

# **WILPF US SECTION STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Tuesday, June 26, 2018 5:30 pm / 8:30 pm ET*

## **PARTICIPANTS:**

- President: Mary Hanson Harrison
- Secretary: Eileen Kurkoski
- Treasurer/Chair of Finance Committee: Jan Corderman
- Chair of the Nominating Committee: Laura Dewey
- Chair of the Membership Development Committee: Shilpa Pandey
- Chair of the Development Committee: Marybeth Gardam
- Chair of Program Committee: Barbara Nielsen
- Chair of Program Committee: Teresa Castillo- attended briefly
- Personnel Committee Chair: position not filled

Start time: 8:34 PM EST End time: 11:19 EST Meeting was recorded.

**Facilitator: Laura Dewey**

**Note taker: Eileen**

## **AGENDA:**

### **1. CHECK IN**

2. **SECRETARY'S Report** Eileen asked for acceptance of the February and April Steering Committee meeting notes. **The notes were accepted by all.** She read the answers from 5 committee members to the first Diversity/Inclusion question: *In the past week I talked with someone from a different background and found commonality? Describe briefly.*

### **3. PRESIDENT'S Update** Highlights of Mary work...

- With help, Mary sent a brief report of what US WILPF has done over the past three years to the International Board for the Congress.

-She is trying to have a gathering called 'Sister's Seeds in Our Hands' at Congress; she is working with the president of Ghana section and Lois Herman from FAO on this.

While in Washington D.C. for the Poor People's Campaign she:

-found The PPC rally had 5 to 6000 people but there wasn't much media. Rev. Barber kept the rally ecumenical. It was a caring, refreshing experience with a positive message and with great music and screening.

- met with the leaders of the newly reinvigorated WILPF Washington branch.

- talked with a local native American, who is interested in saving seeds as is being done by indigenous people in Iowa. An article about the saving of seeds will be in the next issue of Peace and Freedom.

#### 4. **TREASURER'S/CHAIR OF FINANCE COMMITTEE Report** Jan

-We received a bequest from member Mr.Brandt, of Vermont, for \$66,904.

-Very apologetically Jan explained her Excel program had difficulty holding information going into totals; because of this the total in our 2018 budget is actually a deficit of \$100K. The board was very sympathetic and appreciated her courage to speak up. As a former treasurer, Barbara asked if Jan has someone to double check the figures; Jan said she double checks the actual inputs with Chris but said no to the final report, but will get help in the future.

-The PAX fund has \$128,000 and the Bequest account \$200,000. Eileen asked if some of the money was taken out of the PAX fund and put into safe CDs because she feared the market is very high and is overdue to correct significantly. Jan does not believe in this investment approach, but she is planning to get CDs for the savings accounts.

-She gave kudos to Melissa and Dixie for coming under in expenditures for the Practicum and Local2Global.

#### 5. **DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR** -Marybeth

- The Development Committee met in June and will meet again on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

– SPRING APPEAL – So far we have received only about \$1200 for this appeal, which is very disappointing compared to last year. I am seriously considering writing a follow-up letter of appeal to folks.

Despite receiving the Large Brandt Bequest and Craigslist Grant, we have to keep our focus on our capacity goals.

- WWINGS Project – We've been having good interactions with the NJ and DC branches. I visited both in May and Marguerite Adelman visited both in June, followed closely followed by a visit from MaryHH with the PPC events in DC.

**NJ** Although our branch leader in Essex County NJ, Blanca Gerard, will eventually be moving to Idaho, she has found two women to take over leadership. We are encouraged by their commitment and agreement to work on the goals we've set for recruiting.

**DC Metro-** A rebooted branch is forming under the leadership of Camille Danzler who is Courteney Leinonen's sister and a PhD Candidate in Afro-American studies; she is working closely with Katherine Flaherty.

-Marguerite and Marybeth have done a lot of donor lead research in NJ and will do the same in DC over the next two weeks.

