

WILPF US Board Meeting MINUTES, March 23, 2024 (via Zoom)

Participants checked in with primary position held and branch name:

National Board Members:

Darien De Lu: President, Sacramento, CA
Barbara Nielsen: Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair, San Francisco, CA
Ginger Harris: Secretary, Boston, MA
George Friday: Program Committee Chair, Southern Piedmont branch, NC
Martha Collins: Development Committee Co-Chair, Menomonee Falls, WI
Marybeth Gardam: Development Committee Co-chair, Iowa City, IA
Cee' Cee' Anderson: Personnel Committee Chair, GA (arrived after check-in)
Ellen Schwartz, Nominating Committee Chair, San Francisco, CA
Philip Cole: At-large Board Member, Brisbane, CA
Tina Shelton: At-large Board Member, Philadelphia, PA

Other Pundits Members:

Dee Murphy: WILPF International Advisory Board Representative, St. Cloud, MN
Jane "Cricket" Doyle: U.S. Liaison to the America's Region Representative, Santa Cruz, CA

MEMBER GUESTS:

Laura George, (new branch) western VA
Theresa El-Amin, Fannie Lou Hamer branch Convenor, Columbus, GA
Dianne Blais, Jane Addams Branch Convenor, Fairfax, VA
Dr. Linda Ridley, NYC
Shilpa Pandey: prior Membership Development Committee Chair, California (arrived after check-in)

Time-keeper: Tina Shelton volunteered. **Vibes watcher:** No one volunteered, so everyone was asked to speak up if this is needed.

Formal Start of Meeting

Secretary Ginger Harris called Board members' and other Pundits names & positions.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Darien** confirmed the decision that WILPF's 2024 Triennial Congress will be all-virtual, with more information coming soon in our eNews.

She announced that

- **Ellen Schwartz** had been elected to fill the empty position of Nominating Committee Chair.
- Dianne Blais had nominated member **Ellen Thomas** for the US Peace Memorial Foundation's 2024 annual award
- WILPF-US' 2024 budget proposal is still delayed.

2. **Ginger reviewed actions & decisions from the January 27, 2024 Board meeting:**

The Budget for UN Practicum/Local to Global was approved.

WILPF's partnership with An Economy of Our Own (AEEO) was approved.

No vote was taken on Darien's proposal to add social media staff.

The proposal to keep the same days of month & times of day for board meetings was approved.

WILPF's participation in No to NATO/Yes to Peace and to contribute \$1,000 for the No to NATO events in Washington, DC, July 9-11, was approved.

3. Minutes of the January 27, 2024 Board meeting were approved as submitted.

4. Board Committee Reports:

Darien has been especially occupied with planning for our Triennial Congress and with the Budget Committee's process of finalizing our budget.

Ellen Schwartz reported that the Nominating Committee now has two members (Barbara & Phillip) but welcomes more members if they'll be fun-loving.

George Friday invited guests to join monthly Program Committee meetings, which other Board & Issue Committee members attend, with the goals of maintaining the health & mutual support among branches & issue committees and nurturing future members of WILPF-US' Board.

Darien noted that an additional Program Committee Chair seat will be up for election in 2024.

A current focus of the Program Committee is making sure our Mini-Grant program can successfully administer grant applications. Theresa asked the Program Committee to re-establish the June schedule for new applications for funding; George responded that was her intention. Barbara suggested the Mini-Grant program be put under the Finance Committee since the Finance Committee has no ties to specific grant recipients. She wrote in the "Chat" that she has all the documents and forms from the previous incarnation of that program and records of just about all the awards and documentation pertaining to it.

Phillip hopes to talk with George about this issue. Ellen reminded us that the Mini-Grant Committee was originally (in 2010) put within the Program Committee so that these two committees could support each other.

Martha Collins, Development Committee Co-Chair, had emailed her report to Pundits before the meeting but was unable to join our meeting by this time, so gave her verbal report later in this meeting.

5. 2024 WILPF Election Schedule and request for Suggestions of Candidates:

Darien screen-shared WILPF's 2024 election schedule and answered Theresa's question re: nomination & application dates. The 2024 election schedule was approved unanimously by Ellen, Darien, Ginger, George, Marybeth, Tina, Barbara, Phillip and Cee'Cee'.

Suggestions of names for candidates were requested, but none were made at this meeting, though Laura George offered to give Ellen numerous suggestions of members of Laura's Founding Mothers Movement, whom she believed would want to join WILPF.

6. Lloyd Family Legacy:

Marybeth Gardam reported on the steps accomplished towards the search for an Executive Director for WILPF-US, including the interim step of hiring a very part-time Project Coordinator/Scheduler to help manage the outreach & selection of an Executive Director. Besides Marybeth, the Search Committee consists of Martha, George, Phillip, Barbara, Tina, Cee' Cee', & Laura Dewey, plus consultative members Nancy Price, Darien & Robin Lloyd. Laura Dewey's article on this effort in *Peace & Freedom* started the outreach to all WILPF members to suggest potential candidates for Executive Director.

Marybeth answered a question from Phillip: the wording for the Project Coordinator/Scheduler contract was approved in November 2023 and doesn't need a Board vote; and a question from Theresa: that hiring a very part-time Scheduler is necessary to find the best Executive Director to start before the end of 2024. A vote to approve Kyle Elizabeth Grassi from Asheville, NC, for the Scheduler position will be taken in Executive Session today.

Board Committee Reports (continuation of item 4):

Martha Collins arrived in time to verbally report the figures in her Development Report that she'd sent to the Board: Funds raised in 2023 exceeded their goals, and so far they've exceeded their 2024 goals. She also mentioned (a) the WILPF US Equinox celebration in March which was used as a fundraising opportunity; (b) Mary Hanson Harrison's five-families initiative; (c) the Libby Frank book being a premium to raise money, and (d) a foundation granted WILPF double their usual amount!

