

**FRIENDS OF LIBERIA
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS
WITH CONSULTANT BARBARA FELLING
MARCH 7, 2008**

Meeting Objectives

The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Reset organizational vision and mission
2. Set goals and priorities for the next five years
3. Identify means and processes to reach these goals
4. Recognize trustee and officer skills and their benefit to the organization
5. Identify mechanisms for communicating and working together effectively

I. Review of objectives and schedules for the day's session.

Framework of communications plan

Fund-raising plan

Projects that we can fund

II. Following the review of objectives and schedules, we discussed first, FOL's mission statement and then our vision

1. **Former Mission Statement:** FOL is a non-governmental, non-profit membership organization that seeks to positively affect Liberia and Liberians through education, social, and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts

The discussions led to some changes. We determined to eliminate the word membership (since we have decided that anyone who contributes any amount to the organization is a member). Peter Levitov observed that we are in some ways more like a foundation. As he noted that we don't have the staff or capability to "do" projects; but support them. We cut out the words "and Liberians" to emphasize that our mission is on the nation, although we may recognize that Liberians are found in many other countries as well as Liberia. We added 'economic' to the types of programs we support.

Final Mission Statement: FOL is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to positively affect Liberia by supporting education, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts.

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2. **Vision: what is our vision of the organization in the future?**

Members divided into pairs and each pair developed a poster of what FOL would look like in five years time. When we met together we listed some of the values that we perceived we would espouse in five years time .

As an organization, FOL values:

Liberian participation and increased involvement in the organization

Growing as an organization and including a diverse membership of young and older members

Responding to the needs of Liberians through giving to institutions rather than individuals

Cooperating with existing Liberian groups and expanding our partnerships with such groups especially at the grassroots level;

Cooperating with U.S. organizations and groups working in Liberia

Building community awareness across Liberia

Capacity-building for self-reliance

Filling a niche in development needs

Respecting the talents and skills of Liberians

Sustainability

Promoting entrepreneurship/self help

Leveraging funds for other organizations

Complementing the educational effort

Engaging in micro-financing

Not substituting for inherently governmental functions

Not the exclusive source of program support

Leveraging funds with other funding sources/partners with one or more entities

Advocating and standing up for Liberia in various fora

Responsive to the needs of Liberians (as perceived by Liberians)

Mentoring, partnering and empowering those Liberian groups that we work with

Continue to keep up with the Liberian news and to increase and use our knowledge base of modern Liberia.

Barbara sums up the “big ticket” items:

Community Focus

Self Reliance

Capacity Building

National Focus

Diversity in the Organization

(B.notes omission of environmental responsibility).

III> GOALS

A. Goals to achieve by 2009 (Short Term Goals) :

Increase funding by 50%

Develop links with five (5) local organizations in Liberia

Develop (annual and midterm) financial plans to get funds from a variety of sources

Increase volunteer members by 10 people (non-board) {currently three posts for volunteers: Debby-volunteer coordinator, Mike-web, newsletter editor – none}

Develop structure and procedure- check list?- for screening large projects

Development of committee statements on procedures to be followed/scope of work for committees

Supporting five projects financially

Operating budget that disburses 100% of program budget

Develop evaluation process with minimum/maximum criteria; Implement this process including “end of grant” reports

Revise By-Laws on board elections so as to stagger board terms; ascertain that all positions on the Board are filled.

Plan a large self-supported return trip to Liberia for service (Pat, Jim and Lyn Gray)

Program committee criteria/limits

Develop ways to support PCR/PCV (support training and recruitment as bylaws allow).

Recruit returning USAID/NGO workers to work with FOL and Liberia

Start a list of groups who are working now in Liberia

Improve and keep the website current

Improve communications with members and stakeholders

Maintain a “knowledge base” of modern Liberia and keep up with the news.

B. Longer Term Goals to achieve by 2012:

Develop links with 10 Liberian organizations by 2012

Increase funding by 50 percent

Supporting 10 projects

Increase involvement of “active non board members” by 25 people.

Expand operating budget by 50 percent consistent with our income

Implement; continue evaluation process for funded projects

Maintain a full listing of other organizations working in Liberia with ongoing information about their projects.

By 2011 plan event in conjunction with the PC 50th anniversary

Yearly annual meeting of FOL

Work with LSA/FOL/Liberian organizations to develop a big combined group event.

