

Volunteer Tennessee
Quarterly Commission Meeting Minutes

Cheekwood Estate and Gardens, 111 Cheek Road, Nashville, TN 37205

Friday, August 11, 2023

Members in Attendance (in person underlined): Chairing: Amy Walter*, Terry Frank*, Amy Gilliland*, D'Shonta Gleeton (TDCS), Katie Goforth*, Michael Hogan (TDSHS), Adam Jarvis (TDFA), Caroline Ledlie (AmeriCorps), Heidi Leming (TBR), Greg Lyles*, Nancy Schelin (TDEC), Jason Scott*, Tracy Van De Vate*, Betty White*, Eileen Wollam*, Jessica Youngblom (TDMHSAS)

Members not in Attendance: George Bove*, Suzanne Carr (TDHS), Stephanie Davis*, Andrea Hill* (proxy), Liz Johnson (TDH), Holly Jones*, Patrick Maloney*, Lee Moten* (proxy), Kane Reeves*, Cameron Sanford*, Leon Shields*, Terry Silver*, Kendra Thomas (TDH), VACANT – TDE, TDLWD, TDM, UT

Staff: Hope Alexander, Latiyfa Fields, Gordon Harless, Jim Snell, Candace Taylor, Neelam Gupta

Guest: Nathalie Lavine (Cheekwood)

Quorum Count: 11 (including two proxies, with 6 in person) of 19 appointed (10 is quorum). (*) indicates voting member.

Amy Walter called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. CDT and reviewed the agenda for the day. Amy W. introduced Nathalie Lavine, Cheekwood Vice President of Education and Outreach. Nathalie welcomed the Commission to Cheekwood and shared their Community Impact Report and many of the ways they invite guests to engage at Cheekwood. Amy W. invited participants in person and online to introduce themselves.

Amy W. asked Eileen Wollam to report on Friends of Volunteer Tennessee. Eileen has been chairing since January, and they now have 10 board members and lots of new energy. They are researching projects, including an emergency fund for AmeriCorps members for unexpected expenses (such as a car breaking down). A study group for the Certified Volunteer Administrators (CVA) exam would like to collaborate with Friends to provide scholarships for the CVA exam. Friends will also be helping with editing Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards (GVSA) bios. Amy W. encouraged all commissioners to donate, even a small amount, to get to 100% participation. Eileen noted that donors can sign up for a reoccurring monthly donation.

Amy W. called on Jim for the Director's Report. Jim reported that Hope Alexander joined the staff a few months ago, and Volunteer Tennessee is now fully staffed. The new State budget that began in July also includes funding for an additional full-time staff member. Jason Scott was nominated to America's Service Commissions (ASC) Board – the national membership body that provides State Service Commissions with a lot of support. Jim provided an update on federal funding for FY24 (starts in October). The House proposal significantly reduces AmeriCorps funding (less than half of current level). Essentially, that would end the AmeriCorps program, because the House version would not provide funding for Education Awards. The Senate version

is much closer to what was approved for the current fiscal year. The President's Budget Request is \$1.478 billion compared to \$1.313 for the current year. States for Service, the ASC policy arm, requested \$1.652 billion, which is unlikely to happen. Jim also reported that the AmeriCorps 30th anniversary is coming up in September. Volunteer Tennessee's 30th anniversary is February 7, 2024. Jason Scott and Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee have offered to host the Tennessee AmeriCorps 30th anniversary on June 7, 2024 in Knoxville.

Amy W. asked Amy Gilliland to do a roll call quorum check. Six voting members were present in person; three were present by electronic means; and two (Andrea Hill and Lee Moten) passed their proxies to Amy W. Ten votes are necessary for quorum, and the proxies meet quorum. Amy W. reviewed the Statement of Necessity. Due to scheduling conflicts, less than a quorum of Volunteer Tennessee Commission members was present in person for the meeting, so under Tennessee Code Annotated section 844-108, the Volunteer Tennessee Commission is allowed to rely on the participation of members by electronic or other means to constitute a quorum, only upon determination by the Commission that a necessity exists. The Commission was scheduled to consider the time-sensitive votes on revisions to the 2023 AmeriCorps Formula Funding and the 2024 AmeriCorps Funding Timeline. Amy W. called for a motion to approve the determination of necessity to proceed with the meeting with a quorum to include electronic and phone participants based on the time sensitivity of the matter on the agenda. Katie Goforth made a motion, and Betty White seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed unanimously.

