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**MEETING MINUTES
NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
STATE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 10, 2003**

Meeting Date, Time & Place: September 10, 2003, 8:30 a.m., Job Service North Dakota, 1601 East Century Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58503.

Members Present: Al Lukes, Gloria Maragos, Wayne Kutzer, Rosella Grant, Lisa Ringstad, Donna Thigpen, Jim Dahlen, Leo Cummings, Dave Massey, Helen Funk (on behalf of Carol Olson), Max Laird, John Pohlman, and Jim Hirsch.

Members Absent: Carol Olson, Cathi Christopherson, Dr. David Gipp, and Mike Zimmerman.

Others Present: Cheryll McDowall, Kaye Knudson, Rosey Sand, Deb Schiefelbein, Beth Zander, Kathryn Pederson, William Basl (via telephone), and Jill Splonskowski.

Opening Remarks & Introductions: The Chair, Al Lukes provided a welcome to everyone. The Chair proceeded with asking members and guests to introduce themselves.

Administrative Announcements: Al Lukes requests that all members review and give comment on the 2004 Meeting Dates which are as follows: January 7, April 7, June 16, and September 8.

Approval of Agenda: Al Lukes asks for approval of the agenda as presented.

Motion: Jim Dahlen made a motion to approve the agenda. Donna Thigpen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Al Lukes asks for approval of the June 4, 2003, minutes.

Motion: Gloria Maragos moved for approval of the June 4, 2003, minutes. Jim Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chair's Report:

Budgets

Jim Hirsch explained that copies of the budgets are not available at this time. They will be sent out when they are completed.

The Administrative, PDAT, and Disability budgets look good right now. We received a partial allocation for the Administrative Budget in January 2003, and then we received another partial allocation which is for 15 months. The Administrative budget is at \$166,000. The PDAT budget allocation is \$89,000. Those monies need to be put towards professional development and training. Cheryl McDowall has been working on developing training for projects, and we have been sending members to conferences and have held e-Grants training for our projects. Jim Hirsch mentioned that the commission is working at sponsoring a Learn & Serve Conference with the Department of Public Instruction in October 2003, and several staff members will be attending a conference in New Orleans, Louisiana in December 2003. The Disability Budget amount is at \$25,000. We are looking at hiring a person on contract to work with the disability funds.

The Corporation for National and Community Service has approved 2 of our projects at \$139,000 total out of the \$500,000 award that North Dakota received. The rest of the funds are allowed to be carried over to the next funding year to our knowledge (\$361,000).

Commission Business:

AmeriCorps Position Reductions

Jim Hirsch briefly explained that there have been attempts to get additional funding, but those attempts thus far have failed. Two projects had 46 slots available. We had to reduce the existing number of slots by 10 from our existing projects. We were hoping for some expansion with letters of support that were sent. We were notified that we had to cut the existing number of slots and could not recommend funding for any new projects. We were only allowed a 20 FTE or 29 slots cap. We are currently at 29 full and part-time slots.

Under certain conditions, we are allowed to do planning grants with the \$361,000, but without any significant changes at the corporate level, we may not be able to fund projects in the future even with planning grants. Hopefully, in the next week we should have more information on the availability of grant funding for program year 2004-2005.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion that a document be prepared with an attached letter under the Chair of this Commission demonstrating the impact of the changes of the commission's processing of grant dollars, and that this document be transmitted either in person if possible or under the best of circumstances to our congressional delegation or their staffs. The document should be prepared in such a way that it states the negative impact the funding cut has caused in this state. Dave Massey seconded the motion.

Before the motion carries, Donna Thigpen suggests that the letter or document should state with anecdotes the project name at the bottom and the projects that were funded as well as those not funded.

Motion carried.

Commission Policies

Jim Hirsch explained that the Financial Management System will be incorporated into the grantee contracts. Since a copy was excluded from the handout packet, Jim Hirsch states that a copy was sent out prior to the meeting, but that another copy will be e-mailed to all members and feedback should be given to him.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion that we approve the Financial Management Plan pending an objection by any member of the commission - pending a deadline date.

Before the motion carries, Jim Dahlen suggests that we each get a copy of the plan so that it can be reviewed and approved at today's meeting. At this point, administrative staff went to make copies of the Financial Management System Manual.

Grants Committee Report:

Grants Committee Project Recommendations

The Grants Committee has been limited to publicizing the AmeriCorps program since the slots and positions have been limited. They will be going through the Request for Proposal process again for the 2004-2005 funding year starting in October 2003. They will also be inviting projects to compete on a statewide and national funding level. Max Laird stated that the grant recommendations are strictly for one year – we are not establishing long-term policy. Some specific recommendations brought forth from the Grants Committee are:

1. That the Request for Proposals issued for Program Year 2004-2005 include instructions for applications for the following:
 - State Formula Funds
Continuation Programs only (no new applicants).
 - State competitive grants funded nationally (and competing nationally).
2. Continuation programs should be given priority over new applicants, if they are meeting their goals.