7. Board retreat: Because the Board has voted to make WILPF-US's 2024 Triennial Congress virtual only, Darien proposed instead to have an in-person Board retreat immediately preceding or following the No-To-NATO activities in Washington, D.C. July 5-7. Dianne Blais has offered to host the retreat. Options for the programming at the retreat include team-building activities, evaluation of the WILPF work and the Board. Darien asked for feedback & additional volunteer help.

Ginger noted that if everyone who attends such an in-person Board retreat also plan to attend No To NATO, our Board retreat could be scheduled to surround the No-To-NATO event.

WILPF would pay for attendance by all Board members.

In a poll on attending the Board retreat in-person: 3 people (Ellen, Marybeth & Barbara) said no.

George: With two West Coast members not attending in-person, that will save money.

NEW BUSINESS

9. Exceptional Board Meeting to Discuss and Approve Budget: Barbara had to leave the meeting before this item came up, so Phillip reported on it instead. They expect to have the proposed budget ready for review by April 4 and to be able to hold a special Board meeting on it by April 15. There was discussion about the feasibility of various dates based on Board members' availability. All WILPF members are invited to the special Board meeting.

10. Length & function of a member meeting at WILPF-US's *Virtual* 2024 Triennial Congress:

Darien asked for input on what the nature & topics of a member meeting at a virtual Congress should be, Marybeth remembered holding such meetings at Congresses — though not recently — for voting on campaigns, programs or projects, and thinks it could be a good opportunity to present & discuss financial & fundraising goals and rationales.

Ellen reported that Barbara wants member-driven resolutions for action. She feels it's an opportunity for our membership to speak with one voice. But it would require a Resolution or Rules Committee to determine how resolutions should be submitted.

George: Topics could be fund-raising & spending, WILPF elections, and our relationships with each other.

Cricket: In future we should consider having 4 or 5 regional Congresses. Our Congress invitation and/or registration form should ask members their opinions about cost, the dangers of Covid, & issues for discussion.

Tina agreed: finances & regional congresses are good Congress topics for discussion.

Dee: Scant time to add items to this year's Congress. Barbara had previously suggested doing resolutions at this Congress, but Darien had nixed this proposal.

Theresa expressed disappointment that WILPF is not living up to Theresa's standard/expectation that a pro-democracy membership organization be led by the members votes on such things as resolutions.

As a brand new member, Laura George expressed shock that this Congress doesn't plan to provide opportunities for votes by the attending members.

Dee reported that it was stated at the beginning of planning for Congress that there would be no voting on resolutions, because it was difficult to forecast how many would attend this in-person Congress; we didn't want votes by a small group of attendees to represent WILPF as a whole. Dee invited Theresa to organize a structure for gathering resolutions and providing a method for virtual voting.

Darien expressed the belief that a system of proposing & voting on resolutions could still be created for our 2024 Congress and thanked everyone for their input/feedback.

8. Improved Dispute Resolution Procedure - Peace Seekers Proposal:

When **Shilpa Pandey** joined the meeting, Darien asked her to explain the Conflict Resolution proposal prepared by Darien which the Board adopted in March of 2022 with slight revisions since then. Darien had proposed establishing a conflict mediation process years ago. WILPF members Ashley Carrington and Margo Schulter had also designed one. Shilpa joined this discussion in order to support whatever the Board approves as a feasible procedure.

Darien believes the best of both previous proposals has been incorporated into the current Peace Seekers proposal. The main difference between the two proposals is how volunteers are selected to serve on the dispute resolution panel: either selected by the Board or by some combination of general members of WILPF.

Discussion ranged widely on what mediation skills volunteers should have, what selection process, an ethical code for the panel, and if a Board member could serve on the panel

Cricket suggested that there's an implicit assumption that Board members would be biased, but the board members are voted on by the membership. Also, we should train the volunteers who are chosen to serve as mediators. (Training will require funding.)

Marybeth noted there's no funding in our 2024 budget for training.

Dee explained a mediation panel can be independent of the Board through a subcommittee to review volunteers' qualifications.

Darien described the proposed initial panel: 3 members & 2 alternates, qualified in advance; 4-year terms so panel members' terms don't coincide with any existing board.

George wants to have especially BIPOC & younger people serving on the panel.

Vote to adopt the proposed Peace Keepers Procedure:

Ayes: George, Ginger, Tina, Martha, Cee Cee, & Darien. Phillip & Ellen abstained. No nays.

Darien will start the process of creating the mediation system.

11. Staffing in Peace Organizations for Social Media, Communications, etc:

Considering upcoming budget decisions, Darien asked for feedback on whether WILPF-US should expand its paid staff as other peace organizations have already done, as itemized in a related document she had sent the Pundits. Last year the Board decided not fund staff to do social media for WILPF.

Phillip feels we need a measured approach with a new Executive Director first.

Nancy feels WILPF needs social media outreach beyond WILPF members and that we need a committee to bring recommendations to the Board.

George recommended having interns for under \$10,000/year.

Member guests' opportunity for feedback to the Board:

Theresa: this dispute resolution is being pushed by Darien. Her dispute is between her & Darien, whose term ends next January, so Theresa wouldn't need whatever mediation process is set up. She plans to run for Membership Committee Chair.

Dr. Ridley: This dialogue has been a fast learning curve. She'd like new members, new blood, for WILPF.

Executive Session Decisions

Approved: Hiring of Kyle Elizabeth Grassi from Asheville, NC, for the Scheduler position.