

Friends of Liberia
Semi-Annual Meeting of the Officers and Board
Saturday, September 26, 2009
Silver Spring, Maryland

Board of Trustees & Officers Present: Terry Anderson, Jim Bowman, Joseph Crayton, Svend Holsoe, Romelleh Horton, Jefferson King, Torli Krua, Peter Levitov, Jim McGeorge, Pat Reilly, Robert Sharer, Stephanie Vickers, Mike Waite. **Board of Trustees Absent:** Candace Eastman, Pat Hough, Saah N'Toe. **Observers:** Barbara Ferguson Camara (Tapita), Pat McGeorge, Walida Willoughby. **Guests:** Ambassador Nathaniel Barnes, Elaine Dunn, Dr. S. Konneh.

Welcome:

- A. New board member introduced: Romelleh Horton
- B. Approved updated Bylaws distributed

Review of 2009:

A. FOL Trip to Liberia

1. General comments: Group of 27 diverse people went on trip in May. FOL reception at the Monrovia YMCA, partially financed by FOL, allowed contacts with Liberians, Returned Peace Corps director and volunteer, Liberian government officials including VP Joseph Boakai, former PC Liberian staff, Liberian friends, and NGO staff & other Americans working in Liberia. Attended a 1 hour & 15 minute meeting with President Sirleaf. Attended reception at the US Embassy hosted by the US Ambassador to Liberia. See the trip report written by Pat Reilly at www.fol.org.
2. Report of Health & Medical team service project by Jim McGeorge.
 - i. Report distributed.
 - ii. 10 team members (1 MD, 1 FNP, 2 RNs, Medical Technologist, Medical Librarian, 3 Mental Healthcare providers, etc.)
 - iii. Brought medications and medical supplies worth over \$200,000 which were donated by Brothers Brother, Global Links & team members & donated to the 2 hospitals.
 - iv. Ganta United Methodist Hospital was site of the 8-day project and similar project carried out at Curran Hospital; however, funds from FOL grant not utilized for Curran Hospital.
 - v. Emphasis on mentoring and education of hospital staff, nursing & nurse midwifery students, & nursing program faculty.
 - vi. Mental Health is an area of great need due to lack of mental health care providers in Liberia.
 - vii. Maternal mortality is very high and this is another area where assistance is needed.
 - viii. Dr. Pam Branning worked with the doctors by going on rounds with them and delivered 6 babies by performing 5 C-Sections.
 - ix. Joanne Stuempeges, medical technologist, worked with lab staff at Ganta and identified need for a working & adequate microscope. A microscope was obtained before all the team left Liberia.
3. Report of Environmental team service project by Mike Waite.
 - i. 7 team members
 - ii. Peter Mulbah who works in forestry in Liberia worked with the team.
 - iii. Area of project was the East Nimba Nature Reserve.
 - iv. Surveyed villages in the area of the East Nimba Nature Reserve.
 - v. Need to preserve this Nature Reserve and in order to do this must get cooperation from the villagers.
 - vi. Hopefully the survey will reveal the conflicts and lead to some kind of agreement about preserving this unique area of Liberia.
 - vii. Also evaluated Camp 4 area and needs of people there.
4. Report of Educational team service project by Stephanie Vickers.

