

VFP Board Meeting Minutes - Phone Conference Call November 16, 2009

Present: Goldshlag, Bolger, Williams, Ferner, McPhearson (Executive Director), Mayers, Adams, Collins, May

President Ferner—call to order 6:00 CST

Agenda approved.

ED Report:

Last week attended Black is Back meeting in DC—purpose was to show that Blacks are critical of Barack Obama. “Obama is white power in Black face” was a popular theme.

Cindy Sheehan—Peace of the Action—encampment on the ellipse to disrupt traffic around White House & Capitol Hill in conjunction with ANSWER’s action in DC. Recommend endorsement of action. Mayers wants to see more information about the action before endorsing. ED will send additional information to the BoD.

Network for Responsible Global Policy event--Progressive organizations working in 2 – 3 states to mobilize progressive activists in “non progressive” states. Idea is to network with disparate organizational operatives who feel/are isolated. Network subscribers would get regular emails to update on current activities. Outcome is to push congress when a critical issue is pending through grass roots advocacy. Network organizational members expected to provide names of their members in the target state or to commit to send e-blasts to members in the state. No solicitations or other use of email names. Citizens for Global Solutions with Ford Foundation and UN funding. ED will send additional information about the project.

Ferner—give update on Portland Hotel. Tim Blanchard local chapter member working with BoD planning committee on securing accessible meeting site. Locals are surveying other resources to find a suitable hotel. We’ll break the contract with Eastland because they don’t meet access standards.

Williams—chapter wants to move quickly to secure a Convention location. They have identified at least two alternatives that are accessible.

ED—Foster spent a few days helping to bring E-Tapestry up to speed in National Office. Staff is inputting information into the databank to facilitate fundraising, etc. Everyone who has not renewed membership will be given one final opportunity to renew. If they don’t they will be expunged from the active database.

Continuing to work on developing the fundraising calendar

ED—Strategic Planning Work Plan Committee still trying to meet.

ED—end of year fundraising appeal to go out without within two weeks.

Goldshlag—what's up with mix up with name and address on snail mail sent out?

Most BoD members didn't get appeal, even with incorrect name. Back to the drawing board.

Treasurer's Report—Mayers

Summary of October financials sent out to BoD via email. Requires careful examination. \$36K drop in one month, but substantial amount transferred per mandate from funder, UU Foundation. We are still \$12K+ short for month. Discretionary spending capability is currently \$110K (refund from U of MD not included). (\$170K with U of MD refund). Donations from major donors and grant \$ seriously deficient. Convention nearly broke even.

Bolger—re Case for Support status? Has been sent, but no systematic follow up. ED identifies fundraising as his responsibility and that of the BoD.

Goldshlag—we need to be serious about fundraising in light of our budget shortfall. Recommend consider asking each chapter to host a fundraiser for National VFP in addition to finding major donors.

Bolger—what about shifting effort to following up with major funders? Foster is planning to do 2 day training for fundraising at the January meeting.

Ferner—we do not need to wait to approach major donors, but BoD needs training before being unleashed on unsuspecting potential donors. Calling on known contacts okay.

Goldshlag—projections for major donors are very conservative. Combined major donor and grant funding totals approximately \$35K/Mo.

January Fundraising Training—BoD desired outcomes...Ferner--Each BoD member is able to do individual solicitation of major donors and has a short list of major donors on which to practice.

Williams—critical time for fundraising. We should consider using social networking resources such as FaceBook (many organizations are using this)

Goldshlag—renewed commitment from each BoD member to fundraising

Bolger—Why not go to follow up with Case for Support mailing? What's our priority?

Collins—needs names of targets, then training, then follow up with Case for Support.

Mayers—we need to know how to develop a campaign plan for a major fundraising action. Resource demands? Resource availability? Timelines?

Ferner—will get information to Foster for January training preparation.

October BoD Meeting Updates

Proud Supporter Pilot for SOA—Goldshlag & Adams—Goldshlag has constructed a three-panel display with pictures and captions with VFP activities. T-shirts (\$40 donation) and informational packets being sent to organizers.

BoD Training—Williams—in the process of gathering suggestions from BoD members and staff. Primary topics fundraising, technology training, strategic planning. Mayers suggests investigate webinars, etc. Williams to follow up.

Chapter Training—Ferner—no progress on this so far.

Information & Action Teams—Ferner—previously suggested Afghanistan Team—to become informed on this issue and be readily available resources for breaking developments. Other options War Tax Resisters, Latin American Issues.

Adams—how do we solicit engagement? Many members are self-identified “experts” who may not be able to provide useful information for the organization. We need to recruit good thinkers and prudent contributors.

Mayers—that’s why a forum is useful. It can help avoid distractions.

Chapter Calling—Ferner—previous BoD vote to pass responsibility off to staff. Problem—staff overburdened, other important business would go undone.

Proposal—BoD members take 5 chapters each to call with guidance from National Staff. Ferner will recruit volunteers to call the chapters.

Mayers—BoD needs to do the work vs. relying on volunteers. To do otherwise is to shirk our responsibility.

Collins—calls were ok, but need current #s for chapter contacts.

Adams—use chapter rosters to find a local person who knows what’s up with the chapter. Problems with member database noted. Staff to send database (full roster) to BoD with assignments of chapters to call with revised questionnaire.

ED Selection—Ferner—Job description draft to be sent to BoD. Selection Committee will select 2 – 3 top candidates. BoD asked to send suggestions for where to send the job announcement.

Goldshlag—Foster sent list of several organizations/publications to send recruitment info.

Adams—Trip to Gaza—two forms of oppression in Gaza: 1) 3 year siege; 2) attacks. Siege is incredibly complete and attacks are ferocious. Speaking engagements scheduled and more welcome.

The Good Soldier Screenings—McPhearson—going very well. Attended screening in NYC. The piece was very well received. Sande Zeig szeig@artlic.com for additional information. See the Good Soldier website for schedule of screenings.

Adams—the question for folks who might be inclined to take action is, “What am I going to do”? Adjourn

11/16/09 8:04 PM CST

Gary E. May, Secretary

11/19/2009