



Commission Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022

Carroll College, Trinity Hall and via Zoom

10:00 am-11:45 am

AGENDA	DIALOGUE	ACTION ITEMS
<p>I. Chair Harbage called the meeting to order at 10:00 am</p>		
<p>a. Roll Call</p>	<p><u>Commission Members Present:</u> <i>*Indicates individuals attended via Zoom</i> Chair Rebecca Harbage, Vice Chair Morgan Hubbard*, Commissioners Kelly Ackerman, Amy Busch, Pam Carbonari, Jim Larson, Thomas Risberg, Eric Strauss, Jim Swan, Donnie Wetzel, Jr.*, Karen Moses*, Heather Margolis*, Doug Mitchell*, Kevin Myhre*</p> <p><u>Commission Members Excused:</u> Commissioners Juanita Vero and Karin Olsen- Billings</p> <p><u>Guests and Staff Present:</u> <i>AmeriCorps Program Staff:</i> Bryan Wilson, Big Sky Watershed Corps; Jono McKinney and Stacey Williams, Montana Conservation Corps; Stephanie Reynolds, Montana Public Health Corps; Chris Manos, Montana Business Assistance Connection</p> <p><i>OCS Staff:</i> Sarah R. Sadowski, Executive Director; Joe Naiman-Sessions, Grants Manager; Sheree Isola, Fiscal Officer; Kristina Jordan, Training Specialist; Alyssa Mathieu, Program Specialist</p>	
<p>b. Opening Activity</p>	<p>Vice Chair Hubbard led commissioners in an opening activity.</p>	
<p>c. Group Picture</p>	<p>Alyssa Mathieu took a group picture.</p>	
<p>d. Approval of December 9, 2021 Minutes</p>	<p>Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Larson seconded. The motion was approved by acclamation.</p>	<p>Dec 9, 2021, Minutes approved</p>
<p>e. Commissioner Reports, Updates, and Volunteer Engagements</p>	<p>Commissioner Carbonari shared that the Kalispell Brewfest, Frosty the Brewfest, had fantastic volunteer turnout and the event raised over \$26,000 for the Flathead Warming Center.</p>	

	<p>Commissioner Moses shared she is helping a 95-year-old remain in her home and be healthy and happy. The MSUB Foundation worked diligently to search for a new Executive Director, and Krista Montague was recently appointed.</p> <p>Commissioner Margolis noted it is hard to get kids out and volunteering with COVID. Gallatin Valley Foodbank has done an online system to sign up as individuals or groups to pack kid food packs, which sends automated messages when volunteers are needed. She said it is exciting to see technology meeting a need, and kids showing up to help other kids.</p> <p>Commissioner Risberg reminded everyone of No More Violence Week in Great Falls, scheduled for April 4-8. This event features trainings on human trafficking task force, drug endangered children, safe zone training for practitioners, and offers dance and artistic celebration.</p> <p>Director Sadowski thanked Commissioners Akerman and Moses for tuning into the online Student Volunteer Awards Ceremony in February.</p>	
<p>f. OCS Director Updates</p>	<p>Director Sadowski shared March 14-18 is AmeriCorps Week and Governor Gianforte will sign a Proclamation to make next week AmeriCorps Week in Montana. She encouraged Commissioners to share the proclamation if involved in their local government, and to follow @ServeMontana on Facebook and Instagram to amplify AmeriCorps week posts. If not on social media, Director Sadowski asked the Commission to tell a story of their own service to someone else, and/or tell someone about the Commission and AmeriCorps programs.</p> <p>The OCS legislative priorities are to increase the amount of general fund allocated to the office, and to eliminate the tax on the Segal Education Award for AmeriCorps Montana alumni who use their award in the state. Director Sadowski asked Commissioners to please reach out to local legislators as OCS develops informational flyers for these initiatives. OCS is currently hiring for an Organizational Business Analyst position, who would fortify OCS infrastructure, operations, and continuity planning. This position is open until filled, but there is an observable workforce shortage of qualified applicants.</p> <p>Director Sadowski has been busy conducting outreach to eligible organizations interested in AmeriCorps resources and is working to get more applicants into the Planning grant pool. She recently met with newest Commissioner Wetzel to provide a brief Commissioner orientation.</p>	

