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**NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
STATE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**MINUTES
November 19, 2008**

Meeting Date, Time & Place: November 19, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. - Job Service North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Members Present: Charles Axtman, Leann Bertsch, Jill Deitz, Debbie Painte (for Dr. David Gipp), Representative Bette Grande, Joseph Harr, Alan Klein, Wayne Kutzer, Lee Lampert, Gloria Maragos, David Massey, Senator Tim Mathern, Joan Ehrhardt (for Carol Olson), T.J. Russell.

Members Absent: Leo Cummings, Rosella Grant, Cynthia Lindquist, Dr. Joseph McCann, Jackie Velk, Brad Williams.

Staff Present: Jerry Houn, Ryan Volk, Cornelius Grant, and Cheryl Leach

Ex-Officio Members Present: Jerry Houn (for Jim Hirsch).

Guests: Kelsey Bless, Nancy Olson

CALL TO ORDER:

Opening Remarks & Introductions: Wayne Kutzer, Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed the committee members and introduced Cheryl Leach, Executive Assistant for Workforce Development. Jerry Houn gave an update on Jim Hirsch's medical condition who could not attend the meeting due to recent back surgery.

Administrative Announcements: Jerry Houn noted that travel vouchers are available for members and to see Cheryl Leach after the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Wayne Kutzer asked for changes or additions to the November 19, 2008 agenda. With no corrections or additions, The November 19, 2008 agenda is approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Wayne Kutzer asked for additions or corrections to the June 11, 2008 minutes.

MOTION: Charles Axtman moved to approve the June 11, 2008 minutes. Senator Tim Mathern seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Medora Joint Retreat: Jerry Houn mentioned there are attached meeting notes in the agenda packet for review and opened up the floor for comments from the members that attended the Retreat, and to share what they felt they accomplished from the Retreat. Representative Bette Grande stated that she felt the group received nothing to work with. She expressed there is nothing to work with off any of the discussion. What is the plan of action? Senator Tim Mathern commented that a big part of the discussion at the Retreat was regarding the high unemployment on our Reservations, and that if we really should approach this in a new mind-set. There is a whole workforce available if we were to engage in a better way with the tribes. Every tribe has a strategic plan; we should get those plans and connect it with our State plans. We recognize that the tribes are an important part of the State. Debbie Painte commented that each of the tribes have a WIA Program. Each of the tribes under their WIA offices do have comprehensive service plans, however they do have an overall plan for the tribes. Wayne Kutzer asked if the information is available to share or receive access to. Debbie Painte did not know at this time and will check the availability of the information and bring it back to the next meeting.

Wayne Kutzer recalled some of the conversation with Dr. Gipp or Cheryl Kubas and asked them to provide some of that information from the tribes. They did have that information, but most of it was not up-to-date. We do know that they are the largest growing singular population of young people. Part of the problem is trying to collect the information so we can work with something; it is hard to work without that information.

Wayne Kutzer mentioned that on the last day of the Retreat he really enjoyed the discussion that broke into smaller groups and each group tried to progress on certain topics. Good information came out of it in terms of what is available.

Wayne Kutzer mentioned that he came away from the meeting with the feeling that some of the population numbers they were looking at were quite small.

Joseph Harr commented that with all the oil activity; there are a lot of jobs and a lot of problems with students dropping out of school just to make \$20 per hour on the oil rigs and the work is probably short-lived. He questioned whether there is anyway to ask the oil companies not to hire high school drop-outs. Wayne Kutzer asked if they have to be 18 to work. Representative Bette Grande mentioned that there are certain jobs they can't get until they are 18. The tough part about telling an employer you can't hire somebody when there are 16,000-17,000 job openings. Representative Grande commented that one suggestion would be to encourage GED's and make sure there is some type of educational pushback. Senator Mathern commented that maybe the oil companies could initiate some type of involved in a work-plan to help those employees finish their high school degree. Maybe we could engage the companies into recognizing that it is good for their employees to finish high school or earn a GED. Representative Bette Grande mentioned that Dave Massey would have to be the one to help address that situation, and is the Department of Public Instruction going to be flexible. There can be some creative way in dealing with this type of situation as well as increase the workforce. We need flexibility from all levels.

