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**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Minutes of May 2018 Commission Meeting**

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on May 9-11, 2018, in Boston, MA and Nashua, NH. Portions of the meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and were 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 (5/10-11 only)
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Janine Davidson

Staff present for portions of meetings:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Keri Lowry, Director of Government Affairs and Public Engagement
- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations
- Annie Rorem, Deputy Director of Research and Analysis
- Amy Schafer, Military Propensity Research Team Lead

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- Judson Crane, Selective Service Research Team Lead
- John Lira, National Service Research Team Lead
- Cristina Flores, Public Affairs Officer
- Sandy Scott, on detail from the Corporation for National and Community Service

**May 9, 2018**

**Business Meeting**

From 1000-1030 ET, the Commission held a business meeting. The Chairman moved to close this portion of the meeting to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. All Commissioners present agreed.

Chairman Heck then moved to approve minutes from the April 2018 Commission meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the April 2018 minutes with minor amendments.

Mr. Abernathy briefed the Commission on migration to official government email accounts on the inspire2serve.gov domain. He explained that staff would work with Commissioners to migrate their communications to their official government accounts and to gather official communications contained on non-official accounts. He asked Commissioners to segregate official communications on non-official accounts and stated that details on gathering the communications would follow.

Mr. Lekas informed the Commission that its Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations had been implemented and that the Commission had received its first FOIA request. Staff is processing that request and would be providing responsive, non-exempt records within twenty days.

Mr. Abernathy then reviewed the schedule of events for May 9-11. Ms. Lowry highlighted a few changes in expected attendees at the May 9 lunch with Boston business leaders.

*Discussion on a Policy Recommendation*

Mr. Kilgannon referred to a discussion held at the last Commission meeting in April regarding a proposal to create a service academy. He noted that he did not have enough information to evaluate the proposal and asked the Commission to view his comments from the April meeting with that caveat. Ms. Rorem noted that staff is open to preliminary policy recommendations that Commissioners may have. Vice Chair Gearan suggested that the staff connect with Chris Myers for further information on the service academy proposal; he noted that Mr. Myers was involved in developing that proposal.

*Discussion on Private Sector and Service*

Commissioners then discussed their objectives at the lunch with Boston business leaders. Vice Chair Gearan felt it would present a good opportunity to glean from business leaders their perspective on developing an ethos of service, on hiring people with service backgrounds, on the

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private sector's view of service more generally, and on corporate responsibility. He noted that John Fish, the host of the session, has told him that millennials whom his company (Suffolk Construction) hires come to the company with an expectation of corporate responsibility.

Mr. Barney continued the discussion into private sector issues. He noted that although the nation has a positive unemployment situation overall, there remain about 6.5 million people not working and about 6 million available jobs. He highlighted the challenge faced by the private sector in identifying and recruiting people with the right skill sets.

Chairman Heck recommended the Commission find out from the business leaders how much value they place on prospective hires having some type of service. He recommended that companies consider expanding their efforts to provide preference points to veterans to people who engage in other forms of public service. Mr. Khazei endorsed this suggestion and asked what it would take companies to implement such a program.

Vice Chair Wada wondered if companies in Boston would be more likely than companies in other metropolitan areas to incorporate that kind of service ethos into their business culture, and whether there might be lessons for companies in other areas. Vice Chair Gearan did not have a view on how Boston compared to other cities but highlighted the strong service community in the Boston area, along with its strong economy and robust academic community. He noted that a former head of CNCS used to refer to Boston as the "Silicon Valley of Service" because it gave birth to City Year and other organizations. Vice Chair Gearan returned to thoughts expressed by John Fish to him about viewing service as part of corporate identity and part of creating a responsible business community. Vice Chair Wada compared Boston to Washington, DC, in which the government, academia, and business do not intertwine as they do in Boston.

**Work Group Deliberations**

From 1030-1200 ET, Commissioners met in Work Groups to deliberate issues concerning the matters within the scope of their respective Work Groups. Accounts of these sessions are set forth in internal memoranda for the record (MFRs).

