



Commission Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2022

Montana State Capitol

Room 152 & on Zoom

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

AGENDA	DIALOGUE	ACTION ITEMS
<p>I. Chair Harbage called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm</p>		
<p>a. Roll Call</p>	<p><u>Commission Members Present:</u> Chair Rebecca Harbage, Vice Chair Morgan Hubbard, Commissioners Thomas Risberg, Kevin Myhre, Don Wetzel Jr., Jim Swan*, Karen Moses*, Heather Margolis*, Amy Busch*, Eric Strauss, Pamela Carbonari*</p> <p><u>Commission Members Absent:</u> Commissioners Kelly Ackerman, Doug Mitchell, Juanita Vero, Karin Olsen-Billings</p> <p><u>Guests and Staff Present:</u> <i>Guests:</i> Elaine Dahl, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies the Montana Coalition; Samara Lynde*, Rocky Mountain Development Council RSVP Director; Kelley Moody*, Rocky Mountain Development Council Senior Companion Director</p> <p><i>OCS Staff:</i> Sarah R. Sadowski, Director; Joe Naiman-Sessions, Grants Manager*; Sheree Isola, Fiscal Officer; Kristina Jordan, Training and Technical Assistance Specialist; Alyssa Mathieu, Program Specialist</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Indicates individuals who attended via Zoom.</p>	
<p>b. Opening Activity</p>	<p>Vice Chair Hubbard led the Commission and OCS staff in an opening activity.</p>	
<p>c. Approval of March 9, 2022 & May 18, 2022 Minutes</p>	<p>Chair Harbage asked for corrections or objections to both sets minutes and heard none. Minutes for each meeting approved.</p>	<p>March 9, 2022, Minutes approved; May 18, 2022 Minutes approved</p>

<p>d. Commissioner Reports, Updates, and Volunteer Engagements</p>	<p>Commissioner Karen Moses described a monumental volunteer effort, which created 2,088 gift baskets for staff and raised over \$60,000 for schools.</p> <p>Commissioner Thomas Risberg described a Back-to-School-Blast in Great Falls. In partnership with Town Pump, groups are planning an Aug 6 event to give out 2,000 backpacks to students for the upcoming school year. The event will provide other services to prepare students for the school year such as food, haircuts, and more.</p> <p>Vice Chair Morgan Hubbard shared that she attended the ASC National Service Training Conference in Albuquerque, and commended Sarah for her 2020 Commission Staff award, noting it was great to see Sarah recognized at this event. She shared there was great representation of Montana.</p> <p>Chair Rebecca Harbage recognized the DEQ wellness committee, which was started to support general employee wellness and increase employee retention. The committee covers a wide array of topics, such as mental health, boating, garden work for Helena Food Share, and more. Events have been well attended and include volunteer events across the community. She offered DEQ teams to those at the commission meeting to complete volunteer work in communities with a DEQ presence, such as Helena, Bozeman, Kalispell, and Billings.</p> <p>Commissioner Pamela Carbonari presented Youth Serve Montana Scholarship certificates to students at Flathead High School, and shared it was a great evening.</p>	
<p>II. AmeriCorps the Agency Regional Office Update</p>	<p>Commissioner Amy Busch shared the full ORO team went to Washington DC in May for a convening with all ORO staff, where they met with Michael Smith. CEO Michael Smith and the AmeriCorps Board of Directors hosted their first public meeting on May 13, during which Catherine McLaughlin was named Board Chair. Board Member Alvin Warren was also present with Michael Smith at the ASC Conference in Albuquerque, as well as other Denver ORO staff. Michael and Alvin did site visits while in New Mexico.</p> <p>Amy reminded the Commission that midnight ET on 6/10/22 is the deadline for comment on the AmeriCorps match schedule, per the 5-year strategic plan to overcome barriers to programs and members. Match has been a big topic of discussion and concern at the agency, especially through the pandemic.</p> <p>AJ Pearlman was appointed as the Director of Public Health AmeriCorps. Programs started across the country, and the agency is eager to see where this initiative goes as needs increase.</p>	

