**Transcript**

February 28, 2025, 4:03PM

 **Hope Alexander** started transcription

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 0:04
From day on the hill. So there been some ideas and opportunities that have been floated over the last couple of months and we were all trying to get through gpsa and through the conference before we really locked in and had some of those conversations, but wanted to just.
See if we can talk through some of those today.
Figure out where we're at, what action items might need to happen to just kind of build and improve upon down the hill and strengthen it a little bit more for this year?
So the three big.
Items that I think are probably the primary focus of conversation, one being the topic matter.
So what really are the asks or the information being shared?
To be the physical materials, and if there's a way to.
Scale those back a little bit.
Make them a little bit more digestible.
And then three, of course, which I don't think we've done, at least since I've been on, is some sort of an opportunity to do a a virtual whether it just be a video or whether it be a live training or something.
Before day on the Hill, just to give Commissioners a better sense of what to expect in the county, go over some materials and that's why I'm glad Candice is on the call.
So thanks Candice for being on so.
And we are recording.
Is that right?
Pope or Jim?

 **Hope Alexander** 1:16
Yes, yes. And Terry just joined. Terry just joins.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 1:16
Whoever's OK. Perfect.
Perfect. Welcome, Terry. Welcome, Terry.
OK.
Well, I will.
Let's start with the asks, because that's probably the most important thing.
The three ideas that have been floated in terms of kind of the primary.
Obviously going in today on the hill, we wanna talk about what volunteer Tennessee is, right.
We will do that.
That's a part of any any, any conversation.
What volunteer Tennessee is and just building that kind of positive reputation for the organization with elected officials.
But we had a conversation.
Last year was my first time doing volunteer Tennessee Day on the Hill.
I've done some days on the hill with some other organizations and really was wanting to challenge us a little bit to think through.
In addition to just broadly, here's who we are.
Please keep us in your, you know.
Keep us on your radar is really specifically sharing some key points, some key successes and maybe some key asks. So the three that have been floated, I think we could do all three of these because none of them are heavy necessarily in the interlock, but one is to.
Very more intentionally promote the Tennessee service network this year.
It's gotten a lot of attention over the last year, specifically as it relates to the disaster.
So I think there's an opportunity to highlight it and talk about.
The way we have it before.
Two was the.
Specifically, the roles and the ways in which volunteer Tennessee and the Commission and the staff have supported disaster relief efforts over the past year and a number of different capacities.
So I know Jim.
Jim was vital in helping to get some of our core and triple C folks on the boots on the ground in the region.
I know that the platform is used pretty significantly throughout the disaster.
Rally volunteers. I know there's been some other opportunities that have come from that. So I think an opportunity to specifically talk about how valuable the organization was as it relates to the disaster. And then the third item, which I think is the small ask is just putting you.
On their radar that we will be doing a roadshow this summer and that will share dates and things as they get closer, but.
Really inviting and encouraging them that if they're available and able, while we're if they're, if we're in their community.
That we would love to engage with them while they're there. So even outside the day on the hill, we would love to invite them to be a part of that to to engage with them in the community outside of just being in Nashville.
So those are kind of the three big ideas that were floated.
Tennessee serves network disaster as well as a brief mention of the roadshow, so I want to pause there because I know not everybody was involved in those conversations because we have now that we've merged the committees. I want to pause there, see if there's questions, ideas.
Anything we're missing about in terms of key opportunities that we may be able to highlight outside of the normal thing?
Things like America or and the organization as a whole.
I'll pause there.

 **Jason Scott** 4:16
This is Jason. I I I was not on the comms committee before, but I think the focus on disasters really meaningful. I think when people are trying to look at like what is a value that is added, I think being an effective part of the response to a.
Disaster like that is, is meaningful.
I one thought with day on the hill, you know, getting people to show up today on the hill.
Is always kind of a thing, but it might be meaningful.
I don't know if Members from AmeriCorps programs who might be able to talk about their. Maybe this is like too much stuff, but like, I just think about the value of stories.
And how sometimes people get lost in numbers, you know, you see stats 1000 of this, 500 of this, whatever.
Real easy to.
You know, but maybe maybe putting a face to some of these things 'cause. I would be shocked, frankly, if if we don't see ourselves in a position, our Commission and all Commissions and AmeriCorps broadly looking at pretty significant cuts.
I mean, that's just kind of where I'm at with it, I mean.
Glass half full glass, half empty.
I'm just reading the reading the room.
It kind of feels like there is no.
I mean, there's no way to meet the spirit of the direction of government right now without a significant reduction.
I mean, EPA is looking at like a 60% reduction, right, so.
So like how do we?
Best case scenario, find ourselves with support to continue existing.
You know, this is like really big picture stuff.
I mean, I I met yesterday with our Community Action Network people.
And strategizing around Tim Burchett and just like different members of Congress that may or.
Politicians and state politicians with the federal politicians and just trying to make arguments that kind of connect those two things because in some ways those significant decisions may be made beyond the state. But that doesn't mean that there's not connectivity between like the local state.
To the federal decision makers and I. And I'm just wondering if there's.
Maybe that's just not our thing.
Maybe that's.
Being handled, you know by ask and separately.
But if if there's a way we can amplify whatever initiatives there are to try to create a broad appreciation of the value argument of.
AmeriCorps and I know the Commission does more than that, but man?
An awful lot of that money is attached to AmeriCorps, and if we lost it.
There would be a lot fewer people.
On any of these zoom calls.
You know, just just I guess all of that to say is there like a way and I think like the disaster piece creates a very relevant like local regional state value argument that connects to the big picture thing.
I don't know.
Just just just some thoughts and observations.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 7:56
I think that's helpful, Jim.
This might be a question for Jim and thank you Jason for sharing that.
Have we ever, Jim, as a Commission, put forth any?
I know obviously day on the Hill in terms of some of our advocacy work in that space is to Jason's point has been primarily targeted towards state officials.
Have we ever put forth any sort of a formal, coordinated effort towards congressional folks or any of our federal leadership, do you know?

