



## AmeriCorps Cape Cod

# Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

### **I. Call to Order**

- a. Ms. Hutchinson called to order the meeting of the AmeriCorps Cape Cod Advisory Board at 9:04 am on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

### **II. Attendance**

- a. Members present: Nancy Church, Tim Famulare, Rachel Hutchinson, Michael Lach, Heather McElroy, Lauren McKean, John Ohman, Brian Sharp, Jessica Whritenour
- b. County & AmeriCorps Cape Cod Staff Present: Beth Albert, Andrew Platt, Meredith Ballinger, Phoebe Plank, Derek Brudahl, Bob Bennett
- c. Members Absent: Ryan Burch, Nina Coleman, Sheila Lyons, Steve McKenna

### **III. Public Comment- N/A**

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Meeting of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021
  - i. Ms. McElroy clarified that she “abstained” rather than “sustained” from voting on meeting minutes for the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, meeting.
  - ii. Ms. Whritenour moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Famulare seconded the motion.
- b. Meeting of June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - i. Ms. Church moved to approve the minutes. Ms. McElroy seconded the motion.

### **V. General Business –**

- a. County Administrator Introduction:
  - i. County Administrator, Beth Albert, introduced herself to the Advisory Board. Ms. Albert explained that she was the previous Director of Human Services that Barnstable County. Ms. Albert explained that changes were happening to the County’s Center for Public Safety Training and announced the departures of the Center for Public Safety Training’s



Director and Deputy Director, Mr. Phil Burt and Mr. Andrew Platt. Ms. Albert explained that she had been having regular meetings with Mr. Burt and Ms. Platt to discuss capacity gaps in the AmeriCorps Cape Cod staff and the need for staff expansion. Ms. Albert announced that the County will be hiring for a Program Manager for AmeriCorps Cape Cod and that the job description had recently been finished. Ms. Albert also explained that the County is still actively recruiting for a Fiscal Grant Officer who would be responsible for managing the AmeriCorps Cape Cod grant. Ms. Albert said that the Fiscal Grant Officer would devote 50 % of their time, for at least the first 12 months of being hired, to managing the AmeriCorps grant. Ms. Albert also explained that the County is looking into assessing structural repairs needed at AmeriCorps Cape Cod's program residences, in particular the Pocasset House. Ms. Albert announced that the County will begin addressing repairs at the Pocasset House, in particular window repairs, when the County Commissioners and the Assembly of Delegates have approved AmeriCorps Cape Cod's supplemental budget. Ms. Albert also expressed the need for two additional Program Supervisors to reside in the two residences that have not historically had a live-in Program Supervisor. Ms. Albert explained that supplemental funds AmeriCorps Cape Cod will be receiving from the American Rescue Plan would cover the salaries for two additional supervisors. Ms. Hutchinson acknowledged the departure of Mr. Burt and Mr. Platt and explained that the Advisory Board is now the history of the program. Ms. Hutchinson expressed the need for the Advisory Board to remain actively connected to the AmeriCorps Cape Cod staff, Ms. Albert, and Barnstable County. Ms. Hutchinson explained that the job description for the AmeriCorps Cape Cod Program Manager would be sent to the Advisory Board so that members of the Board can help network. Ms. Albert summarized by expressing the need for both the County and the Advisory Board to support the staff. Ms. McKean welcomed Ms. Albert to the role as County Administrator and Ms. Church thanked Ms. Albert for taking time to meet with the Advisory Board.

b. Staff Introductions – Program Supervisors:

- i. Upper Cape Program Supervisor, Derek Brudahl, introduced himself to the Advisory Board. Mr. Brudahl explained that that he was the Outer Cape Program Supervisor during the program's 22<sup>nd</sup> year. Mr. Brudahl explained that he injured his shoulder in March 2021 and returned to work in early August 2021 to take on the role of the AmeriCorps Cape Cod's Year 23 Upper Cape Program Supervisor. Mr. Brudahl also expressed his excitement for more staff support.



