Volunteer Tennessee Commission Minutes
Tennessee Board of Regents, 1 Bridgestone Park, Nashville, TN 37214
May 15, 2026

Members in Attendance (in-person underlined): Chairing: Terry Silver*, George Bove*, Destiny Brown*, Stephanie Davis*, Nathan Farnor*, Katie Goforth*, Rebecca Henderson*, Andrea Hill*, James Hoggard*, Greg Lyles*, Maddie Ratliff*, Tracy Van de Vate*, Betty White*, Crista Whitney* (TDOE), Eileen Wollam*, Evon Wood*. Ex officio: LaShan Dixon (TDH), D'Shonta Gleeton-Partee (TDCS), Adam Jarvis (F&A), Nestor Reyes (TDLWD), Nancy Scheline (TDEC), Patti Smith (AmeriCorps), Trinity Weathersby for Shannon Rosedale (DHS), Jessica Youngbloom (TDMHSAS)

Members not in Attendance: Kim Carpenter Drake*, Amy Gilliland*, Holly Jones*, Lisette Lopez*, Lee Moten*, Amy Walter*, Patty Woodby*, VACANT (TBR) (TDM) (TDSHS) (UT)

Staff: Anthony Bennett, Latiyfa Fields, Neelam Gupta, Lizzy Lemieux, Jason Scott, Jim Snell, Don Sowers, Candace Young

Quorum Count: 16 (8 in-person) of 23 appointed (12 is quorum). (*) indicates voting member.

I. Terry Silver called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. She shared the agenda and outcomes for the meeting: 1) to approve March 2026 Minutes, 2) to elect a new Vice Chair, 3) Funding Issues, and 4) Committee Updates.

II. Commissioners introduced themselves. Jim welcomed new Commissioner, Maddie Ratliff.

III. Friends of Volunteer Updates (James Hoggard)

A. Friends is working to boost visibility online, update website, increase FB following (only 34 now); sharing VT work. Friends has a new promotion: highlight GVSA Star Award recipient each week.
B. Grant has been received from subsidiary Mid-TN Electric of $10,000 for use in any way; but needed matching funds through anonymous donor specific held for addressing scenario where VT is faced with emergency situation to fund staff if needed.
C. Stephanie Davis, Treasurer of FoVT: Balance is $5,687.65.
D. Eileen Wollam explained more about Volunteer Tennessee Novelty license plates: Novelty plate is for sale and available for anyone who makes a donation of $15 or more to Friends. Eileen also encouraged every Commission member to make a donation of any amount, and we can specify where funds go.

IV. Director's Report (Jim Snell)

A. New staff person: Jason Scott in place and already making connections.
B. Two primary operational grants; last year uncertain about one of those, not awarded until late. This year both have already been awarded for fiscal year which begins in July.

C. President's budget request reduces AmeriCorps from $1.3 billion to $108 million, which basically closes down AmeriCorps. But legislature will continue to work on its budget and may change as it has in the past.

Terry asked if there is anything we can do as a Commission; Jim replied that the Commission needs to continue to educate legislators. President's budget is the Executive side; last year and 1st Trump term he did the same thing, so there is a precedent for what the President had done in the past, and what the legislature has done. Terry thanked staff for continuing the hard work and diligence in spite of difficulties.

V. Quorum Check (Betty White)
Roll Call indicated a quorum; 16 voting members (8 in-person; 8 Webex) of 23 appointed (12 is quorum).

VI. Commission Business

A. March 9, 2026 Minutes were approved after the motion was made by Greg Lyels; Eileen seconded; 14 yes, 1 abstained.

B. Voted on several budgets: CSG and CIF are operational budgets; federal money has been awarded for these. The Executive Committee met and approved these.
Budgets based on allocations for '26 – 27 only, but we will be able to use unspent funds.

1. The 2026-27 Commission Support Grant Budget was approved unanimously after a motion made by George Bove, second by Nathan, and after a positive recommendation from the Executive Committee.

   A question was asked about travel in the budget, if there is consideration for increased gas prices. Jim said mileage amount has already been set. This is a good opportunity to donate travel expense.

   LeShan pointed out that if the Executive Committee has already recommended approval of an item, there does not need to be a motion but only a second.

