

WILPF Board Meeting, September 29, 2020

Participants:

- President: Darien De Lu
- Secretary: Eileen Kurkoski
- Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair: Jan Corderman
- Program Committee Chair: Joan Goddard
- Membership Development Committee Chair: Shilpa Pandey
- At-large Board Member & Chair of Earth Democracy Issue Committee: Nancy Price
- Acting Development Committee Chair & Chair of Women, Money & Democracy Issue Committee: Marybeth Gardam
- Americas Region Representative Alternate: Janet Slagter
- US Liaison to the Americas Region Representative: Jane "Cricket" Doyle

Guests:

- *Ellen Thomas; Disarm Committee Co-chair
- *Dianne Blaise; Jane Addams At-Large Branch Chair

Decisions made are **underlined and in bold font.**

Agenda:

1. Two board members reported on the THANK YOU calls that they made to donors this month, as the start of the practice they agreed to do. Nancy reported a member's story of a very large family and her father's advocacy for civil rights. Eileen reported a member's ongoing work to prevent chemical and fossil fuel pollution as well as nuclear waste transfers back and forth from Canada and Michigan. Both Nancy and Eileen enjoyed and learned from the calls.

2. Check In: Mention something in the last month that renewed your hope for optimism about political organizing.

3. Brief Announcement Items

- a. Branch contacts and branch call coordination – There are many calls to branches going on, and the branch contacts could use some updating! Please contact Shilpa Pandey to coordinate calls.
- b. Advancing Human Rights Committee future – This issue committee is in suspense until about Feb. 2021. Please contact Joan Goddard with suggestions, questions, etc.
- c. Elections deadlines – The Nominating Committee agreed to extend the deadline to Oct. 18. Contact Laura Dewey.
- d. Peace and Freedom Magazine (This issue is virtual.) The deadline for non-elections-related articles is Oct. 16. Contact Wendy McDowell.

4. Commission on the Status of Women planning: It is very unlikely WILPF US will have any projects with students or members for the free, virtual 2021 CSW. We may plan for the 2022 CSW, starting work in August 2021, based on reports from the 2020 facilitators. (*Note: To reach out to colleges and universities in a timely fashion, work would begin in August 2021.*)

Mary will reassemble a seed/agriculture presentation. (It was not presented for 2020 because of the cancellation of most events, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

5. Bylaws amendment Proposal: Allowing the option of co-chairs (with only one board vote) for the Development Committee - *Darien De Lu*

The Board understood the proposal. One concern was what would happen if co-chairs disagreed about how to cast their one vote, which meant that they would have to work out their differences.

Vote: For: Unanimous Nay: 0 Abstain: 0

6) Board Visionary Journey – *Marybeth Gardam*

On Oct 12 at 8:30 pm EDT Marybeth will lead the Board with fun imagery to bring out their creative ideas for projects and initiatives that can advance WILPF work and inspire others. We'll choose ONE goal for the 2021 year, identify a budget and explore ways to fund that one project. The Board is to think about what WILPF needs and what it can provide.

Time: 90 minutes to two hours.

7) Strategic Planning Meeting with Peace Development Fund (our fiscal sponsor), Nov. 14, 10 AM PT, 1 PM ET – Jan Corderman

Delia Kovac and Emily Serafy-Cox, Foundation Officers, will be the facilitators.

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Purpose of the meeting
- SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats - more info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis)
- Plan to do a 360 evaluation of WILPF as an organization
 - identify stakeholders to interview
 - plan outreach and interview questions (if time)

We were unsure what a 360 evaluation was and decided on a time for the two hours session. Prior to this meeting Eileen will share, with Delia, Emily and the attendees, the notes from the Des Moines training and strategy planning sessions PDF did with WILPF in 2018.

8) Branch Development Field organizer proposal: *Darien De Lu*

The proposal describes the purpose, overview, path, a job description for the organizer, and criteria for picking the organizer; it also includes a timeline and information on reporting. Jan, Eileen, Mary Hanson Harrison and Laura Dewey are on this committee; the first three plan to continue. The project would be paying an organizer \$20-24. an hour for approximately a 28 hour work week for one year. Announcements of the opportunity for branches to get involved will go out by eAlert and directly to branches in late October and applications for branches and a facilitator will be available for those who are interested. The facilitator will be trained in December and start working in January 2021.

