

Friends of Liberia

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

March 8, 2008

Members Present: Terry Anderson, Jim Bowman, Svend Holsoe, Patricia Hough, Peter Levitov, Jane Martin, Pat Reilly, Robert Sharer, Roy Shrobe, Stephanie Vickers

Also Present: Vivian Bowman, observer, and Barbara Felling, Consultant

- I. Welcome, Goals and Expectations: Terry Anderson began the meeting by summarizing the agenda: we will begin by reviewing yesterday's work, and then move to proposed plans for the next 6 months. Committees will meet separately. Since several committee members were absent, and the finance committee would not be meeting, members joined committees to which they were not appointed for the purposes of the day's discussion. Committees will report before lunch, and lunch will be followed by a discussion of the Reports and possible selection of projects to support. FOL officers will report at the end of the meeting .

- II. Recap of Friday's Work(Barbara Felling): Barbara felt that the board discussions were good and "on the right track". We completed a Team Effectiveness Inventory , responding to statements about our understanding of our mission and roles, how we work together to make decisions, carry out tasks, inform and monitor our activities etc. We briefly reviewed the "smart goals" that we had discussed on Saturday afternoon for 2009 and 2012. Pat and Jane will condense these goals so that individual members can advise on additions. Svend noted "Recommended Criteria" -for our work: We should support self help activities , sustain existing organizations, consider microfinancing, leverage funds from others and not become an exclusive source of funding and our projects should not serve as substitutes for government obligations. Entrepreneurship and Sustainability were mentioned.

Terry asked" Are the committees we have the best ones for approaching these goals?". Peter inquired whether finance and communication should be standing committees. Svend proposed that we see how the current system of committees works for the next six months. If there is a crying need for further committees or if a committee does not function, we can make changes. Peter noted that we may need more members on committees or wish to add members who have desired skills.

Peter reminded members that we need to plan a way to stagger nominations for the board by the end of 2009 so that we maintain continuity in our board membership. Also - as Svend pointed out - we have vacancies on the board -although we don't necessarily have to have 12 board members. The Nominating committee can do more to keep track of the skills of board and perspective board members. Terry suggested that he and Stephanie consult with Deborah Matima about the role of volunteers. Jim McGovern noted that Torli has contact with a few students who would like to be interns.

Barbara felt that our discussions were good and our proposed future plans are doable. One observation: when all committees include only members of the board, you can get insular. Also, you can solicit others to get the work done. Stephanie has some volunteers, and Terry said there are many people at this point who would like to participate but they need to know exactly what the committees do and then they will need direction. Peter noted that if you get more people than you need, you can select .

The composition of the committees at the present time is:

Communications Committee: Pat, Robert, Jim McGovern, Jane and (in absentia) Joseph Crayton and Mike Waite

Development committee: Torli, Candace, Patricia Hough, Terry ,

Program: Peter, Svend and Torli, (Jane)

Finance: Bowman, Crayton, Roy Shrobe

III. Committee Meeting Reports:

A. **Communications Committee:**

1. In order for committee members to communicate effectively, members determined to develop a listserve of committee members, and to set up a system for communicating. Someone should be responsible for setting up conference calls and mastering the free phone technology.
2. The committee also needs to develop strategies for communicating with other groups:
We need to help committees with their messages

We need to communicate with all FOL members

We need to communicate with Liberians

We need to communicate with the general public.

We must create the means for communicating (through list serves as well as the website?)

We need to determine who should be the communicator on messages - the point person to respond to the media when they inquire : Terry or Stephanie would be spoke persons, but Communication Committee members would help with talking points or consideration of strategies.

3. We should have the important information such as our mission statement and our structure and our activities on our website.

4. Goals for the committee:

Refresh the web site and keep it current.

Check for dead pages (of immediate concern) and delete

Put criteria for programs on the website.

Play a role in yearly/ half yearly appeal letter (check last one and make additions and changes) .

Help other committees in developing their messages, and sending them out

Send messages maybe twice or three times a year to update members – for instance “The website has been revised. Look at it”, or “bi-yearly letter is coming out in _____”

Enlarge and check our membership e-mail addresses. Assist Jim McGovern in revisions.

