



1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 2
P.O. Box 2057
Bismarck, ND 58502-2057
Phone (701) 328-5345
Fax (701) 328-5320
E-Mail: jhirsch@nd.gov

NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF FAITH BASED & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

MINUTES June 10, 2009

Meeting Date, Time & Place: June 10, 2009 at 8:00 AM, Job Service North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Members Present: Leann Bertsch, *Carol Cartledge (for Carol Olson)*, Representative Bette Grande (teleconf), Alan Klein, Senator Tim Mathern, and Brad Williams.

Members Absent: Cynthia Lindquist , Carol Olson

Ex-Officio Members Present: Jim Hirsch

Guests Present: Linden Boyd

Staff Present: Jerry Houn and Cheryl Leach

CALL TO ORDER:

Opening Remarks & Introductions: Brad Williams welcomed everyone.

Administrative Announcements: Brad Williams reminded members that travel vouchers are available and to see Cheryl after the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Brad Williams asked for a motion to approve the June 10, 2009 agenda.

MOTION: Alan Klein moved to approve the agenda as presented, Senator Tim Mathern seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Brad Williams requested a motion for approval of the April 22, 2009 minutes with the correction of the November 19, 2009 date to read November 19, 2008 on page two under the Chairs Report.

MOTION: Senator Tim Mathern moved to approve as corrected the April 22, 2009 minutes. Alan Klein seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

CHAIRS REPORT:

Planning Meeting Developments: Brad Williams reported the observations made from the June 09, 2009 planning meeting. Brad commented that it has been a slow hard pull to get from the beginning to where we are today. In 2003 the Senate Bill was past, establishing the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was initially the Governor's Office responsibility, with no funding. In 2007, the Office of Faith-Based moved from the Governor's Office to the Department of Commerce. This transfer made sense, since the role of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is very closely aligned with the role of the State Commission on National and Community Service. The transfer was intended to provide opportunity to leverage additional federal funding for the State Commission by bringing the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives under the umbrella of the State Commission. This was to be a WIN for both since they both were under-funded. For the 07-09 biennium there was a \$25,000 which was put in the Operating Budget under Travel. This is used for travel of the Faith-Based Commission members and did not result in our ability to leverage the full \$25,000 for federal match under the State Commission.

For the 09-11biennium we were able to get into the Governor's budget a transfer of the \$25,000 from the Operation Line Item to Salary. The Governor's budget also provided authorization of \$75,000 in special funds for the biennium. To expend the special funds allocation, we would first have to raise this amount from private contributions. The additional state funding in the salary line item can be used for match to access an additional \$25,000 in federal funds. The Special funds could also be used as match if the funds were channeled through allowable activities of the State Commission. The spending authority on the special funds starts July 01, 2009.

Jim Hirsch commented that the monies that were in the Governor's Office were basically used for travel expenses to national meetings. There was no staff assigned to the position because the dollars were not there. Before the 2007 session, we were also struggling as a State Commission with this similar issue, we never received any state funding for the State Commission operation and we were not able to generate a sufficient match where we could access enough federal dollars to do what was expected. When the State Commission was started there was an escalating match requirement, we were able to access \$125,000 per year in federal funds for administration with a 5% match. The first three years we were able cover the match, however, it went to a dollar-for-dollar match, and therefore our level of match stayed constant and the federal funds came down.

The State Commission was struggling. The Governor's Office was also struggling with the Office of Faith-Based, a proposal was laid out implying that the two missions appear to be very similar and both organizations are struggling, therefore, if Faith-Based was transferred over to Commerce and funded, and those funds could then be used to leverage additional federal funds. In the 2007 session, the Senate Appropriations Committee did transfer the Office of Faith-Based to the Department of Commerce with no budget. The \$11,000 that was in the Governor's budget was being considered for an increase of up to \$25,000, we argued a minimum of \$50,000 was needed to be affective for the biennium. We didn't get it. When Commerce finally received \$25,000, OMB inadvertently put it into the operation line item. We have an operating budget but no staff to support the expenditure of that budget. The \$25,000 is still in the operating budget. This session we were able to transfer those dollars from the operating budget into the salary line item. That will allow us to leverage the \$25,000 against the required match and generate an additional \$25,000 from the Corporation for National Community Service.