Joseph Harr commented that when a student drops out of high school and has a high paying job, they could be missing out on courses such as economics that would help them understand finances, and in turn help them to manage their money. They are going to be making a lot of money and if they don't have some idea how to save that money when their employment doesn't last, they are going to be in trouble. Possibly, the company could help with courses that would be beneficial in helping them learn economics and how to manage their finances.

Gloria Maragos commented that were losing trained people in the workforce as well. Trained employees are going out and taking jobs that are doubling or tripling their salaries, and the problem is finding replacements for them. Even if these students were 18, they are not going to make it working in the oil fields. Those jobs work exhausting hours. Rough-necking is grueling work; working 12-16 hours and sleeping eight. They are going at this pace for two-weeks before they receive any time off. If these students can't get up to go to school, how are they going to get up to get to that kind of job? The oil field is pulling from a more skilled labor pool.

Wayne Kutzer asked if there is something that this Commission can do in terms of community service, by working with retired people to help students work on their GED, or work in different situations to help individuals and families.

T.J. Russell commented that the market has it figured out and for those of us that are affected; we have to address that situation the way we need to, and the public sector has to address it in a manner that is efficient for them. The rules are different in the public sector as they are in the private sector, and there are things we can do

that the public sector can't, but where do you stop? Representative Bette Grande asked why with all the jobs are the oil companies not recruiting the people from Michigan. Gloria Maragos commented that there is an issue of a place to live. There is not enough housing for those people. Wayne Kutzer commented that there is no easy answer, but it is something that we need to be aware of and continue to work on.

2008 Budget Summary: Jerry Houn reported that the budget information presented is through August, and is on target. We did budget \$10,000 for data processing to get the website up and running for the State Commission. Particularly the Website the Corporation wants the State Commission to run. The problem we found was that we could do it with those funds; however, the maintenance on a monthly basis would make it impossible to do, so we continue to work with ITD to try to find a way to get it to work. Jerry pointed out that we have \$92,000 budgeted and next year we did budget for the full \$125,000 that we have available. The biggest jump is that we put in \$25,000 of federal funds and \$25,000 of matched funds. Hopefully we can get some special funds to match. These funds will be applied towards hiring a Grant Writer to help with some of the grant writing for the non-profit faith-based organization. Jerry mentioned that we are doing well as far as salaries. We are behind a little in the operating line due to being cautious on how we are spending. We are lagging in the PDAT area (training funds); one of the reasons is we do owe some travel funds for one/two state commissioners to go to the National Conference each year. This year no one attended. We also did budget for at least two commissioners to go a Commissioners Training Conference that the Corporation put on; there was no interest there either. Next year, if we budget in the same way, we definitely would like to see interest in attending those conferences. We didn't do much budgeting for printing in the training area this year. Most of the budgeting was in the administrative section and as well as a new printing of a brochure.

Jerry reported on the disability inclusion receiving a just under \$44,000. We are behind because late last year the corporation threw additional disability inclusion funds at us. The purpose behind that was for every State Commission to employ an old-time disability inclusion coordinator. Jerry commented that it would be tough hire full-time with \$44,000 unless they don't do any kind of travel. What was put into the budget for the next legislative session is that we did ask for one full-time position which will be split between disability inclusion and training. This would free Ryan Volk to be full-time Grant Officer and part Program Officer, as well as free-up my time to be Program Officer for the AmeriCorps Program and the for Faith-Based Program.

Senator Tim Mathern asked if the next budget has been prepared and approved. Jerry indicated that as far as he knows it has been prepared through the Department of Commerce and forwarded to the Governor's office.

AmeriCorps National Conference: Jerry Houn reported on the National Conference and mentioned that he took Jill Dietz from the YMCA and Lauren Bosch of Youthworks to attend with us. We extend this to four sub-grantees and to their project coordinator to attend the conference with us. Two of the four accepted the offer. Jerry mentioned that it is tough to bring specific training into the state, that the privates have and by attending the National Conference they could pick up some of that specific training. Part of the National Conference is that there is training available for the State Commission staff. Jerry mentioned that he did attend several of the training sessions, i.e., disability inclusion, performance measurement training, new laws, and bills introduced. One bill being introduced is the Give Act. Right now the living allowance and the education award are taxable to the member once they receive it, and The Give Act is trying to make it so it is not taxable. They are also trying to increase the amount of the education award for a full-time member to cover tuition fees for a college. Jerry mentioned that the National Conference next year will be in June if any members are interested in attending. Jerry also mentioned that this September they did have training in Washington, DC just specifically for Commissioners and we did budget for this again for next year for two Commissioners to attend.