- ii. Outer Cape Program Supervisor, Bob Bennett, introduced himself to the Advisory Board. Mr. Bennett explained that he served as a member during Years 18 and 19 of the program and is excited to be back on board as the Outer Cape Program Supervisor. Mr. Bennett explained that since being a member he worked for an environmental non-profit organization in Maine. Mr. Bennett also expressed his excitement about additional support.
- c. Advisory Board Mentorship Initiative:
  - i. Ms. Hutchinson introduced the idea of the ACC Advisory Board Mentorship Program and shared her video screen to display the Program Proposal she had created. Ms. Church expressed that she thought the Mentorship Program sounds great. Ms. Whritenour said that she appreciated having tangible information about the Mentorship Program in writing. Ms. McElroy and Mr. Famulare agreed with Ms. Whritenour's and Ms. Church's statements. Mr. Sharp asked how many mentees each mentor group would have. Mr. Sharp also asked for follow-up information on how the Mentorship Program would work. Ms. Hutchinson asked Program Coordinator Meredith Ballinger, how many members had been recruited. Ms. Ballinger explained that 22 members had committed, staff were going to make an offer to 1 more applicant, and staff were preparing to conduct an interview with 1 other applicant. Ms. Ballinger explained that the goal is to be fully recruited with 24 members by the start of the program year. Ms. Church asked if Advisory Board members are allowed to visit the program residences. Ms. Ballinger explained that she is still trying to flush out details about guests at the program residences in accordance with COVID-19. Ms. Hutchinson provided examples of the fluidity in the structure and format of the mentorship relationship based on interests of the mentors/mentees. Ms. Hutchinson explained the importance of creating a connection with the incoming Corps members. Mr. Brudahl explained that he would like Advisory Board to attend house dinners throughout the year if COVID-19 policies allow. Ms. Church agreed with Mr. Brudahl's statement. Ms. Hutchinson explained that she and AmeriCorps Cape Cod staff will continue to figure out logistics and refine the proposal for the Mentorship Program. Ms. Ballinger explained that AmeriCorps Cape Cod will be offering up a chance for an Advisory Board Meet & Greet on Friday October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, during a day of field games and team builders that will be hosted at Drummer Boy Park in Brewster. Ms. Hutchinson was interested to know which Advisory Board members would be willing to participate in the Mentorship Program. Ms. McElroy



explained that she would be willing to participate. Ms. Hutchinson explained that if any Advisory Board members do not have the capacity to participate that they should email Ms. Hutchinson and Ms. Ballinger. Ms. Hutchinson explained that will be important for Advisory Board members to check their schedules to gauge whether they have availability to participate in the Mentorship Program. Ms. McKean expressed that have a Mentorship Program is a good idea to help with morale issues that have arisen due to COVID-19.

d. Advisory Board (2) Vacancies:

- i. Ms. Hutchinson explained that the Advisory Board has two vacancies that need to be filled. Ms. Hutchinson said that at one point there was a standing list of potential candidates, but the status of that list is unknown. Ms. McElroy said that she had spoken Jessica Rempel of the Cape Cod Commission about being on the Advisory Board. Ms. McElroy explained that Ms. Rempel is interested, is a native Cape Codder, and has worked for the Cape Cod Commission in multiple capacities. Ms. McElroy also explained that Kelly Grant, the Conservation Administrator in Yarmouth, would be a good person to ask. Ms. Church said that Julie Early, Executive Director of the Dennis Conservation Land Trust, would be a great resource and mentor to add to the Advisory Board. Ms. McElroy and Ms. Whritenour agreed with Ms. Church's statement. Ms. Hutchinson explained that the Advisory Board is lacking representation from the Eastham/Orleans area. Ms. McKean offered up Alex Bates, Land Stewardship Coordinator for the Orleans Conservation Trust, as a potential candidate. Mr. Platt agreed with Ms. McKean that Mr. Bates would be a good candidate. Mr. Platt also said that Kelly Barber, Director of Land Stewardship for Barnstable Land Trust, would also be a good candidate. Mr. Platt explained that both Mr. Bates and Ms. Barber are recent alumni of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Mr. Platt also expressed that having an Advisory Board member from the Red Cross or from a Police or Fire Department would add representation on the Advisory Board for disaster preparedness/response which has been lacking. Ms. Hutchinson asked about the status of Ms. McKean's role on the Advisory Board and her since she cannot be officially sworn-in voting member because it is a conflict of interest as a Cape Cod National Seashore employee. Ms. Hutchinson mentioned that Cape Cod National Seashore Fire Management Officer, Dave Crary, is retiring at the end of 2021 and would be a civilian that could be sworn-in voting member of the Advisory Board that could also represent the disaster preparedness/response component that is currently missing from



