

Volunteer Tennessee
Quarterly Commission Meeting Minutes
Cheekwood, 111 Cheek Road, Nashville, TN 37205
Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Members in Attendance (in person underlined): Chairing: Amy Walter*, George Bove*, Destiny Brown*, Kim Carpenter Drake*, Nathaniel Farnor*, Terry Frank*, Amy Gilliland*, Katie Goforth*, Adam Jarvis (TDFA), Aimee LaGrone (TDOE)*, Caroline Ledlie (AmeriCorps), Greg Lyles*, Patricia Powell*, Nestor Reyes (TDLWD), Shannon Rosedale (TDHS for Suzanne Carr), Jason Scott*, Terry Silver*, Betty White*, Eileen Wollam*, Evon Wood*, Jessica Youngblom (TDMHSAS)

Members not in Attendance: Stephanie Davis*, D'Shonta Gleeton (TDCS), Andrea Hill*, Michael Hogan (TDSHS), Holly Jones*, Heidi Leming (TBR), Lee Moten*, Kane Reeves*, LTC John Rigdon (TDM), Nancy Schelin (TDEC), Leon Shields*, Kendra Thomas (TDH), Tracy Van de Vate*, VACANT (UT)

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

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

Amy Walter called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. CDT and asked for quick introductions around the room and then online.

Amy W. called on Eileen Wollam to give report on Friends of Volunteer Tennessee (VT).

- Working on a license plate for the State of TN. Currently with the Legislature and was supposed to be voted on at end of March but haven't heard yet. Will share with the Commission when it is approved. It takes \$30 to reserve a plate and need 1,000 people to sign up and add \$30 to get them printed. 35-37 AWG
- Also working with the TN Certified for Volunteer Administrators scholarship team. TNCVA asked Friends to serve as a funnel for scholarships for the costs for exam. Twice a year, Friends will get list of who will receive scholarships and Stephanie Davis (Friends of VT Treasurer) will send out the checks. All the guidelines are written up, and Friends of VT doesn't make any decisions, just serving as the banker.
- Applied for a grant from America's Service Commissions for an AmeriCorps member emergency assistance fund. Friends plans on license plate sales going to towards this in the future. Application had to be completed by the Commission, so Jim completed the application and submitted recently. Should know by May 10 if received. It is a dollar-for-dollar grant to serve AmeriCorps members ages 17-25. Friends will be providing the match. Friends can also put in money for members over 25, but that doesn't get matched by the grant. Eileen clarified that it was for emergencies – still need to write up guidelines for what will qualify. Not a large sum of money, but it is at least some. Jason Scott indicated that the license plate is waiting on signatures with Senate. Adam Jarvis indicated it did pass.
- Also very excited about the AmeriCorps anniversary celebration in Knoxville on June 3.

- Last meeting – anonymous donor matching \$30 for Commission members who donate \$30. Can do through Friends of Vol TN website or with check in person. As of yesterday, only 7 had donated. Amy W. encouraged all to consider and reminded that it is powerful to share that we have 100% giving participation from Commission.

Amy W. asked Jim Snell to share his director's report. Today is Gordon Harless' last day – going to work at the Commission in Maryland. Gordon shared that he will be building a VISTA program for the state of MD. Jim noted they posted to refill Gordon's position yesterday. Jim also reminded that AmeriCorps 30th celebration is on June 3. The Commission 30th anniversary recognition was in February. Volunteer TN has a room block in Knoxville if folks interested in attending the AmeriCorps 30th celebration, but it expires on May 10. Hotel costs will be billed to Volunteer TN, but Commissioners need to confirm reservations. Jason indicated that they are expecting a couple of hundred people, great speakers (VISTA, Undersecretary of Defense, CAC Executive Director), 60th anniversary of CAC coming up. The celebration will be 5:00-8:00 p.m. EDT at Mill and Mine in Knoxville. Jim will send out link to register for the celebration and information on the room block. Jim also noted that staff has been working on the AmeriCorps Funding process.