Brad inquired if it would be appropriate as an advisory commission to lay out a work plan for the State Commission and have staff respond to those tasks and priorities developed from the June 9th planning meeting by allocating staff. A determination will have to be made whether the \$25,000 + \$25,000 match is going to adequately expand staff or provide funds necessary to meet the tasks requesting to be done.

Jim Hirsch noted that this is a standing committee of the State Commission on National & Community Service and the Commission will be responsible for creating a State Service Plan due to the recently past Serve America Act. A process to work through this is: 1) establish the overall priorities to be included in the State Service Plan and; 2) develop a Strategic Plan for the Commission with resources to support it. Jim Hirsch commented that the dollars won't allow us to hire another staff person. The staff currently in place is what we will end up with. We are currently combining a temporary position to full-time.

Jim Hirsch commented that the Service America Act could benefit ND because the federal legislation could double the amount of federal administrative funds available to small states, we could move from \$125,000 per year to \$250,000 per year on the federal side. If we don't have additional match it doesn't make a difference because we can only access the federal dollars to the level of match we have, however, there is a provision written in where we do have a capability of requesting a match waiver. If we were to get the waiver, it would allow us to access the full \$250,000 of the federal funds and still maintain the existing match. At a minimum we are going to see the opportunity to bring in \$125,000 additional. This could provide additional staff positions. The staff we currently have is tied to AmeriCorps. The #1 priority is administering the AmeriCorps projects and grants and working with the sub-grantees.

Brad Williams commented that we should as the advisory group to the State Commission formally request that our strategy be part of the State Commissions Service Plan as they develop their strategy and allocate funding to meet that Service

Plan. We could form an outside group, non-profit organization, to put together a grant request for volunteers to help accomplish some of the work.

Brad Williams commented he would like the committee to focus on outcomes we would want generated by the State Commission, and charge the staff to meet those tasks and accountabilities for the initiatives. We can take these deliverables and ask the State Commission for acceptance in order to accomplish our program of work within the confines of the State Commission.

Linden Boyd reported on the June 09, 2009 planning meeting. Notes from the meeting were prepared and administered out to the committee members. The objective of the meeting was to develop a plan and establish direction and recommendation to address the mission and goals of the organization. The meeting began with outcomes which include:

- Develop an executable plan with accountabilities and timelines.
- Determine three realistic and specific steps for recommendation.
- Be convinced that this committee needs to exist, it does have a purpose, and it does have access to resources to carry out its mission.
- Discussed the rationale for Faith-Based Initiative having been supported by three federal administrations. Other states are doing a better job of getting resources/funding. This is an opportunity for North Dakota.
- Promote to do more with the faith-based community and have the faith-based community share in the program and services provided by government for enhanced quality and quantity of services.
- Don't provide services, but help identify providers, and develop partnerships and collaboration with faith-based communities and other resources.
- Provider examples discussed were: healthcare, parish nurse programs, senior care, after-school care, foster care, etc. There maybe an interest with the Department of Human Services for such collaborative programs with faith-based organizations.
- Connect County Social Service programs with faith-based organizations to identify opportunities to impact those organizations.

The overview of the mission, goals/objectives and functions as defined in Senate Bill # 2349 were discussed. In reviewing this information it was determined that these functions defined a specific focus for this advisory commission that is a subset of the State Commission's work with communities to: enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of Faith-Based community organizations in providing human services in their respective communities.

In reflecting on the mission and goals, strategy was discussed. After discussion on strategy, the following objectives were developed and agreed upon:

- 1) Develop a comprehensive list or database of faith-based organizations in the State that specifies the contracts, type of organization, and other pertinent information.

- 2) Provide target communication with faith-based organizations.
 - a) Quarterly Newsletters
 - b) Community/regional forums
- 3) Collect information regarding programs/service needs, opportunities, priorities, and model programs for replication/expansion.
- 4) Communicate with government agencies to leverage programs with faith-based community organizations.
 - a) Provide faith-based list to these agencies for communication purposes.
 - b) Encourage “turn-key” programs for faith-based organizations.

