

**Friendship Force of Wisconsin - Madison, Inc.**  
Board Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2020  
Via Zoom

Sandi Wysock called the meeting to order at 2:10.

**Present:** Sandi Wysock, Kathy Speck-Kemeny, Martha McGregor, Mary Juckem, Gail Holmes, Dorothy Baldwin, Stephanie Sorensen, Peter Kaufman, Helen Ann Rugowski, Magdi Sebestyen, Agnes Rona, Doug Johnson, Vice President elect, Diana Rodum, Secretary elect.

**Guests:** Jeremi Snook, CEO and President of FFI; Lynn Hargreave, FFI board member; Allison Lindsey, Assistant to Jeremi.

**Discussion with Lynn Hargreave and Jeremi Snook reviewing FFI's current financial situation and needs with possible solutions.**

**Lynn Hargreave:** This is uncharted territory for FFI but we know that support is needed from all clubs world-wide. Since it's not common for some countries to donate funds, most of the support will need to come from US clubs. The FFI board has discussed opportunities for organization and also many challenges.

**Jeremi Snook:** We can be grateful for the technology that will bring people together. The financial impact from the pandemic will last for months with the psychological impact to last much longer. There is no way to predict when people will feel safe to travel again. But the pandemic is bringing folks together. The board has been responding to all emails even the negative ones.

What FFI is doing now:

James Permana, board treasurer, says that they will hope for the best but plan for the worst. They are not planning for any real revenue until July 2021. Their current budget that will carry them through December 2021. They will furlough some staff, and the remaining staff including Jeremi have agreed to a 20% reduction in salary. Some suggestions to help keep clubs and members engaged are virtual journeys developed by members to share, pen pals from previous journeys, FFI radio hour, virtual reunions from past journeys.

Summary of the campaign: they have a \$340,000 goal. This goal reflects that FFI has reduced their expenses by 50%. FFI has applied for the government stimulus funds from three banks for grants up to \$100,000. This money is needed to maintain an experienced staff in all parts of the world because they don't want to lose that institutional memory. There is a fail-safe in that they can close and re-open, however, close connections will be broken, and members and staff are no longer engaged. The network is critical to FFI's survival. There are new clubs being developed such as the one in Boston. New clubs are critical, and journeys are the life blood of the organization. They have \$70,000 in donations that came in right after the initial appeal to members.

Agnes asked about increasing frequency of newsletters and she will volunteer to publish monthly with the support of the board and members. Jeremi emphasized that communication is critical now. FFI may go to monthly newsletter and will include tools that clubs may use for holding monthly activities and connecting with members. Another suggestion is an on-line event such as happy hour, virtual book clubs or any other small group activity we might have.

Stephanie asked about planning to move our 2020 journeys to 2021 and how many clubs we have lost recently.

Jeremi said that they have lost as many clubs as they have gained. Most of the clubs lost were due to aging where the members could no longer travel or host ambassadors. There 200 journeys for 2020 that have not yet cancelled. They are planning for journeys to go forward during the third and fourth quarters of 2021. The worst will be if they must move them to 2022. Journeys are cancelled or postponed when the participating clubs have come to an agreement.

Diana asked if the \$340,000 was a bare bones budget. Jeremi said that it's not known the financial impact of the pandemic on the individual members, but they will be fortunate if ¼ of the members contribute a one-week journey's worth (about \$170). Most of those donations will come from North America. They have a budget to carry them through 2021 if they get \$200,000.

Lynn asked us to pass this information on to our members. The cost of a journey averages out to \$15/month. There is the possibility of combining journeys and to keep the hotel option on the agenda if folks are uneasy about hosting.

Allison mentioned that there is an FFI blog with information for members. All work to up-date or refresh the website is on hold. There is a facebook page and a donation page that can be accessed from the website. 4500 people participate in journeys each year; they need 3000 to meet their goal.

Jeremi, Lynn, and Allison left the meeting.

### **Business meeting:**

**Minutes.** Martha failed to submit the corrected minutes to the board, so approval is tabled until the May meeting. The corrected minutes will be submitted ASAP.

**Treasurer's Report.** Mary previously submitted a report. There is a balance of \$21,020.30 which includes the CD's but does not include the balance from the recent Open World. Gail moved to accept the report, seconded by Kathy, and motion carried.

Sandi has three items for the board to focus on now: The May activities, the newsletter, and our support to FFI.

### **May activities.**

Gail reported that Second Harvest is requesting that only individuals volunteer to work because it's not possible to practice social distancing if large groups come together. Members will need to call Second Harvest for scheduling.

The Let's Hike activity will be at the discretion of the leader. Magdi said that the March 29 hike was cancelled. The May 16 hike will go forward if members can maintain physical distance. Gail will check with Stephanie Vanden Bush about the highway clean-up project and the results will be posted on the calendar and in the newsletter. Diana suggested that Pope's farm has wide trails for walking.

The book club scheduled for May 12 to be hosted by Helen Ann will not be in her home. It may happen via a Zoom meeting. Gail will check with Reta Haring and Marilyn Ehrenberg about their thoughts.

Dining on the 6<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled. It may change to a virtual happy hour. Members will sign up by email and Peter will vet the participants based on the membership list.

**Journey Coordinator.** Stephanie reported that the New Zealand/New Caledonia journeys have been cancelled. The Global Bike journey will probably be cancelled but Stephanie will contact the participants to see if they are interested in rescheduling in 2021. Now it will be difficult to find hosts for the short journey to follow the leadership training conference to be hosted by FF Milwaukee. Stephanie will call Dave in Milwaukee to cancel because we don't have anyone to home host the participants. Peter will up-date the calendar to reflect these changes. Mary reported that Holy Wisdom will keep the deposit we had made for the welcome dinner for the bike journey active until December 23, 2021.

**Newsletter.** Agnes said that the deadline for submission of articles will be April 24. All changes to activities discussed above will be included

**Donation to FFI.** Sandi opened the discussion with a proposal to contribute \$3400. This is the amount that would have been sent them if 20 ambassadors travelled for a one-week journey at \$170 each. Magdi proposed that we pay the member's dues for 2021 from our budget because the activities for 2020 will be mostly cancelled. We have 94 members. Dues would be \$3290 at \$35 for each member. After some discussion, Magdi moved that FF pay the dues for membership in 2021, seconded by Kathy, motion carried. Helen Ann moved to donate \$3400 to FFI, seconded by Gail, motion carried. Sandi will prepare a communication to the membership regarding these actions to be distributed via MailChimp.

Meeting adjourned at 4:18.

The next meeting will be May 13 at the Bridge Lake Point/Waunona Community Center or via Zoom at 12:30.

Respectfully submitted by Martha McGregor.