	<p>AmeriCorps Seniors HQ is hosting a summer series online May thru September. A Foster Grandparent Program from ID project presented which was an exciting highlight. The FY22 budget included an increase in the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer stipend (\$3 up to \$3.15 per hour) for all 3 programs.</p> <p>Currently recruiting AC VISTA members to start in July & August. Please share this opportunity with potential service members. VISTA members 55+ are now able to transfer their Education Award. Transferring the Ed Award was previously only available for AmeriCorps State & National members age 55+.</p> <p>VISTA Summer Associates have started & continue to start, many serving across Montana through Montana Campus Compact, Rural Dynamics, and Billings Metro VISTA Project. Summer Associates will conclude their service in August. Keep an eye out for them in Montana communities.</p> <p>Commissioner Heather Margolis asked if match could be suspended for a time. Amy said it could be possible, looking for any public comment. 50% match is sizeable. Different for different programs, asked Director Sarah Sadowski to weigh in. Sarah noted she will share thoughts on match comment in the Director’s Update.</p> <p>Commissioner Jim Swan asked whether match amounts are required discretionarily or in statute? Asking for clarification. Amy said yes, in accordance with Executive Order 13985.</p> <p>Grants Manager Joe Naiman-Sessions asked whether there is any reciprocal action planned on other benefits members get, meaning existing VISTA benefits extended to AmeriCorps State & National members, or vice versa, for example the Non-Competitive Eligibility AC VISTA members get. Amy said there is no update at this time, but discussions do happen around this at the agency, and she will check in on the status of such discussions.</p>	
<p>III. Governor’s Office of Community Service Updates</p>		
<p>a. Director’s Update</p>		

<p><i>i. Staffing happenings and Commissioner terms</i></p>	<p>Sarah gave a shout-out to AmeriCorps Seniors for attending the commission meeting.</p> <p>There are currently three staff positions open at OCS: Applications for Administrative Specialist will be closing this week, while applications for the Grants Specialist and Financial Officer will be extended until June 19th. Financial Officer Sheree Isola will be graduating from her position with OCS on August 26, and we are hoping for some overlap between Sheree and the new Financial Officer. Sarah shared she is grateful to Sheree for staying on an extra 1.5 years, and this is likely her last commission meeting with the office. Sarah shared that six Commission positions will turn over this year, and Commissioners whose terms are ending may or may not have heard from the Boards & Appointments office. These Commissioners have served well and may still get call from the Boards & Appointments Office. If Commissioners are inclined and want to serve again, they are encouraged to apply through link: https://svc.mt.gov/gov/boards/docs/Application-for-Appointment.pdf.</p> <p>Please also share this opportunity and send the link to those you know who may be well-suited to serve as a Commissioner or share names of those you recommend with Director Sadowski. The priority is to find active & engaged commissioners.</p>	
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<p><i>ii. General Updates</i></p>	<p>AmeriCorps Montana programs continue to struggle with housing and recruitment. Please share opportunities with those in your life who may be interested in serving with AmeriCorps or renting to an AmeriCorps member. OCS is hosting a housing committee with AmeriCorps staff to problem solve and identify opportunities.</p> <p>Sarah shared she has draft for AmeriCorps Match comments going. The agency is requiring commissions to match ARPA funds 1:1 for whole 3-year period of award, which makes accessing funds difficult. Sarah has visited with governor’s budget office to problem solve.</p> <p>Commissioner Margolis asked when the Match Comments document might circulate and if there is a process to sign on as a Commissioner? Sarah said she will send to the Commission and noted it is not an “e-sign” document but would like to list as many commissioners as would be inclined to support.</p> <p>Commissioner Swan shared his appreciation for Sheree and commissioners whose terms are ending.</p> <p>Thomas Risberg asked for clarification on ARPA match, is it 1:1? Could OCS go to the state legislature to find other sources of match? What are the alternatives if the match does not get waived or the legislature doesn’t appropriate more funds? Sarah noted at \$140,000 general fund, OCS has a very high ROI. She visited with budget director to request a general fund increase and One Time Only (OTO) funds to support match for APR and regular Commission grants as well. OCS does not want to lose those ARPA funds as they are a stimulus for Montana’s people and places.</p> <p>Sarah asked if AmeriCorps Seniors will submit comment on the match schedule? Samara Lynde, RSVP Director at the Rocky Mountain Development Council in Helena, said yes, and through the National Senior Corps Association. She noted match requirements for RSVP are very high as well. Sarah noted there is a huge number (~3,000) of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Montana, but the programs have very lean budgets.</p>	
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a. ServeMontana Updates		
i. <i>Gift of Life and Organ Donation Memorial</i>	<p>Program Specialist Alyssa Mathieu shared that every April, which is Donate Life month, OCS honors organ donors with engraved leaves on the Tree of Life. With two trees now full, OCS is looking to establish an outdoor memorial on the Capitol grounds. OCS has an approved plan from the Capitol Complex Advisory Council, is currently speaking with architects, and is working through some hurdles. The goal is to get legislative approval next spring.</p> <p>Chair Harbage asked how the memorial will be funded, and Sarah noted she is working with the Department of Administration & their attorney to move a bill through the legislature, following approval of design by the Capitol Complex Advisory Council. Fiscal is not attached at this time, though OCS does have resources for concept and design. This may be an opportunity to leverage funds with Life Center Northwest, the Donate Life partner. Will have clearer picture of funding needs after the next Capitol Complex Advisory Council Meeting.</p> <p>By next year, trees will be on display in the capitol, on the first floor, for at least one year.</p>	
ii. <i>Newsletter</i>	<p>Earlier this year, OCS requested Commissioners respond to the Commissioner Highlight survey. Three Commissioners have been published in the OCS newsletter so far, planning to continue. Alyssa will resend the survey link, please respond if you have not already. The goal is to get readers to know Commissioners a bit better.</p>	
iii. <i>ServeMontana Awards</i>	<p>Scheduled for June 24, room 303 in the capitol, starting at 10a. The ServeMontana Awards ceremony will be followed by a luncheon in the Rotunda. Lieutenant Governor Juras will join and recognize awardees, please join if you can.</p>	
a. Financial		
i. <i>Financial Status Report</i>	<p>Sheree asked if anyone has any questions on the report. Chair Harbage asked about the current balance and general fund, and would funds be spent by state fiscal year end. Sheree answered OCS will journal funds away from grant, then spend the grant in the second half of the year.</p> <p>Chair Harbage also thanked Sheree for her time with OCS and noted the commission will miss her.</p>	
b. AmeriCorps		
i. <i>Competitive Grants</i>	<p>Joe shared that OCS did receive competitive funding determination, and all applicants were fully funded, including expansion and increased living allowance amounts.</p>	
ii. <i>Formula Grants</i>	<p>Joe thanked all who participated in the Formula granting process to get applicants approved. OCS hit submit on Formula grants yesterday and is now finalizing additional documents. The office is moving forward with the approved recommendation from last month's special meeting of Commission.</p>	

