



# 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 July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 held virtually over via Zoom.

## **II. Attendance**

- a. Members present: John Ohman, Brian Sharp, Jessica Whritenour, Nancy Church, Laiuren McKean, Heather McElroy, Rachel Hutchinson, Steve McKenna, Timothy Famulare, Michael Lach, Ryan Burch
  
- b. Members Absent: Phillip Burt, Hillary Greenberg-Lemos, Ronald Beaty, Nina Coleman,

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

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

- a. Mr. Ohman moved to approve the May 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Minutes. Mr. McKenna seconded the motion.

## **V. General Business-N/A**

## **VI. Staff Updates**

- a. Kayla Baier: Coordinator Updates
  - i. Ms. Baier updated the board that since the board last met Jack Yunis, our county administrator, sent out a letter on May 15<sup>th</sup>, suspending the program. Mr. Yunis gave the members until May 31<sup>st</sup> to vacate the program housing. He shared that if the AmeriCorps member could not find housing, Barnstable County would work with those individuals on a case by case basis. Ms. Baier shared the catalyze for this decision was the response the lehac members had to potentially having Covid-19 in their house. The fear and unease about the the unknowns of the virus created an unhealthy environment within the resident. Once the county heard the members felt unsafe, and AmeriCorps expressed they had exhausted all feasible options, the county choose to end the service year early.



1. Ms. Baier expressed that it was unfortunate the program was ending early because the members residing in the Pocasset were coming out of an 8 week quarantine and they (the members) were excited to resume outdoor group service in the community again.
  2. Mr. Ohman asked if all the members received credit for completing their term of service to be eligible for the full education award. Ms. Baier said that the members still qualified to get the full education award but would not continue to receive a stipend once they were exited from the program. She shared that under the CARES act members could qualify for unemployment.
- ii. For AmeriCorps staff and members to have some closure to this challenging year, we (AmeriCorps Staff) created a virtual celebration for the year 21 members. Ms. Baier shared you can find the link to view the celebration on our facebook page and youtube page.
- iii. Ms. Baier shared insight to what we learned over the course of the last five months:
1. Change in the middle of the year is never easy for the members.
  2. The program cannot operate doing straight teleservice for more than 2 weeks without a strong teleservice plan from Individual Placement site partners and long term projects the members can complete from home.
  3. Member's mental health takes a hit when they do not have the option to leave the residence to visit friends and family.
  4. The supervisors mental health took a hit when they were faced with so many unknowns and had to field questions that we did not have the answer to.
- iv. Ms. Baier shared that we are actively recruiting for the upcoming program year. At this point 11 future members have accepted and we have 8 more interviews lined up. AmeriCorps Cape Cod is actively working with Barnstable County to determine a safe number of members to bring in based off the allotted housing.
1. Ms. Hutchinson asked if there have been hesitations from the applicants. Ms. Baier replied that most of the applicants are individuals taking a break from online and are searching for Gap year options.



- v. AmeriCorps Cape Cod will have four program houses for the upcoming program year. Our newest house is the Devine house located in Chatham. The county attorney and CCF are currently working on the lease for the Devine House.
    - 1. Ms. McElroy asked how this new house will fit into the current program structure, specifically if it will be included as part of the Outer Cape group. Ms. Baier confirmed that this house will be paired with the Lezac house.
    - 2. Ms. McKean the national seashore will need to screen AmeriCorps housing policy. At the moment the seashore is operating at a significantly reduced capacity and there will need to be one person per bedroom. Ms. McKean suggested connected with Nicole Taylor, the safety officer, at the seashore.
  
  - vi. Mr. Ohman asked if AmeriCorps Cape Cod's policies differed much from Barnstable Counties policies in regards to members serving in the field. Ms. Baier said we are extra cautious because we are a residential program
- b. Meredith Ballinger: Program Specialist Updates
- i. Ms. Ballinger shared that she reviewed and selected IP's for next year. The applicants will be notified if they received an IP for the upcoming program year after AmeriCorps Cape Cod officially confirms how many members we can safely bring onto the Cape.
    - 1. As a result of accepting fewer members, Ms. Ballinger said AmeriCorps will not have COD day or a third group service day. This will allow us to accept more IP placements.
    - 2. Ms. Ballinger shared that the program tried to avoid giving a member no more than two IP over the course of 3 days.
  