	<p>She then reminded all that the 2022 ServeMontana Symposium starts with lunch after this meeting and runs through Friday morning, concluding with lunch. OCS is expecting over 250 in person attendees, a clear sign that people want to gather in community.</p>	
<p>II. AmeriCorps the Agency Regional Office Update</p>	<p>Commissioner Bush provided the following updates:</p> <p><i>AmeriCorps & AmeriCorps Seniors Updates</i></p> <p>The Office of Regional Operations team is in town for the ServeMontana Symposium, joined by Dylan Davids and Rio O’Neal who are at a site visit currently. This team visited with the HRDC in Bozeman yesterday. AmeriCorps week is on the forefront with the Agency, and AmeriCorps is looking forward to honoring members across the state and nation. Remember the “Day of the A” photo contest next week.</p> <p>AmeriCorps is working to launch Public Health AmeriCorps nationwide. The grants are going through reviews and clarifications. Award announcements will be made around the end of March/April.</p> <p>American Recue Plan Act (ARPA), grant competitions and resolutions are ongoing for the various streams of service. The National Tribal Notice of Funding Opportunity is open until May 4th, and federally recognized partners who are eligible for the opportunity are aware. Please reach out to Amy and her team for more information; webinars and FAQs will be shared in the coming months. In April, a panel of current grantees sharing their success stories.</p> <p>A new Regional Administrator has been selected. Jill Sears, previously the Department Administrator, has accepted this position. The regional office is bringing on more Portfolio Managers and continues to get new staff up to speed with increased ARPA grant opportunities.</p> <p>AmeriCorps Seniors will offer three different funding opportunities using ARPA funds - two for existing grantees, and one new opportunity. The HRDC AmeriCorps Seniors in Bozeman is kicking off transportation for seniors in the White Sulphur area.</p> <p><i>VISTA Summer Associates Updates</i></p> <p>4 VISTA projects are operating as Montana intermediaries with multiple subsites. Montana Campus Compact VISTA and Billings Metro Vista Project both engage with Summer Associates</p>	

	<p>and are currently seeking host site applications from organizations. VISTA is a capacity building program, so members traditionally do not do direct service, but Summer Associates can, in support of the VISTA mission. The primary focus is on food security, but other focuses may include education and learning loss. Summer Associates are typically 70-day positions, from June through August. AmeriCorps is also recruiting full-time VISTA members, who will start again in July and August.</p> <p>Jono McKinney, MCC, asked about the Continuing Resolution. Busch: hopefully the budget gets passed by this Friday March 11, but there are different avenues as opposed to the Build Back Better for different programs to help us move forward. The Agency is currently focused on implementing ARP.</p>	
<p>III. Governor’s Office of Community Service Update</p>		
<p>a. ServeMontana</p>	<p>Delivered by OCS Program Specialist, Alyssa Mathieu.</p>	
<p><i>i. Youth ServeMontana Scholarships</i></p>	<p>Applications closed January 31, 2022, and are reviewed. Out of 120 student applicants, 83 were selected to receive the scholarship, with 10 alternate students selected (some students lose eligibility based on changes in school selection). This year, the scholarship amount is \$1,200. Award letters will be sent next week, and ServeMontana will post about the scholarships on social media pages.</p>	

<p><i>ii. ServeMontana Awards</i></p>	<p>Nominations close on April 17th. Twenty nominations are submitted so far. Please encourage your networks to nominate individuals and organizations. Remember that active AmeriCorps members are not eligible for award.</p> <p>Chair Harbage challenged each commissioner to submit one nomination, as was requested at the December meeting of the Commission.</p> <p>Commissioner Moses asked for clarification on conflict of interest if Commissioners submit a nomination, given that a subcommittee of Commissioners then select winners. It was determined that to avoid conflict of interest nominations, participants in the workgroup for Serve Awards would be asked to <i>not</i> select their own nominee.</p> <p>The Commissioners who agreed to be on the ServeMontana Award Workgroup at the December meeting will be contacted as we reach the April 17 nomination deadline.</p>	
<p><i>iii. Gift of Life Ceremony</i></p>	<p>The ceremony is scheduled for April 28, 2022, at 6 p.m., and will be virtual again this year. This ceremony will honor 35 individuals who gave the gift of life through organ donation in 2021, resulting in 139 individuals having a second chance at life. Videos of Director Sadowski and Governor Gianforte will be played during this 1-1.5 hour ceremony.</p>	
<p>b. AmeriCorps</p>	<p>Grants Update & Engagement Opportunities Delivered by OCS Grants Manager, Joe Naiman-Sessions; OCS & Commission Training delivered by OCS Training Specialist, Kristina Jordan; Finances delivered by OCS Fiscal officer, Sheree Isola.</p>	
<p><i>i. Grants Update</i></p>	<p><i>Competitive Grant Updates</i></p> <p>Competitive grant applicants have clarified in alignment with fall Workgroup recommendations, submitted in January, and clarified with AmeriCorps. No requests from AmeriCorps to reduce budgets during clarifications, meaning we expect the expansion requests to be honored. That said, grants still have to go through a final Funding Determination with the Office of Grants Administration. Expecting to hear about awarded status in April/May.</p> <p><i>Formula Grant Updates</i></p> <p>OCS has been working hard to modify the Formula Notice into two Notices, one for operational/program grant applicants, and one for planning grant applicants (previously, there was a Planning Supplement). This change is intended to reduce barriers by simplifying the application for Planning applicants. Director Sadowski has been doing a lot of outreach and there are some exciting organizations who have expressed an interest applying to both operating and planning grants. The Notices of Funding Opportunities are posted on the ServeMontana Grants Webpage: https://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-grants/</p>	