- i. 7 team members.
 - ii. Brought over teaching supplies and books which were distributed to schools.
 - iii. Worked with teachers and students at Ganta United Methodist School and Ganta YMCA Ganta.
 - iv. Since there are no textbooks in the classrooms and teachers write information on the board, this creates effective learning difficulties.
 - v. Taught in the classrooms.
 - vi. Modeled teaching methods with teachers.
 - vii. Last day of project group lead a teacher training experience. Had stations, treasure boxes, books etc to assist with teaching skill development.
 - 5. Report on individual projects by Svend Holsoe.
 - i. Described his project in Bomi County.
 - ii. Discussed changes he has seen in Liberia.
 - iii. Two others in the group also worked on individual service projects – Liberian Tax Law & Social Services in Robertsport.
 - 6. Stephanie Vickers reported on assessment of FOL funded small grants projects in Liberia. She felt the projects were progressing and meeting their goals.
 - 7. FOL cookbooks – 73 cookbooks sent with a PC Response volunteer in October. Lucianne Phillips, PC Response Director in Monrovia, is facilitating the sale of cookbooks throughout Liberia. The cookbook is being sold at 3 businesses in Monrovia.
- B. Review of 2009 Income, Expenditures & Finances
- 1. Report given by Jim Bowman.
 - 2. Financial report distributed.
 - 3. Financial report reviewed and discussed.
 - 4. Has been a decrease in incoming donations since 2008, but not severe decrease.
 - 5. Discussion about administrative costs in relation to funds used to provide grants etc
- C. Membership Status Review
- 1. Report given by Jim McGeorge.
 - 2. Membership report distributed.
 - 3. Comments on membership donation forms and need to follow up with comments concerning volunteering, questions etc discussed.
 - 4. Need to develop ability to distribute FOL information via e-mail discussed.
- D. Communications Committee and Efforts
- 1. Pat Reilly and Mike Waite led this discussion.
 - 2. Joseph Crayton volunteered to work with communications.
 - 3. Past year committee has concentrated on improving the web site.
 - 4. Pat noted need for Memoriam section on our website.
 - 5. Discussed PC Director's request that FOL members recreate PC in Liberia history since has been lost.
 - 6. Discussion about other online communication such as Facebook.
- E. Advocacy Committee and Efforts
- 1. Discussion about how FOL can advocate for Liberia.
 - 2. Will discuss this area with Ambassador Barnes when he arrives.
- F. Development Committee and Efforts
- 1. Cookbook – main project this year.
 - 2. Jim McG. reported that Candace had discussed with him that she is working on development of an ad for the cookbook.
 - 3. Will pursue putting this ad and other information about the cookbook on the Indiana U Liberia news.
 - 4. Candace is pursuing how to obtain grants for FOL.
 - 5. Stephanie showed samples of note cards, postcards and a calendar from photos taken during the trip to Liberia in May. Possibility of using these items as fundraisers was discussed.
 - 6. Explore using calendar and note cards for fundraising.

Presentation by Ambassador Nathaniel Barnes

- A. Expressed appreciation to FOL.
- B. Stated he would host a function at the Liberian Embassy/Residence during the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary celebration in September 22 – 25, 2011.
- C. Discussed work to decrease poverty in Liberia.
- D. Discussed Diaspora project/committee. Plan includes:
 - a. Economic revitalization
 - b. Infrastructure & Basic Needs
 - c. National Security
 - d. Governance & Rule of Law
- E. Provided update on Liberia
 - a. Lift Liberia campaign going well.
 - b. New emphasis on food security and agriculture.
 - c. Work on basic needs being done.
 - d. Working hard on security and reform of military.
 - e. Stated President Sirleaf is focusing on governance and anti corruption also.

Report by Elaine Dunn and Dr. S. Konneh on Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)

- A. 3,600+ Liberians on DED.
- B. DED ending in March, 2010.
- C. Discussed why DED should be extended for Liberians on DED.
- D. Bill in Congress right now to provide a blanket extension of permancies for Liberians on DED.
- E. Rep. Jack Reid and Rep. Patrick Kennedy are the contacts in Congress.
- F. Terry asked, "What would you like FOL to do?" Stated we would discuss writing letters etc this afternoon. NOTE: this was not discussed.

Looking Toward 2010 and Beyond – afternoon discussion

- A. Budget Recommendations & Review
 - a. Received Treasurer's proposed 2010 Budget.
 - b. *Recommended spending \$50,000 in 2010 for Grants/Contracts/Special Projects.*
 - c. Discussed need to be sure money is allocated in the budget for any expenditure.
 - d. *Adjust projected income from \$40,000 to \$30,000 for 2010.*
 - e. ***Motion made and approved to raise fundraising from \$2,000 to \$6,000 for 2009 Budget.***
 - f. Operating expenses \$12,000.
- B. Nominations Committee and Elections for 2010
 - a. Report distributed and discussion lead by Peter Levitov.
 - b. Discussed need to stagger board terms.
 - c. ***Board approved nominating Terry Anderson, Joseph Crayton, Svend Holsoe, Patricia Hough, & Robert Sharer as Board Members & they will stand for election by the members of FOL.***
 - i. Discussed need to stagger board terms.
 - ii. An informal understanding was agreed upon by the Board and Officers that:
 - 1. Joseph and Svend will serve for one year and than be nominated again for another 3 year term.
 - 2. Terry & Robert will resign after 2 years and be nominated again.
 - 3. Pat Hough will serve the full 3 year term.
 - d. ***Board approved election of Stephanie Vickers and Peter Levitov to serve 3-year terms on board beginning 2010.*** Motion Joseph and Second Torli
 - e. Terry resigning at the end of 2009 as Board Chair.
 - f. Svend agreed to serve as chair for one year.
 - g. Jane Martin requested to resign as Secretary and Pat McGeorge agreed to accept position as Secretary. ***Board agreed to this change.***
 - h. ***Board approved election of officers for 2010: President Stephanie Vickers, Vice-President Pat Reilly, Membership Coordinator Jim McGeorge, Treasurer Jim Bowman, Secretary Pat McGeorge, Web Master Mike Waite.*** Motion Svend.

