

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FRIENDS OF NIGER
BY SKYPE
JUNE 25, 2017**

Present: Meredith McGehee, Tom Corcoran, Larry Koff, John Baird, Steve Bushell, Yari Rabiou, John Hutchison and Penni St. Hilaire

Guests: Amy Wilson and Tom Dechert

Minutes: The minutes of the April 9, 2017 board meeting were unanimously approved. The board also approved posting draft minutes on the web page two weeks after they are circulated to members for corrections. The final minutes will replace the draft minutes after board approval at the subsequent meeting.

New Board Member: John H nominated Amy Wilson to serve as a member-at-large and as a member of the projects committee. The nomination was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: There is \$18,754 in the checking account and \$6,000 in the savings account (which is considered a reserve account.) Anyone who contributed even if they did not specify \$20 for membership is considered a member. There are no outstanding obligations.

Camel Express: the latest version was sent to board members immediately before the meeting and most members had not seen it. It will be sent out as soon as the board approves it. Anna Falkovitch does not have as much time as she thought and is resigning as editor. She also did not get material for the CEX as she had hoped. The CEX should include a notice that FON is again looking for an editor. Amy suggested that the website include an email address for the editor so members can submit articles. It was also noted that the Facebook page has lots of articles posted. Steve will create a newsletter@FON.org address.

Zarma Speaker: Meredith received a request for a Zarma speaker and Yari said he would come up with a name.

Niger Independence Day Celebration: The Embassy of Niger has proposed an agenda focusing on women and young people for this event August 3 at Africare House in Washington, DC. The afternoon will include a panel of organizations that support activities in Niger. From 6 to 8 there will be a reception with Nigerien food. The event will cost around \$10,000 which the Embassy thought they could only support half. Guests will include FON members, CONUSA members, NGO's, Ambassadors from ECOWAS countries, Congressional and State Department representatives. Invitations will go to all FON members. There was a debate about using FON funds for the event. Since part of the event is a substantive discussion of issues in Niger it was proposed that FON contribute \$500. Members will also be asked if they would help defray the costs. The motion to contribute \$500 was unanimously approved. Penni will convey the information to the Embassy.

First Global International Robot Olympics: Niger will be sending a team and First Global hopes there will be a strong FON presence to support the team. The games are July 17 and 18 at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC and the Opening Ceremony is July 16. John B said he could send out a notice and there could be something on the Facebook page. Meredith said she planned to attend.

Fundraising: Tom C said he met with the Lightbowns and they asked if FON is going to have any other projects than Moringa that they can present to their group Niger 67 that will meet in September. They are hoping to do substantial fundraising. He also mentioned the Rotary foundation . They support projects in the amount between \$50 and \$75K. It was agreed that once we go over \$50K we need more accounting support. Tom C sought board approval to engage with the Rotary on projects and fundraising issues. There were no objections.

Projects: John H recognized the work that Tom D (with help from Amy Wilson) had done in restoring the institutional memory.

Tom D and John H sent a Projects Committee (PC) agenda (attachment 1):

- **Proposal to work with Himma:** Meredith noted that we are expecting Himma to do a lot of work. What percentage or amount would they take. Tom D said there was no agreement yet. They would ask them what it would cost as cost has yet to be discussed. We need to have an understanding about the costs. Need to be able to justify to our members what we are paying. Tom D said we are not close to being committed to them. Tom D plans to be in Niger once a year. Larry will be giving a few comments on the proposal.

- Larry complemented Tom D on the Matrix of all pending, funded in 2017 and 2016 and projects rejected in 2016. We are still waiting for reports. Whether a report was submitted is not on the matrix but it is on the spread sheet. Most of the reports are in the Camel Express, not in a projects file.
- Policy and Documentation Proposals: Tom D is accumulating documentation on each project and is storing it and a spreadsheet on Dropbox. The committee is proposing to change and update the web documents for submitting proposals to FON. Project approvals should be in the minutes, even when occurring outside a board meeting. All final project proposals should also become part of the official record and in the minutes and kept in the document storage system (drop box can be used for this). All four proposals were approved by the board and are part of the attached agenda.