Amy W. asked Amy Gilliland to confirm quorum. There are 8 voting members in person and 14 online. 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 8-44-108, 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 revisions votes on the 2024 AmeriCorps Funding Timeline revisions and the 2024 AmeriCorps Formula Funding. 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. Greg Lyles made a motion, and Eileen Wollam seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next order of business is to approve the minutes from February 19, 2024. The link to the minutes on the Commission Member Resource page was sent in email and posted in the meeting chat. Betty asked if the minutes, which note the next meeting date as May 17, needed to be corrected. Jim noted this was an accurate reflection of the May meeting date at that time but was unsure on minutes. Nestor indicated that we would record in this meeting that the May meeting had to change. Betty White made motion to approve, and Katie Goforth seconded. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed with fifteen (15) votes to approve and one (1) abstention.

Amy W. called on Eileen to share Grant Committee report. First, has everyone needs to complete Conflict of Interest Form. Jim confirmed the reception of forms from online and in person Commission members or confirmed a lack of conflicts from any others online that were not received. For the AmeriCorps Formula discussion, some have clear conflicts: Nathan Farnor, Katie Goforth, and Jason Scott. Potential conflicts: Destiny Brown (attended ETSU and is currently active in sorority activities), Patricia Powell (served as member with Hands On

Nashville 2021-22), Adam Jarvis (attended ETSU). Patricia raised the question if these would be considered perceived conflicts. Having attended a university does not constitute a conflict, but Jim asked for discussion. Patricia commented that it could be seen as support. Betty White noted if actively involved in alumni affairs or fundraising, could be conflict, but likely is not. Amy W. shared that she did not believe that commissioners who are not actively at the school should be a conflict. Amy G. indicated that there are enough votes for quorum even if those with potential conflicts are not included, but we also do not want to set precedent. In the past, have had several alumni from potential grantees and not considered that a conflict. Jim recommends that, based on discussion, commissioners can determine whether they want to vote or abstain. Betty asked if the conflict form indicated term for connection, and Jim indicated that it is usually a year. If actively involved or if was recent, that's different. Patricia also served as a member Hands on Nashville and considering it same as university if after a year. Her term ended in 2022. Patricia asked if you were a grant reviewer is that a conflict. Jim stated that does not constitute a conflict. Those who reviewed and scored can participate in the vote.

Kim Carpenter Drake added clarification as someone who has worked in this space. Having an interest does not inherently mean that you have a conflict. From the governance perspective, a conflict is that you may make a decision that is not in the best interest of your role in the room today and that could benefit of another organization or person. All are connections of interest, but the threshold for disallowance to participate is a conflict of interest.

Other things to discuss before that vote, so those in the room with a conflict will need to leave for the vote, and those online with a conflict will need to mute during the discussion and vote.

Since Eileen is filling in for Michael Hogan, Jim noted that the AmeriCorps Funding timeline needed a couple of minor revisions. Internal pre-award risk assessment was a little different from the original timeline and getting the worksheets was a little different, but more importantly the change of this meeting date needed to be reflected in the timeline. This then changed the subsequent dates. Amy G. asked if it changed again from the February meeting revision, and Jim indicated that it did change again. This meeting change was due to the date that funding packages have to be received by the national office, and part of the process requires applicants to make minor revisions after Commission votes. Amy W. asked if there were any additional questions. Eileen Wollam motioned to approve, and 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. had Jim pull up the Competitive Funding Chart. No vote was needed on this. Eileen shared the chart is the AmeriCorps National Competitive results. One of the new Competitive applicants received competitive funding – Marth O'Bryan. The others will move over to the Formula process (Bridges, Emerald Youth Foundation, and Hands on Nashville). One continuation program (Impact America) declined and will cease AmeriCorps operations. The other continuation programs (City Year, Public Education Foundation, and Tennessee's Community Assistance Corporation) received slight decreases in funding.