<p><i>ii. National Service Regional Training, ABQ</i></p>	<p>Training Specialist Kristina Jordan shared that OCS staff, Vice Chair Hubbard, and AmeriCorps program staff had the opportunity to attend America’s Service Commission’s National Service Training Conference (Western Region) in Albuquerque and online last week. It was a great learning opportunity with many stellar breakout sessions, and attendees had the chance to hear from and speak with AmeriCorps CEO Michael Smith and Director of AmeriCorps State & National, Sonali Nijhawan.</p>	
<p><i>v. Accommodation Assessment Report</i></p>	<p>Kristina provided an overview of results from the 2022 Accommodation Assessment Report: https://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/2022_Summary-AC_Accommodation_Assessment.pdf Commissioner Swan asked about the drop in percentage of respondents disclosing a disability from 2014-2016. Kristina noted there was a change in the way the survey was implemented those years, and Sarah shared that the survey has kept up with changes made by the Social Security Administration regarding disclosure and accommodation.</p> <p>Commissioner Strauss offered Department of Labor and Industry Employee Relations Division training resources on accommodation to OCS.</p>	
<p>IV. New Business</p>	<p>Chair Harbage announced the formation of a Commission Bylaws Workgroup and requested at least three Commissioners to serve on the workgroup. Chair Harbage, Vice Chair Hubbard, and Commissioners Myhre and Swan volunteered. The goal of this workgroup is to align the bylaws with the federal code and with realistic expectations. Sarah shared she does not expect drastic changes, but some operational improvements. The workgroup should plan on attending meetings in July and late August, with the goal to have changes ready for proposal at the October meeting of the Commission. Jim Swan noted in the Zoom chat that in the current bylaws, we have no place for the Chair to vote in case of a tie, which we learned that at the Roberts Rules Training in January.</p> <p>New commissioner orientation is scheduled for October 13, 10a-12p and will be followed by the regularly scheduled meeting at 1p. Please save the date for the full day, as OCS encourages existing commissioners to join the orientation, as it is an opportunity to welcome new commissioners.</p>	<p>Commission Bylaws Workgroup Formed</p>
<p>V. Public Comment</p>	<p>Kevin Myhre thanked Sheree for her service with OCS and the commission will miss her. Elaine Dahl thanked OCS staff for help during planning grant application process and for workgroup for their review and feedback. Karen Moses thanked everyone, and noted it’s been a wild year – lots happened, lots upcoming. Heather Margolis said it’s been a pleasure to serve, and to serve under Sarah’s leadership. Commissioner Wetzal shared he was honored to be here in person and is curious to get to know everyone. Chair Harbage noted this was a great meeting and thanked everyone for coming.</p>	

**VI. Adjourn: Chair Harbage
adjourned meeting at 2:28 p.m.**

The regularly scheduled third quarterly Commission meeting is Thursday, October 13, 2022.

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