Amy W. gave instructions for committee breakouts. For the 2023-25 State Service Plan, committees need to determine outputs and outcomes and cover all areas. Limit expectations for staff for this work so they can focus on position responsibilities. Jim noted the packet on the Commission Member Resource web page (August 11 meeting – handouts 4A and 4B) includes the Plan, and there are printed copies for those in person. In red are the sections of the Plan that do not have a committee assignment, and committees need to discuss if any of the items in red are a good fit for the committee. The Commission broke into committees (in person and in breakout rooms) at 10:22 a.m.

Amy W. called the meeting back to order after committee meetings. Amy W. asked everyone to review the minutes from the May 4, 2023 meeting and asked for any corrections or additions. Eileen made a motion to approve. Greg Lyles seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed unanimously.

Amy W. asked for Committee reports. Jason Scott from the Board Development Committee reported on updates to the bylaws to be discussed later in the agenda. The committee is planning for the retreat to include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training with a pre/post assessment for State Service Plan 4.1.2. The committee also looking at helping with 5.1.1. Emergency Preparedness. They are also discussing officers for 2024 and looking to Knoxville as potential annual planning retreat location. Tracy Van de Vate added that applications are available online for new Commission members.

Amy W. asked Jim to share the proposed bylaws revisions. Many of the proposed changes are minor such as correcting agency names; adding representative of the volunteer community (in

statute and Executive Order, but not in by-laws); explicitly including that *ex officio* members can appoint someone to serve on their behalf. Jim reviewed the other proposed changes in the red-lined bylaws document. Amy W. asked about discussions on a Personnel Committee or if the Executive Committee serves this role. Adam Jarvis asked if Executive Committee had discussed this with State HR office since last meeting. Jim noted that Executive Committee did meet but did not make final determination on how to address this issue, so it still needs discussion. Jim added that we are not ready to have a vote today but want to gather more input so that the Board Development Committee can do more wordsmithing, get a legal review, and then potentially vote at the October business meeting or at the first meeting in 2024. Tracy asked if the proposed Executive Order (EO) revisions were pulled from the Governor's office before legal review was completed. Jim explained that the Commission drafted the proposed EO revisions right before COVID. The Chair at the time, Tina Hodges, and Jim determined not to submit the EO during COVID and thought it would be a few months. As part of discussion with the Governor's Office on appointments, Jim provided the proposed EO revisions to see if they would consider them.

Jason commented that Board Development Committee discussed utilizing the Executive Committee to have compensation discussions and coordinate with state regulations and structures rather than creating free-standing personnel committee. Adam shared that compensation information can be provided to the Chair, and the Chair can determine how to share with Executive Committee. It is public information. Perhaps the frequency (maybe annually) should be determined to make sure compensation is benchmarked.

Jim added that America's Service Commission does an annual survey of all State Service Commissions and collects salary information. Most of our staff positions correspond to the data collected there, with the exception that most states do not have a Compliance Director.

Adam added to consider revision about proxy votes – Robert's rules says consult your by-laws.

The in-person attendees stopped for 15 minutes to get their lunches.

Amy W. reconvened the meeting and called on the Communications Committee for a report. Hope Alexander shared that the committee will have a meeting later, because not many of the committee members were able to attend this meeting. The committee asks Commission members to like, comment, and share social media posts. Hope is recruiting GVSA new County Coordinators. Hope is also working on streamlining GVSA materials and trying to find ways to use colleges and universities to create videos (possibly doing videos on why people volunteer or serve).

Amy W. called on Michael Hogan for a report from the Grants Committee. Jim collected Conflict of Interest forms from all Commission members and staff. Jim stated that the Formula funding discussion requires those with a conflict of interest to step out of room or go on mute if attending virtually. Nancy Schelin, Katie Goforth, Jason Scott, and Tracy Van de Vate identified conflicts related to the AmeriCorps funding and left the room or went on mute. This dropped the voting members below quorum, so two voting commissioners, Katie Goforth and Tracy Van de Vate, came back into the room to constitute quorum. Jim shared the revised 2023 AmeriCorps Formula Funding Document. Michael shared that adjustments reflect recommendations to utilize American Rescue Plan (ARP) money and meets requests that agencies submitted (either more members

and/or more funding). Betty White made a motion to approve. Amy Walter seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed with Katie Goforth, Caroline Ledlie, and Tracy Van de Vate abstaining.