Eileen asked Jim to explain difference in Formula and Competitive funding. AmeriCorps programs that operate solely within the State of Tennessee are required to go through Volunteer TN for their funding so that State Service Commissions have authority. Each state gets an

allocation of funding based on population formula, so it is called Formula funding. Most federal agencies do Formula funding. The Formula decision-making is up to the Volunteer TN Commission. The Commission also has the opportunity to send programs from TN to compete nationally for another pot of money held by the AmeriCorps agency. They compete against other programs across the country. For programs that operate in more than one state (National Direct), rather than applying to each individual state, they can apply directly to AmeriCorps to simplify things. Since it is a national competitive process, it is called Competitive. These are the results that Eileen just shared. Out of 8 programs, 4 were within the 3-year grant period (tentative approval for 3 years with required reapplication). Those four were either going into year 2 or 3 and are called continuation. Typically, they are refunded each year as long as there are no serious issues. Programs at end of 3-year cycle must re compete and reapply, so that was Bridges and Hands on Nashville. Volunteer Tennessee selected two more to compete as new programs: Emerald Youth Foundation and Martha O'Bryan Center. These funding decisions are made by national AmeriCorps agency. If not funded in Competitive, programs drop back into consideration for TN Formula funding. Hope asked about Impact America and about the money that was awarded to them. Since declined, it goes back into the national pot and the AmeriCorps agency determines what to do with those funds.

Eileen noted that the next step was to review the 2024 AmeriCorps Formula Funding. Amy asked those with conflicts to step out of the room or mute. Katie and Jason left the room, and Nathan muted. Jim noted that the summary, application descriptions, and other materials are all posted on the Commission website. Neelam conducted risk assessment for new applicants. There were no applicants that were rated high risk. Several medium and the rest were low risk. Staff posted the version of the funding chart online last week and then got notification of the actual funding available, and it was slightly different than the estimate. The Grants Committee used the amount from last year to estimate the amount for this year. Since receiving the actual amount, staff revised the chart to reflect change in funding available. Adam asked if it went up or down. Jim noted that it went down a little bit. The Grants Committee used \$3,849,181 (what TN received last year). The actual number was \$3,772,464. Adam asked if this is portion based on the population formula. Jim confirmed that it is, and Adam asked if this means our population went down. Jim noted not necessarily, other states may have gone up or may have gone down for all states.

The total amount available also includes potential unspent carryover funds from the current year. Staff checked with current programs on estimated carryover, and it is a conservative estimate. The total amount available includes funds remaining from the American Rescue Plan Act (about 1.5 million remaining). Adam asked if these funds were not used do they have to be removed. ARPA funds have to be allocated before September, which Commission is doing today. There are two different formula awards with slightly different time frames (with 3-year grant cycles). One formula award we can carry over into the next year as part of the 3-year cycle. Should be able to carryover the other as well, but next year will likely be last year for carryover on the second grant. Eileen noted it took her a long time to understand continuation and re competing, but clearer now.

The revised chart is the 2024 Formula Funding recommended by the grants committee that met last week. Staff presented three options, and grants committee decided to present Scenario 1 to the Commission as the most equitable.

The Grants Committee proposes fully funding the top performing continuation programs: Memphis Teach Residency, Teach for America – Memphis, Teach for America – Nashville - Chattanooga, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, and Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council. For those that were below average in performance (86.4%), the committee proposes a percentage reduction. This step takes their request and multiplies by performance percentages for a new funding level for each. The performance criteria are: average enrollment, retention (as defined by earning a partial or full Education Award), performance on performance measures, and timeliness.

Jessica asked about new programs. Jim noted first step is to fund continuing programs, then funding adjustments, and then look at money available for new programs. Jessica asked if there is a minimum threshold in order to get funded? Jim indicated that the Commission has not set a minimum requirement, but staff advises requesting less than about 10 members does not often yield a good ROI for the amount of staff work involved. However, since the Commission has not set threshold, the Commission funded one program at 5 members.

Jessica clarified her question around threshold of performance, and Jim added that Commission has not established minimums for performance. The Grants Committee reviews, and if they have concerns, they sometimes put additional requirements on that program.

