



**SerVermont Commission
AmeriCorps Funding Discussion
GoToMeeting 622-085-637
23 May 2016
Approved 10/20/2016**

Members in Attendance (either by phone or computer): Jason Gosselin, Madeline Strasser, Sabina Haskell, Thomas Hark, Dan Noyes, Christy Gallese, Betsy Ward, Shelley Park, Guy Isabelle, Jim Coutts, Michelle Park, and Doug Kievit-Kylar

NOTE: Christy Gallese and Shelley Park both had need to leave the discussion early.

Staff in Attendance: Philip Kolling

Staff unable to Attend: Robyn Baylor, Sharon Hearne

Unable to Attend: Jacob Bogre, Peter Hayward, Susan Cheesman, Ryan McLaren, Lee White

10:00 am Call to Order

Chairperson, Betsy Ward, called the meeting to order and ceded to Phil Kolling who explained that this was an open meeting subject to the open meeting rule. THUS, any motions made and voted on would be done so on a roll call voice vote. Such voting results are documented in this document. As an open meeting Phil had previously posted notice for how it is that anyone who wanted to could attend. No one made such a request.

10:10 am Phil Kolling Update

Phil shared that official word has been received from CNCS under an embargo regarding CNCS competitive funding decisions...THUS the need for this AmeriCorps Formula Funding Discussion (for the 2016-2017 Program Year). The discussion and decisions made will be based upon the original applications and any data available for programs making application. Past performance is also a factor (where available) in decision-making and such data/information will be presented as part of the discussion. Based upon embargoed CNCS notification of competitive funding, SerVermont has an EXTREMELY STRONG competitive portfolio for 2016-17.

The meeting's agenda was described as follows:

- Roll call
- Provide background and context
- Review situation and answer questions
- Discussion
- Decide how to move forward

Develop funding strategy and/or

Make funding decisions via roll call vote

Phil offered the following as background:

- Set out to increase applicants, improve programming, offer more opportunities to serve.
- This is a competition
- Not a value judgement
- Decisions based on application, past data, and future forward thinking
- SerVermont's RFP

Overall program design

Organizational capacity to manage grant and program
Past performance

Phil described the timeline as tight:

- Formula package due to CNCS 6/24

We will submit on the 22nd or 23rd at latest

- Any Request for Proposals need to be posted 10 days
- Timeline is TIGHT no matter what

Phil offered a long view that included the following:

- What do programs do “after” competitive funding?

Previously, went on formula, continued

- AmeriCorps was not designed as a forever solution, or something organizations should become “reliant” on.
- With a strong competitive portfolio, and programs that will be coming up for re-compete in the next two years, what is our forward thinking funding strategy?

Phil shared the situation as he saw it at this point, including what he explained would be described with greater detail later in the discussion:

- What is funded already
- Past performance
- Current performance
- Requests

Phil’s overview included a reminder of which pool of funding, competitive or formula each applicant is in.

Dan called for a brief explanation of the difference between competitive and formula funds in order to ensure everyone was on the same page with these important terms. Phil summarized the difference as:

Competitive Funds: Those funds awarded by CNCS, part of a national competition for such funding.

Formula Funds: Those funds that state service commissions such as SerVermont have discretion for allocating to support programs.

Phil summarized SerVermont’s current fiscal situation with regard to the programs funded competitively, those not, and the yet unexpended fund carry over.

The question now becomes, with the request for funds totaling more than available, how do we invest these funds?

Phil, at this point, shared the results of an AmeriCorps Program Performance Data Analysis that he filled out. The assessment is developed from available performance data and questions CNCS includes in their past performance review

With review of the analysis Phil called attention to the difference between the objective data results and the more subjective responses to CNCS indicators, especially the risks and opportunities portion. Phil stressed that the current program year is not closed and LEAP, CEDO, and VHEC all have plans to enroll additional members. Phil has concerns about CEDO’s current performance that contribute to the classifications given to CEDO in the subjective portion of the assessment. Explanation was given for how it is that this analysis could be used in decision-making.

Discussion ultimately focused on concerns the performance analysis suggested for CEDO with commissioners asking for clarification and voicing frustration for past performance and issues with compliance. Phil reminded everyone of Sharon’s more positive assessments recently and program improvements.