OIG Audit Resolution: Jerry Houn reported that the audit is closed. The document enclosed in the packet is just an email they sent to us, nothing formal was sent. The email indicates that they did complete final action on the OIG audit of grants awarded to the ND Workforce Development Council - State Commission on National and Community Service. Corrective action on all internal control and compliance recommendations is documented as complete in August 12, 2008 Final Management Decision. They did have four findings and we were able to provide information on each of the findings to affirm that we were following through.

Jerry reported that we came up for a standards review. They chose AmeriCorps State Standards, Module 5, documentation relating to the program RFP process.

Report from the Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Advisory Council: Alan Klein reported on the Faith-Based meeting held earlier in the morning. Alan mentioned that Jerry Houn shared with the members the grant writing seminars he had presented in October at six different locations. He also indicated some disappointment in the fact that he sent out notifications and requests for people to attend and attendance was low, but he did point out that we have to try and be more proactive. There does seem to be a disconnect in the fact that there is money out there and the means to get the money, and people tend to shy away from the concept of searching out those grants. Secondly, we discovered that this is a faith-based issue and maybe we should get all the churches on board, at least to receive the information that these things exist and be more proactive themselves. Therefore, we asked Jerry to search out all the churches in the State and get information out to all those people. We discussed what should be the priorities for the agenda for the next meeting and we need to establish more clearly what are the priorities of the committee are, and also identify more clearly what we want Jerry and his staff to do to carry out those requests.

Sunset Policy Renewals: Jerry Houn reported that these are all policies that we have adopted. At the bottom of each policy it indicates the date of adoption. The reason for the adoption of the sunset policies is that they need to be reviewed each year for corrections or changes. The policies that have revision or corrections are identified by a strikethrough for deletion, and underlining for additions. These policies need to be reviewed periodically due to out-dated information. Each policy should be reviewed individually and have a motion to pass or make corrections.

T.J. commented that if there no staff recommendations or revised language, than it makes sense that the policy is as good as it gets. Jerry pointed out that there are new members to the Commission and the reason we need to review each policy, giving everyone the opportunity to correct the policy if there is a concern. If everyone is comfortable with it, a motion can be made to accept it as presented.

The question was asked if Jerry is comfortable with the changes made to the policies. Jerry responded that he is comfortable with the changes since he wrote the changes. Jerry stated that he wants to be sure that the members are comfortable with the changes. Jerry stated that he writes the policy one way because he understands it that way, but the reader may understand it differently and he needs to know that.

- ~ 1-14-05 (0) Findings, Resolutions, & Debt Management
- ~ 1-15-05 (0) Grievance and Complaint Procedure
- ~ 1-16-06 (0) Additional Voluntary Match Requirement
- ~ 1-17-06 (0) Application Score Sheet
- ~ 1-18-06 (0) Sub-grantee Project Evaluation Requirement
- ~ 1-19-06 (0) Section III Administrative Cost Budget Exceptions
- ~ 1-20-06 (0) Counting On-Call Hours Towards Service

Motion: Senator Tim Mathern motioned to approve Policy 1-14-05, Findings, Resolutions, & Debt Management as presented. Seconded by Dave Massey. All in favor. Motion carried.

Jerry briefly discussed Policy 1-15-05, Grievance and Complaint Procedure. There were no changes to this policy, it basically deals with what sub-grantees would have to go through, or a denied applicant would have to go through.

Motion: T.J. Russell motioned to approve Policy 1-15-05, Grievance and Complaint Procedure as presented. Seconded by Gloria Maragos. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion: Representative Bette Grande made a motion to take all the Sunset Policies in one motion and except them as proposed. Motion seconded by T.J. Russell. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion: Senator Tim Mathern asked Jerry Houn for rational for the changes in these policies. Jerry reported the change on *Policy 1-16-06, Additional Voluntary*

Match Requirement. He stated that before it used to be a separate match and they need to come up with a budget of 33% match for the program, and 15% match of the member cost. Now the corporation says they are just doing an overall 24% match. This policy was up for renewal as well as the verbiage had to change.

Jerry reported the change on *Policy 1-19-06, Section III, Administrative Costs Budgeted Exceptions.* Jerry stated that in the past they used to have the five and ten percent rule for administrative costs where the sub-grantees could budget up to 5% federal funds and up to 10% match. That is changed now to a 5% federal and up to a 15% overall. It doesn't work out to five or ten percent.

