**VT Comms\_Strategic Partnerships Committee Monthly Meeting-20250314\_100331-Meeting Recording**

March 14, 2025, 3:03PM

20m 20s

 **Hope Alexander** started transcription

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 0:03
Or may not know me as well.
My name is Nathan Farner serve as coordinator for leadership and civic engagement at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City.
So I'll manage our nonprofit and business partnerships for the university and have the pleasure of serving as a Commissioner for Volunteer Tennessee and Chair of this. What I have been referring to as the Frankenstein committee.
So it's the committee. A recent decision to combine.
The communications and Strategic Partnerships committee.
So essentially what that means is we have a very large team of people.
That's exactly what that means.
So that's why there's a lot of boxes on the screen. We got a lot of staff support and we also have a lot of Commissioners on the screen.
I am going to commit to us keeping today's meeting fairly brief.
I know it's a Friday.
I know people have lots of commitments.
I know all of the Volunteer Tennessee staff are in final planning stages for day on the Hill next week, so maybe we can give some time back to them.
My budgets for next year for the university are due at 5:00.
Today, so every minute that I can get back is very valuable.
So I wanna try to make today not as discussion heavy and maybe just some updates and lay of the land of where things are at and then people can go into their weekend and we'll kind of reconvene and get through day on the hill. I feel like I.
Pretty sure I've been on a call with somebody from Volunteer Tennessee every day this week.
So it has been a busy week between trainings and other conversations, so.
I've gotten a lot of my Vt FaceTime this week, which is great.
And I will echo what hope said.
I was under the weather yesterday, still a little bit under the weather today. So if I get coffee and hacky, I apologize in advance so.
OK.
Well, I will go ahead and kick us off since it's the most timely.
Let's start off with day on the heel.
There's not really necessarily anything to discuss at this point, because if we try to make any changes, Jim may.
May freak out, as will most of the staff appropriately.
So so just wanna kinda update you all on where we are and where things have happened.
So from conversations from this committee over the last several months, there was an interest in two primary areas around day on the Hill.
One was trying to offer some sort of a pre training pre orientation as a way to get folks oriented before actually showing up to the Capitol for day on the Hill.
We did that yesterday and I think that it was a wildly successful. So thank you so much, Candice.
Jim.
Our Our Academy Award winner and Jason Scott, who is on the call who played his role so well, he really kind of played himself.
He didn't really have to play a character.

 **Terry Silver** 2:39
Yeah.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 2:40
You kind of by yourself, but did a great job. But yes, but I think it was well attended.

