



# ServeNebraska Meeting Minutes

<b>NOTE TAKER:</b> Peter Cales and Greg Donovan		<b>LOCATION:</b> Omaha – Valmont Industries	<b>DATE:</b> April 24, 2008	<b>TIME:</b> 12:45 p.m.	<b>DURATION:</b> 2.5 hours
<b>PURPOSE:</b> Quarterly Commission Meeting		<b>ATTENDEES:</b> <u>Present:</u> Pat Beans, Ed Burchfield, Sally Ganem, Barry Kriha, Art May, Jamie Moore, Diann Muhlbach, Rick Nation, Gerry Osborn, Ron Sedlacek, Carol Speicher, Nancy Wang, Lois Wine, Heather Wiley <u>Staff Present:</u> Barbara Wilson Thomas, Greg Donovan, Peter Cales, Dennis Fowler, and Jennifer Rutt, AmeriCorps VISTA <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Mikki Chullino, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska			
<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>SPECIFIC DISCUSSION ITEMS</b>				
1.	<b>Meeting Called to Order</b> at 12:45 p.m. by Ed Burchfield, Vice-Chair of the Commission. Roll call was taken by Dennis Fowler. Twelve members were present at roll call. A quorum was present.				
2.	<b>Lutheran Family Services AmeriCorps Program</b> – Mikki Chillino, Program Director of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska AmeriCorps was introduced by Greg Donovan as our guest speaker today. She provided an overview of the evolution of AmeriCorps service at Lutheran Family Service from a few members assisting new Americans in Omaha (SUN Program focused on the 24 <sup>th</sup> & Leavenworth area of Omaha), to its current status as a multi-disciplinary program focused on meeting the varied needs of new Americans, low income persons, and youth populations in communities throughout eastern and central Nebraska. The program emphasis continues to be on easing and assisting new Americans as they develop new lives in our state.				
3.	<b>Approval of January 24, 2008 Minutes:</b> <u>Motion:</u> Gerald Osborn To approve the January 24, 2008 minutes as sent. <u>Second:</u> Rick Nation <u>Vote:</u> Yes - 12				
4.	<b>Approval of Agenda:</b> <u>Motion:</u> Jamie Moore To approve the April 24, 2008 agenda. <u>Second:</u> Ron Sedlacek <u>Vote:</u> Yes - 12				
5.	<b>Commissioner Briefing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Briefing topic today is on "Commission Funding and Fiduciary Responsibilities" presented by Commissioner Pat Beans. Pat provided an overview on Commission Funding and Fiduciary Responsibilities, referencing a handout distributed at the meeting o highlight the nature of the Commissioner fiduciary responsibility and the processes &amp; procedures in place to ensure that proper fiscal management is practiced by the Commission. The main emphasis of the presentation to Commissioners was to highlight the importance of each Commissioner to carefully provide financial oversight, and to show that the Commission has more fiscal responsibility than may be realized. Barb added that program staff provides fiscal monitoring of the AmeriCorps, Citizen Corps, Training and Disability Programs.</li> <li>Ed asked if someone looks at the Commission's controls during auditing. Barb responded that yes, our specific ServeNebraska programs and processes are reviewed by federal representatives when we have our periodic OIG audits. However, since we have fiscal support from the Department of Health and Human Services, the state accounting system is our operational base. The State Auditors Office audits DHHS annually. DHHS Accounting follows the Department of Administrative Services' fiscal policies, procedures and controls. ServeNebraska is too small to be mentioned in the actual written audit unless there is a finding. We have not had a finding in recent audits. Barb reminded Commissioners that the only issue that was raised with auditors to DHHS-Financial Services was that the Commission's Executive Order 94-5 did not specify a line of authority to operate and do business. When Barb was informed of this verbal concern, the Commission did an extensive revision of our Bylaws in July, 2007 to add a line of authority to operate.</li> </ul>				

6.