 **Jim Snell** 8:27
You mean through the General Assembly or directly to the federal?

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 8:31
Not. Not even I would, but either either direct either, I suppose, but I'm even thinking more directly.
Right, 'cause. I'm thinking about, you know, one thing, I think that's unique about down the hill. Of course, the idea behind down the hill is physically.

 **Jim Snell** 8:38
Yeah.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 8:43
We're there physically.
We're meeting with our elected officials at the state level and I think definitely to Jason's point highlighting and bringing some of those things. However, we're able to, to the awareness at the state level is helpful, but also to Jason's point is.
I'm even wondering outside of day on the Hill.
You know, in the coming months or even, you know, into the summer perhaps, is there a way for us?
To do some more direct outreach or advocacy directly to our our our representatives and senators at the federal level.
I mean, have we ever done that?
Have we ever done congressional meetings, for example, like in district with a member of Congress or with a state senator?
Have we ever done that as the Commission?

 **Jim Snell** 9:29
So.
Not not in a extremely coordinated way.
I mean, the Commission has done lots of things in the past to reach out to the members of the Tennessee delegation.
So.
There, we've done at Commission meetings where Commissioners do little thank you notes that that we then send to the delegation.
In the past, there've been various times when the chair has reached out to the Commissioner.
And encourage them to do outreach on specific issues related to what's going on at the federal level. Now, of course, staff staff can't lobby and staff can't encourage other people to lobby. So.
Anything like that would have to come from a Commissioner. If you're asking for a specific thing. I mean, if we're just providing education.
Staff can can certainly help with that, but if we're asking them for something then that's where that crosses the line of lobbying and and someone else has to make that ask. But but that has happened in the past where the chair has reached out to the Commissioners and.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 10:25
Yep.

 **Jim Snell** 10:36
Said, you know, there's this specific thing. Please reach out to your representatives and to the senators and and.
Ask them for whatever it is. We need it at the time.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 10:46
Yeah.

 **Jim Snell** 10:47
So we've done that.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 10:48
Are there?
Are there any?
Are there any limitations to AmeriCorps workers themselves being able to be a part of those conversations? And what are like, what is the allow they allowed to at all or completely no.

 **Jim Snell** 10:57
Yes, yes.
They are allowed to do legislative education so they can talk about the service that they do and the impact that it has on the Community and the impact that it has on them personally.
They can talk about those things, but they also are specifically prohibited from doing any type of lobbying.
For or against any kind of legislation or platform or candidate, so they could not say, please give us more. Please vote to give us more money or please give us more money.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 11:21
John.
Got it, got it.

 **Jim Snell** 11:34
Now they could. They could talk.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 11:35
But but if but for them to say, yeah, go ahead. Sorry, go ahead.

 **Jim Snell** 11:40
Oh, no, that's OK.
I mean, they they could talk about the consequences of what would happen if they weren't in their communities doing the service that they're doing like what would be lost. I mean, they can certainly talk about that kind of thing. But again, they can't ask for specific action.
Either in terms of again voting for or against something, or, you know, asking for more money or whatever, you know.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 12:07
Yeah, but we, but just to clarify, we as Commissioners.
Perhaps not the, not the.
Official commissioners, but we as Commissioners in a broad sense, are able to do that. Is that correct?

 **Jim Snell** 12:20
Yeah. Yeah, that that's true. And and and all of all of us, including staff and including members.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 12:22
OK, OK.

 **Jim Snell** 12:27
Can do.
Any kind of political outreach they want on their own time, it just has to be clearly their own time so.
The the the dividing line is. You can't do any kind of lobbying on time that's being paid or supported by by federal funds or state funds.
And Adam has his hand hand up.
So he did.

 **Adam Jarvis** 12:50
Yeah, I was just Nathan.
You probably already know this, but a nuance to what Jim just said. Since you're a university employee, I would double check some of that, not double check it is.
I think that same stuff applies to you, since it's a state institution, so you would want to make sure that it was clear that it was on your own time there as well.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 13:06
Yeah, yeah.
Yeah, no, it it it does an hour and we get training on that at the university level. And and I I think that what makes it less messy to write, it's something right in regards to hatch act and all the things you know I can't be out on.
University time on a university business as a state employee promoting a party or a candidate or a particular piece of legislation.
I think why, of course in this instance makes it even more challenging.
Is.
In addition to whether or not it's on your own time, you are advocating for yourself, right?
Indirectly, as a Commissioner, right? Like this is a program of the Commission.
This is something.
So that was more where my question was at what?
I'm curious about though is I'm thinking through like yesterday for example, and I know we're way off topic now, but I think this is really Jason brought it up is like yesterday I was with Senator Blackburn's team most of the day yesterday. Right. And I have you.
Know like I have a relationship with them.
I have a relationship with my elected official and as an example, as a Commissioner, it's like the ability to be thoughtful on how do we.
And again, staff can encourage.
Staff can XY and Z not hear you do in that regard, but how do we?
Prepare, perhaps, is the better word.
Prepare or educate commissioners enough to where should they want to go and do that on their own time. They have the information that they would need to be able to have that conversation right.
So for me, as a Commissioner, even on my own, on my own time, outside of work, outside of Commission, if I just wanted to sit down with, you know, staff from Senator Whiteburn's office.
And say, hey, I want to bring your attention some concerns that I have. Again, this has asked Nathan.
I know.
Here's all the programs that I know are in your district that are in the state that I think are are at risk, that I'm really worried about.
Here's how I think they're going to impact them. And as a Commissioner, I just really want to make make you aware of this and make you aware that I'm really concerned like that would be appropriate as a Commissioner, but not as staff for us to be reporting is.
That correct?

