

MINUTES
**GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON
ENDOWMENTS AND PHILANTHROPY**

Thursday, October 18th, 2007
Helena's Exploration Works Center

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL TASK FORCE MEMBERS: If you haven't had a chance to do so yet, please take a few minutes to fill out the spreadsheet that Dorcie e-mailed to all, asking you to rank the suggestions that came out of the Governor's Conversation. *Thank you!*

IN ATTENDANCE

Sue Talbot (chair), Galen McKibben (host), Linda Coulston, Donna Davis, Dorcie Dvarishkis, Spence Hegstad, Jean Jenkins, Amy Kelley, Brian Magee, Dennis Peterson, Major Robinson, Judy Wing.

SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Sid noted a correction: the first paragraph on page 3 should read "an advisory council appointed by Executive order" rather than "State order." **Amy will make that change before sending the minutes to Galen to post on the web site.** Spence moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Sid seconded the motion. All approved by voice vote.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Brian reported that August had been fairly quiet – more activity occurred in September. There is \$15,000 on the books for the sponsorship of the L&Ls; the expenses for the sessions will come out of this and the remainder will be GTF income. Brian also noted that there will be a \$1,500 expense for the Indian Philanthropy project, which the GTF approved at the last meeting. The balance is \$14,000 of which \$6,700 is in the Conversation budget.

Dorcie asked how GTF members can find out who's contributed. Brian sends the list of donors to Sue to send thank you's. Dorcie would like to thank certain people she approached as well. **Brian will send the list to Amy as well, who will distribute to other GTF members.**

UPDATE ON L&L SESSIONS

The session in Sidney was already held, with 20 attendees. John Eastman reported to Sue that the event went well, with good turnout from Sidney, Glasgow, and Glendive. He said that some bugs need to be worked out, but overall the presentation was very well received and the venue was perfect with an excellent lunch. Sue passed around the manual they are distributing to each attendee.

Sue said she had seen the list of those registered to attend the Missoula session, and that nearly all of the nonprofits were represented, but not as much the legal or financial entities. She went around to people she knew in those fields and handed out the

brochure. She noted that Jim Soft has an excellent reputation with these people, and all she spoke to said they'd like to attend. Sue thanked MNA and Yellowstone for all of their excellent work. Brian noted that if all registrants attend and if expenses fall out as budgeted, the net revenue will be ~\$23,000. Sue said that some of that money should go to the Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch Foundation and MNA for all of their efforts and out-of-pocket travel expenses.

There was an announcement that on October 25th, from 9:30 – 4:30, the Big Sky Institute will hold the Montana Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness Grantmaking Program at Jorgenson's in Helena. Those interested should contact Mike Schechtman.

Sue passed around a *Missoulian* circular, with a wonderful discussion of nonprofits flourishing in western Montana. Amy mentioned a recent opinion piece by Robert Reich, in which he proposed that charitable tax deductions be given only for contributions to charities, as opposed to well-off entities like Harvard University and New York's Metropolitan Opera. There was some discussion about the difference between the Harvards and the smaller colleges, hospitals, etc. Major mentioned the difficulty in fundraising for tribal colleges. Most agreed it was an interesting subject but a slippery slope.

INDIAN PHILANTHROPY PROJECT UPDATE

Major passed around a preliminary concept paper for the project, noting that the partners in the project ultimately will formulate the final concept. He reported that a group of about 20 representatives of Indian nonprofits, foundations in Montana, and government attended the first meeting on October 4th. He thanked the GTF for helping fund their travel expenses. He said the gathering was a great success, that all were anxious to share their stories, strengths, and needs. There was truly a great interest in this initiative. Everyone in the room had a chance to speak about their programs, with a lot of back and forth. He said they got through half of the agenda; the group was really eager to meet again, at the end of November in Helena. He will make sure those who couldn't attend before will be there.

Sid added that the gathering was clearly unique and historic. People were really grateful to have the opportunity to get together, to share information and make contacts, and to begin building networks for collaboration to truly build the infrastructure in Indian nonprofits. The foundation people were equally grateful; one foundation pledged a \$5,000 contribution immediately. Linda Carlson will make \$2,000 available from the Governor's Office of Community Affairs. One of the most important things was that it wasn't a top-down discussion, it was absolutely from the bottom up. This coalition will shape the initiative. It has the Governor's enthusiastic support. The Kellogg Foundation trustees and staff are in Montana right now for the first time, making site visits; they are very enthusiastic about the project and met with the Governor yesterday. Major gave them a quick sketch of what we're doing; they expressed much interest.