Check our stationery for updating names

Put the Board minutes on the website.

Meet on an occasional basis via telephone conference calls. .

5. Assignments for committee members are listed in full at the end of these minutes(Appendix A) .

Later in this meeting, during the discussions on the Financial Report, there were a few comments about the website changes recommended by the Communications Committee. Jim Bowman noted that we need to advertise any changes that are made on the website. Pat assured him that everyone will be informed. Members were reminded to use the website address when they write letters on FOL stationary. Pat is the gatekeeper who will deal with corrections/ additions suggested by Members. As Jim McGeorge noted, all committee heads (Pat Hough- Development and Svend Holsoe- program) should send their suggestions for website contributions to Pat Reilly. No E-mail addresses for board members should be on the website.

B. PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT AND FOLLOWING ACTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS:

1. PROGRAM POLICIES.

- A. Peter Levitov, chair of the Program Committee, noted that FOL has a program of giving grants, working through the program committee. The grants are for external organizations. The committee continues to recommend that no "pass throughs" be accepted, although, as Jim Bowman notes, we do have a small fund remaining from the "Hands over the Water" project, that must be expended and reported upon.
- B. The Program Committee recommended some modifications in its policies, proposing that we increase the limits of funds budgeted. The committee has proposed that one program for nonprofit organizations be limited to \$2000 and a second - board initiated program - be limited to \$5000. The Committee's extensive report details recommendations prior to the January 20 Executive Committee Meeting and its review of proposals submitted after that time.
- C. Very few grant proposals were received in the first grant cycle ending Feb 15. And, as the supplementary report notes, none received in the extended period are recommended for funding at this time because they were weak or have not met the guidelines. Two proposals were approved and funded during the January conference call of the Executive Committee.

- D. The committee asked the board to make a decision on criteria for the funding. Do we want to fund scholarships? Bricks and buildings? The committee has not proposed funding these items. Other proposals for funding projects that are the responsibility of government – such as wells, electricity etc. are also not recommended.
- E. The committee is deferring a discussion of budgetary limits until September. If more proposals are received, they might wish to recommend funding them. Also, in the case of proposals submitted by organizations in Liberia, we may consult with our members in Liberia (although the task of following up with all these organizations would be a great imposition).
- F. We do not make grants to individuals or to profit making organizations. Pat inquired how we can determine if a Liberian organization is a nonprofit. If this can be ascertained, then we might support a grant to such an organization even though it might not be government certified. If a board member has an idea for a project that we could manage or co-manage we might possibly fund such proposals. The final decision on any project rests with the board.
- G. The program committee is responsible for communicating their decisions to the Board, through Stephanie, the President of the Board. The Board decides on an award. Once an award is made/approved (or not made) a communication to the proposers must come from the Board. This communication may state when the money will come to the organization submitting the grant – i.e. In stages or all at one time. The Committee report is approved or disapproved by the board (later in this meeting) policy (such as activities that should be carried out by government) can be modified by the Board. The committee is not recommending such modifications.
- H. The committee is interested in determining that those requesting a grant are contributing to the tasks/ project that they are proposing. Such contribution may be the work of human beings, resources, time, etc. Svend Holsoe noted that it is important for the grant proposers to sustain the building being built or the program being developed. Peter notes “We don’t want the policy to say what you can’t do but to stress what you CAN do.” The board needs to adopt this policy or tweak it. “We are not advising that we have an application form but we tell applicants what exactly they have to have.”

- I. Later in the meeting a few other queries about Programs were raised. Jane M inquired about large grants. Such grants are not possible under the revised system although it would be possible for a grantee to apply for a continuation grant according to Svend Holsoe. This could occur in Spring and Fall for up to five years.

BOARD POLICY: During the afternoon discussions, a motion was made and approved by the Board to accept the revised policies proposed by the Program Committee as set forth in the Committee's Report to the Board 3/4/08. **1. For FOL's Policies for the Small Grants Program and 2. for the Program of Board Generated and Administrated Grants.**

C. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

Stephanie Vickers reported on the Development Committee's discussions. The committee proposes to "plan and develop activities to support the goals of the committee". At today's meeting of the committee, members decided on three things: first, they recommend that each board member plan a fund raiser in the next half year; second, Foundation research should be done to seek specific funding that supports our particular projects; third, the next appeal letter can include some of the aspects of our programs that we have worked on this weekend, We can list specific projects, and perhaps, suggest a monthly donation schedule. There has also been discussion of doing something at the time of the next Peace Corps Reunion. Terry recommends that the committee develop a work plan before the next board meeting.

