

FRIENDS OF NIGER Board of Directors Meeting

Sunday, October 7, 2018, 7:04 p.m. ET

CALL TO ORDER – at 7:04 pm

Present: John B, Larry, Cheryl, Dale, Amy, Penni, Phyllis, Tom D.
Absent: Yari, Seybou, Douma, Meredith, Tom C, John H,

APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved

APPROVAL OF September 16 MINUTES – Cheryl - approved

REPORTS

President – John B – not a lot to report. Reminder we are in touch with Ambassador Whitaker. The initial inquiry was around how we want to be careful about how our funds are used (especially avoid funding terrorists). Now the conversation has changed, into how we can use local NGOs to implement. We do have a connection with the Ambassador small grants fund. We need to follow up on how that connection can help us.

Website - We need to upgrade the Wordpress site. Tom Lightbown is willing to let us use his funds to support the improvements. Dale has some ideas of how to engage an intern (potentially from MSU), paid or unpaid.

Treasurer – Larry: We got \$50 this month in donations. We spent about \$2000 on a new project.

Description	Amount
General contributions	\$13,705
Moringa/Potential Projects	7,500
Lightbown Funds	5,000
Jane Huser Funds	180
Savings	6.012
Total	32, 397

Info in table provided by Phyllis Forbes

There is no update on the Quick books conversion. Phyllis Shelton consultancy – Larry has sent her info, but hasn't heard back, will call next week We are awaiting info on how many hours it will take to do the work – if it is more than the number of hours she has offered, we can pay her for the difference. We already have Quickbooks, Phyllis Shelton will help us to use it better. Amy reiterated that we would like to have it done before the influx of funds at end of

year, and that it shouldn't take too long for her fix things up.

Projects Committee – Phyllis – We need to have a projects committee meeting. We will establish some systemic changes, including tracking, update names and email addresses on the website, update who gets proposals. We want a system where one person gets the proposal, logs and then distributes to all.

We want to award all funds that we have before fundraising request, if we can. There are still some questions about current proposals. We also want to include information on currently funded projects in annual letter.

Tom Lightbown – Phyllis had a long conversation with him. He is willing to spend money on increasing memberships, improving website, supporting a Board retreat, as well as a member get together just before. They didn't talk a lot about projects, but he had some concerns about BFR (sustainability and a few others. We want to be sure to honor his wishes, but not give him veto power on specific projects. We can delay the question of how to use his donation at this point. But we want to make sure there are limits to his control of decisions.

Tom D added that there were three BFR proposals, that came in as one request in three parts. We have funded two so far.

Dale and Amy will work on the website and get someone to take on website maintenance. Cheryl will talk to Steve about the email addresses and make a recommendation concerning where proposals are directed (single email address) and how they are distributed (Projects google group).

Sabit proposal – we need to respond to the proposal. It seems that no one has reviewed the proposal. Phyllis translated the proposal and sent to the project committee – transform goat milk into cheese and yogurt. \$2400

Phyllis reiterated that there will be projects committee in the next 2 weeks to review 4 or 5 projects to review, and then make up a plan for next year's process. Next year, we want to have published review dates will make the process more organized.

OLD BUSINESS

1) Fiscal Sponsorship – “pass-through”. Amy had a discussion with Clark Kerr from Apres Demain, Albino Children's Projects, carried out by a nonprofit based in Switzerland. We want to be able to provide a pass-thru service to members who want to send money to Niger. Amy drafted an agreement and shared with the Board and Clark. Although we already provide this service, it was never officially approved by the Board. We as a Board want to be sure that we know what is happening. For the Albino Children's project, we let other organizations use our 501c3 status, money goes through us to Switzerland and then is passed to the project in Niger. For all pass thru projects, we should be getting narrative and financial reports.

2) Transferring funds to Niger - we talked about the African Development University – Can we use them to transfer funds? Are there other NGOs that can help us? Mercy Corps – yes, but they also want to know how it will benefit them.

3) CEX – Amy – WE decided not to solicit content from members. We do want to include blurbs on active projects, a tribute to C. Paine Lucas, perhaps a “where are they” now feature.

- 4) Fundraising appeal letter – Dale – as we describe the different projects, we might offer members the opportunity to support specific projects if they are interested - let them earmark. We can also think about requesting corporate sponsorship (e.g. get Lisa Curtis & Kuli Kuli to contribute funds to support projects).
- 5) FON retreat – Phyllis & committee - had to delay because not everyone could make it. WE will wait til next year. Want to combine with a local RPCVs event. This can become part of an annual retreat process – hence a change of location from year to year.
- 6) Bylaws – Amy - Nothing to report at present. She and Larry are doing a strategic review, looking at key issues that need to be addresses - elections, member roles. They are working from example bylaws from other RPCV groups

NEW BUSINESS

1) Fundraising letter - Thank you Dale for taking on this important job. Dale has started pulling together information on currently-funded projects, with information from Larry and thank you to Tom Dechert for everything you’ve painstakingly placed in Dropbox over the years regarding projects!

Tom said “All the projects are in Dropbox, so information should be available. He is happy to answer any more questions

2) 2019 Operating Plan and Budget (what do we want to do and how much do we want to spend) – Dale. We can’t do a budget for projects until we know how much money we have to work with. But we can project costs for website support, Quickbooks, presence at events in Niger, member events in USA, retreat costs. We need to determine how much of this can we do with the Lightbown funds. **Phyllis and Dale said they would develop a draft budget.**

COMMENTS/FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Cheryl met with Maggie Janes at Mercy Corps – she is willing to help us with some professional relationships, etc. Not ready to be on the Board
- Merou - setting up rural radio stations all over Niger
- RFP – due date is October 15 – we have not heard whether we are going to get a lot of responses.

ADJOURN 8:26 pm

NEXT MEETING – November 4, 2018, 7:00 p.m. ET