

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Minutes of February 2018 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on February 22-23, 2018, in Harrisburg, PA. The meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and was closed to the public pursuant to Public Law 114-328, section 554(b)(3). The Commissioners agreed to make a separate version of these minutes available to the public.

Attendance

Commissioners present:

- Mr. Edward T. Allard III
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Mark Gearan
- Ms. Avril Haines
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei (absent for morning session on Feb. 22)
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Janine Davidson

Others present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Keri Lowry, Director of Governmental and Public Engagement
- Gregory Brinsfield, Director of Operations
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Rachel Rikleen, Deputy General Counsel

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

- Yolanda Hands, Operations Program Manager
- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations
- Amy Schafer, Research Team Lead
- Sandy Scott, on detail from the Corporation for National and Community Service

February 22, 2018 Session

Beginning at approximately 0800 on February 22, 2018, the Commission convened at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Harrisburg, PA. The Chairman closed the meeting to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated.

Introduction and Run of Show

Chairman Heck opened the meeting. Mr. Abernathy then reviewed the agenda for both days.

Mr. Lekas provided an overview of guidelines for the public stakeholder meetings, which would occur on February 22 at the Army War College and on February 23 at the Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) Public Service Center. Staff circulated a one-page guidance memo ahead of the meeting.

Ms. Lowry provided an overview of the February 23 public meeting at HACC. She also profiled the panelists. Mr. Scott provided detail on certain panelists.

Two-Year Research Agenda and Timeline

Dr. Rough briefed the Commission on the two-year research agenda and research timeline. Dr. Rough circulated a white paper on the research agenda along with a presentation on research scoping questions ahead of the briefing. Dr. Rough explained that she intended Commissioners to consider the documents for a more fulsome discussion at the March 2018 meeting.

Commissioners made preliminary observations about the research material. Commissioners expressed some concern with having enough time to deliberate and reach decisions on key issues during 2018. Commissioners also noted the importance of coming to agreement on how to define key terminology. Dr. Rough explained that Commissioners will need to build in sufficient deliberation time depending on how much detail they may want to include in the interim report and how many issues they would want to resolve by that time. Dr. Rough explained that the research agenda reflects Commissioners coming to agreement on two threshold questions—whether the Selective Service System remains a necessary component of national security and whether the Commission would endorse a mandatory service requirement—by the end of 2018.

Several commissioners raised the idea of dividing into subcommittees to facilitate the Commission's review of research and recommendations. Chairman Heck indicated that Commissioners would discuss the creation of subcommittees at the March meeting.

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

Vice Chair Wada expressed the importance of identifying barriers to service and reaching out to minority communities. Dr. Rough indicated that staff was well aware of these issues and would be coordinating outreach activities during each Commission trip to reach different communities.

Ms. Haines requested that staff prepare briefings to assist the Commission in evaluating key research issues. She specifically requested briefings on mandatory service, including how mandatory service has worked in different places, as well as on options for defining “service”.

Public Engagements

Following the research briefing, the Commission departed to several public engagement events. Staff is preparing separate memoranda for the record regarding each of these events.

From approximately 1020-1145, Commissioners met with staff of and volunteers with RSVP of the Capital Region (RSVP), a Senior Corps program, in Camp Hill, PA. Presenters included Erin McGrath, Deputy Director of Senior Corps for the Corporation for National and Public Service (CNCS); Carol Oman, RSVP Executive Director; Cathy Gable, RSVP Administrative Director; Scott Brubaker, RSVP Program Director; and volunteers Henry Hill; Jenna Price; Millie Hernandez; Paul Pozorski; and Crystal Adams.

Thereafter, Commissioners travelled to the Army War College in Carlyle, PA. Chairman Heck delivered a presentation on the Commission during a plenary session. Attendees then divided into three groups to hold stakeholder meetings addressing issues within the Commission’s mandate.

Following the visit to the Army War College, Commissioners Heck, Khazei, and Skelly met with Harrisburg Mayor Papenfuse. The remaining Commissioners visited the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank where they were briefed by Eric Orndorff, Director of Agency and Program Services.

Review of Day

At approximately 1730, the Commission reconvened at the Crown Plaza Hotel to review the day.