the Advisory Board. Ms. McKean liked Mr. Platt's suggestion of adding an Advisory Board member that represents disaster preparedness/response. Mr. Platt provided other options of organizations to reach out to for Advisory Board candidates. Mr. Platt's list included the Red Cross, Cape Cod Medical Reserve Corps, Cape Cod Disaster Animal Response Team, and Rachel Fleck from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. Mr. Platt agreed that asking Mr. Crary about joining the Advisory Board would be a good choice in the future. Ms. Ballinger asked if a application should be made for individuals interested in joining the Advisory Board or should AmeriCorps Cape Cod staff and Advisory Board members approach people to ask about interest. Mr. Platt encouraged using an application to help formalize the process. Ms. Hutchinson explained that towns maintain an open interest application. Ms. Hutchinson asked if the County does the same. Mr. Platt explained that the County Commissioners will want back-up documentation and detail that outlines the process of filling vacancies on the Advisory Board. Mr. Lach explained that when filling positions on their Board, the Harwich Conservation Trust uses a matrix spreadsheet to identify the needs of the organization, the background experience and skills of each candidate and the areas of representation that are missing. Mr. Lach suggested that the matrix tool could be adapted and used to fill vacancies on the AmeriCorps Cape Cod Advisory Board. Mr. Platt recommended that Ms. Hutchinson and Ms. Ballinger connect with the new County Clerk, Robin Young, to make sure that the process of filling vacancies is being completed in accordance with County policies. Ms. Hutchinson said that she would be interested in adapting Harwich Conservation Trust's matrix tool to fill vacancies on the Advisory Board.

e. Utilizing ACC Advisory Board Moving Forward

- i. Ms. Hutchinson explained the expectation that Advisory Board members need to take more of an active role to support the staff and the program. Ms. Hutchinson said that she doesn't have an answer for what the exact role is, but there needs to be a willingness to be present and commit time to supporting the program. Ms. McElroy explained that historically the role of the Advisory Board has changed to in response of the program's needs. Ms. McElroy also explained that the exact role of the of the Advisory Board may not need a single definition, but rather be available as a resource to the program. Ms. Hutchinson reiterated the need for Advisory Board members to remain active/ available



and expressed the hope that Advisory Board members are excited to take a more active role.

## VI. Staff Updates

### a. Andrew Platt - Deputy Director Updates:

- i. Mr. Platt, the Deputy Director of the Cape Cod Center for Public Safety Training, announced that he had officially resigned from his position. Mr. Platt explained that his last day at the County would be Friday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Mr. Platt thanked the Advisory Board for all of the support that he had received over the years. Ms. McKean thanked Mr. Platt for his dedication and commitment to the program.