- i. Note: Nancy Wallace should be approached to determine if she would agree to be the volunteer coordinator.
- C. Program Committee: New Grant Recommendations.
 - a. Report submitted by Committee Chairman, Peter Levitov.
 - b. 17 grants submitted.
 - c. Discussion of why grants weren't approved – brick and mortar, not fully formulated, grant money needed before could be approved, etc.
 - d. Peter made motion that Board fund following 4 projects approved by committee – motion accepted and approved**
 - i. African Community Exchange - \$1,300. To facilitate the “Literate Liberia Movement” by providing transportation for organizers, community leaders & school personnel as well as materials & supplies to students in grades 7-12 who will teach literacy to some 3000 people in the Monrovia area, including neighborhoods & market places.
 - ii. Marghibi Country Women’s Association - \$1985. To train women to re-establish the production of country cloth, including weaving, tailoring, needlework, design, marketing & sales.
 - iii. Liberian Potters (Pottery) Association - \$1750. To purchase a kiln & related materials to enable a group of potters to become self-reliant through training more potters, providing production access for more potters and developing marketing strategies.
 - iv. Visions in Action -\$1600. To distribute scientific calculators to high schools & universities in certain counties & also educate teachers in the incorporation of calculators into the curricula & the learning process.
 - e. Motion made to revise small grant policy to fund organizations with preference for organizations in Liberia. Motion passed with one against the motion.**
 - f. Motion made to limit an organization to one grant application per year. Motion approved.**
 - g. Tappita District Development Association grant
 - i. Committee deferred to full board for discussion and decision on funding for this grant which was submitted by Jefferson King and Torli Krua.
 - ii. Jefferson and Torli discussed the project, which involves a program to assist young Liberians with developing programs that will solve some of the problems in Liberia with products and services. This project includes education and a competition for innovative solutions.
 - iii. Cost of pilot project is projected at \$10,000.
 - iv. Jefferson & Torli have raised \$4,500 so far.
 - v. Before project funding is approved Jefferson & Torli will submit:**
 - 1. A concept paper – within next 2 months.**
 - 2. A report of program accomplishments and progress.**
 - vi. **Motion: FOL will delegate up to \$3,500 to be used for the prize money after receiving the concept paper & after reviewing accomplishments of the project.** Motion Joseph Second Svend.
 - h. Board Sponsored Projects presented by Stephanie & Svend
 - i. Handout on projects distributed.
 - ii. Work-Travel Grants – 5 grants of \$3,000 each per year – to stimulate travel of FOL members to work on service projects
 - iii. Basic Teacher Training Project – assist teachers to earn a C-Certificate. Request is for minimum of \$25,000 annually for this project.
 - iv. Motion made and approved to table these items until March meeting.**
- D. Fundraising Letter – explore development of a tri fold letter with color pictures. Stephanie and Jim will explore this change in the letter.
- E. Peace Corps 50th Anniversary & History Project
 - a. 50th Anniversary – discussion of proposed PC celebration activities in DC.

- b. Discussion of possible FOL fundraising dinner during this celebration and/or other FOL activities.
 - c. Discussion about possibility of holding FOL Board meeting during the celebration. No decision was made.
- F. Beverlee Bruce Memorial
- a. Discussed and Jane will check with IRC.
 - b. No decision made.

Next FOL Board Meeting: Saturday, February 27, 2010.

Submitted by Jane Martin and Pat McGeorge 10/4/09

Amended 3.6.10 after minutes reviewed at meeting on 2.27.10. PMcG