	<p>AmeriCorps the agency has informally announced a Formula submission due date of June 6. This has expedited our spring Formula timeline somewhat. The Official Posting date is March 21, but there are a few documents to finalize by then.</p> <p>Joe then turned it over to Chair Harbage, to request proposing a May 11 Formula Grant Review Workgroup, with May 13 as the second-choice date. OCS noted that the community volunteer reviewer, is available on May 11. Commissioner Swan, who served on the Fall Grant Review Workgroup, has a conflict on May 11, but noted he appreciates the reduced barriers for planning grant applicants. Commissioners Strauss and Risberg said they are available on May 11, and Commissioner Margolis volunteered to join the Workgroup.</p>	
<i>ii. Engagement Opportunities</i>	<p>The ServeMontana Symposium this week is the primary opportunity for this time of year. Early spring is a slight lull in program’s calendar years, but there may be opportunities coming up later in the season or early summer. OCS will share these opportunities as we learn more detail.</p>	
c. OCS & Commission Training	<p>Thank you to Commissioners who attended the Roberts Rules of Order training in January. It started a great conversation about Commission meetings and bylaws, and OCS would like schedule a follow up training in the future to dive deeper into the rules and what would be most fitting for the Commission.</p> <p>Thank you as well to Commissioners who have attended or watched recordings of the America’s Service Commissions (ASC) Commissioner 101 webinars. These are typically held quarterly, and OCS will continue to share them as they occur.</p> <p>Each year, ASC hosts National Service Regional Trainings (nationalservicetraining.org). The Western region conference will be in Albuquerque, NM, June 1-3. OCS staff and AmeriCorps program staff attend, and OCS has funds available to cover the cost of attendance for Commissioners who would like to attend. There is typically a leadership/commission track with relevant topics for Commissioners. This conference will be in person, with a limited livestream option, however livestreamed session choices may be limited. Email with additional information will follow.</p>	
d. Finances	<p>Commissioners should have received the newly renamed ServeMontana Financial Snapshot, Fiscal Officer Isola is available to answer questions. Director Sadowski pointed out this is a lot of information on one page, which covers many calendars/timelines and streams of funding, some of which go to OCS, with most passing through to subrecipients. She noted under the</p>	

	<p>“Subrecipients” heading, competitive ARPA funds have been awarded and approved to pass to programs. Programs have been instructed to spend their original grant award before spending ARPA dollars, and to increase the Member Living Allowance.</p> <p>The two grants that generally fund OCS operations are the Commission Support Grant (CSG) and Commission Investment Funds (CIF). CSG funds have a 1:1 match requirement, including on ARPA dollars. OCS is working to generate match to cover the whole 3-year period, but this is difficult. To put this in perspective, current State General Fund allocated to OCS does not covers the match for regular office operations, much less the three year ARPA award.</p> <p>Competitive and Competitive Fixed grant applications are submitted and awaiting determination. Programs operate from September 1 or January 1 start dates.</p>	
<p>IV. Old Business</p>	<p><i>Commissioner Honorarium</i></p> <p>Director Sadowski noted she has check ins with the Lieutenant Governor, who will speak at the ServeMontana Symposium Friday morning. Since the last meeting of the Commission, it has been recommended that OCS hold off on reviewing Commission honorarium policies, as there may be an upcoming legislative approach. Due to budget constraints, the Commission on Community Service has limited capacity to grow the honorarium, so policy changes are now on hold.</p> <p>Waived honorarium is considered in-kind match for OCS operating grants.</p>	<p>Commissioners were asked to please request or waive, in part or whole the honorarium.</p>
<p>V. New Business</p>	<p><i>Proposed Special Meeting of the Commission: May 18 Grant Recommendation Vote</i></p> <p>Director Sadowski noted Grants Manager Naiman-Sessions described the adjusted timeline in the Grants Update section. Because of the quarterly schedule of Commission meetings, it is not in alignment with bylaws to have a full meeting in May, and not meet again until October. OCS recommends maintaining the June 9 regularly scheduled meeting, and holding an additional special meeting on May 18, during which the only agenda item would be to vote on the Grant Review Workgroup Funding Recommendation. She also pointed out that a quorum is needed to approve the Formula Grant Recommendation. OCS is proposing Wednesday, May 18 at 1 p.m. for a virtual meeting, via Zoom.</p> <p>Commissioner Larson asked if Commissioners could vote by proxy. Director Sadowski responded that is acceptable per the Commission bylaws, and that proxy votes should be received before the May 18 meeting.</p>	

VI. Public Comment	<p>Bryan Wilson thanked the commission for all they do. Chris Manos agreed.</p> <p>Jono McKinney shared, now that MCC is in the national direct pool, he does miss the sense of community they had with the Montana Commission and expressed thanks for MCC being invited to the ServeMontana Symposium. While no longer a grantee of the commission, MCC is still looking forward to staying part of the community.</p>	
IV. Chair Harbage adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am	<p>The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting is Thursday, June 9, 2022. A special meeting of the Commission will be held via Zoom on May 18, 2022 to vote on the Formula Grant Funding Recommendation.</p>	

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