Motion: With no further questions or discussion it was moved to approve the ballot of the policies. All in favor. Motion carried.

Jerry reported on *Policy 1-05-04 (2), Commission Peer Review Policy.* Jerry stated that this is not a Sunset Policy. Jerry indicated that he has sent out 150 Faith-based, 230 non-profit, and 300 school district emails inquiring their interest if he was to do an AmeriCorps Grant Writing Workshop, would they be interested in attending. Thus far, 80 have responded. Jerry noted that this doesn't mean it will materialize into applications.

Jerry commented that this policy deals with the fact that we need to be guarded against too many applications and how to handle it should we have excessive applications. The old policy (second paragraph) states that we have a peer review panel. Jerry commented that the statute used to require that we have a peer review panel, but it is not, it is strongly suggesting that we have it. Technically, we could go away from the peer review panel if we wanted to. We are much more comfortable in having a peer review panel to help decide which applications are best. Our biggest concern is having 80 respondents and how will we deal with all the applications. The peer review wants to be looking at no more than four applications. This would mean if we have more than four applications another peer review panel would have to be sought after. It is tough to get people to take time out of their schedules to review applications. Right now, if we have 10-12 applications, Ryan Volk and I would review, rate, and forward a certain number of the applications to the peer review. Jerry stated that this is a practice that is done by other states; Wyoming uses this practice and never uses a peer group. Other state commissions are mix, some do-some don't. Jerry has spoken with Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri. These states take a look at the top applicants and only pass on a certain number to the peer review, and some they automatically cancel out. The peer reviewers don't give the final recommendation, they give us their opinion on the application, we then take that information and give it to the grants committee and the grants committee is the one that will make the recommendations to the Commission.

It was asked what type of scoring would be used by Jerry and Ryan for disqualify some of the applicants. Jerry stated that they would go through and do the same type of scoring the peer reviewers would do. Jerry stated that he looks at applications and

can tell right away with some of the verbiage if their obtainable or not. Some of the biggest problems applicants have are they “shoot for the sky”. They want to accomplish everything, and as you read through their application, it can’t happen. Sometimes there is no expertise to provide certain services. They have no plans in place to get the expertise to provide these services.

The question was asked if there is a rational for the nine applicants and do we have a certain number we could submit to the Corporation. Jerry responded that for the Corporation it is nine. The significant number of nine is that we have a group of six peer reviewers brought in each year. Each would review three of them and if they have 10 or more we would have to find additional peer reviewers.

Motion: Representative Bette Grande moved to approve Policy 1-05-04 (2) as presented. Motion seconded by T.J. Russell. All in favor. Motion carried.

Dave Massey commented why review the applications twice? If the staff is going to review the applications and reject the ones that are not good, why do we want to have a peer review? Dave Massey stated that this poses an issue. We provide technical assistance to these grantees and then turn around and review them for quality. This represents conflict of interest. I don’t think staff should review for quality at all. It should be for technical review. This policy is not addressing what we really want to do. Dave Massey expressed his concern and has an issue with this policy.

Senator Tim Mathern asked if there is a technical review or intermediary step taken, and can an agency submit an application and receive feedback before it submits to the Commission, or is it a one-step process? Jerry explained the process and criteria in which the applications are judged. Jerry stated that they do go above the technical review. What we can really look at and send back to them are things that they are not going to be judged on by the peer reviewers. We look at the numbers part of the application, not the narrative. We do not go back and review the narrative and tell them to rewrite it. We make sure there numbers add up ok.

Dave Massey confirmed with Jerry that what he described is technical review. Jerry confirmed it was technical review. Dave Massey mentioned that Jerry’s earlier statement that the staff will actually reduce the number of proposals and in his judgment will not be good proposals. This is not technical review? Jerry agreed. Jerry stated that with this policy we would be going above the technical review now. Jerry stated that last year there were six applications. We have never had this kind of attendance at the AmeriCorps Grant Writing Workshops. The workshops illustrate specifically the AmeriCorps instructions, and how to address those instructions. Jerry expressed the concern for the number of applicants they may get and finding enough peer reviewers. The biggest issue with peer reviewers is finding the time to bring them and train them on being well-versed with AmeriCorps in order to score the applications.