MORINGA PROJECTS:

John H and Larry made a request that payment of the cost overruns of the Moringa project be recorded in the minutes. Moustapha Harou, the principal agent for the projects informed FON that there had been some serious cost overruns in developing 3 or 4 of the Moringa gardens. According to John H a majority of the Board approved paying the cost overruns and \$1,737 was sent to Moustapha Harou May 12, 2017. (Note: the documentation for the overruns is attachment 2.)

Moustapha has an agricultural engineer working on the project and Tom D and John H are hoping to meet him when they are in Niger this summer. Meredith asked about the security situation. There is no problem in most of the country, but it is not safe to go to Tillaberi or Tchín Tabaraden.

There are additional Moringa projects totaling about \$10,000, but they are not requesting the funds now. Meredith said she was not comfortable sending more money until we have a better idea about why the overrun. Amy asked if there was a sense of urgency, noting that it is already June and the rainy season is upon Niger. PC was not comfortable with going ahead with the \$10K until there is more information. Tom D suggested funding in stages and he is not sure that they are relying on rain for water. He proposed identifying 2 priority projects and agree to fund and pay for planting and hold the rest of the funding until he and John H are back from Niger. He thought it would cost about \$2800 for planting the initial steps including on-site visit. The board unanimously approved up to \$3,000 for two additional Moringa projects.

OURZP: requested \$2,200 for further training for women who have been involved in the 4 previous milk goat projects. The question was raised as to how do we know what is happening there. There have been a couple of reports. Himma can go almost anywhere to get an assessment . Tom D could write up a scope of work to have Himma take a look at this. It was decided to hold off until we hear from Himma and get more information. Amy has a friend who travels around and she could ask him if he gets to Tchín Tabaraden.

It was pointed out that the CEX is a way of telling people how we are spending our money.

Meredith informed the board that she is phasing out as president. She is now working full time instead of part time when she started and life has gotten quite full. Between now and September she is hoping someone will step forward to step in. She will stay on the board but not as president. Tom C is vice president and is a logical person.

The next board meeting will be September 17 at 6:30 pm EDT.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm, EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Penni St. Hilaire
Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board September 17, 2017

**Projects Committee Agenda
for the
Friends of Niger Board Meeting**

June 25, 2017

Progress on Items Pending from the April Board Meeting

1) Relationship with Himma

The new Projects Committee (PC) is moving forward with a proposal to contract with Himma for services in Niger. A copy of the proposed contract with Himma is attached (See Attachment 1 (English) and Attachment 2 (French)). Primary Himma responsibilities would be: a) on a case by case basis, HIMMA would facilitate the transfer of funds from FON to a particular project identified by FON; b) on a case by case basis, HIMMA would monitor, evaluate and report on any particular FON-funded project based on guidelines and/or scope of work provided by FON; and c) upon a request from FON, HIMMA would consult with FON about the development of a particular project or activity, providing FON the benefit of local Nigerien input to project and activity development by FON. Other minor activities and FON responsibilities are defined in the draft contract

Action Requested: Board approval of the contract concept and the draft contract with instructions to move forward with negotiations with Himma.

2) Bagalam Drug Abuse Treatment proposal

The Bagalam proposal asks FON to provide some monetary support for the development and implementation of a Drug Abuse program in the quartier of Bagalam, Maradi.

Action Requested: The PC is proposing that the Bagalam proposal remain on hold until such time as a contract is developed with Himma to help manage any funds that might be provided by FON. The Bagalam proposal itself does not have a primary contact person, nor any means to monitor the use of any money provided by FON, nor to prepare a report.

3) Outside Funding for FON Projects

The PC, along with Larry Koff and Thomas Corcoran have been investigating various sources of outside funding for FON projects. Primary among these are discussions with the Lightbowns of the Senegal – Niger coalition, who apparently are primarily interested in helping fund the moringa projects. Thomas and Amy have also made contacts with the African Development Fund and Rotary. It's clear that any outside funding for FON requires that we improve our project development and monitoring protocols. To that end, we have 3 major changes on the table to be approved at this meeting.

