

Governor's Task Force on Endowments
And Philanthropy
MINUTES
Governor's Task Force
on Endowments and Philanthropy
Thursday, January 17, 2008

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sue Talbot (Chair), Sid Armstrong, Barbara Anthony, Linda Coulston, Dorcie Dvarishkis, Spence Hegstad, Judy Held, Jean Jenkins, Amy Kelley, Brian Magee, Tim McCauley, Galen McKibben, Dennis Peterson, Bill Pratt, Peter Sullivan, Bob Vogel, Judy Wing.

NOVEMBER MINUTES

Sid made a motion to approve as distributed; Peter seconded the motion. All approved by voice vote.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Brian distributed the financial statement for January through November 2007. The two "big ticket" revenue items were the Lunch & Learn registrations (\$15,390 – just under 400 attendees) and sponsorships (\$15,000). He reported that the cost incurred by the L&L sessions (catering, facilities rental, etc.) totaled between \$17-18,000 (this does NOT include time spent by Jim Soft) with net profit of about \$12,000. After total expenses, the net balance in the combined GTF account is \$20,616 (with \$5,235 of that in the Conversation account).

Brian reminded that the group still needs to discuss what to do with the net from the L&L sessions. They are unrestricted funds. Sue complimented the success of the sessions, sharing a comment from an attendee: "Jim Soft is so good!" Dennis agreed; an attendee commented to him "He's on another level!" Judy thought this was the best presentation Jim's ever done on these issues (having attended several over the years). Brian reported that the reviews by participants were excellent. As a token of their appreciation, MNA gave Jim a plant and a gift certificate to take his staff out to lunch.

JIM SOFT RESIGNATION

Sue read aloud an e-mail from Jim, who couldn't attend the meeting, which in part read:

"After much thought and reflection on the role that I play on the GTF, I feel it is time for me to formally resign. As you know my focus is primarily public policy and education and I do feel that those skill sets can perhaps best be utilized in the MNA setting....Should the GTF continue on, I will happily network with GTF towards whatever common goals we aspire..."

It was not happy news for the GTF, but all understood how incredibly busy Jim is, and very much appreciated his offer to assist in future efforts.

IRA ROLLOVER

Brian reported: no good news. The bill did not pass – the IRA rollover extension didn't make it through the process. He explained that Congress assumes it will cost too much, despite our

arguments that it will actually make money in the long run. Barbara said that Crescendo and others are telling people to hang onto any marketing materials on the IRA rollover and be ready to print and get them out “when” it happens. That is to say: many are hopeful that it will pass in the future.

INDIAN PHILANTHROPY PROJECT

Sid reported that the project is in a transition. The new Indian Affairs coordinator in the Governor’s office has a lot on her plate. Major Robinson has moved back to Lame Deer, so there is also a new economic development person in the Governor’s office, who is also learning the job. Everyone is trying to figure out how to best facilitate this transition. Major is helping – he is the director of a new nonprofit, The People’s Partners for Community Development. Sid noted that, eventually, this project needs to be run by an Indian nonprofit. There will be a meeting in Billings next week coinciding with the Montana Indian Business Alliance (January 23rd). Bill said that the meeting will focus on the direction the project might head.

Bill reported that some informal things have happened: Indian nonprofits have met foundations, with some being asked to apply for funding. Reno Charette, director of MSU-Billings’ Native American Studies Program, has an intern who has expressed interest in compiling a directory of Indian nonprofits in Montana, which will be a critical resource for foundations and the nonprofit community. Bill noted that there is interest in the project – people are hearing about it and want information. The Montana-Wyoming Funders Group wants to do a Montana tour, much like the recent funders tour in Alaska, where they want to see Indian programs. Major and others from the IPNG have been involved in that effort. Bill shared one story: someone who participated in the first Indian Philanthropy Project meeting said that, if it weren’t for that gathering, he would never have had the courage to approach a foundation.

WEBSITE

Amy and Galen have been working to update the website in some areas. Amy suggested using the “Legislation” section to inform visitors about legislation *other than* the Montana Endowment tax credit – such as the federal IRA rollover. Others agreed. **Amy will draft language** (referring to the websites of the Council on Foundations, NCPG.org, the Independent Sector, and the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation) and forward it to Galen.

FUTURES DISCUSSION

Sue reported on the meeting she and Brian had with the Governor. He had the letter she’d previously sent with him, and knew exactly what they wanted to talk about. He was very positive about the idea of NOT being the “Governor’s Task Force” as he thinks there are already too many advisory councils, etc. — he said we’d be doing him a favor in that regard. But he also said that he’d put his name on programs (like the Governor’s Conversation) where it makes sense, and asked that we let him know if there are ways we can use the leverage of the Governor’s office to further the mission.

To start the discussion, the question was asked: What is the long-term vision for the GTF? Bill explained that organizational culture is very difficult to change after 13 years. On the other hand, the philanthropic landscape has changed over those years. He reminded that there is a proposal on the table from the Futures Committee: *“Return the Governor’s Task Force on*

Endowments and Philanthropy to its original mission. . . . AND. . . . Develop a formal and broad-based Philanthropy Development Initiative led by a Philanthropy Leadership Council or Consortium under the aegis of MNA.”