Jessica asked about the low performance measurement percentages of a couple of programs and whether or not they should continue to receive funding. Gordon and Latiyfa have communication with those programs and can share why they may be lower. Some programs had lower enrollment, and if you can't enroll, then if you can't retain, and it will impact the program's ability to meet performance measures. Betty asked if the Grants Committee is looking at other factors to see if they are trying to reach those goals. Literacy Mid-South is a relatively new program, so typically the Commission has not defunded in first three-year period. If a program has not done well at end of 3 years, the Commission might defund. The general understanding is that programs that continuation programs will get funded, they just may not get all that they asked. Programs must re compete at end of 3 years.

Jessica asked if we fund at a reduced rate, do they reduce performance measures. Jim noted that if the Commission votes to decrease funding, programs have the opportunity to revise their performance measures. Another reminder that this is the Grants Committee make a recommendation, but Commission can vote differently. George Bove wants to make a motion to move forward with the Grants Committee recommendation.

Amy asked if any other questions. George reminded us that motion comes first and then discussion. Betty White seconded the motion.

Gordon shared that Literacy Mid-South was in first year and had redesign mid-stream due to difficulty recruiting full-time members and modified to part-time members. Performance

measures were based on full-time, but they have modified for next cycle and will focus more on summer session as well. They also had some changes with partnerships.

Latiyfa also noted that programs had a difficult time recruiting due to the living allowance.

Jim added that the Commission over time has done conditional funding for programs that it was concerned about. That is another option: to fund at this level based on conditions (such as improve retention, improve application score, improve performance measure performance, etc.).

Adam asked for confirmation of their funding being reduced since performance was low. Jim confirmed.

Eileen asked if they get feedback if funded lower. Jim indicated there is a general statement about funding reduced based on performance. Betty asked if we ask for suggestions on how they could improve performance. Gordon and Latiyfa do this on an ongoing basis.

Jim noted that staff is not as concerned if performance is above 80. If below 80, need to have general training for programs to support.

Latiyfa and Gordon indicated that these are generally good programs, and staff do not have serious concerns about any of the continuation programs. Adam and Betty noted they appreciated the feedback from staff in communication with these programs and their support for the continuation of these programs.

Eileen shared three programs finished 3-year cycle and are recompeting (Hands On Nashville, Emerald Youth Foundation, and Bridges). The Grants Committee suggests reductions for two for below average for performance (Hands On Nashville and Bridges).

Eileen noted that the Grants Committee recommends one new program (ArtistYear) for this year. Jim noted that the distinction of programs below the heavy line in the chart is for programs requesting planning grants for an agency to look at having a program in the future. All planning grants are new applicants. The Grants Committee recommends planning grants for the top 3 scorers (East Tennessee State University, Tennessee Charitable Care Network, and United Way of West Tennessee).

George again made motion to approve, Kim seconded. Initial motion was on the table.

George motion to table discussion and move to vote. Betty White seconded.

Terry Frank clarified a procedural point that the intent of the motion to table discussion is to call the question on the vote. The Commission can vote up or down or withdraw motion before the table. The first motion was to approve as presented. Then another motion to approve. Then motion to table discussion. Mayor Frank thinks that a vote on the motion to table is not needed.

Amy G. began a roll call vote to accept as presented by the Grants Committee. After the roll call vote, there was a discussion about quorum. Destiny noted she abstained, and so the Commission

was at quorum with those voting members in the room and online. The motion passed with ten (10) votes to approve and two (2) abstentions. The recused members returned to the meeting.

A couple of Commission members offered their thanks and appreciation to the Grants Committee for their work on the funding.

Jim pulled the State Service Plan up on the screen. Caroline Ledlie shared updates from the Strategic Partnerships Committee. They are working on: sponsorship and targeted asks; providing training to Commission members and CERT training for communities; focusing on disaster teams support; creating information sessions to promote TN Serves and sharing on social media; using Days of Service to gather and track participation and create contact lists; and connecting with National Direct programs with members in TN and VISTA recruitment.

Amy W. noted we will break briefly for lunch and then return for working lunch.

