

AGENDA for FON Board Meeting, Sunday, Sept 16, 2018, at 7 p.m. EDT

1. Call to order: John B - 703
2. Members present, Quorum: yes
Present: John B, Phyllis, Larry, Cheryl, Tom C, Dale, John H, Amy, Penni,
Absent: Yari, Seybou Douma, Meredith,
3. Discuss Agenda – additions?
Added item 12c about pass through donations
Recommended that agenda development start with follow-up list from previous minutes.
4. Approve August 5, 2018 meeting minutes – Cheryl
Minutes Approved
Some discussion about the level of detail needed for minutes. Penni recommended including key decisions, less of the discussion. Others have provided feedback that the detail is helpful for those who were absent.
Agreed to highlight decisions, add more detail as possible and appropriate.
5. Entertain motion: Expand Board to 15; elect Meredith to Board [*1] - John B
Motion made and seconded
Larry suggested we wait until we finish the review of bylaws,. Several agreed that more people on a phone call might be difficult to follow. It was also noted that Merri is not available to be more active right now. Also members do not have to be on the Board to be engaged, participate in committees, etc.
Agreed to table the vote, and seek other ways to engage membership.
6. Treasurer's Report – review/approve: Larry
 - a) Treasurer's Report: FON Sept 2018 Working Funds Balance
Attached treasurer's report was clear and accepted. Larry noted that
 - There are no outstanding paypal funds.
 - Balance and contributions are around \$15,000; after BFN obligation is paid, it will be about \$13,705.
 - b) Report on problem sending funds for projects/lessons learned: Larry
Attached memo "Problem sending funds" from the Treasurer describes problems with sending funds - money gram. Walking around with large sums of cash is uncomfortable, can be a big problem if things don't work.
No Action Noted
 - c) Report on CPA Phyllis Shelton setting up bookkeeping system: Larry
There was a slight delay while Phyllis was busy, but the pro bono consultancy will move forward soon.

7. Membership: John B and Amy

All records are up to date, based on info from Larry
Access File sent to Amy – will look at converting to Excel,
Updates are tedious, want to try to keep work of updating shared

8. CEX – request for information; discuss ideas for structure; timing: Amy

Amy suggests we have a standard set of topics for each issue – check in monthly on each topic area (project updates, Board updates, diaspora updates, current events in Niger, culture). We won't cover all in every issue, plan to include links, info from Facebook, involving members more, aim to issue three or four times a year.

- Mini-CEX in August – the newsletter was easy to do. Suggest we limit sending articles in between issues to avoid email fatigue.

- Penni – We are not doing paper newsletters any more, so we should be able to do some info more often

John B – wants to keep up more frequent contact. Keep membership engaged,

9. Annual Fundraising Appeal letter 12/1/18? Discuss method, timing, budget

John B - Fundraising appeal – suggested sending a letter based on the examples from the last two years (written by Jackie Howell). Need to note whether the letter actually generated additional revenue – is the letter getting the impact we want. Mailing includes remit envelope, check off sheet (tailored by name?), plus letter and additional project info. Check off sheet makes it easier to track what money is coming in and for what purposes. (and from whom?)

- Can we document whether there was a jump in revenue after the appeal letter? Need to get something out by Dec 1.

- It is a lot of work to put together mailer. Letter, and envelope, we could stuff at the retreat.

Dale – will take a shot at writing the letter. – what is the return address.

10. Social Media

a) FON Facebook Page: Dale

Things are going well – Dale is posting a lot, getting followers, a lot of Nigeriens, posting stuff as he finds things.

b) Website – perhaps Lightbown funds can be used for redesign. Amy has ideas for recruits

- No webmaster at present. Tom Lightbown said his donation can be used to upgrade the website, but still need someone to supervise the process. Some Board members had thoughts about potential candidates. First we need Steve to develop specs for what is needed for the site.

11. Niger News:

a) Diaspora: Yari s absent - no updates

b) Shared info on Flooding*2, but there was no strong candidate for donations

c) CONUSA: Douma absent – no updates. Douma has not attended in some time. Can we verify that he is still willing to participate. **John H will reach out.**

12. Projects Committee: Phyllis F

a) Committee decided to do an RFP do review moringa projects. Not sure how much it will cost. Want board approval to send out the RFP. Should cost about \$5000. Phyllis will send summary to share with minutes. Attached.

There was discussion as to whether we want to do this sort of evaluation of all projects. Agreed that yes, we want to think about a strategy over time to ensure our money is well spent, but for now, we are focused just on this group of projects so we can learn and fix problems.

Motion carries about putting out RFP for an award not to exceed \$5000

- b) The overall proposal solicitation process is not clear. Proposals don't come in consistently to the same source, no tracking numbers. We need to develop a clear strategy, tracking system, possibly discuss at retreat. Better describe the process that Tom D has been following (receiving proposal, doing initial review, sharing summary with other Boards, sharing summary report.)
- Penni - we need to respond to a proposal submitted by Sabit. He is linked to other projects, so we want to be responsive
- **Projects committee will review by the end of September**, want to finish this year's money by the end of the year. Then send out a solicitation after we have new resources from the annual letter.
- c) If we are serving as a pass thru for other donors, then we need to know what the money is going toward. Albino children's project [*3] wants to pass funds through us. We need a policy, possibly a lawyer, or a local NGO. Write up who does what. Need a deduction statement for the org passing thru us.

13. Follow-up on items from last meeting and Any other business

a) Senator Booker letter? – No follow-up yet.

b) Board Retreat – select/confirm date: Amy and Phyllis F

Agreed on Boston the weekend of Nov 30th for the retreat

Expect to complete the fundraising mailing at the same time

There is an AirB&B where most of us should be able to fit. Amy and Phyllis will make arrangements

14. Report on Cheryl's visit to Niger: Cheryl

Met a number of project people, people were very positive about FON and our contributions.

15. Setting up more indiv & group email addresses like FONSecretary, Projects Committee: Cheryl, John B

Still figuring out what is going on. Setting up a google group for Projects committee.

16. Begin bylaws review: Amy

There are a lot of things that need to be addressed. we have a lot of processes that are unclear, need to agree on basic concepts.

Larry – bylaws need revamping, is there a better template? They have been a constraint for awhile. Look for another Friends group with a template we can follow.

- Want to discuss the big “final issues” at the retreat –
- Cheryl – we should have a clear mission and vision before we decide on new bylaws

17. Next Meeting:

- **Will have a short meeting on Oct 7. Meeting after will be Nov 4.**

Adjourn at 8:20

Footnotes:

[*1] Entertain motion to expand FON Board to a maximum of 15 members (currently the max is 11 and we have 11). If approved, entertain motion to add Meredith McGehee to Board as Member At Large (would increase the Board to 12 members).

[*2] We had an article in the mini CEX (Aug 24), but didn't appeal for donations, which, if we did, could they be pass through? Yari mentioned Soudouré, the most affected village near Niamey, and contacting the Embassy and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.

[*3] The last two years **Au Coeur du Niger** albino children project of Niger III & IV RPCVs has passed several thousands dollars through FON for charitable donation deductions. Could individual FON members fund projects, like solar electrification of health clinics in their village, the same way?