2. The 2026-27 Commission Investment Fund Budget was approved unanimously after the recommendation was made by the executive Committee; Tracy Van de Vate second. George thanked the Executive Committee for its work on the budgets.

3. Volunteer Generation Fund Budget was approved unanimously after George seconded the motion previously made by the Executive Committee's recommendation.

C. Update on AmeriCorps funding process
Jim explained that there are 2 timelines: Formula process; every state gets a portion, based on population; VT makes the decision on this funding. The other process is national Competitive funding, held by AmeriCorps, and AmeriCorps makes decision on funding. We do not have the

national Competitive announcement yet; we should have it in mid-June. At the March meeting, the Commission authorized Executive Committee to make that decision in June when we receive the funds. Jim explained the national Competitive programs, and we expect that AmeriCorps will fund continuing programs.

On the Formula funding, all of the programs at the top of the Formula decision chart are continuing programs; typically we continue funding, but we may have to reduce the amount. Total requests for continuing and new programs exceed what we have available so there will not be enough money to fully fund programs, and the chart does not include programs in the Competitive process which might not receive Competitive funding. We are not sure if we can use unspent funds from previous years. We are not in the place where we can actually make a firm decision. Typical process has been to wait to make the decision until we receive Competitive funding. Eileen, Chair of Grants Committee, recommends that we wait; Commission already voted to wait and authorize Executive Committee to make the decision.

D. AmeriCorps Funding Timeline Revisions
Jim explained that revisions to AmeriCorps Funding Timeline are due to short turn-around times, and dates when we received instructions. We had to submit the placeholder to obligate that Formula amount ($3.9 million), but we will have to go back and tell them which programs get subgrants. The motion was made by George Bove to approve the 2026 AmeriCorps Funding Timeline Revision; James Hoggard seconded. The motion carried by 14/15 voting members.

The Commission took a brief break from 10:58 – 11:11 a.m. Business continued with a working lunch.

E. Election of Vice Chair
Greg Lyles, Chair of the Board Development Committee, reported that applications were sent out for interest for Commission Vice Chair. Nathan Farnor applied. Greg reviewed Nathan's qualifications and activities and interest statement. The Board Development Committee recommended Nathan as Vice Chair. Terry asked if there were any questions or any nominations from the floor. None responded. Nominations were closed. Greg made the motion that the Commission elect Nathan as Vice Chair; Katie Goforth seconded. The motion was approved 13/14, one abstention was Nathan. We congratulated and thanked Nathan for taking the position as Vice Chair.

F. Commission Attendance Participation
Terry led a discussion about the need to have greater participation with Commission work.
Greg's concern: are committees robust enough to the work of the committee; do they have enough members who attend the meetings?
Nathan expressed the concern that we need to remind ourselves that we need to spend the time and energy to do the work of the Commission.
We might look into a By-law revision where we have 3-tier leadership: chair, chair elect, and past chair all serve on the committee. In this situation, it is important for people to serve in other capacities rather than just one committee.
Suggestion: the Board Development Committee can review this and make a recommendation.

Commissioner Handbook and training has a Commission member description, expectations, and time commitment.

In addition, the State Plan 2026 – 2028 has specified responsibilities for each commissioner:

1) 100% of Commissioners participate in at least 2 activities: site visits, grant reviews, or commission activities during their term;
2) Each commissioner participates in 75% of meetings;
3) 100% of Commissioners participate in giving or in-kind giving each year;
4) Each commissioner engages in at least one volunteer activity each year in addition to attending VT Commission meetings.

The suggestion was made on how to track expectations:

Board Development Committee can get that info from Jim on several of these items. Create a spreadsheet so that we can track. If there is some kind of real issue, we can recognize that and let Commission Chair know.

G. Committee Reports

1. Board Development Committee (Greg Lyles)

-Filling Vice Chair position

-Responsibilities of Commissioners

-Retreat: Memphis, October 22 - 23

Volunteers to assist with planning: Andrea and LaShan

2. Communications Committee: Rebecca Henderson stated that she didn't have a report to share.
3. Foundations of Service Committee (Destiny Brown)

Conversations ongoing about VT Conference.