Brian agreed that energy in the group was something he'd not witnessed before. It was a great first step. He reiterated that what comes out of this is as yet undefined. He noted that he often hears the comment that there are too many nonprofits in Montana, but when you take it to the reservation communities it's not the same thing at all. There are many shining examples, but the challenge is to harness what they've learned from the successes in order to help other native American communities do the same. Brian will be looking at the MNA budget soon to see how they can help.

Dorcie asked Major about the scope of Indian nonprofits in the state. Major said they came up with a preliminary list: there are about 35 or 40 (both on and off the reservation) Indian nonprofits. They've only identified 7 to 10 foundations that are Montana-based with a focus on Indian issues. The Harvard project on Indian development documented that nationally only 1/20 of 1% of foundation money going to Indian issues. **Sid said she can send this information to Amy to distribute to GTF members.**

Sue thought that this was a good first step, especially letting foundations know how they can help. Major said that the Kellogg foundation is thankful that we are helping them reach the right nonprofits. He noted that this isn't just about strengthening the Indian communities, but the surrounding areas as well. The plan from here is to bring back a report to the GTF, foundations, and other interested folk after the 2nd meeting.

Major passed around brochure from the Montana Indian Business Alliance. He described it not as a nonprofit but as a coalition of entities enthusiastic about changing the dynamic on the reservations by creating a stable economy, with tribal leaders speaking the language of business as they lead.

FUTURES DISCUSSION

Brian was unclear about where the group wanted to go from here after the good discussion at the last meeting. Sid reviewed what the Futures Committee had recommended, the 4 alternatives it proposed. She reiterated from the last meeting that there was great consensus that the first three, for various reasons, were not workable, and that somehow the GTF should incorporate into the MNA program. She reminded that there was further discussion at that meeting about whether we might be able to keep the connection with the Governor; the general conclusion was that neither a sitting Governor nor MNA would want to have joint control. Sue thought that perhaps the GTF had enough of a reputation by now that the name could stand as the "Task Force on Endowments and Philanthropy" alone, without Governor's name.

Brian doesn't know the position of the MNA board yet; they wanted the GTF to go through the process, and want to honor that process. Like the theme of the Governor's Conversation: "It's a New Day." He thought the situation very different from 10 years ago. For example, there are two separate groups talking about funders tours right now. We're at the nexus of a lot of information and initiatives underway. MNA has played a neutral role so that it can play the role of convenor if needed. There are some program aspects that MNA is already taking on that dovetail well into what the GTF is doing – the L&Ls, for example.

Judy thought that much would depend on where we go from here and how likely we are to be involved in legislation. If we focus on capacity building and promoting philanthropy, that would fit in well with MNA, since they're already doing a wonderful job in those areas. Dennis agreed that Brian and the MNA board are quality people, which makes him feel very comfortable about incorporating into MNA. Having some direction from a quality Board of Directors would help set the direction. Sid thought it an advantage to have the defense of the tax credit and all policy/legislation pertaining to nonprofits under one roof. Dennis had some concern about a future Governor creating another GTF – he'd want to make sure we maintain communication with the Governors office in the future. Sid thought that highly unlikely if the job is already being handled.

Sue laid out what she saw as potential hurdles to cross with MNA:

1. Money. Who raises the money for the ongoing work w/in MNA?
2. How easy will it be to achieve the "marriage"?
3. How independent can the TF be? What happens if the MNA board and the TF see things differently on some issue?
4. Can we keep the visibility of our mission? (She scratched this off the list because the mission would be the same as MNA.)