3. After the 3rd year of funding from the state, programs should be required to submit an application for state competitive grants funded nationally. If they aren't selected they should be allowed to return and compete for formula funds.
4. Continuation programs should be required to increase the percentage of operating costs they contribute as they move through the 3-year grant cycles.
5. Suggested state priorities for grant selection:
5 points to rural areas of 2500 population or less, and reservations.
Programs involving 10 or more members would be given priority, but smaller programs of quality would also be considered.

Motion: Max Laird moved that the commission accept the above recommendations. Leo Cummings seconded the motion.

Before the motion carries, Leo Cummings questioned the possibility of losing the \$360,000, and if we would be able to fund planning grants with this money.

Max Laird commented that if you offer a planning grant, you must offer that planning grant under the assumption that the full grant will be funded the following year.

Jim Hirsch stated that the Corporation for National & Community Service has guidelines for planning grants and it is also an area that the commission has to do a report on the same as a project. The expectation with the planning grant is that there would be technical assistance provided so that it would turn into a fundable project.

Donna Thigpen questioned whether the planning grant agency could market that grant to other agencies or individuals.

Max Laird states that the guidelines are restrictive – in that, if you give the planning grant, you have to fund it.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion that we amend the previous motion to add an item #6 which states that a request for proposal for 3 planning grants would be developed and distributed up to \$50,000 each for the upcoming fiscal year. Leo Cummings seconded the motion.

After group discussion on planning grants, Max Laird made a friendly amended motion.

Motion: Max Laird made an amended motion to add an item #6 that expends up to \$150,000 of available funds to develop an RFP and accept proposals for planning grants expending up to \$150,000.

Jim Dahlen moved to withdraw the amended motion.

Motion: Max Laird moved again to adjust the motion to say an item #6 would be added to develop an RFP to accept planning grant proposals with no dollar amount. Dave Massey seconded the motion.

Before the motion carries, Donna Thigpen makes an amendment to use up all available funds.

Motion: Max Laird moved again to adjust the motion to say an item #6 would be added to develop an RFP to accept planning grant proposals using available funds. Rosella Grant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jim Hirsch questioned what if one of the projects decides that they are not interested in pursuing planning grant funding?

Motion: Rosella Grant made a motion to approve the entire Grants Committee Project Recommendations as amended. Jim Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Request for Proposal Process/Procedure

Cheryll McDowall reported on the RFP process for the next fiscal year. She outlined the timeline and/or calendar of events. Legal notices will be sent out as well as an e-mail distribution list (which will include planning grants). The application will also be posted on the company website. By mid October 2003 the Notice of Intent to Apply for funds will be due. The applications will be due by the end of November. In December the peer reviewers will meet and make their recommendations to the Grants Committee. The Grants Committee will consider peer review comments and will make their recommendations to the full Commission in January 2004. The Commission would decide which programs to fund and forward those to the Corporation to compete on a national level. In February 2004, those projects applying nationally will have to submit their application on e-Grants. In June 2004, the state formula funds will be submitted to the national office. In September 2004, the grant award letters are sent out and the programs start-up date is October 2004.

Lisa Ringstad questioned the timeline for existing projects such as Cooperstown. Cheryll McDowall suggested that she could re-work the request for proposal timeline in order to have the proposals submitted, after the national guidelines are finalized, from 90 or 120 days.

Al Lukes then mentioned to commission members the use of the Interactive Video Network to hold special meetings in the future, and asked for member comments and feedback on using this system.

Financial Management System

The Commission resumed discussion on the fiscal manual now that all members have copies in hand. Jim Hirsch identified to members the final AmeriCorps Fiscal Manual. The document is part of the Administrative Standards requirement. It will be used as a guide to make sure the grantees have a sound fiscal system in order to maintain audit requirements as well as maintain compliance with federal and state statutes, regulations, provisions, and policies. The manual outlines 23 guidelines in order for grantees to successfully comply with federal regulations.

Motion: Jim Dahlen made a motion to accept the Financial Management System (AmeriCorps Fiscal Manual). Rosella Grant seconded the motion. Motion approved.

PDAT Plan Report

Jim Hirsch gave some background information on the professional development and training plan. We are given \$89,000 per year for training events and planning.

Cheryll McDowall identified some activities the Commission has developed and will be undertaking during the 2003 process:

- Financial Grants/Management
- Sustainability/Fund Development
- Program Evaluation
- WBRS Reporting
- Supervision for Members
- Member Development
- E-Grants
- Learn & Serve Conference (October or November 2003)
- Cross Stream Event
- Dissemination of training/resource materials
- Information sharing through a website and newsletter
- National & State Events Support
- Unified State Plan

Leo Cummings commented that he believes there should be more promotion of civic engagement and volunteerism that is linked to the programs affiliated with the State Commission. Jim Hirsch re-affirmed Leo Cummings comments.

CNCS Project Update

John Pohlman reported on the management situation of the Corporation for National and Community Service. He stated that Leslie Lenkowsky has resigned as Director of the Corporation for National and Community Service. He also discussed the phase-out of the WBRS system into e-Grants because all reporting of members and performance measures will eventually be transferred into the e-Grants system. John Pohlman discussed the success of faith-based organizations this year. Their office is currently trying to get RSVP services to every county in both North and South Dakota.

