

**SerVermont  
Commission Meeting  
April 10, 2014  
109 State Street  
4<sup>th</sup> floor Conference Room  
Montpelier, VT  
(Approved 7/10/14)**

**Members Present:** Chair Peter Hayward, Lee White, Matt McClain, Jim Coutts started on the phone and joined the group in person later, J. Guy Isabelle, Ryan McLaren, Betsy Ward, and Ben Hayslet and Susan Chessman, ex-officio

**Members on the phone:** Tom Hark and Jacob Borge

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Phil Kolling, Program Officer Sharon Hearne, Robyn Baylor VISTA Project Supervisor

**Guest:** Susan Spaulding, Administration Board and Commission liaison

Chair Peter Hayward called the meeting to order at 10 AM. He asked each member to introduce themselves, tell who they represent, how long they have been on the Commission and to share a service experience since our last meeting.

Peter asked if people had read the draft minutes of the January meeting. Tom made a motion to approve them. Ryan seconded. Motion passed with no dissensions or abstentions.

### **Finalize Commissioner Expectations**

Phil reviewed the Commissioner Expectations document that was discussed at the retreat. Tom motioned to accept the document. Betsy seconded the motion. Phil stressed that the document can be tweaked. Guy asked whether this was modeled after other states. Phil stated that he had borrowed elements from Minnesota and Illinois. Betsy asked whether other states strive for the broad diversity. Phil stated that the diversity was outlined in the regulations. Owen asked how many people are on the Commission. Phil stated 15 but we can have up to 25. He is still working on recruiting more folks. Motion passed with no dissensions or abstentions.

### **Updates**

Phil apologized for having so many updates and suggested that the group should have a monthly check in call specifically for updates. Folks agreed that it was a good idea. There were many suggestions for times and days of the month. Phil will email a doodle poll.

**Mayor's Day-** While the event experience some issues because of all that was going on, it did go off fairly well. Governor Shumlin was at the event with Mayor Hollar from Montpelier and Mayor Louzon from Barre. The Coalition of Mayors signed the proclamation and there were other celebrations around the state. There were a good number of volunteers who attended the event at the Cedar Creek room at the statehouse. Guy, Matt and Susan shared their experiences and positive impressions on how things turned out. Matt suggested that town and city councils should put the event on their meeting agendas next year.

**Guiding Principles for Commissions-** Phil reported that the Governor's staff was okay with exploring the issues outlined. Phil said that there will be more on this issue at a further date.

**Green Up Day-** Phil explained that he had been approached about becoming a partner with Green Up Day because the organization has come under some funding pressures. He explained some of the reasons for that. After exploring the options he decided to expend some funds that were left over to help them ease their funding burden. The match generated as a result of the partnership could be as high as \$12,000. While he understands the potential controversies that come with this partnership he feels that Green Up day could become a great partnering event since they mobilize up to 15,000 volunteers a year, have a long history and have been successful. He has been working with a consultant, Andy Robinson, who is looking at the organization and how it operates. Green Up is a 501c3. Clearly they have not updated their operational model for some time and with some help it could be a win win. Owen stated that he sees many social media opportunities. Susan asked if AmeriCorps members are currently involved. They may be but it is not well documented. Phil sees an opportunity to make the event more than a one day event.

### **Public Service Announcement**

Phil shared that he has PSAs from CNCS and that he will be running them with local stations. Guy asked what had happened to the PSAs that the Governor was promoting. Phil stated that there are actually two that exist and that they had generated match in the past and could do so in the future. Peter suggested that PSA were a good opportunity to solicit corporate support. He also stated that the PSAs should be distributed to all the local access channels.

### **CNCS Budget 2015**

Phil reported that the current proposal has a slight increase for the Commissions, level funds AmeriCorps and zeroes out Senior Corp. Vermont did get the VISTA supervisor money (\$26,000). Guy suggested that the group should keep an eye on the budget because there are many potential implications.

