

Governor's Advisory Board on Services and Volunteerism

May 18, 2023; 10:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Libbie Mill Public Library

2100 Libbie Lake, East St., Richmond, VA 23230

Board Members Present: Vanessa Diamond, Peppy Linden, Kimberly Luckabaugh, Joy Parker, Sheila Williamson-Branch, Clifford Yee

Board Members Absent: Naila Alam, Jessica Bowser, Cynthia Downs-Taylor, Mark Fero, Zachary Leonsis, Enid Mpumwire Machayo, Priscilla Martinez, Bryan Pearce-Gonzales, Jamie Seagraves, Julie Strandlie, Adria Merritt, NaQuetta Mitchell, Reagan Polarek

Ex-Officios Present: Sara Vanderploeg (AmeriCorps), Carol Ayars (AmeriCorps Seniors)

Serve Virginia Commission Present: Kathy Spangler, Samantha Lukasiewicz, Shannon Girouard, Alex Vanik, Jae-Young Choe

Guests: Karen Cullen (Three Chopt Presbyterian Church)

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:14 AM by Board Chair Clifford Yee.

Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The meeting was opened for approval of the agenda. Peppy Linden motioned to adopt the agenda, Sheila Williamson-Branch seconded, and all were in favor. Chair Clifford Yee called for the adoption of minutes from February 23, 2023. The motion to adopt the minutes was made by Kim Luckabaugh, Joy Parker seconded, and all were in favor.

Chair's Remarks

Chair Cliff Yee reported that the Executive Committee met recently and discussed ways to engage board members in the work of the Commission. Yee thanked those who had participated on AmeriCorps grant making or Awards panels, at site visits, in outreach efforts, VCEI (Virginia Community Engagement Index), and at meetings. The Executive Committee suggested several ways to encourage and/or require board member participation, including AmeriCorps program site visits, serving on a grant making or award selection panel, outreach, and promotional efforts in-person or through social media. When the Board slate is confirmed by the Governor's office this summer, a survey will be conducted to determine what activities would interest board members for the year ahead. Chair Yee encouraged the Board to consider a leadership position for next year and to notify Kathy Spangler or him if interested.

Two Board members will be concluding two consecutive terms on this Board and will need to step aside for at least one year per state statute. Chair Yee thanked Zachary Leonsis and Jessica Bowser for their years of service to the Governor's Advisory Board and support for the Virginia Service Foundation. Gubernatorial appointments for new and current member reappointments to the Board are pending. Each board member is eligible for two consecutive terms. Interests in serving as an officer or committee chair next year can be directed to Kathy or Cliff.

Mission Moment

Chair Cliff Yee introduced Karen Cullen, one of the Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Award recipients last year. For over 40 years, Ms. Cullen has sustained a passion for helping others, including a career in social services supporting local community initiatives and over eight years leading the food pantry at Three Chopt Presbyterian Church in Richmond. She engages volunteers from across the region in serving others and has made the food pantry a space for community where all are welcome.

Committee Updates

Foundation Committee

Cliff Yee reported on behalf of Committee Chair Julie Strandlie that the Foundation Committee met on April 28, 2023. The Virginia Service Foundation has been active in supporting the State Service Plan projects through the sole source contract with the Commission. The Foundation also recently supported the National Service Awards by offering a \$200 monetary gift to each of the four recipients. \$7,000 of a goal of \$10,000 goal was raised to support the Virginia Volunteerism Summit. Fundraising is still taking place, and the Board is encouraged to share any prospective contacts.

Pro Bono legal support has been secured to ensure agreements and contracts meet current nonprofit standards. The Foundation Board will begin working on recruitment over the next few months and welcomes any recommendations. Lastly, the Governor's Community Service and Volunteerism Awards nominations are currently open until mid-June. Everyone is encouraged to promote this special award program. Elizabeth Childress Burneson recently stepped down from the Foundation Board, consequently resigning from the Foundation Committee as well.

Public Engagement Committee

Kathy Spangler reported on behalf of Committee Chair Cynthia Downs-Taylor that spring was busy with site visits, connecting members and programs with elected officials and AmeriCorps leadership. Site visits were held with Congressman Rob Wittman and staff from Congressman Morgan Griffith's office in partnership with the Virginia College Advising Corps. Another site visit took place in Northern Virginia with Virginia Senator Barbara Favola and Virginia Delegate Alfonso Lopez. Board members including Julie Strandlie, Cliff Yee, and Cynthia Downs-Taylor attended visits with elected officials. Sonali Nijhawan, director of AmeriCorps State and National and Tess Mason-Elder, director of Government Relations at AmeriCorps, were able to join the Commission at a few of these site visits as well.