Link w/other organizations (Embassy, Smithsonian) for visibility and fundraising

Develop “elder hostel” trip to Liberia

PC Partnership

Propose participation of Liberia in Smithsonian Folk life Festival

Entice President EJS to speak at 2011 PC event

III. HOW WE WORK:

FRIENDS OF LIBERIA
MEMBERS
Elect
BOARD*

BOARD ELECTS
OFFICERS &
members?)

Volunteer coordinator
Webmaster
Store manager

BOARD CHAIR APPOINTS
STANDING COMMITTEE HEADS (and

Development Committee
Nominating Committee
Program Committee
Advocacy

AD HOC COMMITTEES
Communication
Finance.

PRESIDENT'S CABINET(?)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers plus three Board members appointed by committee chairs

EX OFFICIO:

1. Should Jim and Lyn Gray and Jeanette Carter (our ex officio members in Monrovia) be listed as an advisory committee, "honorary members"? or other? And Should they always be included" in the loop"?

2. What about former board member such as John Kucij, John Singler, Beverlee Bruce, and others? What communications should they receive?

These questions were raised but no conclusions were reached.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE:

1. Board Chair should be in on Conference Calls of the Executive Committee;
2. President should receive minutes of Committee Meetings from the Chairs; Committees should report and make recommendations to the Board or the Executive Committee, two or more times yearly (by voice or e-mail);
3. Committee to committee communications should go through Communications Committee.
4. Executive Committee should meet quarterly (4 times yearly). Minutes should go to all board members and other position holders within a week or ten days.

5. President and Chair of the Board (etc?) should receive copies of all committee notifications/memoranda
6. The Communications Committee should send announcements about available grants to the List Serve.

VI. SKILLS REVEAL. SKILLS WE NEED TO ACHIEVE FOL GOALS.
Below where possible, a need is followed by the name of the person who might carry out the task.

Website management, design, update (Mike Waite)

Writers – Terry

Recorders - needed from each committee for their section of the website etc. Also, other information gathers to extract Liberian information from various sources

Editing – Pat and Terry

Develop Listserv/e-mail message to members

Excel—Jim B., Robert

Word-processing—Terry, Stephanie

Grant writing – Pat, Terry Stephanie and Jane, Bill Darkins

Legal -- Peter, Irv Bieser

Marketing – Pat and Jim McG.

Fund-raising – Robert, Stephanie, Candace. Bill Darkins, Joseph

Financial – Robert, Roy, Joseph, Svend, Jim B.

Auditing – Independent pro bono

Secretarial

Project manager (for instance for election observation)

Process and leadership

Appraisal, evaluation, analysis

Skills Gap and Actions

More writers

More editors

Maintain a listserv for quarterly messages

Buy external system for membership

Legal advisor

More PR-marketing (goes to vol coord)

Ask Bill Darkins to distill Liberia info from Interaction (disseminate by e-mail)

Information: Reach out and exchange info w/ other organizations (Advocacy group)

Information: Research Liberia info on which orgs are doing what; also review Foundations supporting Liberian causes. Jane

Set up a committee to draft policies and procedures for Sept. mtg. (Joanna and Frank) (see VII below) “We are now moving toward regularizing our actions” says Peter L. We determine to extract (from past minutes and reports) policies that we have instituted in the past.

Program Committee:

Point of Contact: Svend Holsoe

Publicize Policy for small grants

Criteria:

External organizations for \$2,000 limit

Same criteria for board initiated or managed projects

May have to increase the limits of the grants

Recommend that we not fund pass-throughs, maybe donor-advised funds

Development Committee:

Point of Contact: Pat Hough

Finance Committee:

Point of Contact: Roy Shrobe

VII. FUTURE ACTIONS

1. Pat; content manager. Each committee should decide who will provide content to the Board, and/or to the website and the membership.
2. Jim McG: Will purchase a special external disc drive to use in communicating with all FOL members.
3. Lawyer: We need to find a legal advisor who would be willing to be a pro bono house counsel for Friends of Liberia.
4. John Kucij We need someone who could act as a volunteer coordinator and a public relations person. Perhaps John K. would take this on.
5. Bill Darkins continues to send the Board information on Liberia and advocacy from InterAction, (and other sources)
6. We need to scrutinize minutes from former years to identify the policies that we have passed previously that continue to be our guideposts.

Minutes submitted by Jane Martin, developed with the assistance of Pat Reilly

Jane Martin