**NOVA** Dianne Blais wants to start a separate and NEW branch in northern Virginia. She has a lot of organizing experience and will soon be setting regular meetings and times.

**ST. LOUIS** Marybeth plans to try to get to St. Louis in July to do the preliminary work to launch WWINGS with them. MaryHH will be following up after that.

**MIDWEST and CALIFORNIA branches** are lagging slightly but we will be pursuing these in the next few weeks to get them launched.

- DONOR LEAD RESEARCH & APPROACHES Mary Dooley has been working with us to suggest the best plan for beginning to communicate with and make WILPF visible with the new donor leads in NJ, DC and NOVA. We're also looking at ways to communicate more closely with the at-large members in these areas.

We will be targeting communications to begin in July, and hope by September to do some face-to-face visits and ASKS.

- FOUNDATIONS Mary Dooley and I have been working on a CASE STATEMENT that can be used with both Major Donors and Foundations. We're trying to make it a sort of template in which we can switch out the project we are submitting for funding. There has been a delay because the Issue Committees are not yet proposing any significant plans that might inspire donors.

We are looking at the Clif Bar Family Foundation for small grants and Mary D is suggesting 3 or more other foundations to approach. But it will be easier to identify them once we have specific projects in mind. Jan points out that we should look for funding for some of our current budget. That is extraordinarily hard, but we can certainly look for projects we start this year that will be ongoing, like Practicum, etc.

- COMMUNICATIONS Michael Ippolito will soon start working 40 hours a week for WILPF and will be getting to what we most want him to focus on. We'll be having weekly meetings to stay on track and he will continue connecting with Issue Committees and branches to do trainings on social media and other communications technology.

- ON THE SIDE I met with several Vermont Branch members last week and we explored a lot of great ideas they have. One of them wants to research how to do a National Play Writing Contest that would engage young play writers and encourage them to write short 10-minute plays about social justice, economic justice and strong women activists who advocate for their communities. Hopefully they will put together a proposal with a budget and timeline to bring to the Board. It would offer a way to reach out to more colleges and universities and also involve branches in connecting with their local arts communities.

Also, the Vermont women suggested a book by Rickey Gard Diamond which holds a lot of promise for the Corporations vs Democracy Issue Committee. It's called "Screwnomics: How Our Economy Works Against Women and Real Ways to Make Lasting Change". We're looking at ways to use this book with branches for women's self-interest because it offers a gateway to learning more about the economy and ways to make our society more balanced. We're asking the author to be on the August 9<sup>th</sup> ONE WILPF Call.

## **6. NOMINATING COMMITTEE Chair Laura**

-VOTING VS CONSENSUS: Barbara thought consensus was not working because people were not keeping an open mind during the discussion phase. Laura, who prefers voting, explained if we go to voting it will have to be put in the By-Laws. Jan likes consensus and wanted to hear from by others; this led to examples and discussion that swayed Jan and Eileen to not voting by consensus. Laura asked that we vote on this issue at the Board meeting in July.

-FIVE OPEN BOARD POSITIONS-president, nominating, development, one at

large, and personnel (1 year): The committee hasn't gotten any members interested in running and the deadline is July 18 for nominations and July 29 for applications. It went out by E-Alert 2 weeks ago. Laura is finding this alarming; she is thinking it might be wise to have a meeting in our October retreat to address how we want to proceed as a board. (Ex. Look at the future of WILPF and what we are doing to get where we want, the size of leadership, strategize to make US WILPF a better organization). Barbara pointed out that in the past if one year remained in an open 3 year position the board appointed someone to fill it. This is allowed in the by-laws. Over recent years we have not appointed anyone to fill the the open positions. Barbara suggested discussing the possibility of asking someone to fill a position for one year; if someone isn't ready to commit to three years this may give them exposure to the board and the incentive to continue longer. Mary explained attempts to appoint people even in the last year of an open position resulted in much push back. Our voting by consensus was a hindrance to filling positions in the past. She added that rotating leadership with no institutional memory is difficult. Marybeth suggested if we got new people in open positions for a shorter commitment we might ask that outgoing board members to mentor them for 6 months. The conversation was thought to be too important to wait until October. Laura plans to bring up the issue in the next nominating committee, and the application deadline for the openings will probably be extended.