Questions/Comments

-One field organizer will cover up to five branches using zoom.

-It was thought having a facilitator who knows the area and who to contact would be important. This was a problem in groups she was acquainted with. Answer: It would be difficult

to find a facilitator who knows five cities. Most groups include long time activists who know who to contact; group members may need some help to approach them.

-A project needs a focus, deadline and setting priorities and this project is important. We want someone with organizing experience and focus; focus is the main thing.

-How will you get branches involved? Besides using eAlerts and notices to branches, Jan, Mary and Eileen were planning to call branches and invite them.

-Nancy liked this initiative. She gets inspired hearing what branches are doing and helps them when she can. She added, "Branches go through phases and change."

-Jan will contact Cherrill Spencer who has an update of our branch contacts we could use and to pass on to Darien and Shilpa. Darien will pass this info to Chris Wilbeck in the office.

-Congress committee will be reaching out to branches to stimulate them to participate in Congress 2021. It was suggested that the Branch Development committee collaborate on these calls. Shilpa is willing to coordinate their collaboration.

-A budget is needed. Answer: This is a pilot one-year program which will be re-assessed in the last quarter of 2021. We have the money and are trying to keep under \$10,000 for the year; Eileen will prepare a budget.

Those in Favor of this Branch Development with a Field organizer proposal

Vote: For: Unanimous Nay 0 Abstain 0

9) International report – UNO Office, International officers election at Int'l Congress in July or August 2021 Janet Slagter

Having someone on the International Board (IB) helps us have better communication with international, keeps us aware of what is going on and gives us a voice.

Questions/Answers

-The requirements to be on the international board are to be a WILPF member currently and for two years.

-As an alternate, Janet has always participated in the virtual International Board meetings, but she may not be invited to in-person meetings.

-What positions are open? Under the current constitution, set in 2018, all the officers are up for election. There are 6 regional representatives, a president and two VPs, and one treasurer.

-We may want to make suggestions for various constitutional or by-laws revisions. As it stands the whole Americas has one representative (with an alternate); Prior to the 2018 International Congress vote for a new constitution and bylaws, each national section had a member on the International Board (IB); the Secretariat thought this structure was too unruly.

-It's not sure if the WILPF International will have a Congress in 2021. If yes, it will be in our summer in Australia. They are not considering a virtual Congress.

-The terms of the positions are three years

-The IB meeting times accommodate Geneva and are inconvenient for Janet because they are at 4, 5, and 6 AM in California.

-The Secretariat is suggesting they meet only twice a year instead of monthly. This has not been popular in the Americas. It seems like an attempt to weaken the representatives' voices.

-How is the regional representative system working? Answer: Beatriz Schulthess and Janet have worked well together. Many of their reports have been very successful and others okay.

A problem with the current system is some Latin American countries feel neglected.

Columbia could get financial assistance for projects, but Costa Rico had much difficulty getting a grant.

Several of the IB members, including the Middle East and North Africa Region and Americas, are made to believe we ask too many questions when approval is wanted readily; this has been an ongoing issue. Also, when some of the IB members offer a counter-proposal that other representatives approve of there is no consideration of the the proposals.

-Janet, Beatriz Schulthess, Heidi Menzolt and Kerry McGovern proposed new By-Laws for the UNO office. They are waiting to hear back.

10) Budget Considerations for 2021: *Jan Corderman and Darien De Lu*

The board was asked to address the following areas:

1. Funding for program activities – who? how? what? (mini-grants, issue comm. allocations, organizational dues/memberships, co-sponsorships of conferences, etc.)
2. International Congress & WILPF US Congress
3. Staffing
4. Using our bequest/reserve account funds

Questions/Comments/Discussion

-The Finance Committee will meet at least two more times to prepare the budget for the November Board meeting. Jan will soon send out dates for these meetings.

-Some committees have been talking about money needed for 2021.

-Mini-grants priorities have gone through changes, and the Mini-grants Committee is now suggesting we pass some of this money to issue committees. Should we begin having more than one kind of mini-grant?