 **Jim Snell** 15:10
Well, again, it depends on whether or not you're asking for something.
I mean, if you're, if you're just expressing concern about potential cuts in what would happen as a result of those cuts and you're not asking specifically for anything?
That would probably be OK.
I mean that that's something that probably comes a little bit close to the line that might be uncomfortable for some folks.
But if you're if you're providing education again about.
What the individual Member does, or what an Mayor Corps program does, what programs in the district do those kinds of things?
That that kind of just telling them what happens and what would be lost if those programs went away kind of falls under the legislative education branch as opposed to the lobbying branch.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 15:58
Go back.

 **Jim Snell** 15:59
It's it's when you start asking them to like please save us. Or please don't cut us. Or please give us money or, you know, those kinds of things where you're asking them to do something.
That that's where you start getting into the to the lobbying part.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 16:10
Yeah.

 **Jim Snell** 16:14
So in terms of, yeah, yeah. So in terms of the kind of support that staff volunteer Tennessee staff can provide, I mean, we can provide you with any kind of educational materials you need in terms of what's happening in specific districts, the number of programs, number of members.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 16:16
Again.

 **Jim Snell** 16:32
The type of program activities the sites within those.
Districts, all of that stuff we can.
Provide with with no problem. America's Service commissions has.
A political action branch called States for service.
They can provide specific information about the kind of asks with with aask, not ASC. The types of things that you might want to ask in terms of, like what?
What's the? What are the budget proposals?
Look like what is what is.
What is the National service field want to have happen in the upcoming appropriations? All of that kind of stuff could be provided through states of service. So I mean.
And you know, I can connect you or anybody else with the folks at states for service in terms of getting that kind of information about what the national requests are in that regard, because there there's American service commissions.
There's also voices for national service.
There's a a nationwide association of senior core programs, so they're there.
Quite a few national entities that are engaged in national service and are very well versed in what would be ideal to have happen in the National service field in terms of funding appropriations, all that kind of stuff.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 18:09
OK.
Thank you, Jim. That's helpful.
That was just me trying to get some awareness on because I think I think Jason's comments I think are very valid.
So I'll get us back on track.
I apologize.

 **Jim Snell** 18:18
Sure.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 18:18
That was BT used to send a Revit hall, and now my mind's wondering another spaces but.

 **Jim Snell** 18:20
No, that's OK, I mean.
Yeah. No, I mean it's a valid concern because as as things are getting evaluated.
The I mean the most recent version of the House markup essentially.
Well, it zeroed out funding for state service commissions.
It zeroed out quite a bunch of other lines within the AmeriCorps agency.
Budget. It left a little bit of money here and there, but it it was essentially would would wind down the agency.
So I mean, it is certainly something that the Commission should be concerned about in terms of the national, the national atmosphere.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 19:07
Very good, very good. OK.
So thank you, Jim.
So getting getting us back on track a little bit.
So, Jason, yes, thank you that that sounds.
I know. So I think on that list of all the things I said. Thank you for that reminder of in addition to the whatever maybe we can do offline and we can continue to have those conversations. And in regards to the federal stuff is how do we bring.
The stories in the faces and the voices more directly into that on the hill, I think. I think ultimately was the point that if I'm correct, Jason, you were trying to make.
To make sure we were highlighting those stories in the americorp components, thoughtfully.

 **Jason Scott** 19:42
Yeah, yeah, I think.
Yeah, I think putting faces to it is good.
I think as Commissioners or even like program directors, it's easy to just discount that as like well, that's where you get your paycheck from, or you're like, directly invested in it. And yeah, Members are also directly invested in it. But they're like the ones in the field doing.
The activities and they can talk about their post.
You know, one of the critiques last December was that.
That AmeriCorps doesn't have, like, really good sense of the return on investment from like the workforce development standpoint, which is something they've started working on.
That was identified as a material weakness.
So having you know it's not the same as having exhaustive statistics for decades, but you know, being able to hear from some Members that have had meaningful impacts.
Oh gosh, even alums of you know, programs that can be like, yeah. And this is what I'm doing now. And this is how I got started.
Just to see kind of like the kind of the building effect that America service has both for the communities and the people that they serve.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 20:56
And Jim, I know we've got some, we've got some AmeriCorps.
Do we have actual AmeriCorps members that will be participating down the hill so far, or will it just be?
I know we've got some leadership folks that will be at down the hill or like host agencies.

 **Jim Snell** 21:11
Yeah. Well, we we have invited the AmeriCorps programs to attend.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 21:12
But.

 **Jim Snell** 21:17
I think we gave them until I think next week to respond to let us know whether or not they were going to to actually participate in the past.
There, there may have been. When we've done down the hill in the past when programs have participated, there maybe have been like a very small number of Members who have attended.
Like 2 or maybe 3.
But not very many, and usually there aren't any American members who attend.
It's it for programs and for members.
It gets a little bit sticky because even though we wouldn't be asking them to do lobbying just out of an abundance of caution to make sure that nobody would question those hours for those Members, I think programs have generally not wanted to have their members participate.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 22:13
OK.
That's helpful, Jason.
Any thoughts on in that regard on how we do or accomplish what you just shared in light of what Jim also stated, how do we balance those as somebody who is directly in that work?