What is less clear to the PC is the commitment of the FON Board and the FON membership to acquiring and managing outside funds. If we take on managing funds from other organizations, it will doubtless require more involvement and work on the part of both the Board and the PC.

Action Requested: Discussion and guidance from the Board as to how we should proceed, how aggressive we should be in searching for outside funds, what sorts of limits might the Board set.

New Policy and Documentation Proposals by Projects Committee

The PC proposes several actions for Board consideration as a means to facilitate the development and documentation of projects.

- 1) The PC has tried to accumulate as much documentation as could be found of FON funded projects since about 2015, in an effort to create a record of project activity since then. Accumulated documentation is stored in a base directory maintained by Tom Dechert. A copy of the documentation is available for all Board member perusal on Dropbox/FON Shared/Projects, with a separate directory for each project. In addition, Tom has created and maintains a spreadsheet titled "A summary of projects 2016-17" also on Dropbox, which summarizes the status of all the various projects funded by FON in the last few years.

Action Requested: Any suggestions or comments about this system of documentation will be appreciated, especially in so far as to make it more useful and accessible for the Board.

- 2) The PC is proposing to change and update the web documents for the preparation of proposals to be submitted to FON for funding consideration. Major changes include: a new cover sheet with some different information, including a signature from the primary proposer; removal of the time frames for accepting proposal, i.e., agreeing to accept proposals at any time; consolidating the two proposal formats into one; providing a format for detailed budgets which will be required for each proposal; providing a format for reports which will be required for each project upon completion; and requiring a monitoring and evaluation section in each proposal. A draft of the new documents are attached (See Attachment 3).

Action Requested: Approval by the Board for the PC to move forward with developing this new set of documents. Upon approval of the Board, the PC would like to have this new set of documents on line within the next couple of months. Any suggestions for or comments about this new set of documents will be appreciated.

- 3) The PC is proposing that all approvals by the Board for funding of project proposals must be recorded in the Board Minutes, as the FON document of record. In the past some proposals were funded with the only record being in CEX. This PC proposal does not stop funding of projects between Board meetings. It stipulates, however, that projects funded between meetings by positive decisions of a majority of the Board members must be brought forward by the Projects Chair to be recorded in the succeeding Board meeting.

Action Requested: Approval by the board of a motion to the effect that all actions by the board for funding of project proposals must be recorded in the FON Board Minutes, as the official document recording use of funds provided to FON.

- 4) Similarly, the PC is proposing that all proposals approved by the Board for funding must become a part of the official FON record. The proposals approved for funding by FON are essentially a type of contract between the proposers and FON. These “contracts” should be made part of FON’s official record. Most all proposals are now received in digital format, so saving the proposals is not an onerous undertaking. It is only the final proposal, negotiated between the PC and the proposers, and recommended for funding by PC, that should be part of the official record. It will be the PC Chair’s responsibility to insure that the proposer has a copy of the final approved proposal as the final “contract”.

Action Requested: Approval by the board of a motion to the effect that all proposals recommended by the PC Chair for approval, and approved for funding by the FON Board shall be minuted and become a part of the official FON record. They shall be stored in digital format by the FON Secretary in the official FON document storage system. The digitally formatted document shall be provided to the FON Secretary by the PC Chair.

Project Activity

Moringa Projects. Moustapha Harou, the principal agent for the projects, informed FON that there had been some serious cost overruns in developing 3 of the 4 moringa gardens established last year. He submitted a spreadsheet showing those cost overruns. A majority of the Board approved paying the cost overruns and \$1,737 was sent to Moustapha Harou on May 12, 2017. (See Attachment 4 for the spreadsheet as documentation).

Action Requested: Record the FON payment of this cost overrun in the Board minutes.

Pending projects (See “A projects spreadsheet” on Dropbox):

Bagalam -- Discussed above. Basically, this proposal is on hold until a principal responsible agent for the project can be identified, some person/organization to whom FON might transmit any approved funds, and some way to track use of the funds. The PC proposal is to use Himma, but needs Board approval to do so.

Action Requested: None at this time, proposal on hold.

