

## **Governor's Advisory Board Meeting on Service and Volunteerism**

February 22, 2018; 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
395 Azalea Avenue, Henrico, VA 23229

**Board Members Present:** Vanessa Diamond, Leah Dozier Walker, Elizabeth Childress, Mark Fero, Ashley Hall, Jim Underwood, Leslie Van Horn, Gina Lewis, Steven Valdez, Zach Leonsis, Julie Strandlie, Tynetta Darden

**Board Members Absent:** Jessica Bowser, John Taylor Chapman, Omari Faulkner, Terry Frye, Peter Goldin, Amy Nisenson, Seema Sethi, Tashiara Scott, Rachel Thomas

**Staff Present:** Amanda Healy, Kimberly Brown, Joy Wade, Gay Plungas, Abby Hanks, Gail Doyle

**Guests Present:** Kimberly Ligon, John Sydnor

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The board meeting was called to order at 10:42 AM by Vanessa Diamond, Board Chair. A quorum of members was confirmed.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The floor was opened for the adoption of the agenda by Vanessa Diamond. Vanessa requested a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved for the adoption of the agenda by the Board.

### **Adoption of the Minutes**

A motion was made by Vanessa Diamond to adopt the November 30, 2017 minutes. A change was requested for the correction of Leah Dozier to Leah Dozier Walker. Vanessa requested a motion to approve the change in the minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved, for the correction and approval of the minutes. Julie Strandlie, who had not attended the November 3 meeting, abstained from the vote.

Vanessa welcomed the Board and introduced the Outreach and Communications Committee to begin the Board Advocacy Training.

### **Board Advocacy Training**

Gail Doyle reviewed past communications trainings and outlined the role of the Board as advocates for volunteerism and service across Virginia. She covered the basics of board communication, including having an easy to remember elevator speech, knowledge of some AmeriCorps and general volunteerism facts. She went through several tools available to the board, including the Board Portal. She pointed out the locations of Speaking Points, Calendar of Events, Speaker's Bureau Information, and other helpful bulletins. Steven Valdez stated that seven board members have signed up to be on the Speaker's Bureau. These individuals have agreed to be contacted if we receive requests for speakers on volunteerism and service. Gail Doyle shared with the group that our first speaking request had occurred on February 19<sup>th</sup> in the Eastern Shore, which Omari Faulkner had addressed the group. She relayed that he said it was a very good group and he would "gladly drive four hours again to speak to a similar group." Steven asked that board members, who are interested in the Speaker's Bureau, make note on their survey cards which the committee would be distributing soon. Gail also reviewed other tools and

resources, including the VirginiaService.virginia.gov website, social media outlets and the newsletter, with the Board. Steven requested the Board to divide up into two small groups for a “focus group” style discussion. Zach Leonsis led one group, while Steven led the other group. Discussion questions included ways in which board members currently receive information, ideas for how better to communicate, and reflections on past experiences. Steven said that the information collected by the groups, including the completed surveys, would be evaluated and the information would be sent back to the board before the next meeting with next steps.

The board and staff collected their lunches and reconvened for the lunch presentation.

### **EnRichmond Foundation Lunch Presentation**

John Sydnor with EnRichmond Foundation presented to the board during its working lunch. EnRichmond Foundation supports the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities through citizen involvement, education, and fundraising. In addition to organizing and managing the 17th Street Market and a variety of festivals, EnRichmond acts as an umbrella nonprofit organization for over one hundred volunteer groups and special initiatives and ‘Friends of’ groups they call ‘partners.’ John detailed their efforts to beautify and preserve many Richmond area public spaces and also talked about the organization’s passion for restoring the tree canopy in underserved communities. John communicated with the board that they have received three AmeriCorps NCCC teams over the past year to serve clearing and restoring Evergreen Cemetery, a historic African American cemetery in need of dramatic restoration. He said that the teams have been amazing during their service deployments, doing work that it would have taken many more volunteers to accomplish. Currently AmeriCorps NCCC Team 3 is in Richmond for eight weeks clearing a roadway, uncovering tombstones, and recording and cataloging information on the gravesites. The board members asked several questions about their efforts.