To carry out this plan the following ideas were discussed:

- Utilize the Vista Program:
 - ✓ Federal matched funds
 - ✓ State special funds
 - ✓ Private contributions
- Need a list of government agencies for service/program collaboration.
- Solicit a grant proposal and provide technical assistance for AmeriCorps to fund volunteers and supervise/administrate the plan for the Commission.

Action Items Timeline:

Staff with Legislative Biennium	July 01, 2009	Activate Special Funds Authority
Staff	July 31, 2009	Solicit and have received Vista Program Authority for a Vista staff person.
Commission	July 31, 2009	Secure \$10,000 of private funding donation for Vista match.
Staff	October 01, 2009	Solicit the grant proposal and provide technical assistance for _____ entity to secure AmeriCorps funding to support the community communication initiative (newsletters, community forums) to be funded in the 2010 program funding.
Staff	October 01, 2009	Prepare budget for strategy/plan for community project for newsletters, meetings, travel, database/list, development/collection of information mailing, travel, meeting collateral, etc.
Commission	October 01, 2009	Find an organization to apply for the AmeriCorps funding and run the project in 2010.

Senator Tim Mathern inquired whether we are able to receive a VISTA volunteer that would already have a job description, or would that be the staff person. Jerry Houn commented that we would want to create a job description for that VISTA position.

Senator Mathern inquired whether this could be done without AmeriCorps or is AmeriCorps the only vehicle to obtain a VISTA staff position. Jerry Houn replied that AmeriCorps has nothing to do with the hiring of a VISTA volunteer.

Brad Williams commented that the year 2010 timeline may be too aggressive. The special funds authority starts July 01, 2009, therefore we want to recognize that this is the first point we can spend the special funds money. We want the staff to put together the VISTA program and obtain the funds available, then proceed getting the VISTA person started.

Jerry Houn mentioned that Nancy Olson who is responsible for VISTA in North Dakota will be attending the meeting later today and we can visit with her regarding the VISTA staff position. The VISTA programs start October 01, 2009. Jerry commented that we get 18 VISTA spots a year and Nancy had some spots open.

Brad Williams recommended that we as a Commission would ask Jerry Houn to find a VISTA staff person. Jerry Houn agreed he would provide the budget and job description for the VISTA position. Jerry Houn commented that he will visit with Nancy Olson regarding the VISTA position to be sure she saves a spot.

Brad Williams confirmed that the second action step is the application process that will begin July 31, 2009 and the actual hiring would be October 01, 2009, pending the match availability, and we as a Commission would accept the responsibility of finding the first \$10,000 of private funding. We are anticipating \$75,000 for the Biennium.

Senator Mathern suggested that a full time staff person could do the database, newsletter, and communication with state agencies to promote our plans. Senator Mathern expressed his support, but is concerned that this doesn't become some bureaucratic issue that we can't figure out again between AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Faith-Based. Senator Mathern inquired as to why we don't have the VISTA staff do all the work? Why do we have AmeriCorps in addition to VISTA?

Jerry Houn remarked that AmeriCorps is a direct service, VISTA is not. VISTA is an administrative position and AmeriCorps is just direct service. This is why we are considering VISTA because we are not providing direct service.

Brad Williams commented that if we look at the compression of time, this is only a proposed timeline of how to proceed with the strategy and goals. We need an agreement from the committee that this is a recommendation to go forward. Is it the best approach to use VISTA or AmeriCorps, or a combination of both? That could be part of the next step; to analyze the best resources and the most efficient way to proceed.

Senator Mathern commented that he is supportive of this and asked to include the consideration that AmeriCorps work might be done by a VISTA person depending on the listing of duties, writing them down, then speaking with AmeriCorps and VISTA to see if VISTA could do the majority of the work, even if it takes a couple of people. If they can't do the work because of duties or slots, then we should go with AmeriCorps.