Brian laid out some of the assumptions that the MNA board would have:

1. Any policy and program issues would have to be part of MNA. They would go out and raise the money, as they currently are, through memberships, income-generating activities (e.g. conference fees and sponsorships), and some foundations. If MNA has a program, they feel it's their responsibility to get it funded. The point is not how it happens. Of course if the best way to do the fundraising would be to continue doing what the TF is doing now.
2. On bringing it all together: if there were a recommendation from the GTF to the MNA board – i.e. outlining what would stay the same, what would change – the board would consider that recommendation.
3. The actual group or entity would clearly become an advisory group to MNA. The analogy would be the MNA policy council, which advises the MNA board. They have three standing committees on the board, but the policy council is unique in the way it operates. It would not be a situation where the TF would be able to act on its own, but the thinking would be done in that group, which would bring it to the MNA board.

Major reiterated that whatever recommendation the GTF makes also needs to be brought to the Governor. In his experience, if you bring the Governor 3 options, he'll come back with 3 more. We need to ask him where he wants to go – it is the Governor's Task Force.

Brian: The third leg of this stool is that there's an assumption made by the Futures Committee that there needs to be some sort of collaborator. I think it's a good assumption, but we should consider it. Is there a role to play? Some might say it's the LAST thing we need, another coordinating group.

Sue suggested that, if we decide we want to become part of MNA, one persuasive thing to point out to the Governor is that we will soon be without a fiscal sponsor.

Dorcie suggested we look at what we are here for – what does the state need? Who is missing in this discussion? Does MNA have a philanthropic initiative from which this might be a natural outgrowth? And Judy's comment of "form vs function" – if there is a reason to have an entity that is state-based, independent from MNA and the nonprofit community, then maybe we still consider maintaining the connection to government.

Sid pointed out that with option #3, the Governor has been trying to reduce the number of advisory councils, and the Lt. Governor said the same thing. Dorcie understood that, but reiterated her point that if there is something that can't happen UNLESS it's government, separate from MNA, than she doesn't want to close that door. "I think we're all rowing in the same direction in terms of mission."

MNA's next board meeting is November 9th. Sue asked Brian whether we need to do some work between now and then to present something to the board – at least a sketchy idea of where we think we're going – or is it too soon? Brian thought it sufficient to update the board at this point, that it would be premature to say "this is what we're proposing," but it might be an opportunity to get some sense of whether there is interest among board members in pursuing that idea.

Sue wondered about the timing of visiting with the Governor, whether that should come before the MNA board meeting. Judy didn't see some necessary sequence of events, that it would be better to take the time to get more input. Dennis thought that the Governor would want an actual proposal, and we're not ready for that yet. **Sid suggested that the Futures Committee put together a brief memo for the Governor on what we're doing, where we are – something not more than a few paragraphs – letting him know that we don't have a formal recommendation but how would he want us to proceed?** All thought that a good idea. Amy noted that the GTF has already received some input from the Lt. Governor.

Dorcie asked Brian how much interaction MNA had with the administration? Brian said quite a bit – with any policy program you need to have good lines of communication, which is a capacity MNA has been building over time. It's their intent over the next 2-3 years to begin to build some very good, open, working relationships with many entities. They want independence backed up by a strong voice. Brian noted that he is on the National Nonprofit Council and Chair of its Public Policy committee – so there's a nice connection with MNA and the national association.

Sue noted that, under MNA, we would have the ability to rotate leadership within the TF. She thought that it has been advantage having herself as chair because she is not employed by anyone. If we rotate the chair, no one entity would have an agenda.

RANKING CONVERSATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Dorcie had sent out a survey to all GTF members asking them to rank the suggestions that came out of the Governor's Conversation. Her thought was that it would help inform the discussion of where we go from here, getting group input. She had heard back from several members who filled out the rankings, and had the attending members do the same. She reported that there were votes in all categories, and several suggestions for possible partnerships (some already forged, some new).

What did we learn? There were votes all over the map; some ranked higher, some were left behind. It doesn't necessarily mean that those initiatives won't move forward – some are already being picked up by others. But in terms of budgeting the Conversation money and moving forward within the GTF, it might show where the interest lies. Sid didn't think it was enough of a sampling yet to make any sort of decision. A lot of the suggestions were not very clear. Dorcie and Judy will continue to collect and tally the information, and will report on the rankings at the next meeting.

Someone noted that National Philanthropy Day is November 9.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Thursday, November 15th. The likely meeting place will be the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council.

Dorcie announced that she will be leaving the UM Foundation in February, and that she is investigating her options for the future.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.