Representative Bette Grande asked Dave Massey if he just wanted to eliminate the words “and only those applicants will be submitted for peer review”, and just set it up in a ranking. The top nine are there and all the rest of the applicants are available to the peer review. Representative Grande asked if that would solve the issue.

Dave Massey expressed concern not finding enough peer review is not an excuse for not excepting applications, and if we get 20 applications we need to review them. Whether it takes a peer review, then we need to find a peer review. Staff needs to review for technical issues and then peer review needs to judge for quality. And it needs to be independent. Staff is not independent, especially when you are providing technical assistance to the applicants. Wayne Kutzer asked if we currently have a policy describing technical assistant. Jerry responded that there is no official policy. What has been looked at in the past is that peer reviewers are going to score the narrative. Jerry mentioned that the next application process is due by February 13, and by March 1st they go to the peer review team. We don't officially know how many applications we are to receive until the February 13 deadline. This gives two weeks to find peer reviewers and trainers.

1st Amendment of Motion: Representative Bette Grande moved to withdraw her motion to approve Policy 1-05-04 (2) as presented and offer an amendment on the top of page two to eliminate the wording “and only those applications will be submitted for peer review”, thus knowing there would be technical review done on all applications to make sure they meet the criteria and that there is going to be a ranking for the top nine and then forwarded for peer review, knowing they can look through all of them and that the technical review is done. They know what the ranking is, but have the opportunity to review everything. Senator Tim Mathern supports the amendment but suggests that there be a policy on this technical review process. Motion seconded by Dave Massey.

Discussion: T.J. Russell commented that Jerry over the years has been trying to develop market-share for AmeriCorps; we had money but no customers, so he has had to do what needs to be done to increase awareness. Irrespective of if it fit within policy. T.J. stated that he appreciates and respects the job that he has had to do thus far. In the beginning of Jerry's conversation, he talks about the possibility that he may have more demand than that he has supply for.

Representative Grande mentioned that we actually give him that leeway to get this ranking done. If he is helping them write it, he probably shouldn't be ranking it, other the auditors will really be upset if he is the one helping to write it, judge it, and issue the money. This is where the problems arise. So we are actually freeing his hands to help move forward in the procedure. Jerry stated that he is not helping them to write the grant. What he asks them to do is to write about the member's outcomes, what they want the member's to accomplish, and to be careful in speaking about member's not about the organization, and what are some of the things the member's can accomplish. These are instructions that are put out by the Corporation. He just goes through the instructions for the Corporation. He doesn't give extra insight. He just

cautions them to follow the instructions. They are sent them back informing them they need to check the performance measure, making sure it is aligned. It states that in the instructions. It also states that they have to come in at the \$12,600. Jerry stated that some applications will be over by pennies and they will need adjusting.

Jerry asked if they should be ranking the applications. Dave Massey stated that staff should not be ranking the applications anymore.

It was agreed that under the heading "Policy" the whole paragraph that is underlined be removed and keep the changes made to the paragraph under the heading "Purpose".

Senator Mathern suggested keeping the first line of the paragraph that states "The State Commission will direct the staff to conduct a complete and thorough review of the submitted applications". Senator Mathern stated that staff actually work to keep up the number of applicants. They are doing marketing and encouragement and getting technical things done. This is done under the first sentence. Jerry agreed and commented that if we come back with a policy on technical assistance this would take care of that statement. Senator Mathern commented that if we kept that statement in the policy then Jerry can keep doing what he has been doing.

2nd Amendment of Motion: Representative Bette Grande moved to withdraw her previous motion to amend Policy 1-05-04 (2) and moves to eliminate the underlined wording starting from the word "Should to the end of the paragraph. Motion seconded by Dave Massey. All in favor. Motion carried.

Jerry concluded the discussion by stating that if the State Commission should receive more than nine applications that the Commissioners will be asked to step forward to be part of the peer review group.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY UPDATE:

Disability Inclusion: Jerry Houn mentioned that this year so far we have visited with Voc-Rehab in Fargo and they have two people that are interested in becoming AmeriCorps members. We also know there is an individual in Grand Forks that is going to become an AmeriCorps member for them that is considered legally blind. We are making headway with the disability inclusion. AmeriCorps is giving us the funding to engage these people. We know through the labor shortages, this is a group of people that is being overlooked and hopefully through the AmeriCorps Service they are getting some gainful practical experience to help them out.