Brad Williams commented that the best way is to get the AmeriCorps person here and a clear program of work. Jerry Houn commented that his understanding of the June 9th meeting was that the VISTA person will be in charge of gathering information for the database, contact the state agencies, and produce the newsletter. In regards to the AmeriCorps project, we would place an AmeriCorps member in each of the eight regions of the state and have them do the field work for the contacts.

Linden Boyd commented that the purpose of this was to not make a specific decision but to explore, under a clearly resource challenged organization, opportunities that we can creatively find; possibly one person accountable to the commission who then would help us to provide that AmeriCorps field representation. I would like to suggest that the real recommendation may not be this specific, but most importantly ensure that the strategies and goals align with the State Commission.

Jim Hirsch suggested a correction to the wording “write the grant” in the October 01, 2009 timeline table. The wording “write the grant” would create conflict of interest due to the open competitive requirement for the AmeriCorps program. We can assist and identify potential non-profits that might be able to have capacity, and provide technical assistance to them. We need to correct the wording in the timeline table to read “solicit a grant proposal and provide technical assistance...” instead of the wording “write the grant proposal...”

Senator Tim Mathern commented that what we have is the goal to get a VISTA volunteer assigned to the Faith-Based Commission whose duties include 1-4 identified in page two of the notes from the June 9th planning meeting, and to explore with the State Commission and the Faith-Based Commission on how to secure AmeriCorps funding for the further plan of moving this to a regional level. We want the VISTA hire to deliver activity that reflects the legislature’s directive to the Faith-Based Commission.

Brad Williams suggested that the VISTA hire would be charged in their job description to write a plan by which this would be achieved.

MOTION: Senator Tim Mathern moved that the staff, with the help of the Faith-Based Commission members, make a request to receive a VISTA volunteer placement whose activities shall be as outlined to include 1-4 identified on page two of the notes from the June 9th meeting, and develop a plan to involve AmeriCorps. Representative Bette Grande seconded the motion.

VISTA STAFF DUTIES:

- 1.) Develop a comprehensive list or database of Faith-Based organizations in the State that specifies the contracts, type organization and other pertinent information.
- 2.) Provide target communication with Faith-Based organizations.
 - a) Quarterly Newsletters
 - b) Community/regional forums
- 3.) Collect information regarding programs/service needs, opportunities, priorities, and model programs for replication/expansion.
- 4.) Communicate with Government agencies to leverage programs with Faith-Based community organizations.
 - a) Provide Faith-Based list to these agencies for communication purposes.
 - b) Encourage “turn-key” programs for Faith-Based organizations.

AMENDED MOTION: Senator Tim Mathern moved to amend the motion by inserting the phrase “the VISTA staff person would be supervised by the staff of the State Commission on National & Community Service”.

Representative Bette Grande seconded the motion. All in Favor. Amendment Carried.

Brad Williams commented that he is unclear on how to link the Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Program Award to the Service Plan of the State Commission.

Jim Hirsch reported that the Service Plan focuses on three pillars: expanding, volunteer talent, and retaining volunteer talent. What we are looking at in supporting the faith-based organization is; how to attract, expand, and retain talent. The other is what we as a State Commission do to support the three pillars. Many smaller faith-based community organizations don't have full time staff and resources, or the ability to develop a strategic plan or mission. A goal we should look at to in supporting the three pillars is how we can create a type of intermediary assistance that can work with small organizations. Someone that can go in and work with the organization helping to assess the capacity and the needs in their area, how and where they fit, and help align partnerships with agencies and organization that already exist. This could possibly open the opportunity to go after available grants.

Brad Williams suggested that the next step is to request specific deliverables of the staff. We need a timeline for the first newsletter and the content of the newsletter, followed by specific deliverables we need to be managing.

Linden Boyd commented that Carol Cartledge mentioned that the Department of Human Services could provide staff resources we could utilize. Carol Cartledge replied that under the TANF program they have volunteers who are experienced individuals that have skills that could be utilized.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Senator Tim Mathern moved for adjournment. Motion seconded by Alan Klein. All in favor. Motion carried.

Brad Williams adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.