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**FAITH-BASED & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
ADVISORY COMMISSION TELECONFERENCE MEETING**

TELE-CONFERENCE MINUTES
Friday August 3, 2012

Meeting Date, Time & Place: Friday, August 3, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. – North Dakota Department of Commerce, Cross Ranch Room, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Members Present: Leann Bertsch (telec.), Carol Cartledge (telec.), and Senator Tim Mathern (telec.).

Members Absent: Scott Davis.

Ex-Officio Members: Beth Zander.

Staff Present: Jerry Houn, Lena Trondson

Purpose: Review projects and initiatives of the Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives.

Opening Remarks & Introductions: Leann Bertsch took roll-call and Jerry Houn established a quorum.

Discussion:

Beth Zander explains the findings from the State Commission's (SC) meeting in regards to absorbing the SC with the Faith-Based & Community Initiative (FBCI). The SC recommended that FBCI would be brought into SC rather than vice versa. SC is a larger group with very specific responsibilities such as AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents program, RSVP, Senior Companion program etc. SC passed a motion that the FBCI Advisory Board be absorbed by the State Commission and the FBCI legislation be repealed.

Senator Tim Mathern did discuss this with the legislative counsel and that would place the State Commission under the potential possibility of being vacated at any time. Tim

mentions that having something in statute gives it more ability than not being in statute. Without statute, the Governor can close down the commission at any time. Senator Mathern advises that the bill can be written to place the SC in statute, and to have FBCI fall under that. Beth Zander responds that is not the preference of the SC and it would prefer to stay under executive order.

Jerry Houn explains that the only way to get the funding from the Corporation for Community Services is to have a State Commission; it wouldn't be just the AmeriCorps funding that would go away but also funding for all senior corps programs that we have in this state.

Senator Tim Mathern asks why they would not want to be in statute. Leann Bertsch adds that it might give the SC more ability to respond to unique requirements; being under executive order gives more flexibility for the governor to make revisions. Senator Tim Mathern states that although having FBCI in statute has not increased any funding and has not had any significant impact outside of executive order anyways. Beth Zander does state that the State Commission would be a very welcoming group and excited about engaging in getting activity together. However, have to be careful about keeping the funding separate.

Furthermore, Senator Tim Mathern asks what legislators are currently on the FBCI advisory board. Jerry Houn responds that as of now, it is just Senator Mathern. We are currently waiting to have a representative named. He further states that Al Carlson has the authority to appoint a legislator to the board. Senator Tim Mathern states that he does not oppose this merger since the legislation do not properly fund the FBCI; however, whomever Al Carlson appoints might object to the absorption of the FBCI into the SC. Beth asks for clarification whether they would object to repeal this specific statute. Senator Tim Mathern states that might be the case. Beth Zander offers to check on this matter.

Senator Tim Mathern suggests that they get another bill draft that essentially does what the SC is suggesting, and then one of the board members will talk to Al Carlson to move down that road and receive some feedback on that. Jerry Houn mentions that they have been waiting for the last year to have Carlson appoint a legislator to the board and do not know why it is taking such long time to get a decision. However, conversations have been taking place with the governor's office to have the positions filled.

Leann Bertsch states that if they go ahead to draft a bill that goes in line with SC suggestions and if the FBCI statute goes away, perhaps the governor can revise the executive order to be broader in order to include the FBCI so that it wouldn't require the statutory language. This would make it possible for the governor to appoint people to be on the advisory board that is specifically interested in these kinds of issues.

Jerry Houn does mention that AmeriCorps is all about community initiatives and needs. They also deal with the FBCI side of things. The SC should be trying to accomplish the same goals as the FBCI.

Recommendation: Senator Tim Mathern motions to have a new bill draft from the legislative counsel which would repeal the FBCI language and the intent being that the activities of this group may be taken up by the SC under executive order. Leann Bertsch seconded that motion.

Leann Bertsch asks if they should vote on the issue or if there are any questions on the matter.

Carol Cartledge brings forth that she thinks it is the right direction to go but wonders if when the bill goes to the floor, they have to wait and see how it turns out. Is there a danger of putting SC into statute? Beth responds that any time you touch a piece of legislation there is that possibility. Carol Cartledge states that it is crucial that SC is aware that might be a possibility.

Senator Tim Mathern states that his particular motion is just to have the bill drafted and clarifies that this motion is not to introduce the bill. The purpose would be to have it drafted and then have the SC look at it and shop it with Al Carlson so that we have our process in place. Then it would be the final decision as to whether to introduce the new drafted bill or not.

VOTE: Leann takes a vote and it is unanimous.

Motion passes and we appreciate Senator Mathern work on drafting this bill, and then have SC look at it and then meet again. Beth Zander also offers to pull both groups together to discuss these issues. If that would be of interest, Beth Zander's can put something together for them. Especially if this leads to some legislative changes, we could definitely have some joint discussion in regards to a modification of their charter for example.

There was also Scott Davis' business on the agenda but since he is absent, Leann asks if Jerry Houn has any input on that. Jerry Houn states that Chad does not work for Scott Davis any longer so Jerry Houn hopes that Scott received the information from him. The reason to bring this up was to keep thinking about putting together the grant writing training for the FBCI organizations across the state. Hopefully we can still get some information through Chad as to who he was thinking of recommending doing the training for us. Jerry Houn wants them to keep it on the surface and think about it so that they can make some headway in regards to that issue.

Adjournment:

Nothing further to bring up or discuss so Leann Bertsch adjourns the meeting at 10:20 a.m.