During the discussion the issues of bequests was raised. Jim notes that Fidelity Bank can handle this for us. Pat Hough will work with the webmaster on putting the information on the website. The Board adopted a policy a year or two ago about what kind of gifts can be received. Pat notes that the secretary (and others with the records at hand) should review and isolate any board "policies" that have been established. The Board might create a section of the web where such information is saved and which is only available (by password) to board members. Roy and Jim can send the information about Fidelity Bank to Board members. Then we must decide what we want to do with it.

Terry noted that (during the afternoon sessions) we need to sort out the projects that Board members are interested in to determine what projects the Board should initiate. At this time we moved to the Reports of the Officers.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT. JIM BOWMAN

- A. Jim Bowman referred members to the six page Financial Report for 2007 which was sent to Board members a week before the meetings. At the next board meeting, members of the Finance Committee will present a more formal report that will include the audited financial report, reports from previous years and a proposed Budget for the coming year.
- B. Jim noted trends in giving on sheet 6. Our donations have increased during the past year, but our end of year letter did not result in an increase in giving as substantial as in past years. We can do better.
- C. Jim called attention to expenses on sheet 3. Categories in this cycle have been changed to conform to the way Interaction reports. In the next report we will have figures to compare. Educational Outreach is illustrated and summarized on sheet 5.
- D. Sheet 1 shows our different bank accounts with bank balances. We have increased our total balance by about \$27,000 Jim has tried to put money in banks with branches in Albuquerque so that he has more flexibility. He requests that in-kind contributions be reported to the treasurer and he will send members the form and notations about in-kind contributions.
- E. The job of the finance committee is to assist the Treasurer in an advisory role: to assist in financial planning and in financial reports made to the executive committee and the board, advise on liason with the auditor, the management, dispersal and dispensing of funds and collection of revenues. Pat inquires about reserve accounts that allow capability to take stock. We will get information about how to handle stock contributions.
- F. Terry inquires about the procedure for auditing accounts. Jim notes that we file extension and then materials go to the voluntary auditor after April 15. Non profits automatically get extension but we must ask for it. The next deadline is May when Jim gets the audited report and sends it on. Jim will inquire to see if our current pro bono auditor will be willing to continue this service. He has handled both taxes as well as the audits. Jim will ask if he will be willing to continue this service. Jim has given him a gift certificate for dinner and will do it this year also. We should express our appreciation. There have been several occasions when organizations may ask for the form.

G. The \$3,000 from the IMF was noted. Appreciation was expressed to Robert Sharer. Wm Darkins was going to look into the Combined federal campaign.

H. Other queries and information:

Re HAW : Sharon should be encouraged to donate the money to LEAP to clear it off the books;

Jim has the information on the insurance bill and will handle it;

Matching funds. (United Way?) One person has donated \$2500 . Such amounts s comes automatically to our bank account .

V. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Jim McGeorge was available through conference call for this discussion, and his report - sent earlier by e-mail - was reviewed by members present.. Mailings go out to 1365 persons or families on our membership list plus 171 members/families on the Pepperbird List. Jim noted that mailing has improved. The company that does the mailing uses a system that updates addresses. An inquiry was made about international mailings.

We get \$15 back for every National Peace Corps Association member that indicates FOL membership (186 members). Jim noted that the dates for the next NPCA reunion were Sept 22-25 , 2011. Also, a special event has been proposed, to be held at the University of Michigan on October 1, 2008, celebrating the anniversary of the first Peace Corps group deployment with John F. Kennedy .

Jim McGeorge's biggest concern is to find a way to send e-mail to all FOL members . It was proposed that Jim purchase an external drive that could be used for this purpose. In this way, we could make the membership LIST SERVE actually work. We could then send a notification before the appeal letter in May and June. We could send the information on grants to our

members beforehand . We could more fully engage the many donors on our lists (who are not members?? Check this.)