**NVSC Operations Reports:**

1) Executive Director's Report : Barbara submitted her written report and highlighted the items below:

- The **GIVE Act**, a major federal reauthorization of the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS), failed to advance in Congress. This was a disappointment since it would have allowed a waiver for Administrative Match that is such a difficulty for our Commission. The GIVE Act would have also set a minimum of \$200,000 funding for Commissions (ServeNebraska's base is \$157,900) and set a minimum for AmeriCorps Programs at \$600,000 (ServeNebraska's base is \$500,000).
- **Tom Osborne** indicated in a letter to Barb that he will try to attend and participate in the July Commission meeting. Barb added that she and the Commission Chair will schedule a meeting with him to discuss the best way to meet his needs to increase volunteerism in Nebraska.
- **ServeNebraska** was launched as the new operating name on April 1, 2008 at the Governor's Conference. The new website ([www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov)) is live. Commissioners are invited to contact the staff if they have suggestions for improving the website.
- The **National Conference on Volunteering** sponsored by the Corporation for National & Community Service will be in Atlanta in late May and early June. Barb and Barry Kriha will attend. Congratulations to Peter Cales who will present a session on disability preparedness as part of the pre-conference sessions. All three will attend the Association for State Commissions' annual dinner.
- The Commission has partnered with on two new projects. The Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education submitted a social media federal grant with ServeNebraska as a partner (Commissioner Gary Heusel). The State Office of the Corporation for National & Community Service (Commissioner Heather Wiley) has given the Commission a grant to provide training for VISTA members. The grant will bring \$11,000 to the Commission.
- Barb introduced a nonprofit standards guide from Iowa, "Iowa Principles & Practices Charitable Nonprofit Excellence", that may be of help for Commissioners as they provide oversight of the Commission. Copies were available for all present.

2) Commission Financial Report: Barb Thomas gave the report for Janet Schmidt who is attending the National Grants Management Conference this week.

- **Commission Financial Report**: The report ending March 31, 2008 was distributed and presented by Barbara Thomas. Barb explained that the NEMA received approved to extend the 06 Citizen Corps funding through June 30, 2009. The Commission will review the status of the programs where the contracts were extended through May 31, 2008 and then decide which programs will need additional time to spend their funds. The 06 contracts are with individual Citizen Corps Councils (17 contracts) and were designated primarily for CERT training. Many of those contractors did not get their trainings completed in calendar year 2007. She said Dennis Fowler, our new Citizen Corps Program Officer, is currently evaluating program plans for the use of 06 funds by 06 grantees in order to determine whether to further extend the use of funds or reallocate them internally. This decision will be on a grantee-by-grantee basis. The contracts for the DHS 07 funds are with six Regional Citizen Corps and are purchasing more diversified program goals, specifically the requirement to develop Community Preparedness Campaigns.

Jamie Moore asked what happens to unexpended funds. Barb replied that with federal funds there is a draw down as they are expended so we don't receive more than we have spent. So funds that are unexpended stay at the federal level. Dennis is working on visiting with each grantee to get an idea of the status of each. Art May reflected that he understands that the grants to regions or councils used to be larger, and that some councils are unhappy about the size of grants and more thorough enforcement of project plans. The former emphasis on CERT training has been shifted to a fuller program approach that includes additional focuses outside of CERT. Dennis is also trying to work with the councils to encourage them to change their mindsets to more closely follow their grant application plans and spend down the funds.

- **Administrative Grant Match Report**: Barbara explained that the report may indicate we are ahead in "match" for the year, but to be aware that our Cost Allocation share is still low and that is the primary source of our required match. We are still projected a match deficit by the end of this year. She expressed strong concerns that additional match for the Administration grant is going to be a key issue for Commissioners to address soon, especially since we need to make up the \$19,000+ deficit from 2007. All Commissioners are reminded that they should submit an In-Kind Match Form for their travel to all Commission meetings and events.

3) AmeriCorps Program Report: Greg Donovan submitted a written report and highlighted the items below.

