

Executive Committee Minutes  
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

**Present:**

Laura Davis  
Scott Clarke  
Natalie Furlett  
Nisan Chavkin  
N. Ayoka Mota Samuels  
Senyah Haynes

Serve Illinois Executive Committee Meeting  
March 16, 2021  
9am

**1. Call to Order**

Called by Natalie Furlett

**2. Introductions**

New addition to this meeting was Senyah Haynes, who will serve in the capacity of assisting the Executive Director with special projects, including board engagement, over the next several months.

**3. New Business**

- Postings and agendas are currently up-to-date
- Two new commissioners confirmed yesterday: Carolyn Roberts of Hands On Suburban Chicago and Amy Rush, representing labor organizations. Their bios and photos are still needed; this makes “two down and ten to go”
- The governor will make 2-3 appointments at a time
- Non-voting commissioners don’t have to be reappointed by the Governor
- During our discussion of non-voting Commissioners there was a query about why we have this position at all and further, whether having non-voting Commissioners was required. This is an answer that needs to be researched.
- Bridgett Haymen of Access Living will be joining the Commissioners and she represents persons with disabilities

**a. Committees**

- A robust discussion about this topic ensued. Many points of clarification are needed:
  - Who is on what committee? The last known list is from 2018
  - Many Commissioners don’t know which committee they are on
  - How often do committees meet and how often should they meet?
    - Finance and Governance and Public Relations committees meet quarterly
    - AmeriCorps hasn’t happened in a while- quarterly sounds good
    - Volunteer Recognition Committee meets at least quarterly and sometimes more
  - A consensus about meeting quarterly was come to with an option of more meetings if necessary
  - It was decided that a survey should go out to Commissioners about committees
    - The expectation is that all Commissioners serve on at least one committee

- Once created, this survey can automatically be sent out to new Commissioners
- Survey should include a brief description of each committee
- Survey should ask (among other things): if you are currently on a committee, which one? Are you interested in staying or changing?
- Survey deadline for Commissioners will be the end of March

#### **i. Chairs and Staff Assignments**

- A list of staff representing on each committee was provided:
  - Governance and Finance: Ayoka, Senyah, and Claire Starling (minutes and attendance at main meeting); Chair: Scott Clarke
  - Strategic Planning committee: Ayoka and Senyah; Chair: Ami Copeland
  - AmeriCorps Committee: Karen and Ayoka; Chair: Laura Davis
  - Recognition Committee: Michelle; Chair: Tiffany Mathis
  - Public Relations Committee: Cassie, and Ayoka; Chair: Catherine Leoins
  - Public Policy committee: Ayoka and Senyah; Chair: Steve Solomon
  - Executive committee: Ayoka and Senyah; Chairs: Natalie Furlett, Nisan Chavkin

#### **ii. Meeting Requirements**

- There was a discussion about the Open Meetings Act and points of clarification were needed
  - Did meetings always need to be recorded? Perhaps not during Executive Sessions; this will need to be researched further. Consensus now was that full documentation was always necessary via minutes and recording was good backup; transparency is always better and recordings deter “creative minute-takers”
  - This meeting will be recorded except for the Executive Session which will include sensitive legal information
  - Executive Sessions, if recorded, need to be done separately
  - Blending of recordings and topics discussed in different meetings should be avoided
  - There is no requirement for recordings to be released unless requested
- This needs to be done more consistently, not only with dates, but also with agendas.
  - 1. Dates posted 48 hours in advance**
  - 2. WebEx**
- This is the platform that the State uses and needs to be used for any official committee meeting (not for one-on-one meetings)

#### **iii. New Commissioner Committee Assignments**

##### **b. New Commissioners**

##### **i. New Member Orientation**

- This will take place on April 15 in the AM for about an hour
- Who is the Commission, what are its priorities, and responsibilities will be included in the meeting
- Insight about additional agenda items/topics of discussion was requested and the following was given:
  - \*Nisan, in service with other organizations, received a seasonal "map" that showed key events and deadlines that happen in the same season each year. It did not replace the actual calendar, but it was very helpful for planning.
  - Orientation about different programs that we administer, types of agencies we fund, what activities they do, how they get funded, how proper funds management is ensured

- Hierarchy of organization(s); affiliation with IDPH and how we are not a “Lone Ranger” agency
  - Our budget, our Foundation, how it all works (or doesn’t)
  - How not to violate the Open Meetings Act
  - A glossary of acronyms and lingo was suggested
  - The fact that their role as a Commissioner is only when meeting with the Commission at large, never to act unilaterally
  - Use caution with personal social media posts and always be a reputable representative of the Commission
  - Examples of how not to behave, for instance, walking into an organization solo and requesting to see “their books”...
  - Necessary trainings (sexual harassment, Open Meetings Act) and any other guidelines
  - Clarity about terms of engagement, importance of appointment letter
  - Difference between voting and non-voting members; role of non-voting members as seen as members of the public attending meetings
  - How voting/non-voting relates to a quorum- this needs to be thoroughly explained as the nuances can be complicated
  - How non-voting members can still understand their contributions as worthy and impactful work
  - Basecamp overview- how to use it, the fact that it’s subject to FOIA, etc.
  - A buddy system for new and seasoned Commissioners
  - 5-minute presentation by each Committee Chair about their committee projects, etc.
  - Great program highlights (the Annual Report served this function in the past)
    - It could be that the last one was finalized in 2019- a new one hasn’t been seen since
  - An elevator speech about Serve Illinois and each committee could help energize new Commissioners
- There was lack of clarity about who could or could not vote, and whether those individuals knew their particular status pertaining to votes. More research needs to be done and clarity offered to all Commissioners
  - A comprehensive list will be compiled and shared by Ayoka and Senyah containing the following:
    - Who is or isn’t a voting member
    - Their appointment status (if not already appointed, how long until they are)
  - Natalie will put together an overview for the meeting agenda and send for committee to review
  - Cassie will set up a streamlined, aesthetically pleasing deck to be used moving forward as we develop

#### **c. May 13<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting**

- The goal is to get committees up and running before the Commission Meeting
- Introduce new Chairs, ED, etc.
- Each Chair should talk about their committees, priorities and what they are working on
- Give AmeriCorps updates
- Some decisions will need to be made depending on what happens with AmeriCorps National
- Want to reinvigorate people, reintroduce AmeriCorps work and forge a path forward

##### **i. Refresh on purpose of commission**

##### **ii. Introduction of committees and committee chairs**

#### **d. AmeriCorps**

- **EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES**
  - i. **Update on Illinois**
  - ii. **Rescue Act funds**
- A rep from AmeriCorps will be prepared to say something very comprehensive by the May meeting
  - e. **Open Discussion for committee members**
- 4. **Open Discussion from Members of the Public**
  - No members of the public were present
- 5. **Adjournment**
  - The date of the next meeting was not discussed or decided