Program Development And Training (PDAT): Jerry stated that the National Conference is at the end of June and there will be training for commissioners again. We did put into the budget again for two commissioners to attend. The National Conference had a lot of information, a lot of sessions for state

commission staff and for program staff, however they are starting to gear it differently, in November the vast majority will be geared toward the projects rather than open up the state commissions. There will be some training for us. In May, they will have a conference specifically for the State Commission but it is not confirmed at this time. Keep this in mind to attend some of the conferences. We will get an email out when the dates are finalized.

AMERICORPS 101:

Basics / Provisions: Jerry presented a PowerPoint describing what goes into making the decision of the AmeriCorps funding. Jerry stated that the funding we handle is considered a formula of funding. We are hoping to have a project apply for Competitive Funding. Competitive Funding is on top of our formula fund, for example, if we could get the YMCA to obtain \$300,000 in competitive funding, then we have the full \$500,000 in formula funding available. We have had some responses to this from several tribal organizations. We would like to see them get into the tribal funding. The ultimate goal would be to bring in a million dollars a year of AmeriCorps funding. Jerry reviewed how AmeriCorps was started, what kind of funding is offered, problems of subjecting funding, what is the formula funding process. Jerry stated that we are addressing vital, critical community needs. The money is divided into eight different streams, administrative funding, training funds, and disability inclusion.

Jerry briefly reviewed the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), AmeriCorps National, AmeriCorps State Formula, AmeriCorps State Competitive, AmeriCorps National & State, Sub-Grantee Funding and some terminology used with AmeriCorps.

Web Based Reporting System (WEBRS): Ryan reviewed the WEBRS system. Ryan commented that WEBRS is a Web Based Reporting System that is currently being used. The Corporation is going away from this system so everything that is used with this system is being created manually now. There are multiple reasons this system is not being used, but the main reason is the maintenance cost. Ryan reviewed each area of reporting, i.e., AmeriCorps member enrollment, number of AmeriCorps slots available, financial statements submitted, performance measures, education awards and the hours recorded, etc. Jerry Houn stated that this report should be reviewed regularly. Project coordinators enter the hours, but in the future the members will only put in whether they have completed their time. It will no longer be itemized. Part of the problem with this system being taken away is there is no way for us or the project coordinators to see where they are at with their time. There still needs to be something developed to help track where these people are at with their time. Jerry stated that a progress report is a big part of AmeriCorps. On a quarterly basis a progress report has to be supplied to us, and from the progress report we are able to determine whether they are going to be able to accomplish their goals or not. We have created our own system for the

performance measure. In April the Commission will receive a report on what kind of progress these projects made this past 07-08 year. Starting January 1st we have to go from WEBRS to a new system, so Ryan has re-created this information in an Excel format.

AMERICORPS STATE SUB-GRANTEE UPDATES:

2008-09 Project Startups: Jerry Houn reviewed the summary of each of the projects funded for the current year which include: Kidz Count AmeriCorps Programs, CSI: Grand Forks, AmeriCorps (After School Activities Program), Fargo-Moorhead Family YMCA AmeriCorps, and Mountain Plains Youth Services AmeriCorps Program.

2009 Calendar Year Timeline: Jerry briefly reviewed the Timeline for 2009. The timeline will be tabled until the April meeting when a quorum is available. It was noted that January 1, 2008 needs to be corrected to read January 1, 2009, in the timeline format.

VISTA / RSVP: Nancy Olsen - AmeriCorps*VISTA, reported that they have under their sponsorship Bismarck, Dickinson, Minot, Jamestown, Fargo, and Grand Forks. In fiscal 2008 there are over 3000 RSVP Volunteers who are 55 and older currently serving non profit agencies and government organizations across North Dakota. In terms of total hours for six programs and 3000+ volunteers, it is over ½ million hours they are contributing service to North Dakota. In talking about dollar value, in fiscal 2008 we are talking a savings of over seven million dollars to the State of North Dakota. These are people who have given their time, talent, and expertise to get a lot of great things done for the state of North Dakota and get nothing in return. RSVP volunteers do not need to qualify in any way; they just need to be 55 and older. We do an interest inventory when they volunteer or when they enroll, to get a sense of who they are and what they are interested in, and what kind of expertise they might have. We then take a look at the agencies who have asked for help. There are hundreds of agencies across North Dakota who really need volunteers in order to make their mission. Those missions are vital. The volunteer work that is out there is critical for the State.