OURZP – Further training for women who have been involved in the 4 previous milk goat projects. This new project was received, reviewed, returned to OURZP for modifications, returned to the PC with most of the modifications requested, and is being presented to the Board for approval. (See Attachment 5 for the revised proposal from OURZP as documentation). The dollar amount being requested is \$2,200.

Action Requested: Board approval of this proposal.

ACHET’AKAL – Repair of walls of the girl’s school. Because of a lack of response from ACHET’AKAL about revisions requested by the PC for the project, the PC has informed ACHET’AKAL that the project proposal will be terminated.

If we do not receive a response by the next Board meeting, the proposal will be moved on the spreadsheet to having been rejected.

Action Requested: None. Proposal on hold.

ACHET'AKAL – Sheep fattening project. This project was recommended to not be funded by the technical review, if for no other reason than it was out of date. ACHET'AKAL has been informed that the proposal has been rejected. However, the PC suggested that a similar proposal might be reconsidered for next year, assuming it got resubmitted in a timely manner, and included several modifications suggested by the PC.

Action Requested: None. Proposal has been rejected by the PC.

CONUSA/IA_NE – Financial help for the Iowa_Nebraska chapter of CONUSA to ship medical supplies to a hospital in Diffa. The proposal was returned to CONUSA/IA_NE with the request for several modifications. The most important request was for more details in the cost of shipping the supplies, since the proposal was essentially a request for financial help with shipping costs. To date we have not received a modified proposal from CONUSA/IA_NE so the project proposal is on hold.

Action Requested: None. Proposal is on hold pending response to request for modifications.

Bonbatou – Introduce double cropping of improved sorghum. Bonbatou is in the process of implementing an FON funded project introducing improved Pommés du Sahel. Reportedly the current project is not going well. The PC has suggested the Bonbatou hold off on moving the sorghum project forward until John and Tom have had a chance to visit the project sites, while they are in Niger.

Action Requested: None. Proposal is on hold by mutual agreement of Bonbatou and the PC.

Moustapha Moringa -- The PC just recently proposals for 4 new moringa gardens in the Sakawa commune. These proposals are in the process of being studied and completed. Since they are all for the same thing, they may be combined and submitted as one proposal

Action Requested: None. Some action may be requested for one or more of them before the next Board meeting, since they are growing season dependent.

Attachment 2

Documentation of funding shortfalls for 3 of the Moringa projects.
May 12, 2017

J'ai revisité notre comptabilité et cette fois-ci, comme vous verrez dans le tableau ci-dessous et la même chose ci-joint, selon les chiffres que vous nous avez fournis, il y a des fonds qui restent un peu pour le projet de Attalabawa, tandis que pour Sakawa, Maibarewa et Guingui il y a des fonds qui manquaient. Je me rends compte que pour les plantations de Sakawa et Maibarewa c'était HIMMA qui servait comme intermédiaire entre les Friends of Niger et vous, et que c'était vous même qui avez reçu les fonds de notre part pour les projets de Attalabawa et Guingui.

Je sais que vous connaissez mieux les détails des dépenses pour tous les quatre projets que nous et que des autres. Il faudrait revoir ce nouveau tableau corrigé pour nous dire si maintenant c'est correct. Il faudrait nous excuser pour ce dérangement. Merci de votre patience.

Donc, encore une fois je vous demande de contrôler les chiffres pour nous. J'espère que c'est correct maintenant.

Malam Tijani
(John Hutchison)

| Nom du village: | 1. Sakawa | 2. Maibarewa | 3. Attalabawa | 4. Gingi |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Distance au puits | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Plantes | 500 | 700 | 600 | 900 |
| Plantation | 500,000 | 700,000 | 600,000 | 900,000 |
| Main d'oeuvres | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Clôture | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 |
| Fer de Clôture | 50,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| Ciment | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 |
| Outils (râteaux, arrosoirs, binettes) | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 |
| Peinture anti-rouille | 30,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 |
| Fonds Dépensés | 1,080,000 | 1,280,000 | 1,180,000 | 1,480,000 |
| Fonds reçus | 800,000 ? | 800,000 ? | 1,195,085 (598/\$) | 1,182,450 (591/\$) |
| +/- Différence | -280,000 | -480,000 | +15,085 | -297,550 |