Commissioners raised several points to guide future planning and engagement events, including the following:

- Staff should provide more concrete direction to Commissioners to assist in focusing public stakeholder meetings;
- The Commission should consider sending certificates of appreciation to individuals and groups that take the time to meet with the Commission;
- Meetings with local organizations should not include briefings from DC- or headquarters-based personnel, referencing briefing by CNCS at the RSVP session;
- During trips, staff should consider creating parallel tracks and dividing the Commission into separate groups to increase the number of engagement opportunities; and
- The Commission should consider issuing press releases in connection with visits to local organizations.

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

Ethics Training

Ms. Rikleen provided ethics training on travel-related issues. Ahead of the training, staff circulated a one-page summary of ethics and logistical guidance regarding travel arrangements.

February 23, 2018 Session

Public Engagements

The Commission held two public engagement events on February 23.

At approximately 0800, Commissioners and staff departed for the HACC Public Safety Center. Staff of the Public Safety Center gave the Commission a tour of the facilities. Following the tour, Commissioners divided into two groups to hold public stakeholder meetings with students and graduates of the Center. The meetings lasted from 0830 to 1000. Staff is preparing separate memoranda for the record regarding these meetings.

Thereafter, the Commission departed for the HACC midtown campus. From 1100 to 1300, the Commission hosted its first public meeting. The meeting began with a welcome by Dr. John “Ski” Sygielski, President of HACC and remarks by BG David E. Wood, Deputy Adjutant General for the Pennsylvania National Guard. Chairman Heck then delivered a presentation on the Commission and its mandate. Ms. Haines moderated a panel discussion among Gerard Oleksiak, the Secretary of Pennsylvania’s Department of Labor & Industry; Tiffany Frank, an AmeriCorps VISTA leader; and Abigale Weitkamp, a HACC nursing student and Navy veteran. Following the panel discussion, the Commission heard from members of the public attending the meeting. Staff reports that 27 individuals spoke at the public meeting and 63 entered their names on a sign-in sheet; the Commission also accepted several statements for the record from the public along with comment cards.

Review of Day

At approximately 1330, the Commission reconvened at HACC to review the day.

Ms. James stated that she really enjoyed the small group meetings in the morning, which she felt delved deep into the issues. She also thought the public meeting went well.

Vice Chair Wada expressed that the Commission needs to find ways to get people with different backgrounds involved. It will need to find ways to hear from representatives of all communities in order to understand what barriers to service exist.

Mr. Allard noted a recurring theme of service among individuals transitioning from military to civilian life. He was also impressed by comments that viewed civilian service in a similar way to military service and recommended the Commission consider ways to help people who dedicate their lives to public service, like a GI Bill for public service activities.

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

Ms. Skelly expressed the importance of talking with people on the other side of the barrier – people who do not serve. She raised a concern that not doing so would result in an echo chamber effect.

Vice Chair Gearan praised the Commissioners who led the public meeting. He recommended the Commission consider going deeper into particular topics during certain public meetings, rather than ensuring that each meeting address military, national, and public service themes. He also recommend that the Commission include “impact stories” during each meeting.

Mr. Khazei also praised the public meeting and the role of the Commissioners. He expressed support for the GI Bill-for-public-service idea and agreed with Ms. Skelly’s concern about an echo chamber effect. He would have liked to hear more from the public about women registering for the draft.

Mr. Kilgannon thought the public stakeholder meetings at HACC Public Service Center were phenomenal; as compared with the meetings at the Army War College, the smaller groups allowed for better, substantive engagement. Regarding the public meeting, Mr. Kilgannon agreed with the echo chamber comment. Separately, he suggested collaborating with a military recruiter to meet with a group of high school students in order to try to understand what they mean by service.

Ms. Haines raised several questions for the Commission to consider and deliberate. She asked how the Commission could effectively make the connection between the desire to serve and being part of something bigger, like a service movement. She asked how the Commission could then match that movement to the needs of the country and how the Commission could identify what those needs are. She asked how the Commission could measure the impact that volunteering and other service is having on the country and whether there is a way to lift up the virtuous cycle. Ms. Haines said she liked touching on each of military, national, and public service during the public meeting and the visit though agreed with Mr. Gearan that it would be advantageous to dig into a particular theme in some places.