There is an enormous wave of individuals who are reaching the age of 62; seventy-six million individuals. Research shows that the boomers are going to volunteer differently; they will have a serious impact on retirement. Their service will be different, much more project based. They are bringing their professional life and education to their volunteerism. The organization is thinking through and reimagining what volunteerism means. The agencies have designed their volunteer work around them. Boomers tell us very clearly that they are going to be in charge of their own time, they are going to sign on to projects they like and that work for them. Working with the boomers is going to be different. The boomers have an interesting professional background and are willing to give that background to the non-profit organizations.

RSVP is rebranding by not using the word “seniors” and longer. We are calling ourselves RSVP and using the tagline “your invitation to serve”. The mission statement will be adjusted to say “that we are inviting adults who are 55 and older to engage in meaningful volunteer service that meets community needs”.

Nancy mentioned they have done a self-study as to where they will be in the next 10 years and decided to do things differently. They are going to launch a business and have formed a 501C3. It is a related party 501C3 to NDSU, and the first business to launch is in Minot. RSVP will start up a food and beverage operation called RSVP Gallery at the Minot International Airport. It will be a volunteer driven enterprise for the City of Minot. The business plan was design by an individual through the VISTA program and has been approved. The business is going to be very small starting out and as the Minot Airport remodels their space we will increase the size of the operation. Eventually, the Minot Airport would like RSVP to open up the full scale restaurant on the second floor.

RSVP as Vendor: This means we see ourselves working with organizations or projects with microenterprise innovations and creation of products ourselves. We are enrolling as a Pride of Dakota vendor.

RSVP Campus: Nancy stated the research on boomers is really clear and boomers are going to expect some kind of value added from the organizations from which they affiliate. We are launching RSVP Campus to provide life long opportunities, not just for volunteers, but for anyone in the communities across the state. Nancy stated that there are Community Volunteer Centers in Grand Forks, Minot, and Dickinson, and those volunteer centers have now failed. RSVP has reached an agreement with these centers that those volunteer centers will come into proximity with the RSVP programs and use the RSVP programs to mentor the community volunteer centers.

Nancy reviewed VISTA, which is a full-time service from individuals. The programs are staffed locally and have an Advisory Council made up of local individuals. The Board of Directors is for the enterprise with Minot Airport and is made up of nine members, six to represent the six programs, two at large, and a chair. That body is intended to look strategically at revenue producing operations.

Kelsey Bless – Director, VISTA commented that the volunteers can do anything they want as long as they qualify to be under a non-profit organization, government entity, faith-based, or health propriety. There are a number of the volunteers serving at both hospitals in Bismarck, and hospitals and nursing homes across the state, both rural and urban. Volunteers are mentoring children of incarcerated parents. Many volunteer tutor in schools and participate in tax consulting each spring.

Learn and Serve Update: Valerie Fischer, Director of School Health and Adult Education for the Department of Public of Public Instruction. The Learn and Serve program is part of the three corporate programs that were recognized earlier. The Learn and Serve Program in North Dakota is small. Learn and Serve is funded just

over \$42,000 a year. Learn and Serve sub-grantee is the North Dakota Supreme Court and the purpose of our relationship is to help support the youth courts and youth drug courts and five district sites across the state. We have supported the drug court system of the youth court process for service learning. The attempt of reaching that audience is that it is a group prone to misbehaviors and also drop-outs and by getting them involved in service learning. The intent of the youth courts is to make that connection to a greater picture beyond their immediate needs and give them a connect between them and their community. It is a connect to the schools that is tied in with History, civics, or government courses. They are learning how their community supports them and what they are a part of and how it ties into the academics within the classroom. Learn and Serve has served 130 youth since the grant three years ago. These are youth that have gone through the process of the courts and with parental support participate in this process. They have to serve an amount of hours to predetermine the community service and service learning aspect.

The five programs of Learn and Serve have done a variety of service learning projects. What we are trying to do is keep the connect between themselves and giving of their time and talent and how it ties into the world around them whether it be cleaning city parks, prepared meals at homeless shelters, reading and basic tutorial with young students and afterschool programs, purchasing and participating in back-to-school book-bags and school clothes for homeless peers. The roll of this program is to give them the exposure to service learning and connect it with academics. The goal is to look at a 30% reduction in the drug and alcohol crimes or the incarcerated events that have taken them to the drug court process and looking at their participation level.