- Commissioners have a standing invitation to visit any of our five AmeriCorps Programs.
- Monitoring Site Visits were recently completed with each AmeriCorps Program. Each program had some minor issues to resolve, largely pertaining to member file documents, but each program is functioning well and meeting community needs.
- Greg convenes and facilitates monthly Program Leader meetings of the program directors for each AmeriCorps Program for information sharing, in-service education, team building and collaborative problem solving. The meeting site alternates between Omaha and Lincoln.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AmeriCorps Week (May 11-18) activities include a gubernatorial proclamation and a picnic for AC members &amp; alumni.</li> <li>• Greg continues to work with staff in other state Commissions to identify and evaluate alternative reporting systems to replace existing CNCS systems that are being eliminated. For 2007-2008, the Commission is utilizing paper reporting – using Word and Excel documents.</li> <li>• The Nebraska InterCorps Council is planning themes for Service Days, spotlighting Global Youth Service Day. The Nebraska InterCorps Council drafted and implemented a mini-grant process through which 13 grantees in 8 communities will provide service over the weekend of April 25-27.</li> </ul> <p>4) <u>Citizen Corps Report</u>: Dennis Fowler submitted a written report and highlighted the items below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dennis indicated that he is learning the job since starting with the Commission on February 4. He is currently writing the FY08/09 Homeland Security Grant Application (it is called an “Investment Strategy”) and will submit it to NEMA by the end of April.</li> <li>• Dennis served as a reviewer for the national CERT Train the Trainer curriculum.</li> <li>• All regional CCP grant contracts for FY07/08 have been completed.</li> <li>• Dennis and Commissioner Jamie Moore attended the organizing meeting for Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps. Jamie provided comments about the Medical Reserve Corps activities underway in the state and efforts to bring consistency to these efforts.</li> </ul> <p>5) <u>Training Program Report</u>: Peter Cales submitted a written report and highlighted the items below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final scheduled AmeriCorps training took place on April 21 (Resume &amp; Interviewing).</li> <li>• Greg and Peter have been conducting assessments of AmeriCorps members’ experiences and training needs to help devise a State Unified Training Plan for the 2008-2009 AmeriCorps program year.</li> <li>• Reminded Commissioners of Global Youth Service Day activities (April 25 – 27), and distributed a handout with contact information for all the projects.</li> <li>• The Commissioners and their families were invited to attend the AmeriCorps Week barbecue (May 17 – Pioneers Park in Lincoln).</li> </ul> <p>6) <u>Disability Program Report</u>: Peter Cales submitted a written report and highlighted the items below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collaborative special populations preparedness project involving district health departments in Fremont and Scottsbluff and Citizen Corps Councils in the Central and Panhandle Regions is in process to be implemented. This is a partnership between ServeNebraska and DHHS-Public Health that may bring up to \$25,000 to the Commission to manage the pilot projects with local programs.</li> <li>• Peter distributed a flyer about the National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in Omaha (July 25 – 29). This is an event the Commission Disability Program is promoting. It is being coordinated by the Great Plains Paralyzed Veterans of America, a collaborative partner of the Commission. They hosted our Disability Preparedness Summit last November 2007.</li> <li>• Peter is developing a survey to use with AmeriCorps programs and their host sites to find out the extent of the use, need and challenges in accommodations and inclusivity of individuals with disabilities. He expects to have the survey ready by summer.</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>Unfinished Agenda Items:</b></p> <p>1) <u>Revised 2008 Commission Administration Budget</u></p> <p>Barb Thomas explained that there were two areas of revisions in the administrative budget of the Commission. First, the FSR (Financial Status Report) completed by DHHS-Grants Management staff at the end of January for the 2007 Administration Grant was in error. A revised FSR was completed and submitted to CNCS that would give us only about \$10,000+ of carryover funds to use in 2008 instead of the \$17,000 shown in the original FSR. Because this wasn’t discovered until March, the window of time available to request additional supplemental Admin funds from CNCS was closed. The second Admin budget revision was with the CNCS Disability Grant funds. In early April CNCS informed Barb that the amount of supplemental Disability Grant funds we will receive is only \$16,000, not the \$32,000 we had requested. This necessitated a revision of the disability grant plan and budget. A majority of the supplemental funds will be used in our collaborative special population preparedness pilot project with the local Health Department and Citizen Corps Councils. Barb explained that the revised budget document the Commissioners were reviewing had been adjusted to meet these two situations.</p> <p><b>Motion:</b> Sally Ganem To approve the revised administration and disability program budget as presented by the Executive Director.</p> <p><b>Second:</b> Barry Kriha</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Yes - 12</p> <p>2) <u>Report of Executive Committee’s Annual Meeting with Governor Heineman:</u></p> <p>Barry Kriha explained that the meeting with the Governor was held on February 6<sup>th</sup> in the Governor’s Office and it was very</p>