Bill laid out the four-part vision:

1. Focus on public policy
2. Bring together the major stakeholders (providing a networking and/or mentoring function, recognizing the new landscape, bringing in new entities, and creating a safe environment where information can be shared)
3. Communication and marketing philanthropy (he noted that the only way that’s going to happen is if we raise enough money to hire someone to play that role)
4. Leadership development

Peter thought that Bill hit on an important point: how do we let the general public know what we’re doing? Bill noted that we’ve had some success stories marketing some of the 50 local community foundations in this state. Park Co. has been able to hire the first fulltime executive director. But many are struggling. They need to be at the table, too. There was some discussion of the “Horizons” program that has been training people to be leaders in smaller communities – they have an interest in philanthropy as well. Judy Held noted that ALL of us should be focusing on training younger people to replace ourselves in the future.

Judy Wing added that all of this work needs to happen on a local level: *local* public policy and *local* mentoring. She thinks it would be valuable to have local groups be part of MNA. She doesn’t see the GTF as having a very big agenda on the state level right now, outside of the tax credit. Bill didn’t see these as mutually exclusive. Pragmatically, there is an issue of funding – national and regional funders are going to respond more favorably to a statewide proposal than to a bunch of local proposals. Perhaps we want to look at an organizational structure that is set up on a local membership level. Bill said that both BSI and MNA are examples of organizations receiving funding on a statewide level but then disseminating information, training, convening, etc. locally.

Brian explained that MNA spent its first 5 or 6 years building a good foundation base to carry them forward. This year the board is spending time developing the 5-10 year vision. There will be discussion about what the major issues out there are – things like the baby boomers retiring from nonprofit leadership. From that discussion they’ll be developing a business plan on how to get where the organization wants to be in the near future. One of MNA’s “buckets” is philanthropy. He thought that the GTF Futures discussion can help inform the MNA board in this work. Bill added that the report on the philanthropic landscape would be a good piece of information for them to read. Judy Wing suggested they read the Governor’s Conversation report as well.

Tim noted that about half of the people in the room belong to MNA. He asked whether the future GTF might be a subcommittee of MNA? Judy Held thought that even if the GTF members were not involved in the MNA board, she’d see MNA as being the nonprofit voice, and that “the philanthropic boat is going to rise with the nonprofit voice.” She thinks becoming part of MNA is the way to get the most leverage. All of MNA’s work has already indirectly helped

us with philanthropy. Sid reminded that as we talk about philanthropy in the broad sense, we should remember our initial mission: endowments. That still needs to remain a central focus.

Dennis said that there are so many groups doing similar things – it's no wonder the public is confused. Even the staff of these groups – they can explain what their group does but not what the others do. He wondered if one day MNA might have the power to say to a new organization “Wait – there are already all of these groups out there, why form another?” Bill saw that as an organizational development issue for MNA.

Sue wondered how the proposal should be made: “does the bride or the groom propose?” Do we go to MNA and say “we want to get married” or do we wait for MNA to say “you are the bride of our dreams”? Bill reiterated what Brian previously said: if GTF makes a proposal to MNA, the board's first question will be “what do you want to do?” He thought that GTF needs to make the proposal, taking into considerations questions like: How do we reduce competition among nonprofits? How do we support local efforts? How do we carry out recommendations from the Governor's Conversation?

Brian suggested that GTF come forward with a proposal that dovetails with the planning of the MNA board right now – present an opportunity for the MNA board to consider. “We've looked at the philanthropic landscape, this is where we want to go, and MNA is in the best position to take this on.” He suggested that the proposal focus on “here's what we'd like to see happen over the next 10 years and we need a vehicle to make it happen.” This group is well positioned to help the MNA board understand what's happening (and not happening) in philanthropy in Montana. Brian thought it perfectly appropriate for this group to suggest what role MNA can play. The structure can follow.

Sue thought that a small group needs to hammer out this proposal. Judy Held said that whoever works on the proposal needs to keep in mind the role of the public policy council at MNA. Brian said one option is to ask the Futures Committee to take a cut at a proposal. Judy Wing reiterated that any proposal should consider the recommendations from the Governors Conversations.

Peter made a motion that Sue call on the Futures Committee to make a proposal to MNA on how we see our future and how it might work to fold into the MNA. Dennis seconded the motion. Tim asked for clarification: the motion gives Sue the authority but mentions the Futures Committee – is the idea that the Committee negotiates with MNA or that it comes back to the TF with a draft proposal? Bill proposed that the Committee come back to the TF to refine the proposal before going to MNA. Dorcie asked whether we want to pull in some other key players — not currently involved in the GTF — in the preparation of this proposal? Bill agreed that this would be a good preparatory step. Sue had a concern about making the committee bigger. Dennis suggested that we present the proposal to MNA with the caveat that we did NOT take the time to discuss it with the larger community. Sid agreed – it would take far too much time to get others up to speed.

All approved by voice vote, with the friendly amendment that Bill agreed to do this work and to get feedback from a few outside key players. Bill noted that he received minimal feedback on the Futures Committee documents. **Sue requested that there be more feedback from Task**

Force members on this draft proposal. Bill suggested starting with an outline – that the group provide feedback on whether anything is missing. Bill asked about a deadline; Brian suggested that we have something for the MNA board to consider for their end-of-April meeting. Tim thought this was a reasonable deadline, giving the group February and March to develop the proposal.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on the regular third Thursday, which is **February 21st**.

Meeting adjourned 12:45 p.m.