The Commission partnered with Public Health AmeriCorps on a site visit at George Mason University in honor of National Public Health Week, and again a few weeks later in Richmond for the national announcement of Public Health AmeriCorps grants. The press event for the grant award announcement also engaged city leadership including Mayor Stoney and Councilperson Robertson, in addition to AJ Pearlman, the director of Public Health AmeriCorps. Sara Vanderploeg from AmeriCorps and Board member NaQuetta Mitchell also attended.

AmeriCorps Committee

Committee Chair Sheila Williamson-Branch reported on behalf of Committee Chair Adria Merritt. The compliance team performed an on-site monitoring of Edu Futuro, in Arlington VA in March. Compliance monitoring onsite visits entail review of member files, grant expenditures, criminal history background checks, and interviews with staff.

Program officers and the fiscal officer put together a performance report for each organization in the portfolio, citing areas of deficiency and requesting a plan of action to successfully administer their program in keeping with AmeriCorps standards by the end of the program year. Staff reviewed the subgrantee plans of action as a group in mid-April and recommended additional supports and resources to ensure the subgrantees' plans come to fruition.

March 7th was the deadline for Formula applicant submissions. 12 organizations applied for Formula funding and were scored by an original review panel of 12 individuals. Board members who assisted with the review process were Sheila Williamson-Branch, NaQuetta Mitchell, Priscilla Martinez, Julie Strandlie, Joy Parker, Adria Merritt, Cynthia Downs-Taylor, and Jamie Seagraves. Maggie Bowman from the Virginia Service Foundation also served on the review panel.

Finally, the Commission was able to initiate its contract through America's Service Commissions to start building a 'pipeline' of organizations who would be interested in administering an AmeriCorps project in Virginia.

Public Health AmeriCorps Funding

\$1,226,206 in Public Health AmeriCorps will be accepted on behalf of three applicants and will support 78 members: City of Richmond, Blue Ridge Medical Center, and George Mason University.

AmeriCorps Competitive Funding

\$1,689,090 in Competitive funding will be accepted on behalf of two applicants and will support 102 members. IALR is returning as a competitive program, and UVA is a new competitive grant recipient moving from the Formula portfolio.

Executive Session

Chair Clifford Yee reported that the Virginia Service Commission presented a proposed funding plan for program year 2023-2024 that reflects the actions and ranking developed by the review panel which included members of this board and the AmeriCorps Committee. Due to a deadline of May 17, 2023, to submit Formula applications to AmeriCorps, the Executive Committee authorized the AmeriCorps Committee to provisionally approve the proposal by the Executive Committee during their May 5th meeting. The AmeriCorps Committee met on May 15th and took the following actions: Per Article 5- Section 3 of the bylaws, the Board will consider and act upon grant applications for funds provided by AmeriCorps through the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service as required. Per the Executive Committee authorization, the AmeriCorps Committee provided provisional approval of these recommendations.

Chair Yee asked if any member of this body believed that there was a departure from the discussion requirements and there were none.

Chair Yee read the official motion:

"I move that the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism convene in closed session to discuss the results of the procurement processes for investing public funds in AmeriCorps programming opportunities pursuant to the investment of public funds exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(6) of the Code of Virginia, and the possible award of public contracts

involving the expenditure of public funds and discussion of the terms or scope of such contracts, pursuant to the award of contracts using public funds exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(29).”

The motion was moved by Sheila Williamson-Branch, seconded by Kim Luckabaugh, and all were in favor. The vote was in the affirmative to enter executive session. The AmeriCorps formula funding recommendations were presented to the Board.

During executive session, a quorum was not met; as such, no official action items were taken by vote.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, Chair Yee entertained a motion to conclude the closed executive session and reconvene the open session. The motion was moved by Vanessa Diamond, seconded by Sheila Williamson-Branch, and all were in favor.