	<p>positive. The Governor expressed strong support for the work of the Commission and gratitude for the efforts of Commissioners and staff. The Executive Committee gave the Governor the Commission's official "2008 Report To The Governor" that explained the Commission's accomplishments over the past two years and the increase in activities and responsibilities of the Commission. During this discussion, Executive Committee members pointed out that the Commission has a compelling need for additional resources. The Governor indicated this was a difficult year for state funds and there were very pressing needs that he and the Legislature needed to address, especially local school financing. The Governor was also updated on new Commission activities including (1) plans to develop a state Business Volunteer Council and (2) the new operating name of ServeNebraska. The Governor was very open to our ideas for finding more diverse funding streams and congratulated the Commission on proactively looking for other resources. Sally reminded the Commissioners that the Governor really appreciates the Commission's efforts but is reluctant to give the Commission additional state funding. Commission Executive Committee representatives attending this meeting were Curt Krueger, Barry Kriha, Ed Burchfield, Nancy Wang, Pat Beans and Barbara Thomas.</p> <p>3) <u>State Business Volunteer Council Development</u></p> <p>Barry Kriha explained that there had been several phone conversations conducted by a small working group of Commissioners. He reminded Commissioners that we are still in the planning and development stage of this project. Key staff from the Points of Light Foundation had presented at the 2008 Governors Conference on Community Service and he had received a copy of the new West Virginia promotional BVC video. He would be attending the National Conference on Volunteering in June to attend specific sessions and gather more details on Business Volunteer Councils and Employee Volunteer Programs. Current efforts are focused on identifying key leadership to serve as primary "champions" and "steering committee members" for the Council. It was suggested that a presentation could be made at a meeting of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce Executives in August to talk about how they can be involved and promote the BVC if we are ready at that time. This day may also conflict with our federal Standards Site Visit.</p>
8.	<p><b>New Business Agenda Items:</b></p> <p>1) <u>Nebraska Volunteer Foundation Update</u></p> <p>Pat Beans and Ron Sedlacek provided an update on the Nebraska Volunteer Foundation. The Foundation was created 12 years ago as its own entity but had been dissolved a few years ago, and was now under the 501c3 umbrella of the Nebraska Community Foundation. The Nebraska Volunteer Foundation (NVF) currently has two accounts at the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) – one for the Governor's Conference and one for general programs/projects. Recently, Pat, Ron and Barb met to discuss the current situation and determine what needs to occur to ensure we are meeting the obligations of the NVF. It was determined that the most immediate concern is to ensure that NCF has the correct names of the Foundation Advisory Committee that oversees the Foundation. Of the 7 members listed for the Foundation Advisory Committee, four are still members of the Commission. All four sit on the Organizational Development Committee. Barb was asked to work with NCF to ensure they have the correct names of the Foundation Advisory Committee: Pat Beans (Treasurer), Ron Sedlacek, Rick Nation, Cynthia Buettner and Barb Thomas. An NVF update will be scheduled for the October meeting.</p> <p>2) <u>Commission Officer Elections</u></p> <p>Previously submitted nominations were reviewed by members of the Nominating Committee. The slate of officers includes Barry Kriha for Chairperson and Susan Cook, Art May, and Ron Sedlacek for Vice Chairperson. The floor was opened for nominations. There being none, voting commenced by secret ballot. The balloting results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair: Ed Burchfield -1, Barry Kriha - 11 ---- Barry Kriha was elected Chair.</li> <li>• Vice Chair: Susan Cook – 4, Art May – 1, Ron Sedlacek – 7 ---- Ron Sedlacek was elected Vice Chair.</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Committee Reports:</b></p> <p>1) <u>Organizational Development Committee</u></p> <p>Pat Beans, Committee Chair, provided the Committee report and recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the satisfaction level of the Commission Board's work, the Organizational Development is using the Commissioner self-assessment as a tool to focus on areas of improvement such as increasing Commissioner roles and responsibilities in fundraising and how to help Commissioners gain more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the work of the Commission. The comparison of the last two self-assessments gave the Committee very useful trend data to analyze the improvements made and those yet to be addressed.</li> <li>• Few Bylaw revisions will be needed since we did a thorough revision last summer but we will need to reflect the Commission's decision to adopt ServeNebraska as an operational name and to update the mission statement to the one agreed to at the fall 2005 strategic planning meeting. The Committee reviewed the bylaws and found three places for language clarification. They are highlighted in the copies that were handed out to Commissioners today. Pat asked the Commissioners to review the bylaws and get any additional suggested revisions to Barb by May 24. The Committee will review all suggestions sent in at their June meeting. Then the language recommended for adoption by the Committee will be sent to Commissioners 30 days prior to the July Commission Board meeting for discussion at that meeting.</li> <li>• The Committee discussed the <b>CNCS Standards Review Visit</b> in August and the preparations the staff are doing to be ready. The Committee discussed three issues specific to CNCS standards compliance that the Commission must address. 1. <b>State Service Plan Update.</b> The Commission is required to approve the annual State Serve Plan Update. This year</li> </ul>

CNCS required the State Service Plan Update be written into the 2008 Administration Grant applications. Staff used the update information reported in the 08 Admin Grant applications, added some important accomplishments that were given to the Governor in February 2008 and developed a State Service Plan Update document. The Committee reviewed and approved the State Service Plan Update and recommends it to the Commission for approval. Copies have been distributed to all Commissioners.