 **Jason Scott** 22:24
And that's that's the big question.
You know my, my, my best idea honestly is to have have some people out there telling stories if and if you can't make day on the hill, maybe just.
Having just a really cohesive effort at storytelling that came up in the Community Action call the other day about telling the stories of beneficiaries of Community Action.
So it's not, you know, it's it's not just like you're either a contributor or a taker in society.
You know, like hearing the stories behind, like people's circumstance that get different types of safety, net benefits and same kind of thing.
Just like who are the people that are, you know, receiving?
Living allowances and education awards and what have they. What you know, what do they do and where do they go with it? And you know to, to Jim's point, I can appreciate one that program participation is generally.
Building on that and getting members is is is probably highly. It would be a challenge I think, but maybe maybe it's a matter of just, you know, Ameri Corps week is coming up pretty soon and maybe it's just.
And you know.
Hope you know I've seen you reach out trying to get people to engage and I acknowledge that even our program at time is like sometimes helpful, sometimes not.
But just getting cohesive response is challenging.
But this moment is really unique and that I feel like people are maybe more anxious about it. Less like, oh, well, that's a a thing happening up there.
It'll work itself out. I think people have enough concerns that maybe.
Maybe they'd be willing to sit down with their members and put together stories, and maybe they're, you know, maybe.
Some yeah.
So some broader storytelling would be good 'cause one thing that has occurred to me is that.
Virginia Foxx has has been a consistent.
Maybe critic of AmeriCorps and in like last December, you know her, her her last time as chair on her committee.
You know, the last thing she, her her last wish was like if I could see anything happen, I'd like to see americor defunded, right?
And with Musk's recent.
Thing in the.
The White House with President Trump there was like a you know, what's being cut.
How much money is being saved?
I know that same committee rehighlighted the fact that they had found fraud, waste and abuse with the American Agency and the audit.
Agencies miracor agencies audit hasn't been cleaned for something like 8 years, which is like a point of weakness for sure.
But all I that said, like there's narrative that will happen like.
Like that narrative is out there and I think it's important that there's some consistent counter narrative.
I mean.
Even if you're a program and you're limited by your ability to advocate, you can still tell stories.
And present a counter narrative for people to consider.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 25:46
Mm hmm.

 **Jason Scott** 25:48
Yeah, that's that's my best, best thing.

 **Hope Alexander** 25:53
Terry, you have your hand up.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 25:54
And hope you unmute it.
Yeah, there you go.

 **Terry Silver** 25:57
Yes, this is taking me back to the conversation.
Hope about that software where we were wanna capture stories.
Where are we in the funding of that?
Because if if ever there was a time we need that, it's now.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 26:12
Yeah, I think we had put AI think we had put a pause on it. 'cause we didn't think we'd be able to accomplish it before day on the hill and it we probably at this point we've got three weeks.
We probably still couldn't. Having said that though, I do think in this in transition us a little bit into the, I think talking about materials and supplies for day on the hill is I I I think it at a very minimal starting place. Jason, to your point can.
We do some really.
Intentional targeted push even in the next couple of days.
Or maybe even some really direct asks.
So some key key partners we have across the state of do you have one really good americor person that we can hop on a quick phone call with, do a quick little just virtual interview with, I mean even if that's just it's just a written story with a.
Photo of that person, right?
Like and we've got a couple of those that we can, I mean even that at a bare minimum as a starting place and maybe that's what it takes though, right? Is me calling one of our AmeriCorps people right here in Johnson City and saying, hey, I have a.
Personal relationship with you. Can you give me somebody who has a good, compelling story?
That would be willing to hop on a quick 10 minute call so we can just ask some questions and we almost like news article style, right.
But just a little bit of a high level summary of here's this person. Here's their career and ambitions.
Here's the impact they're making in your community. The community you're representing, right?
I mean that, you know, maybe that's something some Commissioners could even help with, right?
But not, I think, at a bare minimum, at a starting place, I think we could probably do something like that without requiring significant amount of money necessarily or time so.

 **Hope Alexander** 27:41
And that would be more impactful than just giving them a list of where the money's going.

 **Jim Snell** 27:47
Yeah. And Nathan, that that was going to be.
My suggestion is that I mean, we already collect great stories from AmeriCorps programs as part of their progress reporting.
But then we could go back and take a look at those and see if anything kind of stands out. But.
If we could have something that has maybe two AmeriCorps member stories.
Just, you know, four or five sentences.
Not something too terribly long and then maybe.
Especially for for where you are, Nathan.
Like.
Maybe two community members who got assistance through the Volunteers and Tennessee serves.
Just that kind of look, like really short personal stories that we could have as handouts and we could ask that the Commission Members try and familiarize themselves with at least one of those stories well enough to be able to say, well, you know, this Member, and you can.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 28:32
Hmm.

 **Jim Snell** 28:49
Read it there on the sheet.
Was an American member, and they did this and that.
This is how it impacted their life and what they plan to do going forward, that kind of thing.
So that it's.
Almost like a Cliff notes for the Commission members to be able to tell a story, they'd have the the printed sheet.
But not but just a couple. I mean just you know, again maybe 2 member stories, two community member stories from disaster related stuff.
And Andrea put something in the chat, she said.
Could we create social media post and then parentheses stories that will be shared on a schedule during the day on the Hill?

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 29:40
Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think so, yeah.
Like you mean like link to them like link to them or or something like that where they like QR code or a link or something, yeah.

 **Andrea Hill** 29:43
Yeah.
Yeah, any any of the stories that we're gonna share from the americor, just as we're all doing, ours is already linked online, so people can get it both ways. And then it's double, yeah.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 30:00
Yeah. Yeah, no, I like that. Well, on that note, 'cause, I know we're 11:30 and I honor people's time.
I know it's a Friday, OK.
I think this is helpful.
So we've got some clear, clear items we want to talk about. One of those items and thank you, Jason, for bringing up is in light of what's happening, how can we intentionally try to share beyond just some numbers and statistics, some good, powerful, engaging stories of americor members?
As well as potentially to Jim's point, some folks that.
Received support and services because the cause of those things and because of those programs, right?
So the direct and the indirect a little bit of both and just some limited ones, but some ways to engage those. I think that's helpful transitioning into the material.
So I know one of the items on the list that we've had numerous discussions about was trying to the best of our ability to scale back some of the papers. And I think to Jason's point maybe.
A little bit less information and data and a little bit more digestible, a little bit more user friendly. You know they don't need to know everything, but they need to know the more impactful most important things right.
So one of the one of the things I would like to see happen, and this is probably my ask, is to get the Jim.
How many? What all can you quickly if you know if I've got what all did we include in the packet from last year?
I know there was.
Some district specific information. I know there was some.
High level volunteer Tennessee. What other?
What else is in that packet you recall?