 **Candace Taylor** 2:42
Acting basics.
Acting basics.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 2:46
There were lots of folks that showed up on the call.
I know there are a few folks on the call that.
Explicitly shared that it was helpful for them.
And and was able to get some positive feedback from that when it was able to go through everything from logistics.
Of what? To wear? Where to park, where to meet, how to review your materials, to what? What does a meeting actually look like?
What are you sharing in the meeting?
And they actually got to role play that out a little bit again with Jason and one of our other Commissioners as well.
So thank you.
So, so, so much. Candice and other folks that were involved in that, I think that was great.
So I know I enjoyed it so, and I know Nestor did as well, so.
The other item related to date on the heel that came up through several conversations was hoping.
To try and for those of you that have participated on day on the Hill in the past, there's always a packet of documents that we leave behind or share with elected officials as we meet with them.
So there was some interest from the committee over the last few months on.
Still sharing the same information about how do we modernize it a little bit?
Maybe make it a little bit more user friendly.
Maybe a little less words, a little bit more visual.
More pictures, more stories.
I know it's something that came up a lot in those conversations, was emphasizing more stories, so.
So hope and others have been working to update those documents, and I think there's still a few more edits that are happening and will be happening over the weekend. But those documents look good.
So thanks to hope for Jim.
Can't anybody?
Who? Anybody who's touched the documents, offering feedback or opinions, Candace or others in any capacity.
Just for reference, those documents, in case you're not, haven't participated in day on the Hill or you weren't a part of that training yesterday.
There's an overview document that kind of talks very high level.
30,000 foot version of Volunteer Tennessee.
What it is?
Yes, perfect.
What it is, what it does?
All the most of the various key program signature programs that it has.
That's what you're seeing on the screen, so this is one of the modified documents that hope has been working on another document is a highlights page.
I don't know if you've got that one as well perhaps, but just highlighting a couple of yeah, spotlights, that's great.
I'm just highlighting a couple of programs and a little bit more depth.
So on this particular one, awards of excellence, community search teams as well as the Tennessee service network.
So thank you hope for working on those as well.
There also were two documents that were district specific. So usually when we do day on the hill, we provide a document that outlines what AmeriCorps programs may be taking place in a particular district, right.
So you're setting down with using the example that's on the screen, or setting down with the senator from District 29 or his staff.
And you want to be able to say like, hey, there's actually a miracor programming taking place in your district.
It's a high level overview of what that is, where those may be, if they're applicable. Of course, not every district may necessarily have AmeriCorps folks, but most of them do.
The other one similarly is governor's Volunteer Stars award.
So just a high level overview of whether or not anyone in their district was a recipient of a governor's Volunteer Star Awards in the past year.
That's commonly a frequent question that we get from elected officials.
Are there any AmeriCorps programs in my district, or do I have any winners for my district?
So that is a physical document we're able to provide to them. And then the last document, which is a newer document but focus more so on the story component, was really around impact story.
So a way to actually put some faces and names and quotes to the work.
You can talk about the data.
You can talk about the numbers, but at the end of the day to be actually be able to say, here's an example. Here's some smiling faces.
Here's them doing the work.
And here's a quote from either one of them, Eric, or folks, or one of somebody on their staff, or one of those agencies talking about the positive impact. So you're seeing a sample of that on the screen.
This is actually going to be a two page document, so you have the front page that you see on the screen. There is going to be a Backpage added as well. That's going to highlight a couple of stories related to volunteer Tennessee's response to the disaster, so.
They'll get a couple of Ameri Corps stories, and on the flip side of that will be a couple of stories specifically about.
How volunteer Tennessee.
How Ameri Cor and how the staff at BT were involved in supporting disaster work, specifically around Hurricane Helene and East Tennessee this past year?
So again, that's a little bit of a newer document, but one of the things that came out of a lot of conversations was we need to do a little bit more around storytelling and supporting Commissioners or other AmeriCorps folks that may be going into those meetings on being.
Able to uplift and share stories. There are, of course thousands of stories we could highlight.
But there'll just be a couple.
A couple of strong ones that will be there for quick easy.
Reference and that the the elected officials will be able to keep behind with them as well.
Anything I missed on those hopes?
I think that was the vibe, right?
Did I get all 5?

 **Hope Alexander** 7:39
I think that was all Jim, was that all?

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 7:41
I think that I think those are the five in terms of the the leap behind documents I believe.

 **Jim Snell** 7:44
Yeah. Yeah, I think so, yeah.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 7:47
OK.
Very good.
So again, thanks so much to hope the Vt staff for working on those.
I know lots of folks have offered some input.
Jim, Candace others some input and thoughts on those, and especially excited about the stories document.
So thank you.
Thank you Jason, for for reminding us the important effaces and stories during our last meeting.
So I think that's very helpful.
For those of you that aren't physically participating on day on the Hill, one thing is Communications Committee.
So it'd be appropriate for me to say this even if you yourself are not physically going to be participating on day on the hill.
Lots of the folks who are participating, as well as the official volunteer Tennessee channels are going to be uplifting and sharing photos and and things from that day, even if you're not physically going to be there yourself, please share those. Please respond.
Engage with those online.
Even if you're not there, that's another way that you can kind of support some advocacy work.
So the Volunteer Tennessee page posts a photo of some AmeriCorps staff members or commissioners meeting with an elected official.
With a little bit of a caption and a story, you know just a quick simple share on any of the social medias and saying you know, so, so excited to have some of my Commissioner peers, you know, representing us in Nashville.
Thank you so much.
I mean, it's as simple as that, right?
Two quick little sentences can really, really go a long way.
So again, if you're not physically going to be there.
We can still love your support.
Or by just uplifting and sharing whatever that might look like.
Anything else someday on the hill. I think I got. I think that was a lot of things.
Jim Candace hope anything specifically for this group on day on the Hill or just updates?