Nancy and Jason rejoined the meeting. Michael shared the draft 2024 AmeriCorps Funding Timeline. Jim shared the Formula and Competitive timelines, explained the formula funding, and the Competitive programs that would be recommended to reapply (BRIDGES USA, Inc and Hands On Nashville) or apply as new (Emerald Youth Foundation and Martha O'Bryan Center). Several programs (City Year – Memphis, Impact America, Public Education Foundation, and Tennessee's Community Assistance Corporation) will apply as Competitive continuation grants. The remaining Formula programs (Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness; Clinch Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council; Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee; Literacy Mid-South; Memphis Teacher Residency; Porter-Leath; Relay Graduate School of Education; Teach for America – Memphis; Teach for America – Nashville and Chattanooga, and The University of the South) are recommended for continuation funding. The Commission will learn Competitive results in mid-April. Any program that does not get funded in the Competitive process would drop back into the Formula portfolio for consideration by the Commission in May of 2024. Eileen Wollam made a motion to approve. Tracy van de Vate seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed unanimously.

Amy W. asked for the Grants Committee breakout report. Eileen Wollam shared that the committee talked about Strategic Goal #1 – Increase Food Responsibility and all three outputs. The Grants Committee plans to have at least one committee member review AmeriCorps grant applications to ensure at least one grant application has food security as a performance measure. The committee discussed the baseline number of volunteers leveraged towards food security and those who will be served by these measures. The committee discussed Strategic Goals #2 and #3 about education and work force development, respectively.

Amy W. called on Nancy for the report from the Strategic Partnerships Committee. The committee is already working on State Service Plan outputs 1.2., 3.2.3., and 6.1.2. The committee will also take on State Service Plan outputs 2.2. and 4.2.1. The committee will develop strategies for the two new outputs.

Amy W. called on Betty White to report on the Foundations of Service Committee. The committee is working on two primary projects, the Award of Excellence and Tennessee Conference on volunteerism and Service-Learning, as a means of implementing the State Service Plan. The committee will start working on State Service Plan outputs 2.4, 3.2.2., 6.1.2., 6.1.3. and outcome 5.2. The committee will tie these into the Conference. The committee will look for sponsorships for youth attendance at the conference.

Amy W. asked for report outs on Commission Site Visits. Betty White and D'Shonta Gleeton reported that they conducted their visit online with Teach for America – Nashville/Chattanooga's Classical Academy STRIDE Collegiate Academy site in Chattanooga. They talked with AmeriCorps members. The program is meeting benchmarks and goals and both AmeriCorps members plan to stay in education.

Greg Lyles shared that he had an opportunity to visit the South Cumberland Plateau AmeriCorps Project at Sewanee. He had a great visit with warm hospitality. He reported that it is amazing what they are doing with community partners. He saw AmeriCorps members involved in summer feeding program, a building program similar to Habitat, and a partnership with the local Health Department.

Eileen Wollam visited with Hands on Nashville (HON) virtually. She met with staff and one AmeriCorps member. She learned that HON has placed 15 AmeriCorps members at 15 nonprofits for capacity building. She reported that the biggest challenge for program is recruitment and retention. The cost of housing in the Nashville area is so high, that the percentage of living allowance required for housing impacts recruitment and retention. Next year, HON is aiming to utilize part-time AmeriCorps members and focus on local colleges for recruitment.

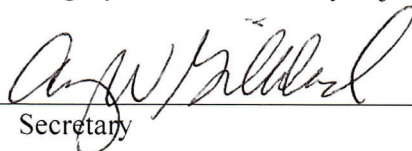
Amy Gilliland shared her virtual visit with Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness and reported that they echoed the housing challenges for members. She learned that one of their AmeriCorps members is helping individuals apply for disability and has helped people be awarded disability in 3-6 months rather than the average 3 years. She also reported that she saw Jason Scott and his members during their orientation this past week and it was great to see the AmeriCorps shirts and the intentional community building that was occurring.

Jessica Youngblom and Terry Silver met virtually with Impact America and reported they are doing a cost-of-living increase for members. They shared the program is connecting young children to services. In addition, the members assisted 850 families with taxes and saved over \$300,000 in tax prep fees and helped with earned income and over \$1 million in refunds. They did not see any AmeriCorps pins or shirts, but it may still be part of coming out of COVID.

Amy W. thanked everyone for making site visits and sharing the stories. She encouraged all to keep up the great work.

Amy W. called for any public comments. None noted.

Amy W. reminded everyone that the next meeting will be the retreat in Knoxville on October 19 and 20. Jim noted that the link to the evaluation is in the agenda, and he will send out as follow-up. Jim shared process for completing travel forms for those in person. Jim will also send out travel form as follow-up. Amy W. then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Adam Jarvis motioned, and Greg Lyle seconded. Amy adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m. CDT.

Approved:  Date: 10/20/2023
Secretary

Meeting minutes prepared by Amy Gilliland