 **Jim Snell** 31:28
Yeah. So just the the General Volunteer Tennessee leave behind that has some facts and figures about volunteer Tennessee in the programs, the district specific AmeriCorps program information and then.
District specific.
Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards honorees, if they have any.
And then.
Then we had some.
Generic information about other programs that volunteer Tennessee has because it it doesn't make you know. For example, the the award of excellence.
There's there's only this year, I think four or five schools and so that only is going to impact like a couple districts.
So it didn't make sense to do district specific handouts for that and not tell everybody else about that program.
So we just had a single sheet that had a couple different programs.
On it the I think it was the Tennessee serves and the award of excellence.
I think we're on the same sheet.
Just in in the week, so that handout was the same for everybody. And then the obviously the district specific amercort sheet and the district specific governance Volunteer Stars award sheet.
Works specific to that district.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 32:58
So I think reflecting.
Thank you, Jim.
And I'm. I'm impressed.
You know all of that off the top of your head.
So thank you.
I'm also going back and just revisiting some of what has been shared a couple of times in some of our previous calls is I would love to see how we can get the things we just talked about and some of the information you just talked about down to.
Just a couple of pages, even if that you know a little bit more user friendly.
Not as overwhelming. I know. Last year, for me, even as a Commissioner who probably knows more, I would say about the work.
Within the average elected official, it was a lot of information I've been in, in, in lots of those conversations, and I'm I'm genuinely concerned.
About it just being too much and whether or not they're going to read it and actually look at it.
So trying to think through how do we make that much more digestible still get the information right, but make it more user friendly, much more digestible and get it down to two or three pages.
As opposed to like a large pack.
Yeah, I know some of the other days on the hill I have.
I mean, I've been on days on the hill where.
They're leaving behind as a single front page, back or piece of paper.
That's it, right?
I've been a day on the hill where it's 2 pages Max, and I know that that was a lot of a lot of materials, a lot of information 'cause. We're doing a lot of things, but it's probably too much to some extent.
So I'm wondering if there's a way to still get that information, but to really scale it back and pare it back.
So that's my request. I know Andrea, you've done some days on the hills and some other organizations as well. I don't know if you have some.
Some thoughts.
On you know if that might be a, a, a good decision, but I definitely wanna want to consider consider that if the group's good with that on how we might do that.

 **Andrea Hill** 34:38
I've seen it done both ways. It could be a packet with multiple pieces of paper in it, and really you just leave it as a leave behind and you just share that general impact and story that you want to share. Or it could be just that simple front.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 34:50
Repl.

 **Andrea Hill** 34:50
And back which is fine.
We had a day on the hill in February and we had Brandon Gibson come out and she so it was it was very varying thoughts, some of the leaders that came in and said that they love to see the leave behind 'cause. They may not have time in.
The meeting to go through everything.
Brandon came in and said that she liked hearing impact in the stories and some like a real like one-on-one person.
What happened? Based on the work that you're doing?
So I think it is, you know, we will have the information whether it's a one page and that's fine, but definitely be geared up with those stories because they need to see the face or the need and the.
Cause behind the paperwork.
If you will. So it can be done both ways, but I think you know having to leave behind whatever that looks like is fine, but being able to have the folks in the room that can share.
What their, their individual or their? Their story is about what's happening or what is needed.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 35:54
Done. Very good. That's helpful, Jim.

 **Jim Snell** 35:56
Well, yeah, just one thing I'll say.
You know 'cause, I I've been doing day on the hill now for 25 years with volunteer Tennessee. One of the things that I see.
Consistently pretty much is.
They will all gravitate to their district specific information.
Like it's we need to have a leave behind that has generic information about volunteer Tennessee.
But they will put that aside and they will look at the district specific information.
And and because that that's that's what they're concerned about.
Like they don't care if we've got, you know, we've got. Tennessee serves in every county, but the one they represent, they don't care about Tennessee serves.
You know, even if it's got 94 counties, they don't care about it.
So that's where they will gravitate. And a lot of them, not all of them, but a lot of them take that information and will pass it along to their their staffers for their staffers to review.
I mean, some of them are good. Like I've gone into meetings where it was clear that the the General Assembly member had already.
Reviewed.
Us as an agency.
Before we even went into the room and in the room while we were talking to them, they were looking at the material and asking questions about specific things on the leave behind because they had questions and they were, they were paying attention to it.
So they were actively using the leave behind stuff in the meeting itself.
But again, you've got other folks who will just take the leave behind and put it aside.
And all they look at is their districts, district specific stuff.
So it's, you know, finding that balance between, I mean well and the purpose of the leave behind is that it is a leave behind, right.
Yeah. So you can put a little bit more information in a leave behind than you would put in a tweet.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 37:46
Mm hmm.

 **Jim Snell** 37:52
Because it's not a tweet, it's a leave behind.
So so I think it's important to have a leave behind that has enough information in it that will kind of capture the general flavor of what volunteer Tennessee does.
And I mean, we can certainly shorten the leave behind by putting only their district information in there because typically what we do with the AmeriCorps sheet is we put their district specific information in there with the sites that are in their district. And then we after that, we.
List The other americorp programs across the state, and so that that probably for for most of them.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 38:30
Mm hmm.