### b. Meredith Ballinger - Program Coordinator Updates:

- i. Ms. Ballinger expressed excitement that staff are wrapping up recruitment for the Year 23 Corps. Ms. Ballinger said that there are 22 members who have committed and 2 other applicants that are in the wings. Ms. Ballinger announced that Barnstable County allowed the program to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for the incoming Corps. Ms. Ballinger said that all incoming members must show proof of vaccination by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ballinger explained that the County decided on September 30<sup>th</sup> as a deadline because members received word of the vaccine mandate in mid-August and needed to time to initiate and complete the vaccination process. Ms. Ballinger explained that the program's COVID-19 policies will fall in lines with state and County COVID-19 policies/guidelines. Ms. Ballinger explained that by mandating vaccines and beginning to ease up on COVID-19 policies she hopes that will have a more positive impact on member mental health and will allow members the opportunity to feel more integrated in the local community. Ms. Ballinger explained that AmeriCorps Cape Cod received \$89,000 from the American Rescue Plan which will be used to increase the member living stipend to \$10,000 and will cover the salaries of two additional Program Supervisors. Ms. Ballinger said that she is still waiting to hear from AmeriCorps the Agency on when that money will become available. Ms. Ballinger also explained that program staff have been working to reset the program residences and she has been onboarding and training staff in preparation for the program's 23<sup>rd</sup> year.

### c. Phoebe Plank – Program Specialist Updates:

- i. Ms. Plank announced that 28 organizations have been awarded Individual Placements for the upcoming program year. Ms. Plank explained that 4 partners represent



State/Federal organizations, 2 partners represent County departments, 9 partners represent Town departments, and 13 partners represent non-profit organizations. Ms. Plank explained that there will be 4 new Individual Placements for the year which include: Barnstable County MASSTC, Massachusetts DCR Forest Fire Control District 1, Sipson Island Trust, and the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative. Ms. Hutchinson asked if the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative was paired with another organization. Ms. Plank explained that the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative Individual Placement will be paired with Lauren McKean the Cape Cod National Seashore Park Planning Individual Placement. Ms. Plank mentioned that the Cape Cod National Seashore Park Planning Individual Placement will be offering physical office space for the member to complete projects for the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative. Ms. McKean said she was happy to accommodate space for the member and is looking forward to partnering with the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative. Ms. Plank said that she and Ms. Ballinger have been working hard to plan and coordinate training and orientation for the incoming Corps. Ms. Plank said that there will traditional trainings such as Power Tool Training, Chainsaw Training, and Shellfish Training will be included in the schedule. Ms. Plank also explained that there will be a couple new trainings that will be offered which will include Knot-Tying Training, Boat Safety Training, and an Introduction to Marine Ecosystems.

## **VII. Board Member Updates - N/A**

## **VIII. Upcoming Meetings**

- a. Determine and Vote on Upcoming Meeting Dates
  - i. Ms. Hutchinson asked Advisory Board members if the virtual format for meetings has been effective. Mr. Famulare and Ms. McKean agreed that it would be helpful to keep a remote attendance option for meetings moving forward. Ms. Hutchinson said that if the Advisory Board is legally able to meet remotely, we will continue to do that. Ms. Hutchinson followed up by saying that according to state law the Advisory Board is legally able to continue meeting remotely until mid-April 2022. Ms. Hutchinson suggested scheduling the next Advisory Board meeting in November and reminded the Advisory Board that updates about the Mentorship Program will be sent out via email. Ms. Ballinger reminded the Advisory Board that program staff will be hosting an Advisory



Board Meet & Greet session from 12:00 to 1:00 PM at Drummer Boy Park in Brewster on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Ms. Hutchinson explained that she will check-in with the Advisory Board members that were absent from the meeting today to provide updates about the Mentorship Program. Ms. Hutchinson also explained that she will work with program staff to create the mentorship pairings. Ms. Hutchinson said that she and staff will email out the Program Manager job description and asked the Advisory Board members to share the description with their professional networks. Ms. Hutchinson also said that she and program staff will work together to figure out an application process for will vacancies on the Advisory Board will be email current Advisory Board members with updates about the process.

## **IX. Adjournment**

- a. Mr. Famulare motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 am. Mr. Sharp seconded the motion.