Amy W. reconvened the meeting and called on Terry Silver to report on the ad hoc Executive Order Revision Committee. The committee met on April 5 and April 19 and have another meeting scheduled for May 17. They are working through the order carefully and will have more changes to bring forward before the next meeting. The draft so far was posted on the Commissioner Website page. Amy W. noted that an ad hoc committee was created to work on revisions for the Executive Order and the Board Development Committee is working on the bylaws to align together. Betty asked clarification if these were working to all be in alignment and Terry confirmed. Terry shared that they have changed name to Volunteer Tennessee and generalized terms like designee rather than "his." The committee is still working through the remainder of document, including Executive Director reporting, etc. and making sure it is in compliance with federal policies.

Amy W. asked Jason Scott to give update on bylaws revisions. The Board Development Committee is revising the bylaws alongside the Executive Order. The committee is working with legal counsel from Finance & Administration for concept language. Jim noted that the F&A legal counsel, Lucian Geise, had joined this meeting in case anyone has any questions. Amy W. asked if any questions for legal or if wanted to share any information. Lucian noted he was happy to provide legal assistance to assist operations.

Back to Jason for updates on the State Service Plan goals, and Jason noted a lot of the items include the Executive Order and Bylaws which are TBD. Tasks include: updating handbook; planning the Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps 30th anniversaries. Jason gave a shoutout to conference committee and Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards.

Amy W. called on Betty White to share updates from the Foundations of Service Committee. One of primary focus has been looking at Commission priorities and incorporating into the committee's work, including the Award of Excellence. This year, the Department of Education presented the Awards. The service project at the Conference focused on food security. The committee hopes to begin Volunteer Youth Council to strength that portion of conference. The Champion of Service has been updated. Betty is going to distribute to three people on May 8. Online you can find the certificate and description of the program. Commissioners can

recognize for providing service – can be nonprofit – doesn't have to be fancy. This honors community members. Next week Betty will honor Crafts for Cause, which last year raised \$20,000 and this year is giving proceeds to Domestic Center, Literacy Center, and three women work relentlessly and each of them are getting one and awards. It is a simple way to thank those who are often overlooked. Betty gave a shoutout to Candace for the conference this year! Betty liked having the Commission meeting at conference, and it was the first time to have an in-person quorum in a long time.

Amy W. asked Terry Silver to share about the Communications Committee. They are directing their focus to the website for updates and revisions. The committee intends to have had Miss Tennessee Volunteer help with GVSA. Miss Teen Volunteer America 2025 (from Tennessee) and Miss Tennessee Volunteer to serve as honorary co-chairs of the Commission. The new Miss TN Volunteer (to be crowned in June) and Miss Teen Volunteer America (Anna Grace Loudenberg) could be honorary co-chairs of the Commission. The committee recommendation bringing on these individuals as honorary chairs of the Commission.

Terry Silver making motion to have current Miss Teen Volunteer America serve as co-chair and then new Miss Tennessee Volunteer to join after selected in June. The term would be while they serve in their role. George made the second.

In the past, honorary chairs presented awards at GVSA, spoke at conference, held regional service projects with county title holders, and used their platform to share information on Volunteer Tennessee (such as to the TN Serves portal).

Betty noted this person was just crowned and so would have a year and would still be in her term for our conference in February. Nathan and Hope are working on a general job description for both. Nathan clarified they will be ambassadors for the Commission. If this works and we like it, we could reappoint the people who follow them. Amy W. asked Amy G. to do a roll call vote. Amy G. called the roll, and the motion passed with fifteen (15) votes to approve and one (1) abstention.

Terry also noted that they are revisiting the Day on the Hill and how to promote and working with the Board Development Committee on that.

Amy W. called for public comments. Jim indicated none received and no public are on the call.

Amy W. reminded of July 19 meeting. Please complete the evaluation on the screen or on the agenda. Travel form in your packet and Jim reviewed process.

Amy W. asked if there were any final questions. Amy then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. George Bove motioned, and Betty White seconded. Amy W. adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m. CDT.

Approved:  Date: 07/19/2024 Secretary

Meeting minutes prepared by Amy Gilliland