 **Jim Snell** 38:32
Adding the other AmeriCorps programs across the state, added adds.
At least you know a page or maybe 2 pages to that district specific stuff.
So I mean, we could.
We could certainly leave that that stuff out and just have the district specific information in the AM airport sheets and we could instead of, I mean the leap the, the primary behind already has.
Or at least the one we've used in the past already has information about Tennessee serves, and it has information about.
The governor's Volunteer Stars Awards in our conference.
So it's got kind of high level information about all of the programs that volunteer Tennessee does.
So we could conceivably not do.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 39:18
Mm hmm.

 **Jim Snell** 39:21
The the sheets for the other programs, like the Tennessee serves and the Award of Excellence.
And maybe even the governor's Volunteer Stars awards and just leave that information in the leave behind.
And include perhaps some district.
Information in the lead behind.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 39:42
OK. Can I what is the update on and I should know this but I don't what is the update on that 11 pager leave behind that we had worked on. I think before the holidays there was like AI think there was like a draft that maybe hope.
It prepared.
That was a a modified, more updated version.
Just did we move on that or what happened with that?

 **Jim Snell** 40:03
Well, we haven't.
Because again, it's it's it doesn't.
It doesn't include all the information about all the programs that volunteer Tennessee does.
And if you're talking about a leave behind, that isn't going to discuss everything that we do, it's probably not going to be a successful leave behind for us.
I mean it may.
That may communicate some some pieces of information about what we do, but it's not going to again kind of capture the full flavor of what we do.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 40:35
OK.
So so here.
So we're 11:45.
Here's where my thoughts probably are is I would like if this is good with the other Commissioners on the screen.
If.
Maybe just via e-mail we can I I based off of this conversation, even draft up and and thank you, Jim for what you shared in terms of what really needs to be in there and kind of the priorities in terms of what elected officials want to look at.
And read.
A quick little bullet pointed list of what are the absolute important items that we want included? What need to be in there, what is priority and then I would love to ask hope to see if she can work on condensing and maybe coming up with some drafts that.
We could look at.
Yeah, even if it's just via e-mail that she can share with Jim, she can share with us that we can look at that perhaps accomplishes some of the things that we're talking about, maybe highlighting some stories. I think that that's a great idea.
Is there a way to incorporate even a?
Here's a quick little photo and a couple little blurbs that are wedding in. Embed some of that.
Trying to focus in on the programs, as Jim just stated the the.
The high level? What volunteer? Tennessee has all the things I do want to make sure that yes, americors a big part of what we do.
We we wanna highlight those stories.
I also wanna make sure to Jim's point that we're also including.
I don't wanna leave out GB. SI don't wanna leave out conference. Don't wanna leave out the service network again.
Those are things that and this is. This is my bias will come out being in Northeast Tennessee, right?
In those moments, the service network, the disaster relief work done, those things were absolutely game changing and I hate that a lot of times they don't get a lot of attention.
I I really do hate that.
Right. 'cause in that moment.
They were absolute game changers.
I mean the number of times I had to pick up the phone and call Don and ask him a random question because I didn't know what this thing in the disaster world meant or the number of times I had to call Jim and say, Jim, we really need.
Help with this right?
We're not making progress on this.
Those are some really, really, really awesome stories.
And again, I'm biased, but I think it really brought to my attention about how much we don't talk about them enough and don't highlight them enough.
And it's really important. Incredible.
Things right?
So it's like we do amazing AmeriCorps work. And then there's all these other programs over here that I don't feel like we always talk about.
So figuring out how do we best highlight all of the things and also highlight the AmeriCorps stories, as Jason has said, especially considering they're at risk.
So I would love if if that is a task that I can work with hope on hoping Candice can work on some combination of us can work on to come up with some, perhaps some draft ideas of what these documents could look like that accomplishes all the things.
We just discussed.
But maybe there's a little bit more refreshed, a little bit more branded, maybe a little bit more, little less narrative, a little bit more picturey, a little bit more, you know, visually appealing.
If that is OK with the folks on the screen, I can ask hope to just come up with some drafts. Not the end all be all, but some stuff for us to look at and discuss and we can share via e-mail and say, hey, what are thoughts this?
Accomplish what we wanted? Are we good with that?
Terry, Andrea Jason.
OK, perfect.
So I hope you got that and then we can touch base with Jim and and figure out and I'll touch base with Jim too and figure out for sure you know again what are those key things absolutely have to be on there. But I think that would be.
Great. OK.
The last things we got.
12 minutes.
I'm sorry, I was trying to rush us through that.
Candice, I'm going to put you on the spot.
I know one of the big things we've talked about is how do we, regardless of how the materials land in addition to the day on the hill itself?
How do we better prep some Commissioners before the day of?
Whether that be, here's a quick video they can watch, whether that be.
Live thoughts. I know you and hope perhaps I've had a couple of conversations.
On what this might look like.
So I'm gonna. You're the expert.
So I'll throw it to you on on some feedback.

 **Candace Taylor** 44:23
Oh, well, hello everybody.
So I I I have a couple of thoughts right.
Like because I do think that we are time sensitive and to take the time to prepare videos and then get it out there, you know it might be a little time sensitive for.
What we have about two or three weeks, so I have a couple of suggestions right? 'cause I've said before that I think for prepping you know we could do videos, we could have a virtual.
Where the people that are coming, we can just sort of get the questions out in like a live session and we can have printed materials for them, right.
So I think just moving forward for me, like we could take this a couple of a couple of ways. We I could or we could just figure out what the action items are and meet with each specific Commissioner before time to go ahead and have that one on.
One to make sure that they're prepared, right?
That might be a little more time consuming.
But you know I I guess.
You know, we could do a video, but what is that video going to going to be on like, we could sort of pull it together. You know, we could like 'cause we normally. I don't want to say normally but in the past we've done like the mock train.
That have been where the group has been there before time.
So is that better to do beforehand?
Like what exactly does? Does that look like?
And I think that once I have a view of what the Commissioners need to be supported.
To go forward then, we can figure out the timing.
How to get into them and what follow up needs to happen? That's beforehand, and then what needs to be reinforced the date of?
But I do think that the like the mock training that is done the day of, I think that's really helpful.
So when does that take place?
What happens with that?
What are the bullet points that we want to be that we want every Commissioner to say, regardless of what elected official they're talking about, right?
Like so, what are those things that are that is, that's wanting that you guys want?
In the training and then I think that I can figure out what's the best way to get it to the Commissioner with the, you know, with the abbreviated time span that we have before the before the 19th.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 46:38
Thoughts from folks on the screen?