-Jan pointed out that we have line-items for monies supporting standing committees, issue committees, the CSW program, WWINGS-Branch Development, Congresses, etc. She supports continuing the current (not program-work-related) approach to the Mini-grants Committee (allocating up to \$10,000) and how it has set-up allocations, because there is a cap and some restraints, and because we have the money. The Madison branch got a mini-grant for their website — an example of a mini-grant *not* related to Program 2.0 or the Program Committee's work..

-We were reminded that Ellen Schwartz in the Mini-Grant Committee suggested it might want to prioritize their grants to align with issue committee priorities, to put our money where our program mission is. This would include the work issue committees will be doing with branches.

-The remaining two people on the Mini-Grant Committee have been doing this work for ten years and are asking to be replaced; they will stay on until they finish some work and will wait until new people fill their positions.

-Darien is looking for suggestions as to how to replace the mini-grant committee. She also indicated that the issue committees each now gets \$400 for projects. We have ways to request more money, but we may need a process to more carefully look at how we allocate money.

Jan provided numbers on Mini-Grant expenses: 2018 - \$3,933, 2019 - \$500; 2020 - 0, but bills are expected to come. She sees no reason to limit the \$10,000 or change the process the committee is using now. There has always been a committee review. Some board members further emphasized looking at how to move WILPF program work forward through working on issues. Funding is very important to accomplish these, and that was particularly so for the Earth Democracy Committee when it was getting started.

-An example was offered to be put into future requirements for requests for money, "Every mini-grant application must have two activities that will take them into the community and not

just be done by issue committee members.” This example highlights a factor to be used to weigh the priorities the Program and issue committees set for mini-grant applications, and may be what the Mini-grant Committee had in mind when Ellen Schwartz mentioned some change. It would help to shape projects, to make them more outgoing and involve more people.

10) Approve July Board minutes -Eileen Kurkoski

Vote: Aye all nay 0 abstain 0

11) Organizing for the Possibility of a Trump Coup – Nancy Price

-Links to websites and a book were provided on this and Nancy was asked to write an eNews on this topic. She may use a milder title than *fascist*, that describes Trump as a white supremacist and condoning and encouraging violence. Her main focus will be on outlining what we can do to ensure a lawful and nonviolent transition, with Trump leaving office if he does not get reelected. She'll refer to three websites that go into more detail. These sites include:

1. **Protect the (Elections) Results** — We can become a partner of it, joining labor, climate groups, Code Pink, and 50 other organizations. She suggested becoming a partner which would not obligate us to do anything.

2. **Waging Nonviolence** — George Lacey outlines 10 steps that include working with local groups.

3. **Hold the Line** — It has good resources and proposals.

Trump is an opportunist and doing all he can to stay in office so he won't go to jail for fraud, tax evasion, etc.. Nancy urged us to watch the enablers, those who are ideologically fascists, like Bill Barr, and to watch the Supreme Court. Trump may want to challenge election results in many ways and take it to the Supreme Court.

She will encourage everyone to get out and vote and send in mail-in ballots as soon as they get them. To avoid election uncertainties, we need a wide margin of votes, including in the Electoral College.

Comments

-There have been three suits, all lost, regarding voting suppression in Iowa.

-Opposing a coup or voter suppression will not affect WILPF's tax status

-If Nancy uses the word fascist she should define it. If the word is not in the title it should be in the first two sentences.

-A possible title could be, "Preparing for a Possible Election Emergency"

-We have to get the point across very clearly so people know what those seeking ways to subvert the vote are doing and planning, so we can be prepared. This situation is frightening, because they have a lot of power and only a lot of people speaking up can make a difference.

-The George Lakey article offers very specific ideas for organizing in advance, and he emphasizes the importance of doing so.

12) WILPF US Congress 2021- Darien De Lu

The WILPF US Congress will be virtual and we have dates extending over two weekends: August 6-8 and 13-15.

13) Comments from visitors to meeting

Darien welcomed Ellen Thomas and Dianne Blaise.

Diane said she has co-shared a vote in several positions and acknowledged co-sharing a position can be difficult, but worth a try in WILPF to see how it goes. Ellen said she was listening throughout but also had an eye on the Trump-Biden debate going on.

Respectfully submitted, Eileen Kurkoski