

CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY SERVICE
Record of Meeting – September 21, 2010
Hartford, CT

Members Present: N. Berube, D. Briggs, J. Ciarleglio, V. Conroy, W. Dyson, J. Hodgson, E. Janney, C. Kozak, M. Manson, S. Murdoch, A. Ostberg, A. Quiñones, L. Sandiaes, M. Wilcox

Members Absent: J. Barber, I. Black, N. Kokoruda, KJ Singh, V. Wilkinson, S. Zotto

Others: J. Bassett (Training Officer), A. Davis (Executive Assistant), J. Johnson (Executive Director)

Members of the Public: M. Drew (Staff Support for A. Ostberg)

1. Call to Order

W. Dyson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

2. Roll Call

A. Davis read the roll call. Quorum was declared.

3. Introduction of New Commission Members

Diane Briggs and Jason Zwang introduced themselves to the group. Diane is Executive Director of RSVP of Central CT and a VISTA alum. Jason is a UConn grad currently working at New Opportunities Inc. in Waterbury. He comes to the Commission with community service experience. W. Dyson welcomed them both to the commission.

4. Approval of March 17, 2010 & June 25, 2010 Minutes

On a motion made by J. Ciarleglio and seconded by C. Kozak, the minutes of March 17 and June 25, 2010 were approved unanimously.

5. State Office Report – Anne Ostberg, State Director

A. Ostberg introduced herself to the new members. Two items were distributed to the group, 1) "Update: 2011-2015 Strategic Plan Process, and 2) CT AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps Projects (updated 9/17/10). Anne reported that they've had a great summer which included three *United We Serve* events: "Let's Read, Let's Move", Learn and Serve, and Senior Corps Foster Grandparents program. Current press releases include the RSVP Recognition Event and new Corporation for National and Community Service CEO Patrick Corvington is planning a visit to New Haven to visit program sites. She will keep us apprised of the date.

6. Learn & Serve K-12 Report – Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Program Manager

Excited to be in the communities of New London, Stamford, Norwich, EastConn-Windham Region, and New Haven (5 sub grantees). Connecticut is the state with the largest achievement gap. 23 districts were invited to the Governor's summit. Windham has the highest drop out rate. They are working on a school improvement plan. Feel free to visit her agency website at www.ct.gov/sde and go to service learning. You will also find links to their programs.

7. Report on the 2010 Board Institute: D. Briggs and J. Zwang

J. Johnson reported that the 2010 Board Institute/Conference was held in Maryland for all AmeriCorps grantees. There was a state commission track, a training officer track, and a state commission commissioners' track. New Commissioners Diane Briggs and Jason Zwang attended.

D. Briggs reported on the topics of the institute:

- Stewardship. Be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars!!
- Transparency
- New strategic plan focuses were discussed.
- How does one get more \$ into state. Take applications, those who are strong in the focus areas put into competition, the others put into formula.
- \$1M in planning grants
- National initiative – to work closer with states.
- How does your commission run? Brand with AmeriCorps. Focus on just education or should it be broader?

J. Zwang reported:

Transparency was a big issue. Rhode Island focuses more on education in their competitive grants while other states have a broader focus. The Corporation needs to simplify their processes and take charge of what states need to do. There is a huge campaign for "branding". AmeriCorps to be huge by 2017. It is a 150% increase in members anticipated. AmeriCorps PSAs need to be more specific to individual states. A summary from the Board Institute was emailed to Jason, Diane, and Jacqui which was of shared dialogue to everyone across the board. Other states have regional responsibility. The Institute will happen every year to coincide with Commissioner Institute in DC in September. This allows for visiting with your congressional delegation. ASPIRA made their "hill visits" on Thursday, September 16th, to Senators Dodd & Lieberman, as well as Representatives Larson, DeLauro, and Murphy.

8. State Commission Staff Update – Jacqueline Johnson

J. Johnson introduced Jill Bassett as the new Training Officer. Jill is originally from SCSU. She met other training officers at the institute. She will be conducting Program Director training on 9/22 – 9/23.

The Program Officer position (which was previously filled by Jaimy Blazynski) will be filled by Shayla Williams, who will start on 9/24. Jaimy is now filling a different role within the Department of Higher Education. Shayla has been hired in a "trainee" position and will earn the actual title of Program Officer after one year. Shayla comes to us from a position with the City of Hartford.

It is time to think of a new strategic plan. There is a new CEO and it is time to embrace changes. An email was sent to all commissioners back in February or so that included links to things that all commissioners should be signed up for. Jacqui will resend to all.

9. Cross-Stream Event – (possibly) November 19, 2010

It's time to look outside the box, i.e. SeniorCorps. Agnes, Mary, Jacqui, and Jill met. What can we do? We need to highlight our programs. November 19, 2010 was tentatively discussed. The Learn & Serve folks are difficult to capture during the day. The concept/working title is *National Service-Share Your Story*. The program is planned to be an interactive experience with rooms filled with interactive presentations to be held all day, plenary/lunch w/keynote speaker. This will be offered to staff, volunteers, students, VISTA members, EVERYONE, for a sharing event, not a recruiting event. Jason stated this should help w/branding. Jason has some literature as well on branding, i.e. bumper stickers, posters, etc. W. Dyson stated he has an idea of a location for this event. J. Johnson stated a planning committee will be formed. We will solicit suggestions for keynote speakers. V. Conroy suggested the band "May" who tries to inspire community service. We want this to be innovative, PG-13 sexy, address the branding issues. We will also collect non-perishable food items to forward to FoodShare.

10. November Annual Meeting – November 16, 2010

Typically this is geared towards "housekeeping", i.e. meeting schedules. V. Conroy asked who is on the committees. The action plan for the Communications Committee was to talk to colleges/universities, i.e. what do they want/need from the Commission? How do they want to be involved with us? J. Hodgson stated we created the committees so that commissioners can become more involved. We need to engage with programs in our respective communities. We need to develop an elevator speech, one that is comfortable to everyone with one cohesive message. With regard to the Leadership Development Committee, Patti Cohen-Hecht resigned her position with the commission. She has taken a position as Executive Director of a Synagogue in New York.

11. Announcements

None.

12. Adjournment

On a motion made by J. Ciarleglio and seconded by S. Murdoch, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Davis
Executive Assistant