Unified State Plan Development

William Basl from the Washington State AmeriCorps program reported on the development of their Unified State Plan (via telephone). In 1994 Washington did not have a state plan. They held town meetings to get input as to what national service could do for their community. They looked at working with youth and their engagement in the community in order to retain their youth in the State of Washington. They also looked at education and after-school programs in order for their communities to reduce high crime rates. This was

an effective AmeriCorps program for them. William Basl feels that we must look at service as a strategy to make a difference to bring about positive change. We should look at recruiting not just youth, but also volunteers of all ages. Washington had their RSVP Association develop their state plan. They tried to improve their state plan by determining how they could make their communities stronger and safer (homeland security issues). They are currently working with county emergency management offices to improve this effort. The plan needs to be unique to each state and we need to prioritize where the community's needs are. Washington State created an organization called the "Northwest Service Academy" in Trout Lake, Washington which is a very rural area. The academy has been in existence for 12-13 years. It has been an economic generator which has brought in about \$1 million per year in a town of 600-800 people. They have 40 AmeriCorps members who live on-site and the buildings are owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

-LUNCH BREAK-

After lunch, Rosella Grant sat-in as the Chair since Al Lukes had to leave the meeting for another obligation.

Senior Companion Program

Kathryn Pederson from the Senior Companion Program gave an update on her service area. She works for Lutheran Social Services in Minot, North Dakota. Her program area serves the western part of North Dakota. In the Bismarck area, they served 154 individuals, they have 21 senior companions, and they donated 18,020 hours of service last fiscal year. They provide companionship services to the elderly to keep them independent as long as possible. They play cards, read, write for them, have lunch with them, and have contact with the outside world through companionship. In the Dickinson area they served 58 people, they have 10 senior companions, and they donated 8,489 service hours last year. In February 2003, she hosted a module on addressing senior disasters (black-outs in the home). Kathryn Pederson said she developed a brochure with a checklist of disaster supply kits, and also put together the actual supplies for the disaster assistance kits. The Senior Companion Program has worked with the community and hospitals in an effort to support this module. Senior companions are stipend positions of \$2.65 per hour plus mileage. They also need to meet income eligibility guidelines. The Senior Companion Program is sponsoring a "Quilt Program" whereby all senior companions in the Western part of North Dakota will be given a quilt for travel in rural areas in the event they may become stalled in their vehicles while volunteering their services. These quilts are provided by Lutheran Social Services.

Learn & Serve Update

Rosey Sand discussed the Learn and Serve Project update. They recently received a 3-year \$47,000 grant award on a conditional basis. One change required was the amount budgeted for evaluations. They also agreed to avoid working with competitive groups such as Youthworks. They have a \$2,500 cap. Priorities are to serve 21st century after-school youth programs. They will also focus on negotiated performance measures and goals. Rosey Sand has been working with Cheryll McDowall on developing the Service Learning

Conference in Fall 2003, as well as working to develop program guidance and an evaluation system. The Department of Public Instruction is planning on incorporating the President's Student Service Award program into their grant. She also mentioned that schools are notified of the President's Student Scholarship awards in May annually. Rosey Sand stated that she will be notified of the finality of the grant award by hopefully mid-October 2003. The maximum amount of money this project could apply for was \$50,000 since it is a state formula grant.

Foster Grandparent Program Update:

Kaye Knudson reported on the Foster Grandparent Program. To end their year, they had a total of over 33,000 volunteer hours. As of September 2003, they are up to 57 volunteers. They are looking at opening a program in Fort Yates, North Dakota, to place foster grandparents with single teenage mothers. A family reading program was established in Summer 2003 which includes a video along with a packet. A cash award is given to foster grandparents for referrals. They are already planning their Christmas season activities. The Foster Grandparent Program offers a stipend of \$2.65 per hour plus mileage, free meals, and other benefits.

Cooperstown Community Activities Authority

Cheryll McDowall reported on the project called the Cooperstown Community Activities Authority. Cheryll stated that a site review was conducted in September 2003. The AmeriCorps program in Cooperstown, North Dakota, offers a Latchkey Program in addition to tutoring services. Lisa Ringstad, who is the director of the program, currently has 38 volunteers in her organization to date. They started with 8 members only 4 years ago. With the AmeriCorps position reduction, their number of slots will be reduced to 21.

Commission Planning & Discussion:

None at this time.

Adjournment:

Rosella Grant then asks for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Gloria Maragos made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the State Commission on National and Community Service will be held on January 7, 2004, in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Action Plans:

- **Sponsor a Service-Learning Conference in Bismarck in Fall 2003.**
- **Send out, review, and give comment on the 2004 Meeting dates as well as IVN meetings.**
- **Send out Administrative, PDAT, and Disability Budgets when completed.**
- **Prepare a letter to congressional delegation or their staff stating the negative impact the fund cut has caused the state of North Dakota with anecdotes of the project names at the bottom of the letter.**
- **Add an Item #6 under the RFP to accept planning grant proposals using available funds.**
- **Cheryll McDowall should re-work the RFP timeline stipulating a 90 or 120 day timeframe for projects to submit their proposals after the national guidelines are finalized.**