Chair Yee stated: *“Consistent with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, we will conduct a roll call affirmation in which each of us is asked to certify the appropriateness of the content of the closed session. Prior to that, however, I must ask whether any member of this body believes that there was a departure from the requirements of the FOIA. If so, please share that information now, and identify the substance of that departure. Thank you. We will proceed with a roll call.*

The question here is for you to certify that to the best of your knowledge

(1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements AND

(2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the meeting by the public body.

When Jae-Young calls your name, please answer, ‘I so certify.’”

The roll call proceeded, and all members present so certified.

State Service Plan Update

Virginia Volunteerism Summit

Kathy Spangler reported that the revenue of the 2023 Summit totaled \$23,115, and expenses are estimated to be around \$9,000. The 223 paid registrations came short of the goal, but with speakers and guests registered, overall participation reached 296. One milestone of note was 176 first-time attendees. The Commission is currently collecting survey responses from participants for recommendations for the 2024 Summit. Recorded sessions are available to view until the end of the month, but some content such as keynote sessions and highlighted projects will be released via the Commission’s YouTube page.

Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI)

The Community Engagement Index was developed in partnership with Points of Light, AmeriCorps, and 39 organizations statewide and was facilitated through the Commission’s contract partner, SIR of Richmond. The goal was to collect approximately 3,000 responses representing a geographic and dynamic demographic mix of Virginians reflected in the most recent US Census—it was greatly surpassed with 6,393 total responses.

The comprehensive Virginia Community Engagement Index findings will allow partners to examine priorities and needs by region, age, race/ethnicity and a variety of other factors to help

pinpoint what truly matters to communities as they identify strategic focus areas to support. The VCEI project was supported by American Rescue Plan funding in partnership with the Virginia Service Foundation.

Branding- Messaging- Website

The Serve Virginia Campaign was launched at the 2023 Summit and aims to expand public awareness and knowledge of the personal and community benefits of service and volunteerism; amplify service and volunteer options available to Virginians through the network of Serve Virginia partners; and strengthen a culture of community engagement and civic action across the Commonwealth. These goals will be accomplished by empowering partners and stakeholders to leverage the Serve Virginia messaging and strategy, assisted by the recent launch of the website ServeVirginia.org. Much of the social media campaign will direct individuals and organizations to find their passion by using an interactive tool, which will help to recruit more Virginians to engage in volunteer opportunities that make a genuine impact in their communities.

Partner Updates

AmeriCorps

Sara Vanderploeg of AmeriCorps reported on behalf of fellow colleague Elizabeth Galaz. The decisions for the 2023 AmeriCorps Competitive awards came out last month. The embargo on public funding announcements was lifted last week, and the Virginia Commission has new grantees in the Competitive portfolio.

The FY23 AmeriCorps VISTA National Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) final concept paper is due June 7. There are opportunities to expand the VISTA portfolio in Virginia, with a focus on economic opportunities, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veteran and military families. NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) project deadlines are June 28—Concept papers for round 2 teams are due June 28 for projects that will occur on October 18 to December 13, 2023.

As May is Older Americans Month, AmeriCorps Seniors is recognizing the elderly through social media and sharing stories. Also, the application review process for the AmeriCorps Seniors Native Nations and Indigenous Elders Workforce Development and Senior Demonstration Program is underway, and applicants will be notified by the end of June. Lastly, AmeriCorps Seniors will be hosting the first in-person convening next week in Alexandria/Crystal City from May 24-26 during which there will be an opportunity for grantees from Virginia to meet with other Senior grantees in an informal space.

ASC (America's Service Commissions)

Board member Vanessa Diamond who also serves on the national boards of ASC and Points of Light reported that she has been serving on the Programming Committee of ASC. The Committee's focus has been on developing programming to support State Commissions with AmeriCorps member retention such as with the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for members in crisis. ASC is doing much work to develop more partnerships to support such programs. ASC sponsored the National Service Training Conference just this week and is currently planning for the AmeriCorps Symposium event in September. Points of Light will host a national conference in Chicago in June.

Public Comments and Adjournment

Chair Clifford Yee opened the floor for any public comments, of which there were none.

The next board meeting is planned to be in person on September 21 in Northern Virginia. Reimbursement for overnight lodging the night before will be available to any member traveling more than 100 miles one way in addition to mileage reimbursement. Officer elections will take place at the September meeting. The Commission is planning opportunities for board members to also visit AmeriCorps programs on that day or the day before for those interested and will be inviting AmeriCorps national staff to join as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Prepared by Jae-Young Choe
Submitted by Kathy Spangler