 **Jim Snell** 9:22
I think that's good.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 9:25
Very good. OK. The other item, I'm gonna transition us just a moment then to the strategic plan. So as you all know, one of the big priorities for this year for the Commission is writing our new three-year strategic plan.
So we started on a little bit before the holidays and really over the last couple of months into 2025, I've trying to identify those key priority areas.
So most of you, if you're a Commissioner, you likely responded to that large survey that asked for you to kind of highlight.
What are those key priority areas at the state level that you think is valuable during our last Commission meeting, Jim, of course shared that.
Summary Sheet where he kind of put them into some buckets and had some high level.
High level sections and kind of themes around those topics based off of our last Commission meeting that took place just a couple of weeks ago as a part of that during the conference in Franklin.
One of the items that came out of the large Commission meeting, which most of you were in, was where to go from here and the best way to kind of talk through next steps and theory of change.
So the wonderful and lovely Kim Carpenter Drake.
Also on our call and on our team offered to pull together all of the committee chairs and some key staff folks to just sit down and kind of get in the weeds of that and think through how to move forward in this process effectively.
And efficiently, because we're also on a on a little bit of a time crunch and we had that conversation earlier this week.
I think it was.
I know I found it to be very, very helpful.
So thank you, Kim, for working on that.
But essentially what came out of that meeting?
At a very high level.
Was trying to offer a little bit of a framework or perhaps some guardrails to really what is the mission ahead.
What is our focus?
Where do we need to be putting our attention and our priorities?
And again, all of the committee chairs were able to participate in that. The action that came out of that conversation was rather than necessarily throwing all of the work directly back into a committee meeting, for example, today we could have plot down and instantly went right back to.
Where we were at in terms of identifying priorities, was it perhaps would be helpful for a small team of people to build out a little bit of a framework and put in a little bit of a structure 1st and then give it back to the committees to figure.
Out what actions and interventions they can engage with from their committee perspective in the larger work. So essentially putting together a little bit of a strategic planning team that can work offline over the next couple of weeks to do the the foundational work.
To make it a little bit easier.
Or on the committee is going forward. Kim, anything you want to add to that?
Is that an accurate description of our conversation?
We can hear you.
We can hear you.

 **+16\*\*\*\*\*\*\*92** 12:18
I don't.
You can hear me OK?

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 12:20
Yep.

 **+16\*\*\*\*\*\*\*92** 12:21
Yes, it's the great thing about teams.
Which Mic is turned on?
The only thing that I would add is that I was really so excited.
To hear the thoughtfulness of the folks that were on that call and and I think everyone will be very pleased with the way that we're not changing what we do as much as clarifying or understanding of what our role is.
Is in the development and support of community service.
The the realignment of how we stack the blocks I think is going to be incredibly helpful and impactful.
Is that is that fair, Nathan?

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 13:03
Agree 100%.
Very good.
Thank you, Kim. Jim, anything you want to add?
You were on that call as well. Any any key takeaways?

 **Jim Snell** 13:13
No, just that it was a great discussion and a great starting point and I think well, my hope is that the next plan will be even better than than the current one.
So yeah, it was a really good starting point.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 13:28
Very good.
So thanks Kim.
Thanks Jim, for pulling that together.
I know personally I found it to be very helpful and I think set us up strong foundation for success. One of the action items that came out of that conversation in creating this essentially a little bit of an informal strategic planning team is all of the committee chair.
Are going to serve on that team as well as an additional plus one from each committee.
So my \*\*\* that I'm gonna throw out and pause. Is there anybody on this call excluding Kim because Kim's gonna be on this team anyway.
Is there anybody else on this call on behalf of this committee that would have an interest in serving on that strategic planning team?
Essentially, what that entails is probably being on an extra call or two and maybe a couple of e-mail threads over the next few weeks is really what that'll entail.
So any other interest on Andrea, I see your note.