The program is on track to meet the performance goals. We are in the 3rd year of a three year cycle which will end in August of 2009. We are at a crossroads as to where we continue to go with this program. The difficulty in receiving a small amount of money and the requirements for the corporation as well as their requirements for attending a national conference and keeping up with progress reports and financial reports. The difficulty is if we can really continue to do this program with a small amount of funding. We need more money and are not eligible to receive additional money. We will be looking into other avenues to continue the program or to increase our revenue opportunities.

Valerie Fischer mentioned that she assumed responsibility for this program in late September 2008. We give the money out and don't keep any for administration, yet the requirements for this program are as great as the programs that have five and six million dollars. It is about the balance of time and the energy as far as the outcome in the numbers impacted. It really doesn't matter how small it is or how many people it impacts, it still is worth doing and doing well. Valerie stated that it is frustrating that were not able to have more money to do more. There is a need and other sites have expressed interest in participating.

Senator Tim Mathern asked if the record keeping made sense and appropriate or is it just the need for more money, or are they fairly inappropriate and they really are not

helping anybody or the helping the program to have credibility. Valerie commented that it is a little of both and it is a little heavy on the requirements. Senator Mather mentioned that if it is inappropriate we should ask our congressional delegation to work on changing it. Valerie commented that it is a little heavy and she has to do the same things to get \$40,000 that she does for five million. We are not going to get any more money than we are. Some of the states that are also formula funded have just declined the money and don't accept that part of the corporate and take the other two tiers, but not the third which is the Learn and Serve. We will lean toward continuing because it makes a huge difference to the kid's future. We will continue to do those reports. Valerie state that she is not apposed to doing that.

Wayne Kutzer commented that one of the things as a commission we can look at and if you can identify the things that are overly burdensome and at least we make the attempt that it is a lot of work for a small amount of dollars.

The Serve America Act: Jerry Houn reported that the Act is about the development of the youth engagement zone program. It is similar to the Learn and Serve Program but targeting the secondary school students and out of school youth in trying to increase engagement from that population. Through this Act it is finding 30 Higher Ed campuses across the United States called Campuses of Services. What they have set aside is approximately 30 million dollars for the 2009 year. We may be involved where they will want us to doing some campuses services in the State or some institutions that may want to be involved. This Act talks about state commissions doing surveys and providing feedback from that survey to the President, building the capacity to non-profits and how we can advise the President about concerns of the non-profit sector has in social issues.

Community Solution Fund Grant Program, this is making grants eligible to FD's to replicate or expand proven initiatives for low income carriers. The Innovation Fellowship Pilot Program is directed toward non-profit organizations. Establishing four new funds: Education Corps Fund, Healthy Corps Fund, Clean Energy Fund, and Opportunity Fund. They want to do studies of people in the age bracket of 50+ in keeping them involved in sharing their knowledge with the community. Through this Act they want to create an Encore Fellowship Program, getting retired professionals to come back in another capacity. This was introduced September 12, 2008, but not acted on.

AmeriCorps Rule Making #2: Jerry reported some of the new rules coming out i.e., mid-term evaluations to be done for full-time members. Any members that are less than full-time have been reduced to end of term evaluation. This helps out the sub-grantees. They also want to make sure the logo is used properly; not altering the colors or logo in anyway. They are also working toward increasing the grantees share, setting aside specific funds for new and returning applicants. The grant selection criteria is that they want state commissions doing a better alignment for the elements that predict program success. Also look at programs that can duplicate their services and finally increase the members living allowance.

New Business:

Commission Discussion & Planning: Senator Tim Mathern commented that maybe we really shouldn't ask Learn and Serve to be specific about something that doesn't seem appropriate and get that to the staff person, write it up in a letter and ask for a few changes. As a board, we should report something that could be changed. Bette Grande commented that if no one complains, then how do they know it is a burden, we have to make that thought known to them. Wayne Kutzer mentioned that for next time we should find out what type of reporting they have. Senator Mathern suggested authorizing Valerie's staff to take that recommendation and forward it on to the Corporation. Representative Grande stated that what ever is sent to the Corporation also needs to be copied to the three people in our delegation, so the senators and representative are aware of the concerns we have as citizens. Jerry Houn stated that he would contact Valerie Fisher for the information.

Pubic Input: No Report

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.