

Governor's Task Force meeting of May 19, 2005

In attendance were Sid Armstrong, Linda Coulston, Donna Davis, John Delano, Brian Magee, Galen McKibben, Sharen Peters, Alberta Rivera, John Scibek, Peter Sullivan, Sue Talbot, and Josh Turner.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. With no new contributions and only \$30 in expenses since the last report, the current fund balance is \$7,868.12. Sue passed around a sheet asking members to sign up for approaching past donors who have not given recently. She asks any member who has signed up for a new name to inform her so that there will be no double "asks." There was some discussion about our fund raising committee, Tim McCauley and Ralph Yaeger and how they can help us. Ralph has indicated that he would like to stay on the Task Force. Sid suggested that Sue ask Tim Baker if Ralph can be the official representative of the Montana Wilderness Association.

Brian Magee gave a report on the successful Panel on the Non-Profit Sector forum. Despite bad weather which kept some from attending there were 12 invitees at the morning round table and 75 at the afternoon session for the public. A few of the highlights:

- The panel meets May 20 to make final recommendations. We can comment on these, via their website, until early June. Senator Grassley plans to introduce legislation in June or July.
- Federal auditing and non-cash donation issues are still possible in the legislation.
- Congress is being told to back off on some issues.
- States like Montana are different and the Panel heard that message.
- The Panel wishes to position itself as a moderator while still dealing with some of the worst abuses.

Some Task Force members who attended the two meetings added their comments:

- It is important for advisers, not just the non-profits, to hear all the recommendations.
- The Montana Land Trust Alliance, as an umbrella organization, is planning to publish best-practices guidelines which will help groups "clean up their own acts" instead of needing legislation.

Some general comments from the Panel:

- They recognize the fear of too much regulation.
- They understand the cost of audits.
- There is concern about the limitation on non-cash donations and how that would affect non-profits like Goodwill.

Galen discussed our website briefly. He will be bringing our minutes up to date on the site. He would like to include a report on the meeting with the Governor when that occurs, with a photo if possible. That meeting was discussed. Sue and, if possible, other Task Force members will ask the Governor if Lt. Gov, Bohlinger as official liaison to the Task Force. They will inform the Governor about Task Force activities and the success of the Tax Credit in building permanent charitable resources. They will also discuss the possibility of holding a "Conversation" next fall. Josh, Sid, Donna and Brian have agreed to serve as a committee for preliminary plans on the "Conversation".

The Task Force discussed the meeting we plan to have with the representatives from the Department of Revenue. It was agreed that the list of discussion items in the April Task Force minutes was very good. We decided to send, in advance, our Fact Sheet as well as the list of discussion items to the representatives, Dan Bucks and Jim McKeon. We decided that, for the meeting with them, we should meet either at the School Board office or at DOR, if that is possible.

There was a discussion about how to learn the kind of information we seek if there are many electronic filings (breakdown on type of gift, to which charity, in which county etc.). An important question to ask DOR is whether or not they recognize the benefit of the Tax Credit to Montana and Montanans. Is there software which DOR could use in the returns that would give this information?

John Scibek brought us up to date on the CARE Act, which is very costly and the IRA Rollover which may be more costly than first thought. Action on these bills may be delayed for a long time depending on how the filibuster issue goes in Congress.

Galen brought up another idea for our web site. It would be informative to add information about each county: size, population, economy etc. We could get the information from each county's web site. Although a huge task for one person, we could assign 4 or 5 counties to each Task Force member who could then email the information to Galen. He also pointed out that there were 35 new private foundations created in Montana last year. It would be interesting for us to find out about them: their assets, their board members etc.

That led to a discussion of the 990 form, its complexity and inconsistencies. It should be possible to make it more transparent and easier to fill out.

The meeting adjourned. Our next meetings will be June 16 and July 21. Depending on attendance of DOR representatives, our location will be chosen and announced.