 **Jason Scott** 14:27
I'm I'm happy to participate.
Yeah.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 14:30
OK.
So Andrea and I've got Jason.
Anybody else just absolutely dying to do some strategic planning?
Because I think that will be helpful since this is a little bit of a Frankenstein committee, since this really is 2 committees. Then Andre, if you're good with that and Kim, do you think it'd be OK to have two since we're really 2 committees?
Do you think we could have adjacent and and Andrea that would be fine. Perfect. OK, Jim, you're hearing those are our two people. I'll send that to you in an e-mail as well. But those will be our two people.
So OK.
Thank you all.
So anything else on? Oh, the last thing I'll add on strategic planning. So those will convene that group.
We'll probably get through day on the hill because I know we've got other priorities, but we'll get through day on the hill and then we'll convene that group again.
That'll be all the committee chairs, plus a couple of other Commissioner volunteers, including Jason, Andrea and Kim and GM will get together and we'll kind of build out that framework at a high level.
And the goal is here in the next few weeks, ideally our next committee meeting will be able to come back with a little bit of a document to respond to and then we can kind of play off of it from there.
So we're not starting with a completely blank canvas because sometimes that can be a little overwhelming.
So that's gonna be the goal.
So any questions about the strategic partner or not strategic partners, strategic planning stuff?
OK. Any other com?
Anything else to add or think we're good? OK, perfect.
Real quick note on the road show, so I know the last Commission meeting we talked about adjusting the schedule of the strategic planning process slightly to allow for.
Us to do some public input and comment over the summer.
So it was a little bit of just a flip.
Does it impact the large timeline but a little bit of a flip, which we have done? I'm gonna wait until after the day on the heel before I really start pushing the roadshow stuff.
Because I feel like we've got our hands in enough pots at the moment and I'm sure that Candice and hope and Jim and all and Latif and the other staff would be very appreciative if I didn't try to kick start that train over the next four days so.
We're going to hold off on doing that until after day on the Hill, but we'll try to start exploring and getting into the weeds of actually planning that out.
We did have some early conversations about.
Again, trying to better align that with some of the work that is happening in the corporate social purpose space.
I've had some conversations offline with some of those folks on that team.
They are definitely interested in that as well.
So we just need to, if we can get through down the hill, we'll set down and kind of get into the weeds and actually start putting some things on paper updates, potential timelines and something for us to start working off of.
So more to come on that, but just wanted to provide that update.
It is happening.
I'm just trying to get us through day on the hill so folks aren't too overwhelmed.
So gone from conference gvsa to conference today on the hill, right into the next thing.
It never really slows down so.
Those are the three big items that I wanted to mention and then I wanted to open it up for any updates.
Hope any other communication updates or anything that wanted to be shared and then I'll do the same for Latifah.
Anything to be shared on that corporate social purpose or more strategic partnership side?
So hope any any updates or anything you want to share?

 **Hope Alexander** 17:43
Oh, no, I think we've already shared most of mine with day on the hill, so.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 17:47
OK.
Very good.
Well, thank you for your work on that.
I think they look great, so it's good.

 **Hope Alexander** 17:51
Welcome. My pleasure.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 17:54
Latifah any any updates?
Anything you want to share on the strategic partnership side specifically, probably around CSP, any updates or things you want to share with the group?

 **Latiyfa Fields** 18:03
Yeah, that would be fairly brief.
So Wade, the vice chair who's hosting us at Bridgestone. He's supposed to get the final date for the event.
Of course, I know we need this like, ASAP, but he's hoping to get that to us next week.
The executive committee meets next Tuesday.
To kind of go over membership structure, hoping to finalize that, whether they're going for like the individual model or like the corporate model where you'll have, you know, a corporation commit.
And then you know when the individual leaves, then the corporation stays and then they fill in someone.
So they're hopefully gonna finalize that next week and also kind of finalize the agenda for the entire 2025.
There's like a draft agenda for 20/25/2020 6:00, but as in topic but also nailing down all presenters and then also kind of talking through a day of service.
This is just a brainstorming for the day of service piece.
At least because that's something that.
Vt Team has to talk about internally.
Like yeah, things are going well.
Things are going very well and then the next Council meeting will be April 8th.

 **Farnor, Nathaniel James** 19:17
Very good.
Thank you, latifah. OK with that, I think I've got us to about 30 minutes.
So other thing, any anybody else on the call.
Other updates, questions. Ideas.
Trying to run trying to run an efficient meeting today for everybody, but any other big ideas or updates that anyone wants to share or questions that are broadly.
Jim Terry. Anything else from you all?
I just want the group to know about.
OK.
This was good.
I think we did it in about 25 minutes, so that is awesome.
I know that was a lot of information.
Again, we'll recap that, just want to make sure everybody was aware of what was happening, but everybody will get about 35 minutes back in their day.
I know the volunteer Tennessee staff will appreciate it very much.
So thank you all. If you think of anything else, let us know and hopefully I'll see several of you next Wednesday at the Capitol so.
Thank you everyone.

 **Jim Snell** 20:18
Thanks everybody.

 **Hope Alexander** stopped transcription