Discussion about whether we should we continue to have stand-alone conference or partner with someone else like Tennessee Nonprofit Network or another. Sharing conference with nonprofit of others in the space enables us to share resources. Candace is open either way, but needs to get Volunteer Tennessee's name out there to promote our ventures

Questions/Ideas which arose:

-Can we create a space for people to get together?

-Costs of conference does affect participation.

-Maybe partnering to share expenses can help

-We have the framework and can build on that.

-How do we ensure that we aren't buried in the limelight of another organization?

-Who is the best partner for us?

-Are there volunteer organizations that would be a better fit than TN Nonprofit Network?

-Commitment to hotel probably needs to be made sooner rather than later, about a year out…also have GVSA to think about.

-2 complicating factors: GVSA & timing

-We may need to wait another year (2028) to partner with someone else because

-Maybe we need to take on the Road Show and wait on changing the conference

-Do we need to form another committee to work on this?

-Foundations of Service now to continue with investigating this.
-Can we afford not to seek partnerships, both in terms of not being able to afford the conference and increasing numbers

The decision was reached that for 2027 we should continue with managing the conference by ourselves while we begin to investigate partnering with someone.

4. Grants Committee (Eileen Wollam)

The Grants Committee is behind on action plan.
It is keeping track of site visits.
There will be time at the October meeting to hear site visit reports.

5. Strategic Partnerships Committee (Nathan Farnor)

There are some challenges with email communications and attendance.
Corporate Social Purpose Network is going well:
Wade Munday is stepping into role as Chair.
Johari Matthews with the Titans is stepping into Vice Chair role.
June 26: Chattanooga Aquarium Networking Opportunity
If we know of organizations in that area, make contacts & share information.

Discussion:

i. Road Show: Taking VT into different areas of TN to learn about the Commission
Go into existing events across the state and have a presence; promote VT
There will be a Toolkit of Resources and marketing materials.

ii. Discussion on how to inform others about Volunteer Tennessee
-QR Code for us to tell what's going on in our areas and send to Nathan.
-Survey will be sent out to Commissioners to return.
-Go to places where people are and have a booth to inform people about VT
Would like clarity as well: what we do, what we share, how we operate
-What is scope of potential work?
-Look at our own organizations, events already set up, and what we do; how can we combine efforts with other organizations?
-Use EVENT BRITE

iii. TN Kids Summer Service
Youth service opportunity moving to Vol. TN
Good move for Vol TN to have an opportunity for kids to serve.
Challenge is worthwhile.
There is a question of funding especially for the Kids' Carnival.
There is the existing staff capacity to send out information.
Value in doing things more regionally so that people can come.
Always valuable to partner; maybe look at local fairs.

H. Suggestions from the floor:
1) Business cards for VT Commissioners and QR code on app with VT information.
2) Engagement: informal opportunities to visit organizations during special events, activities.

3) Can add communication for organizations and insert in AmeriCorps newsletter to invite commissioners.

I. Additional Comments
1. We have 45 Active Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs now.
2. What is the situation of SNAP Benefits for AmeriCorps members? Have been given to some, denied for others. Someone at Dept. of Human Services said that DHS is not aware of AmeriCorps being an entity. Latiyfa said that she has checked into that and our programs are aware of that. There is a letter from AmeriCorps (State and National) which states that stipend from AC should not affect income. Lizzie said that we have made programs aware, but this person may not have known.

Jim said it is helpful for programs to bring concerns to us. Trinity (who is standing in for Shannon Rosedale from DHS) asked that Eileen send that concern directly to her; apologized for DHS, but we understand that there probably is a misunderstanding which can be resolved. Thank you, Trinity, for your assistance today. Eileen will forward her the information.

3. AmeriCorps is no longer going to call its participants "members" but will call them "Volunteers"—with a capital V. (There was a mixture of what they were called in different service programs.) Statutorily they are not employees of the organization for which they serve.

VII. Terry asked if there were any more questions or comments.
Terry read the Public Statement requirement and asked if there were any requests for public comment. Jim replied there were none.

VIII. Wrap-up
Terry thanked everyone for our positive, active participation today.
Next meeting date is August 14, location TBD.
Jim asked us to complete the survey in the QR code. Jim shared the travel form.
Nathan made a motion to adjourn, and Tracy seconded.
Terry adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m.

Approved: Betty White Date: 08/14/26
Secretary

Meeting Minutes prepared by Betty White, Secretary