**Discussion with Boston Business Leaders**

From 1230-1400 ET, Commissioners held a public stakeholder meeting with representatives from the Boston business community and of Massachusetts elected officials. The discussion addressed the value of service to the private sector, connections between service and the private sector, and other topics. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Visit to Military Entrance Processing Station**

Following the discussion with representatives from the Boston business community and elected officials, members of the Commission's Selective Service System Work Group traveled to the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) at 495 Sumner Street, Boston, to meet with MEPS representatives and discuss the process by which individuals are enlisted or inducted into the armed services. An account of this visit is set forth in a separate MFR.

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**Visit to BoSTEM**

Following the discussion with representatives from the Boston business community and elected officials, members of the Commission’s Propensity To Serve Work Group traveled to BoSTEM at 51 Sleeper Street, Boston, to meet with BoSTEM representatives. BoSTEM is a collaboration of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, Boston After School & Beyond, and Boston Public Schools (BPS) to increase BPS students’ interest in STEM subjects and STEM-related careers. An account of this visit is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Public Forum at Suffolk University, Boston, MA**

From 1745-1945 ET, the Commission held a public forum on service at Suffolk University in Boston. Speakers and panelists at the public forum included Andrew Perlman, Dean of Suffolk University Law School; Dr. Marc Holzer, Distinguished Professor of Public Administration at Suffolk University; Dr. Robert Behn, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School; and Dr. Rachael Cobb, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Government at Suffolk University. A full account of the public forum will be made available in a transcript.

**May 10, 2018**

**Work Group Deliberation**

From 0815-0915 ET, members of the Commission’s Ends, Ways, and Means Work Group met to deliberate issues concerning matters within the scope of the Work Groups. An account of this session is set forth in an internal MFR.

**Discussion with Members of the Nashua Safe Stations Effort**

From 1100-1230 ET, Commissioners held a public stakeholder meeting with representatives of the Safe Stations initiative in Nashua, NH. The session focused on Nashua’s response to the opioid crisis and addressing public needs of communities through service. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Discussion with the Partnership for Successful Living**

From 1330-1500, Commissioners held a public stakeholder meeting with the Partnership for Successful Living in Nashua, NH. The session focused on addressing public needs of communities through service and collaborations between government and non-profit entities. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Commission Deliberation**

From 1530-1630 ET, the Commission met in non-public session to deliberate issues related to the definition of service and key terms. An account of this session is set forth in an internal MFR.

**Public Meeting at Nashua City Hall, Nashua, NH**

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From 1730-1930 ET, the Commission held a public meeting at Nashua City Hall in Nashua, NH. Speakers and remarks were delivered by Jim Donchess, Mayor of the City of Nashua; Jennifer McCormack, Nashua Public Library Director; and Matt Wilhelm, Director of Old Sol Alliance, Inc. A full account of the public meeting will be made available in a transcript.

**May 11, 2018**

**Discussion with Academic Thought Leaders**

From 0830-1030 ET, Commissioners held a public stakeholder meeting with Boston-area academic thought leaders. David Gergen and the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government co-hosted the meeting. Participants included professors and administrators from Harvard University, Tufts University, Suffolk University, and Boston University. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Discussion with Service Community Leaders**

From 1130-1230 ET, Commissioners held a public stakeholder meeting with service community leaders, including representatives from Jumpstart, City Year, Social Capital, the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Campus Compact, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, Citizen Schools, New Profit, The BASE, Police Assisted Addition & Recovery Initiative, the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, the College of Social Innovation, Encore.org, YouthBuild USA, and New Politics. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

**Discussions with National Service Program Directors and Members**

From 1300-1500 ET, Commissioners held public stakeholder meetings with directors and members of various national service programs from around the Boston area to discuss motivations, barriers, and incentives to service and programmatic aspects of national service programs. Commissioners split into two groups to facilitate the discussions. Accounts of these discussions are set forth in separate MFRs.

**Business Meeting and Review of Trip**

From 1540-1615, Commissioners and staff reconvened to recap the May 9-11 meeting and discuss issues involving future Commission events. The Chairman closed this portion of the meeting to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated.

Mr. Allard highlighted the blend of activities in Boston and Nashua and, in particular, appreciated the meetings with youth, service community leaders, and the academic thought leaders.

Vice Chair Gearan thought the trip was well executed and appreciated the “curriculum” of meetings during the three-day period. He commented on the success of those events the Commission held with local hosts, noting that local hosts have greater “convening power” than the Commission and recommended that the Commission try to replicate that model on future site visits.