### **Committee Reports and Updates**

#### **Program Committee**

OVCS submitted four 2018-2019 Competitive Applications to CNCS to be reviewed and considered for funding. Clarifications from CNCS have not been received. OVCS has recently released the 2018-2019 AmeriCorps funding opportunity for Formula applicants (new and continuations). The deadline for this RFA (Request for Applications) is March 5, 2018. Advisory board members will be asked to participate in this application review process. OVCS plans to release a new RFA (Request for Applicants) for Targeted Priorities – new funding opportunity. The three identified targeted priorities for this RFA are as follows:

1. Healthy Futures: Reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse;
2. Child Wellness: In one more of the following areas (reducing and/or preventing child abuse, improving outcomes for child victims of abuse and or including youth aging out of foster care) and;
3. Working to improve or support improvement of one or more of the following infrastructure categories:
  - Aviation
  - Bridges
  - Dams
  - Hazardous Waste
  - Inland waterways
  - Levees
  - Ports
  - Public Parks
  - Rail
  - Roads
  - Schools
  - Solid Waste
  - Transit
  - Wastewater

RFA will be released on or about February 28, 2018. The deadline for this RFA will be April 2, 2018. Advisory board members will be asked to participate in this application review process.

### **Communications and Outreach Committee**

Steven Valdez reported that the process for the Governor's Volunteerism Awards was complete, that winners have been notified, and that there is a good representation across the state. He also reported that the Speaker's Bureau was well underway and that the experience of Omari speaking for a group this week was successful. He also mentioned that the creation of new Brand Ambassadors across the state would also create a new way to communicate our message of service to new outlets. He reported that followership growth has increased on most mediums, especially on those webpages and posts relating to the Governor's Awards and Conference. Finally, he mentioned that the committee would be getting a new committee member to help with outreach efforts, especially social media and that Jessica had shown an interest in participating.

### **Volunteer and Special Events Committee**

Julie Strandlie reported that the committee discussed the Governor's Awards and potential roles for the board members. A date and venue have not been determined, however, we are awaiting news from the Governor's Office. The award winners have been notified but the information is embargoed until the ceremony. The National Service Awards nomination period was extended from February 16<sup>th</sup> to the February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Once the nominations are received, the committee will receive an email with instructions, scoring tool, and link to nominations in early March. The ceremony will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Virginia Volunteerism Conference. The committee received updates on the Volunteerism Conference. Speakers and service projects have been confirmed and all information is up on the website. The committee discussed upcoming projects and how board members could participate. These include AmeriCorps Week (March 11-17), National Service Recognition Day (April 3) and National Volunteer Week (15-21). Staff shared other events such as the upcoming Program Directors Training (July 17-19) and regional topical sessions.

### **Special Discussion of Additional Board Roles**

Leah Dozier Walker discussed with the Board other ways that members can serve in their roles more effectively. She presented the idea of hosting "listening sessions" at the upcoming Volunteerism Conference in which nonprofits could discuss needs and issues relating to volunteerism in their regions. Vanessa mentioned that the group should look at the Virginia State Service Plan and see where there might be needs for the board to address.

### **CNCS State Office Director's Report**

Tynetta Darden and Kimberly Ligon mentioned that help is needed to get elected official support for the upcoming National Service Recognition Day, April 3, 2018. Printed cards are available for individuals to fill out so that they don't have to personally sign onto the CNCS website.

### **Virginia Commission Director's Report**

Amanda Healy, representing OVCS in the absence of Gail Harris, provided several updates. Healy attended a meeting of commission directors and staff from across the nation hosted by ASC (America's Service Commissions), and that there is great commonality in the experiences of service commissions. ASC staff expressed hope that CNCS would receive funding at the 2017 level because of its long history of bipartisan support. Healy provided information on the new CNCS CEO, Barbara Stewart, by sharing correspondence from CNCS. Finally, she provided an update on the resolution of OIG matters, and said that DSS has made the required payment and is awaiting reimbursement from the subgrantee of

approximately \$47,000. Healy also informed the Board that because of our own monitoring efforts, OVCS is aware of several other subgrantees that will have disallowed costs, but none at the level of this particular situation.

**Public Comments**

Liz Childress and Mark Fero provided an update on sponsorships for the 2018 Virginia Volunteerism Conference. Mark stated that there are now several official sponsors for the conference. More sponsorships are welcome. Conference scholarships are being offered for \$100 to go towards registration or hotel costs and applications are due March 15, 2018.

**Adjourn**

Vanessa Diamond asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered, properly seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Prepared by Jovon Taylor

Submitted by Gail Harris