**7. MEMBERSHIP Chair** - Shilpa

-We got three or four new members in the past month, totaling seventy three new members since January 1.

-Jan and Shilpa are working to get a new branch started in Ohio

-Development has been slow in Orange County, California, but they got an invitation to speak in downtown L.A. and Mary will be going there.

**8. PROGRAM COMMITTEE Chair** Barbara (Teresa was only briefly on the call earlier. Teresa's mobile phone carrier charges her for this conference call.) Barbara was not on the last program committee call but reports of it here.

-Teresa headed up a fully packed program committee meeting 6/5/18, that covered the Poor People's Campaign, solidarity events, Nagasaki commemoration and who is participating in them. There was discussion about the International Congress and if anyone on the call could help research and write up public statements on the Rapid Response Team. There was also discussion about paid internships. Joan P (sp?) has been a long time Fresno coordinator for interns. Later Melissa, Dixie and Barbara discussed the possibility of the graduate practicum students, with their varied interests and talents, might be in the position to do research and write ups for public statements. This has sparked some interest but Melissa has not had much time to do follow up. Those on the committee call were informed of Michael Ippolito's communication work, which received favorable responses.

-There will be program committee meetings in July and August.

-A follow up question from the May board meeting came from Laura, who asked whether the program committee made a decision about spending committee money for Barbara to go to Ghana. Barbara was told by Teresa the committee agreed but there was no vote. After much discussion:

1. Most board members want the Finance Committee to make some decisions as to what can be done with the money given to committees.

2. Barbara was asked to get a vote from the Program Committee re whether committee money can be used and, if so, and how much can be spent on travel to Ghana. She agreed to do so.

9. INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS: GUEST DELEGATE Darian DeLue presented 20 or more somewhat minor changes to the WILPF International Constitution to make it clearer, more positive and grammatically correct. She avoided the larger question regarding governance because that will be decided by a vote. The substantive changes she presented were:
1. regarding the number of delegates a section could get. Since we have over 1500 member we would be entitled to five delegates and she thought this should be expanded so offered ways that this could be done.
  2. calling of resolutions to be put back into the constitution and
  3. making changes to by-laws with a 55% vote, not a 2/3rds vote
- Darian plans to send these recommendations on her own to the IB Constitution Committee but asked the Board if they wanted to endorse them; the Board received a copy of the proposed changes prior to this conference call. Some discussion followed.

#### DECISION:

Because Darian made a few more changes to the document while on this call, she is sending out the final copy to everyone and we will give our approval by email. (When we endorse Darian's brilliant work on the Constitution Mary HH will be sure to keep the endorsement clearly separate from our dissent on the proposed governance changes.)

-Barbara was asked to facilitate resolutions at the Congress. She has noted that the ones she has seen were not well drafted and has not received any guidelines on what the International Board considers acceptable resolutions, but has seen what has been rejected. She is not sure if Congress or the Board accepts or rejects resolutions.

-Final issues:

-After hearing Beatrix from Costa Rica on a Congress call about inadequate reports, Eileen asked how do we validate reports, hold people accountable?

-We can reiterate our dissent again. We have until July 1.

—Marybeth suggested we send a third dissent to all presidents of other sections & Mary has already sent a copy to some presidents but will be glad to send it out to everyone so they all know why we are opposing the governance changes.

**Next “Steering” Meeting will be at the Training in DesMoines, October 4-6, 2018 (This may be a Board Meeting.)**

**Next Board Meeting: July 17, 2018**