  - ii. Ms. Ballinger shared that the program asked our current IP service partners to fill out a quick survey providing feedback about how teleservice went and any comments or suggestions they have for future service partners or the program. Examples of that feedback include:
    - 1. Overall, how did teleserving go? Was the service provided valuable to your organization?
      - a. almost all the service partners felt the members service was still valuable, even while teleserving. Some were not able to have the member serve examples in Brewster DNR and West Barnstable Fire.



- b. Some service partners weren't sure how much they needed to communicate with their members for example does once a week suffice or does it need to be more often.
  2. AmeriCorps Cape Cod would like to provide tips and suggestions to future IP service partners. What went well and/or didn't go well while your member was teleserving?
    - a. Biggest challenges included:
      - i. finding ways to communicate best with members. Email worked for most, but service partners felt a phone call or video call at least once a week would have been better
      - ii. Having a database or cloud for members to upload work they were completing. Some of the data sets members were working with were very large
      - iii. Technology issues (bad wifi at Lehec, the member having access to the software, ect.)
    - b. What went well/ suggestions:
      - i. Being prepared for lockdown with a list of projects to work on at the ready so they didn't have to scramble
      - ii. Provide projects to the member that will let them use some creativity
      - iii. More video checks-in's (hold member accountable to be up and dressed for the day). Providing more structure than not
      - iv. Fun check-in's with the entire staff and the member- ex "virtual tea time"
      - v. Members remaining motivated to do computer work. At times it seemed like "busy work"
    - c. As AmeriCorps Cape Cod continues to adapt and navigate the pandemic, what can AmeriCorps Cape Cod do better moving forward? What would have been helpful to you as a service partner?
      - i. Staff clarifying what activities are deemed essential and are alright for members to do. Sending out a list to service partners about what projects are OK and what tools are available.
      - ii. Having a better policy in the houses to protect members from other housemates who might be sick .



- iii. ACC formalizing a process for next year for members and service partners to meet in person (while socially distancing)
- iii. Ms. Ballinger expressed service partners are still interested in IP placements for next year, although some expressed that they wouldn't be able to sustain a member tele-serving for more than 3-5 weeks at a time.
    1. Mr. Famulare shared that indoor spaces are considered the most dangerous and that there are strict safety protocols in place.
    2. Ms. Hutchinson shared that the town of Chatham is allowing people to be back in their offices if they don't share it with anyone else. Staff are still not allowed to share vehicles.
    3. Ms. McKean said that the seashore will be installing plexiglass as a safety precaution. She suggested asking service partners to get approval for a member to be in the office space.
    4. Mr. Sharp shared that IFAW recently updated their cleaning policies for the vehicles that he can share with the program.
    5. Mr. Ohman asked between the two houses on the Upper Cape, what is the max number of members the program can support. Ms. Baier answered we can 8 members total on the Upper Cape.
- c. Phoebe Plank: Outer Cape Program Supervisor Updates
    - i. Service highlights:
      1. Ms. Plank shared that Lejac members helped YMCA Camp Burgess staff with property maintenance in preparation for the summer season. This included chipping downed tree material and turning over garden beds.
    - ii. Community Involvement:
      1. Ms. Plank shared that Upper and Outer Cape members submitted articles for the Year 21 Report to the Community prior to exiting the program. ACC staff worked on editing and compiling the Year 21 Report.
      2. Ms. Plank shared that ACC staff created a virtual member recognition video to celebrate the service that the Year 21 members completed during their time on the Cape, staff awarded Barnstable Land Trust's Kelly Barber with the Service Partner of the Year Award and Outer Cape member, Nick Banning, with the program's Darlene-Johnson Morris Award.



d. Connor O'Brien: Upper Cape Program Supervisor Updates

i. Service Highlights

1. Mr. O'Brien shared members served with Buzzards Bay Coalition to weed around the Onset Pier headquarters and move sand dunes off pathways.
2. Mr. Obrien shared that members served with Barnstable Land Trust on multiple projects such as invasive removal at Swift Ave. Meadow and installing split rail fencing at Mill Pond
3. Friends of the Mashpee Wildlife Refuge recently picked up and installed a kiosk built by ACC Pocasset members when the members were serving from home.

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

**VIII. Upcoming Meeting**

- a. Ms. Hutchinson suggested having another meeting prior to the members arriving to go over protocols and go over training.
- b. Mr. Famulare suggested August 21<sup>st</sup>.

**IX. Adjournment:**

- a. Mr. Famulare motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:02. Mr. Ohman seconded.