps, and national service over the fifteen years since he assisted in their initial development. He noted that the national service movement has earned bi-partisan support over time, and thanked Mr. Goldsmith for leading the Board as a bi-partisan and productive group.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Goldsmith adjourned the meeting at 4:42 pm.