Jim McGovern gets the mail from Grace Lutheran church. We have a helper who checks the mail regularly and send it to him. Jim gives her\$ 100 a couple of times a year for postage and honorarium and he provides mailing labels. She has lowered the mailing costs by forwarding materials all together.

VI. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Jane Martin spoke about how she handles the telephone mail at the church and the website mail. Despite spam blocking, we received a vast quantity of unsolicited Chinese mail as well as irrelevant messages . Jane contacts senders of relevant mail and/or relays some messages to Stephanie or Terry or -in the case of proposals or program related issues – to Peter.

VII. POSSIBLE FOL GRANT PROGRAMS DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS.

The secretary's report led board members to engage in further discussions about possible FOL Programs. What kinds of program do we want to support? We reviewed the FOL GRANT CRITERIA (see attachment B) developed by the Program Committee chair Peter Levitov. Grants will be given on the basis of one or more of the criteria.

Board members present made some suggestions and had some queries. Committee members presented some possible ideas and asked for other suggestions of possible grants that might be initiated/investigated. Here are some:

1. sewing machines? (dropped);
2. Svend suggests a project involving photo electric cells – perhaps for the YMCA (solar powered).
3. Svend also suggests the possible revitalization of the zoo developed by the Steiners in Monrovia. Such a program, would relate to both education and environment and perhaps the YMCA would be willing to work with such a program with us. Jim McGeorge notes that many donors have given money for education and he would like to respond. This might be a possible program..

4. Possible niches in the health area. These may be hard to find. . . even if we work with a community that needs sanitation for instance (remembering the old self help community programs). Jane commits herself to investigating village health programs and will try to learn what kind of community projects we might support in this area, perhaps through CHAL and in cooperation with the Sirleaf Market Women Fund. Vivian Bowman is also interested in health programs. Barbara Felling cites the work of the International Alliance of Women which might be a linkage to investigate. Patricia Foley Hinnen is a key contact at the IAW.
5. Microcredit businesses give a Bang for the Buck. Svend urges that members present a proposal. We have money available that needs to be spent/used. Svend is urged to submit a proposal . Bob Shearer also is interested in microfinance programs.
6. Stephanie proposes giving a grant to SMWF; this cannot occur at this board meeting but must be done in line with our new grant regulations. Applications can be considered in the next grant cycle.
7. Stephanie will investigate further LEAP activities.
8. Jim notes that at one time in our fundraising, we listed categories that people could check if they wished their donations to go to that cause. If they checked education this money might be used for LEAP. Some people have had careers in areas of community health projects - Elizabeth Mulbah and CHAL
9. Beside his interest in microfinance, Bob Shearer proposes a Bike Binge - he is associated with a Rotary Club bike program. Lynn and Jim might be interested and if they agree he will work on it.

IX. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

1. **PEACE CORPS RESPONSE CORPS** Stephanie and Pat reported on their lunch with Christina _____ who brought them up to date on the status of the Peace Corps return to Liberia. The Peace Corps Response Corps (PCRC) will go to Liberia first. The director of the PCRC will visit Liberia in a few weeks. Soon they will send a temp officer and an admin officer. The permanent Officer will be trained in June and then go. They expect that volunteers will go in summer . The program is yet to be written. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has asked for support for education.
2. **APPLYING FOR PCRC** : Anyone who wants to be in PCRC can fill out an application form which can be found on line. You are then in the data base. When they post the

project name and say “we are now going to Liberia”, you can apply. We talked about how we can share the information about this process on our website and on the Indiana base. Pat and Stephanie gave Christina contact information for the Gray’s. and also gave her information about the Education ministry etc.

3. **ANNE EASTERLY:** Stephanie got an e-mail from Anne Easterly now in Liberia. Her shipment has not come. She visited two libraries in Ganta and Gbanga .

4. **IDEAS FOR SPRING APPEAL LETTER:** Stephanie asked for ideas for the spring appeal letter. Terry said we should do it soon perhaps right after taxes?
 - A. we need to begin to recruit a corps of volunteers.

 - B. Also there are potential changes in the by-laws and we should send out suggested changes .