Phil, in suggesting alternate strategies to proceed, explained how a recent visit to CEDO provided an awareness for a desire to reinvent the program. Phil put on the table the possibility of a planning grant to span, in effect, a bridge year to a program reinvention and a new application. Phil reviewed multiple options for strategically investing formula funds.

The question was raised regarding how many programs SerVermont could manage. Phil shared that to his knowledge Program

Officers manage an average of about 14 programs. The follow-up discussion focused on the need to maintain the level of service and assistance that SerVermont offers funded programs – and to avoid taking on so many programs that program management becomes so onerous that SerVermont’s ability to work collaboratively with programs and provide a high level of customer service becomes jeopardized.

Discussion returned once again to the merits and disadvantages to providing continued funding to CEDO with many commissioners NOT in favor of providing continued support. The question was posed, “If we were to decide to discontinue funding, then what?” Phil explained that in the event CEDO was not funded in 2016-17, the program could cease operations when the last member exited service, or could still choose to use alternate funding to keep the program afloat and essentially self-fund.

Discussion next focused on what would happen should the commission decide to discontinue funding for CEDO. Commissioners made it clear that should this be the outcome it was important that the reasons for not awarding formula funding be made clear to CEDO program managers, and that it be made clear that such a decision would (if made) be a board decision. Betsy Ward, Commission Chairperson, agreed and offered to be spokesperson for such a decision if necessary.

A MOTION was made by Guy Isabelle (and seconded by Jim Coutts) that the SerVermont Commission NOT fund CEDO during the 2016-2017 AmeriCorps Program Year based on past performance but consider application in the future.

Brief discussion prefaced a request for commissioners to vote on the motion. The following vote tally was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Aye |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Aye |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with ten (10) commissioners voting in the affirmative, and one commissioner not present for the vote.

A MOTION was made by Jim Coutts (and seconded by Sabina Haskell) that the SerVermont Commission utilize formula funds to support LEAP, VHEC and VYCC at levels originally requested in their applications (for a total of \$654K). The motion was amended to allow for individual votes for each of the three (3) programs.

Brief discussion prefaced a request for commissioners to vote on the motion to fund LEAP. The following vote tally was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Aye |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Not Present for Vote |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with nine (9) commissioners voting in the affirmative, and two commissioners not present for the vote.

Brief discussion prefaced a request for commissioners to vote on the motion to fund VHEC. The following vote tally was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Abstain |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Not Present for Vote |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with eight (8) commissioners voting in the affirmative, one abstention, and two commissioners not present for the vote.

Brief discussion prefaced a request for commissioners to vote on the motion to fund VYCC. The following vote tally was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Aye |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Not Present for Vote |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with nine (9) commissioners voting in the affirmative, and two commissioners not present for the vote.

A MOTION was made by Jim Coutts (and seconded by Guy Isabelle) that unexpended funds (\$73,950) be applied to create a maximum of up to six (6) planning grants (with the necessary 24% match) to be awarded at staff discretion.

Brief discussion prefaced a request for commissioners to vote on the motion. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not a request for a planning grant by CEDO would be considered. Commissioners avoided a definitive answer to this but preference was expressed that the program take at least a year to redefine itself. The following vote tally on the motion was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Aye |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Not Present for Vote |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with nine (9) commissioners voting in the affirmative, and two commissioners not present for the vote.

Phil mentioned that the CNCS competitive funding decisions were currently embargoed.

12:00 pm Vote to Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Tom Hark (and seconded by Sabina Haskell) that the meeting be adjourned.

The following vote tally on the motion was registered:

| <u>Commissioner</u> | <u>Vote</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Jim Coutts | Aye |
| Jason Gosselin | Aye |
| Thomas Hark | Aye |
| Sabina Haskell | Aye |
| Doug Kievit-Kylar | Aye |
| Guy Isabelle | Aye |
| Dan Noyes | Aye |
| Madeline Strasser | Aye |
| Shelley Park | Not Present for Vote |
| Betsy Ward | Aye |
| Christy Gallese | Not Present for Vote |

The motion was passed with nine (9) commissioners voting in the affirmative, and two commissioners not present for the vote.

Respectfully Submitted,



Doug Kievit-Kylar
Secretary