Mr. Barney said he learned a lot in the two days of engagements. Regarding the public stakeholder meetings, he agreed with Ms. James that sharing personal stories worked better in the smaller groups. He thought the Army War College groups worked well for broader policy discussion. Regarding the public meeting, Mr. Barney appreciated seeing the audience. If possible, he asked that the staff make available tables for the Commissioners so they could take notes. He also asked staff to build in time following the meeting to allow Commissioners to engage informally with the audience. Substantively, Mr. Barney remarked that the Commission should deliberate on how to support those who serve. He noted that a number of participants in the Harrisburg meetings found their success tied to the level of support they got. Support may be more critical in certain areas, such as Baltimore, with high housing costs. Mr. Barney suggested connecting with outside researchers, such as students at a new homeland security degree program at Penn State University or people from the Army War College, who can help to explore these issues to supplement the Commission’s research staff.

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

Chairman Heck noted that the Commission is speaking with people who serve and asked how the Commission finds those that do not. He suggested Commissioners speak offline about this quandary before the March meeting. He recommended that the Commission engage with some demographic each month. He also asked the staff to prepare a briefing on conscientious objectors and the handling of their concerns. In addition, Chairman Heck recommended taking an informal poll at the end of each public meeting on two questions: Should service be mandatory or voluntary? Should women be required to register for the draft?

Commissioners then briefly discussed the importance of engaging with high school students and individuals in their twenties and thirties who are not serving.

Ms. Lowry and Mr. Scott then briefed the Commission on press attendance at the public meeting. They noted that the local Fox affiliate and Patriot News covered the public meeting.

Operations Update

At 1410, Mr. Brinsfield provided the Commission with an operations update. As reflected in the presentations circulated to the Commission, Mr. Brinsfield addressed the status of information technology build-out, personnel and human resources processes, hiring status, facility issues, and financial and travel management. Mr. Brinsfield also circulated a presentation with guidance on government travel charge cards.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Abernathy reviewed the calendar for remaining 2018 engagements. Chairman Heck requested that Commissioners contact him regarding their availability for the remaining Commission trips. Dr. Rough gave an overview of discussions and engagements planned for the March 2018 meeting.

Commissioners raised several points about the March 2018 plan and the 2018 calendar more generally.

Ms. James noted the importance of holding events in rural areas. She also recommended that the Commission engage with the faith-based community particularly on the question around women registering for the draft.

Ms. Haines recommended that the Commission engage with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to obtain the intelligence community's view about the deterrent effect of selective service registration.

Vice Chair Wada recommended a briefing on millennials and their views of service.

Mr. Barney noted that he had been in contact with the two teenage brothers who run the website, Kids That Do Good. The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran a story featuring the brothers. He said they would be visiting D.C. in March and could make time to meet with the Commission.

**ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
DELIBERATIVE & PRE-DECISIONAL
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – NOT FOR RELEASE**

Mr. Allard recommended that Commission meet with United Way Worldwide (UWW). Ms. Lowry explained that she would be meeting with UWW at the end of March and will report back to the Commission.

Engagement Update

At 1445, Ms. Lowry led a discussion on stakeholder outreach and engagements. Ms. Lowry discussed Commission engagements during public meeting trips, Commission engagements outside of public meeting trips, and separate stakeholder engagements by staff and by Commissioners. Regarding engagement events, Ms. Lowry indicated that she plans to augment the Commission's calendar with engagement opportunities and will be issuing press releases for upcoming events. Ms. Lowry also said that she had been in contact with CNAS about their June conference. Current indications are that CNAS will want the Commission to arrange panelists (former Secretaries of Defense) for the panel. Ms. Lowry indicated that she would provide a more robust engagement plan at the March meeting.

Ms. Lowry also briefed the Commission on plans for engaging with the interagency. She explained that she intends to engage the interagency at the working level to discuss the issues raised in their questionnaires and issues that were not included in those questionnaires. Taking a Commissioner recommendation, Ms. Lowry indicated that she would seek to engage at the deputy level when inviting interagency representatives to brief the Commission.

Commissioners provided comments on future engagement efforts. Vice Chair Gearan recommended that the Commission include presidential libraries during the second tranche of engagements, i.e., during 2019. Chairman Heck recommended that the Commission think carefully about engagement with higher-level academic institutions and experts given the need to visit a variety of sites during Commission trips. He also reminded Commissioners that any location visited during the 2018 season would not be included in the locations visited during 2019.

Approval of Minutes

At 1500, the Chairman moved to approve the minutes for the Commission's January 2018 meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the January 2018 minutes with a nominal amendment from Mr. Kilgannon.

Executive Session

At approximately 1500, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff. Following the executive session, Chairman Heck met with executive staff to brief them on various requests and comments from the Commissioners.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on March 16, 2018