2. **CNCS Administration Grant Match Compliance.** Because the Commission ended 2007 with a match deficit, we must have a plan to give the CNCS Site Visit Team that says how we will secure those resources to comply with the match requirement and ensure we have the same available to expend as match for 2008. The Committee will develop a draft plan at its June meeting for the Commission to have adequate match and bring the plan to the July Commission meeting.
  3. **Commission Staffing Level.** The Commission is required through the CNCS Standards to periodically review and affirm that the staffing configuration in the Commission office is adequate to meet the needs of the Commission's workload. The Committee reviewed the staffing configuration and recommends that the appropriate level of staffing to accomplish current and projected programming workload is seven full time positions. Ron Sedlacek added that the current complement of 5 full time staff is able to address most of the current Commission needs but only by working overtime yet in some cases, important work tasks are delayed or not completed because of the staff shortage.
- Barb invited Commissioners to attend the entrance meeting of the Site Visit on Monday, August 11.
  - Pat asked that the Commission approve the Organizational Development Committee's recommendations related to the CNCS Standards.

**Motion: Barry Kriha**

To accept the Organizational Development Committee recommendations.

**No Second Required for Committee Recommendation**

**Vote: 11 – Yes; 1 – Abstain**

2) **Program Committee**

Nancy Wang, Committee Chair, provided the Committee report and recommendations.

- Commissioners were reminded that all four AmeriCorps programs submitted for 2008-2009 funding support were referred by the Commission to the CNCS for Competitive funding consideration. CNCS notified the Commission that Lutheran Family Services *LFS AmeriCorps* and City of Lincoln *Reach for the Stars AmeriCorps* are likely to be funded with Competitive funds. In light of this news, **the Committee recommends the following uses of 2008-2009 Formula funds:**
  1. **Full funding of the MMI AmeriCorps (UNMC-MMI) and RISE AmeriCorps (State Probation) programs at their requested level.**
  2. **Funding 2.5 FTE AmeriCorps positions with Reach for the Stars AmeriCorps (City of Lincoln) in order to fund the program at its requested level.**
  3. **Funding up to four planning grants in the amount of not more than \$25,000 each.**
  4. **Additional support in the form of funds for additional AmeriCorps member positions for the three programs to be supported with Formula funds.**
- Nancy asked that the Commission approve the Program Committee's recommendations for AmeriCorps Formula funding.

**Motion: Rick Nation**

To accept the Program Committee recommendations.

**No Second Required for Committee Recommendation**

**Vote: Yes – 12**

3) **Public Relations Committee**

Ed Burchfield, Committee Co-Chair, provided the Committee report and recommendations.

- The Committee reviewed the success of the 2008 Governor's Conference on Community Service. Evaluations of the event are underway. He then discussed the Committee's ideas for future conferences. **The Committee recommends that the Governor's Conference on Community Service be held every other year, with the First Lady's and Impact Awards being presented as an annual event. In the years that there is not a Conference, a special training would be offered to enhance the First Lady's and Impact Awards presentation.**
- Ed also mentioned that efforts are underway for Committee members to work with staff to plan and develop Commission and program brochures using the new ServeNebraska trade name. The initial use will be to specifically inform and educate the State Senators and their staff.
- Ed asked that the Commission approve the Public Relations Committee's recommendations for the Conference, and First Lady's and Impact Awards timeline.

**Motion: Sally Ganem**

To accept the Public Relations Committee recommendation.

**No Second Required for Committee Recommendation**

**Vote: 12 – Yes**

10.	<b>Public Comment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No persons signed up to make public comment.</li> </ul>
11.	<b>Agenda Items for the Next Meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next meeting: July 24, 2007 – United Way of the Midlands, Omaha</li> </ul>
12.	<b>Adjourn:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.</li> </ul>

**Action Items**

No.	DESCRIPTION	OWNER	TARGET DATE	STATUS
1.				
2.				
3.				

Submitted by,

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Approved by,

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Curt Krueger, Chair