 - C. we need to get nominations for the one vacancy on the board. We should find out who is interested. Bob will feel out his colleague, a microfinance person.

 - D. We can verbalize some of our needs in the donation letter. We can mention grant requests and possibility of giving in honor of someone or in memory of a friend.

 - E. The refreshed website should be mentioned.

X. NEXT MEETING

- A. The next Executive Committee Telephone Conference Call will be on May 4. 11:00 a.m. pacific time.

- B. The next Board meeting will be on Saturday, Sept. 20 08

- C. Ongoing tasks:
 - Review and establish a budget for 09

 - Review finance report

- D. Consider having a fund raising gathering to raise money in your neighborhood.

Between now and April 1 Terrie will work with Stephanie to carry the work forward, to summarize where the organization is now, and what has happened. We have not been able to support projects for a long time. We can now refer to things we have done recently .

Terrie ended by applauding Barbara for what she has done for us. Stephanie regretted the absence of four of our members. As Terry noted “We needed a lot of skill building and refocusing and we are now all on the same page together.”

Adjourned at 3:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane J. Martin

Appendices:

A. Communications Committee: member task commitments:

1. Jim McGeorge will coordinate conference calls. The actual agenda for the calls will be done by Pat. We need to develop a strategy for communicating with members to update, inform, involve and sustain our constituency, and – in time - to get young people involved.
2. Pat will do the agenda
3. Mike will do the website but everyone will take part in the work of redesigning it .
 - a. Suggest redesign of the website: Pat and Robert will look at the website. Robert suggested we develop an entirely new page with links for Liberian food, for books,
 - b. Prominently show our mission statement. Explanation beside this about what FOL is with an explanation.

- c. Expand and enhance the section about Making a Donation and display it more prominently.
- d. Include an update based on this meeting: a get involved section; crisis corps information ; cruise to Liberia (Jan-Feb 2009). Create a program section on the web site with details
- e. Highlight the minutes of the last FOL meeting .
- f. Put a Calendar of meetings on the site.
- g. Better explain the Indiana List serve and how to get on the list.
- h. Perhaps reconstitute the shop. Perhaps include only a few items with links to other resources.
- i. Put the ten top navigation links on each page Create an ORK (organization) chart .
- j. Accomplishments.
- k. Membership form . . . can be pulled down on the website (criteria for membership is a donation(no amount specified) Vivian Bowman asks" do we need something on the web " please update your address etc" might increase our e-mail addresses
- l. Add personal accounts of members who have returned to Liberia. Such accounts may help individuals who might apply for "the Rapid Response Team" and future Peace Corps. Stephanie's account of her meeting with Ellen in Portland could be added. These accounts should also be on the membership page
- m. E-Zine – take it off the website. Now we are communicating by e-mail and keeping the website updated.
- n. Link to maps and weather. Link to other sites: Jane will monitor the links . Pat will be the gatekeeper and make decisions about this
- o. Pat will create the middle page
- p. Jim and Pat McG. will make messages to send out
- q. Jim will look at the FOL navigation links at the top. Contacts for FOL: address, and phone number
- r. Pat suggests a new image for the top (note now the first group photo (FOL meeting minutes should be highlighted).

s. The date of the first Peace Corps group - Since 1986" should be on the top of the webpage

4. We should have a meeting (conference call) in late April .
5. Pat and Mike will make some "quick and dirty" changes to the website.
6. Next fundraising letter will come out after April 15 but before July.
7. Jane will write a brief summary of the whole board meeting for the website (with a link to the minutes). Such reports should not include the figures in the financial report or in the minutes. Jane .

B. Proposed FOL Grant Criteria

- Liberian participation in the organization
- Responding to the needs of Liberians
- Building community awareness in Liberia in different parts of the country
- Capacity-building for self-reliance
- Benefiting underserved communities
- Filling a niche in development needs
- Respecting the talents and skills of Liberia
- Sustainability
- Supports self-help
- Promotes entrepreneurship
- Complements educational efforts

- Benefits an existing organization
- Engages in micro-financing
- Does not substitute for functions that are inherently governmental
- Not the exclusive source of program support
- Leverages fund with other funding sources/partners with one or more entities