 **Jason Scott** 46:44
I think Nestor made a comment in the chat talking about observing, which I I think kind of speaks towards the maybe I remember the years ago when I first got on this, you know, maybe even before then and it was like come today on the hill and I.
Was like I don't about that.
You know, a lot of folks don't do that regularly and it's, you know, like.
I'm going to go to this like political official and I'm going to.
Educate them, but not advocate depending on your circumstance and like just just like you know some sometimes I mean I I have found doing it really helps going through it.

 **Candace Taylor** 47:19
Right.

 **Jason Scott** 47:25
So maybe those those practice runs or mock runs just to get a sense of that.
I mean realistically those.
Yeah. I mean, what do you have like 5, maybe 10 minutes?
Probably like 5 or 6 minutes with a person to just kind of tell them.
What you got and.
And give him the materials and answer any questions and then you're done. And then you're on to the next one.
So I think just giving people a sense of, like, you're not gonna be with this person for half an hour. I mean, you're gonna have a couple talking points.
Have the opportunity, it would be helpful to have the opportunity to be a little bit familiar with the talking points just so that you know, you're not like looking at the you know the the reference material as much and you're able to just, you know be like, OK.
Going into this, I think you know.
This can all these things can be presented to them, but you know, maybe the thing that I feel most comfortable talking about is maybe.
You know these couple things. And so I'll really lead with that as opposed to like, Oh my God, you know, I have to remember the the GVSA and the conference and the Tennessee serves network and what Ameri Corps program is. And I mean like like.

 **Candace Taylor** 48:35
Yeah.

 **Jason Scott** 48:35
The more that they have to hold in their head while also managing like the anxiety of trying to effectively communicate with this person, you know like.
So practice I think can help people and I think also to the point of making a more concise argument that has fewer moving pieces.
Cases I think that would reduce some pressure.

 **Candace Taylor** 48:56
I think that that's a that's a good point that you bring up.

 **Andrea Hill** 48:58
OK, bye.

 **Candace Taylor** 48:59
Jason is the you know we can do all this prep, but in reality we do only have that 10 or 15 minute time frame that we have to really capture a conversation, right and then to add to that, if we're bringing on the MIRACOR members that are telling.

 **Andrea Hill** 49:07
Yeah.

 **Candace Taylor** 49:14
The AmeriCorps story, then, that's gonna limit the conversation that commissioners have to communicate so.
For me, you know, if if I'm gonna make this, you know my video.
You know, I'll have Jim getting, you know, getting his suit, and he can be the elected official and we could, you know, and we could possibly, maybe I'm just pointing Jim out 'cause you know he I never see him in the suit other than other than on G.
BSA and down the hill.
I'm kidding, Jim, but you know, but what does that actual like? What does that 10 minutes?
What is that 5 or 10 minutes look like?
You know, so I think that if we are setting.
A not an agenda, but like a soft agenda of what? What?
What's really going to happen in these meetings?
You know what?
What does that? What does that even look like?
And I am happy to to meet with Andre as well.
I always pick on Andrea.
That's why I skip the gym this time.
But you know what?
What do we actually, you know, 'cause, we can talk about the leave behind materials, right?
But what are what?
What are the points that we want to drive in while we're actually in their face in front of them? And and what does that look like?
And I think that once I have just like a clear vision of the difference between.
What's on the leave behinds?
What if we do have a miracle members?
What Commissioners are there?
You know, we could.
We could really get together like a concise little five or seven minute video that people can review beforehand so that they already have it there. And then, like I said, we can have that one virtual meeting where the Commissioners that are going to come. And so we could.
Have that.
You know, we could have that interactive time as as well.

 **Andrea Hill** 50:51
And and I'll just and yeah, I think I'll just add that we may not have time to do that if we if we can do it this way potentially if we know who what Commissioners are coming and how we're going to group them together, maybe we have 3.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 50:51
Andrea.

 **Andrea Hill** 51:05
Or four groups.
Or four people. Then, if we had the materials, we can maybe schedule next week and just say, hey, can y'all jump on a virtual call? Let's go through these bullet points.

 **Candace Taylor** 51:12
Mm hmm.

 **Andrea Hill** 51:14
Who wants to take the lead and who wants to talk?
You know, we're going to have.
5 minutes for Miracle to give their story.
And that gives us another five minute balance.
Who wants to lead the conversation around what is volunteer Tennessee?
Maybe highlight three or four of the pieces in the packet and then leave room for asking any questions and and go from there.
That might be the best way to do it and with Nestor's response you know being wanted just to be in a room and be buddied up with a group.
Potentially, I think that might be helpful at least to know who's going to be the lead, who's going to be in the room and divide the time out.
That way.
And potentially, you know, keep the packet the way we've been doing it, but know that we're only pulling out three of those sheets that are are relevant to that particular meeting.
Maybe that's the way to go.

 **Jim Snell** 52:05
Yeah, just to clarify, yeah, well, just to clarify.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 52:06
Jim.

 **Jim Snell** 52:10
There's there's not really any realistic way we're gonna have enough members participate to have a member in every meeting. So I would say what's gonna have to happen if we wanna tell those stories is the stories are gonna have to be told by the commissioner who's making the.