## **Site Visit Report Out**

Phil shared the draft report that was a result of the recent site visit. The visit was conducted by CNCS staffer Doug Goesky. He outlined the eleven issues that were reported. When asked what of those 11 he felt was top priority he answered number 3, Staff Time and Attendance Systems and Records because many of the people involved are no longer around. Peter asked what kind of archive system we have. Phil stated that the paper files are decent but there is little staff time available to research them. Phil feels confident that they will be able to respond to the concerns. He did share that the level of Grant Budget management Tools that CNCS desires is not the level that the State of Vermont practices nor will provide. He also expressed some frustration about the constant change in staff at CNCS. It makes it difficult to have continuity. SerVermont will be getting a site visit form their Program Officer in July.

## **Finances 2014**

Phil shared that they are still carrying over money and that things look okay for the year. He is able to include some of the disability money into a conference line item, will be able to have money for Governor's Service Awards and has included a line item to bring three Commissioners to the National Conference in June 15-18 in Atlanta.

## **May Conference**

The annual SerVermont conference is being coordinated by Robyn. It will similar to last year and will be located at the same location. The difference is that Common Ground will be doing all the food and other conference details (such as dishes!!!)

Wendy Spencer, CNCS CEO is scheduled to make an appearance. Joe Bertolino, Lyndon State College President will also be there. He was a huge hit at the launch. FEMA Corp is going to be in attendance as well. The Red Cross may do a half day training on the second day The Senior Corp programs are going to be invited. Alums are going to be invited. Robyn is still looking for some trainers. She opened it up to anyone who may have a skill they want to share. Let her know. Matt requested that an email be sent tout to remind us of the details and needs.

The group recessed for a quick brown bag lunch at 12:20 PM and reconvened 15 minutes later.

## **AmeriCorps Program compliance 2013-2014**

Sharon shared what she has been doing around the issue of compliance and shared that she has done correction action plans around the issue of hours with CEDO. Unfortunately they are not making the gains that she had hoped and expressed some frustration because it impacts on the other programs and Vermont. She has been honest with the DC office

about the situation. Owen suggested that Sharon put together a performance matrix. Jim expressed some frustration about how long this situation has gone on. Peter suggested that funding should come into play if things don't improve. Phil feels that corrective action should go back to last August and not before because that is when things were put in writing. Jim asked how far up the ladder has staff gone to make sure that corrective action occurs. Sharon said they have included other staff at CEDO.

Owen moved that a letter get drafted that will set benchmarks and if the benchmarks don't get met then they wouldn't get recommended for funding. He also asked that the letter be CCD to the head of CEDO. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissensions or abstentions.

### **AmeriCorps Funding 2014-2015**

Phil shared a potential funding matrix for the programs in Vermont assuming that everything works out the way it looks like right now. Currently the funding requests exceed the amount available by \$9,000. He recommended that the programs be allowed to negotiate among themselves how that amount would be reduced. Of course we will need to revisit the situation if things don't go the way as predicted. Betsy made a motion to support the recommendation. Guy seconded. The motion passed with no dissensions. Tom Hark abstained.

### **Governor's Service Awards**

Phil shared that the Governor's office has yet to give a date for the awards but that they are still interested. He suggested that the commission pick a date and let the office back into it. After some discussion the date selected was *Friday September 12<sup>th</sup>*. This will fall in the window of the 20 year anniversary of AmeriCorps. Betsy will reconvene the committee to begin working out the details. Robyn did share that members would like the event to be more towards the end of service.

### **Upcoming events**

**Green Up Day-May 3, 2014**  
**National conference June 16-18**  
**July meeting-July 10, 2014**

**Phil reminded folks to submit the in-kind and reimbursement forms. He also reminded folks that forms can be submitted for time spent on phone calls.**

**Ryan made a motion to adjourn at 1:43 Pm. Matt seconded. Motion passed.**

**Respectfully Submitted**

**J. Guy Isabelle**  
**Secretary**