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Ms. Haines praised the work of the staff and then turned to the topic of public meetings. She asked staff to consider if there might be ways to attract more people to the Commission's public meetings and if the Commissioners could assist in those efforts. Ms. Lowry noted some of the difficulties faced by staff in building audiences for public meetings, including getting out the word sufficiently in advance of the public meetings. Ms. James recommended that staff continue to experiment with the time for public meetings, noting that holding a meeting during work hours or at dinner time may present barriers to attracting people to the events. Vice Chair Wada concurred, noting the importance of developing a level of messaging and engagement to create a desire among average Americans to engage with the Commission and share their views on service. Vice Chair Gearan doubted that the Commission would ever achieve that level of messaging and engagement. Chairman Heck closed discussion on this topic and informed Commissioners they would discuss it further during executive session.

Mr. Khazei praised the staff's execution of the trip and concurred with Vice Chair Gearan about leveraging the convening ability of local hosts. Mr. Khazei supported arranging more meetings with youth, referring to the meeting held in Denver with students of North High School. Mr. Allard concurred and suggested convening a youth advisory group to help the Commission to obtain insight from that target audience.

Separately, Mr. Khazei expressed enthusiasm for two ideas for potential collaboration on new service initiatives. First, John Barros, Deputy Chief of Staff to Massachusetts Governor Baker, suggested during the lunch with Boston business leaders that Boston could serve as a laboratory to pilot a program for a new service initiative that the Commission may recommend. Second, David Gergen suggested during the event at Harvard Kennedy School that Boston-area universities should consider working together on new initiatives.

Mr. Barney expressed interest in continuing to explore what role private industry can have and what industry can do with respect to encouraging service and developing service programs. Recalling the discussion of UPS' efforts during the Commission's January 2018 launch event, he noted that City Year, among other programs, has benefited from corporate partnerships and it would be worthwhile for the Commission to explore these efforts.

Mr. Barney shared with the Commission that he learned earlier in the day that there are AmeriCorps members serving close to his house and noted that he plans to reach out to some of them. Further on the topic of connecting with AmeriCorps members, Mr. Barney recommended that Commissioners consider attending and participating in the annual swearing-in of new AmeriCorps members held on the first Friday in November.

Mr. Kilgannon expressed an interest in visiting volunteer fire departments as the Commission travels around the country. He noted that about 80% of fire departments around the country are volunteer. He also highlighted the significant differences he observed between the two states visited on this trip.

Ms. James recommended that staff arrange meetings with state education department officials as the Commission travels around the country. She is particularly interested in civics education.

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She noted that Florida requires civics education and it would be helpful to meet with education officials during the upcoming trip to Jacksonville.

Ms. Skelly appreciated the smaller-group meetings. She recommended that when the Commission splits to meet with different groups and then switches groups, staff provide a summary of the prior discussion to avoid merely repeating that discussion.

Ms. James expressed continued concern about the Commission's reach-out to rural communities. Staff indicated that the Commission would include rural communities in upcoming visits to Iowa, Texas, and Tennessee. Ms. James recommended that staff consider state universities that are also agricultural colleges.

Commissioners further discussed ways to generate audiences at public meetings. Mr. Khazei suggested engaging with local service organizations, such as Lions and Rotary clubs, with connections to young people. Ms. Haines suggested asking teachers to bring their classes to Commission meetings as part of a class on civics. Vice Chair Gearan suggested reaching out to Republican and Democratic members of Congress to participate in town halls about military, national, and public service. Ms. Lowry and Chairman Heck noted that the Commission has tried, thus far with no success, to build such a program around elected officials. Mr. Allard suggested making another attempt for the Commission's visit to San Diego in September. Ms. Haines and others indicated that they would prefer a forum highlighting elected officials if it included both one Democrat and one Republican.

Ms. Haines closed the session by noting how struck she was by the number of people who shared their personal stories involving service, illustrated by the woman who spoke about her opioid addiction and recovery during the Safe Stations session in Nashua. She suggested the Commission approach people who have shared powerful, personal stories about the impact of service on their lives to share their stories in videos that the Commission could post on its website.

**Executive Session**

Thereafter, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff. Chairman Heck briefed senior staff following the conclusion of the executive session.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on June 14, 2018