 **Andrea Hill** 52:16
Mm hmm.
Yeah.

 **Candace Taylor** 52:18
Oh oh.

 **Andrea Hill** 52:27
Mm hmm.

 **Jim Snell** 52:28
Visit.
So yeah, so just to just to make sure everybody's on the same page where there's not gonna be actual AmeriCorps members and.

 **Andrea Hill** 52:32
Yeah.

 **Jim Snell** 52:36
Meeting what?
I what I would recommend is kind of following along what what Andrea just said in terms of my recommendation for the training would be to kind of mirror this meeting agenda that Nathan set out at the beginning messaging. What are the key points that we're trying to get?
Across.
Review the materials, although that's a little bit tricky because it may take us some time to actually develop the materials.
I mean, we can maybe do some mock ups of what we think it might look like, even though it might not be the fountain.
Final version but hear what the materials look like and here's where to find the different things on the materials.
Here are the things to point out on the materials.
And you know and then do like a mock visit where one person plays the role of of a Commissioner and one person plays the role of.
One of the General Assembly members, just to kind of run through and just do those three things. And I think that's gonna be a pretty good.
Good way to conduct that virtual training and Andre, I like your suggestion of just involving the people who are going to go on day on the hill. I'll say at this point.
You know, I've sent out the meeting invitation and some people have accepted and some people have declined. Some people haven't responded.
So I I don't have the final RSVP list yet.
For who's actually going to be there?
So it may have to be a more general invitation to.
To folks to attend a training.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 54:12
Candace, would you envision this being to to that point?
Do you envision this being a we record and share out or is this a literally we're all hopping on a zoom and doing it?

 **Candace Taylor** 54:23
I think either way would be fine, you know.
And to Jim's point, since we don't have that like that hard RSV.
RSVP right now that it may be helpful just to do the just to do the zoom call.
Record it and then for have it as a standing, have it as the standing like training video for right now.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 54:37
Hmm.

 **Candace Taylor** 54:43
Like I said, because we are a little time sensitive and then.
For the.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 54:48
Thanks Andrea.

 **Candace Taylor** 54:51
Because it is a little time sensitive, you know, go ahead and get everybody.
Get everybody's questions going.
Have that mock and you know and then have that to share out on what that looks like. But you know either I'm fine and open with with either way, but like as I you know, just to Jim's point as well, you know the just having the MO.
Materials. You know, I don't know what that looks like.
Maybe last year's materials?
You know, whatever that looks like has to be, you know, already kind of mocked up before, you know, before we can actually do it.
And you know, it may work to do it a week out, you know, so it's still fresh on everybody's mind before we actually move in. Today on the hill, so.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 55:29
Mm hmm.
Mm hmm.

 **Candace Taylor** 55:32
You know, it's just.
It just really depends on what you guys think works best for for this and we can hold. I can hold multiple, I can have one in the morning and 1:00 in the afternoon to meet everybody. Scheduling but.
You know, I think it just depends on what you guys think work best and if this isn't the best way then we can.
You know, we can chain it and tailor it for next year on what works best and we'll have the rest.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 55:52
Mm hmm.

 **Candace Taylor** 55:55
You know the remaining of the year from this time until next year to get it right, right.
But I do think that for the support of you guys and so that's and staff can be there so that we also can make sure that everybody's role is also understood. And I think that that's also important for for the meetings.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 56:13
Very good.
So we are one minute from well, it's noon here.
I think it's 11 or will be 11:00 there. I think this sounds good.
So I think what I'm hearing is it's probably worthwhile at go ahead and looking at maybe a date or sometimes and going ahead probably and sharing those and and and even though we may not have all the materials today, right, but going ahead and getting those on people.

 **Candace Taylor** 56:32
Mm hmm.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 56:35
'S calendars forever is able to join and then as much as we have confirmed.

 **Candace Taylor** 56:37
Yeah, and I can work with Jim.
I can work with Jim on that on the date and given the the scheduled time.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 56:41
Perfect now.
I think that would be perfect. And then in the meantime at that, of course we can do a a quick mock version.
We'll share the materials whatever materials we have at that moment to the best, even if they're a draft or even if it's just a high level overview.
But and then to your point, we can record it and folks aren't able to be on.
They can go back and watch it, but again, if it doesn't work, I mean we tried.
It's something you know, you know, some of the questions last year were I felt overwhelmed.
You know, a lot thrown at me right before I went out for the meeting.
Great. We'll try this.
See if it helps.
If not, we'll try something else next year, right?
But it can't hurt.
I don't think it can hurt to to give people some extra time to ask some questions, some extra time to see materials in advance.
So if you'll work on that and then of course hope we'll be working on perhaps some draft documents.
Candace, Jim, you work on some potential dates. And then wherever we're at at that moment, we'll just we'll just kind of roll with it and do it and we'll see what Commissioners are able to be a part of that. And then if we need to hop on a.
Quick call offline Candice or with Andrea or whatever to talk through what that actually looks like in terms of on the video we can do that if that's helpful, or if you feel like.
Now you got it and can run with it.
That works too.
I'm I'm good with either of those so.

 **Candace Taylor** 57:48
OK.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 57:48
OK.
Other needs other questions on on everybody's time.
We're one minute over.
OK, Jim, thank you so much, Candice.
Hope. Thank you all.
All the other Commissioners, Terry, thank you so much.
We'll touch base from there and we'll see you all here in a couple of weeks, if not on some zoom calls. So.

 **Jim Snell** 58:11
Thanks everybody.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 58:12
OK.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 58:12
Thank you, Jim. Bye.

 **Candace Taylor** 58:12
Oops.

 **Jim Snell** 58:13
Bye bye.

 **Hope Alexander** stopped transcription