

# **LAPTOPS TO LESOTHO INC.**

## **Board of Directors**

*6 December 2014 Meeting Minutes*

The meeting was conducted by conference call via Skype. In attendance were President Janissa Balcomb, Treasurer Vicki Panhuise, Directors Henk Boshoff, Fortunato Gunzo, Sherrie Howey, and Kathy Plath. Secretary Sarah Gardner was absent.

### **BOARD BUSINESS**

#### ***Transferring Presidency to Henk***

Henk will officially take over the presidency on 1 January 2015.

Janissa was asked to stay on the Board as a director. She offered to serve as a mentor for Henk until he becomes more familiar with the organization and his new role.

#### ***Possible election of Florence to the Board as Vice President of Operations***

A long discussion was held on voting Project Coordinator Florence Monoto to the Board. Florence is invaluable to L2L because of her in-country knowledge and being in a position to handle tasks no one else in the organization is able to do.

Compensation: Her election would be complicated because, unlike anyone else in the organization, she receives a monthly stipend. The monthly stipend, currently tied to Rotary Club funding, is for expenses and is not a salary. The stipend is a set lump sum payment for living expenses, travel, and communications, though she is required to submit receipts to the Treasurer.

Contract: We need to renew Florence's contract, which officially runs out in December 2014, and we need to clarify in her contract that what she receives is a stipend and not a salary.

Charter: Currently, our charter calls for an all-volunteer board. Other volunteers don't get compensated. We would have to change the charter to accommodate her situation if she were elected to the Board. There was discussion about whether or not we should make the change in the charter role-specific, and if we didn't, how this would be affected if Florence left..

Taxes: Electing Florence should not complicate L2L's taxes because she is not a paid employee and because L2L's small budget means we fall under an IRS category that requires very minimal tax reporting. Our annual tax return is essentially answering a couple questions confirming that we had less than \$50,000 in income for the year. We always fall well below that amount.

Voting Status: There was also discussion about Florence's voting status on issues related to her funding. There were suggestions for two possible ways to handle this. The first would be to elect Florence to a non-voting position. The second would be to require her to abstain from voting only on issues concerning her compensation.

Duties: If Florence were elected to the Board, she would accrue additional duties, including doing more supervision of other volunteers and participants.

Aspirations: Florence has indicated that she would eventually like to become President of L2L.

Talking to Florence: It was suggested that we talk with Florence about whether or not she would accept the role without getting her current stipend. In the past, Florence has indicated that, if she didn't receive the stipend, she would have to get a job and so probably wouldn't have time to fulfill her current L2L duties. It was suggested that Henk be in on the proposed conversation with Florence about either accepting a position with no compensation or accepting limited or no voting rights.

Vote: It was decided unanimously that we should table the vote on Florence as Vice President of Operations until we have more information and have discussed the matter with Florence.

### *Compensation for others*

A question was raised whether we should consider compensating other staff as well.

Requirements: If we did, we would need to change the charter, hire an accountant, and find significantly more funding.

Accountant: It was decided that an accountant would be necessary to resolve the legal and tax aspects related to compensating others. The general consensus was that an accountant would cost \$500 per hour. It was agreed that if we do this, we would need to cap the amount spent to be able to carry this financially.

Research: Vicki will research it from the U.S. perspective and email everybody. Henk said he would look into it in South Africa, discussing it with his accountant. He might fund the CPA from his company.

### *Training for Florence*

Needs: Florence has a B.A. in counseling, but if she is to take on more of a leadership role in L2L, she needs training and experience in project management and leadership skills.

Availability: There is a company in Maseru that provides project management training for approximately \$400.

Budget: We have already budgeted for this item.

Commitment: There was a question about whether Florence would leave for a better job after we pay for her training. Janissa stated her opinion that Florence has a great commitment to L2L and doesn't think she would leave and rewarding her with this training opportunity would give her more incentive to stay. Vicki said we should invest in improving the skills of Basotho personnel. It's part of doing business that people might leave after receiving training. The possibility of stipulating in Florence's contract that she has to continue with L2L for a certain time after training was mentioned but discounted.

Payment: The bill for the training would have to go directly to the treasurer. We cannot send the money directly to Florence. If the company will take a credit card, we can pay with our L2L Visa card. If not, we might have to do a bank transfer. Janissa will ask Florence to find out what payment options the company accepts.

Vote: It was decided unanimously that we will pay for project management and leadership training for Florence at the company in Maseru.

### ***Organizational presence in South Africa***

Legal: The issue of whether we need to set up an NGO/NPO in South Africa because Henk is not an American was discussed. Our Articles of Incorporation and the Idaho State laws governing our organization do not require that board members or officers have U.S. citizenship or residency.

Financial: It might be beneficial to set up a bank account in South Africa. If we do that, we would probably need to register our organization as a NGO/NPO business in South Africa.

### ***Interviewing other candidates for Vice Presidency***

Janissa would like to get more board members from the region.

There are currently three other Basotho, besides Florence, who have expressed interest in serving as an L2L officer.

Henk will email those candidates in early January and will interview them sometime after that.

## **FINANCES**

### ***FY 2014 Report***

The FY 2014 Financial Report was submitted by the treasurer.

The major expenses for 2014 were the Lesotho training trip in March and April and Florence's stipend. The 2014 training trip was paid for through private donations. A Rotary Club grant paid for Florence's stipend, as well as some equipment and technical assistance with the school servers.

The FY2014 Financial Report was unanimously approved by the Board.

### ***FY 2015 Budget***

The 2015 budget is project-based. It covers these projects:

- Volunteer Stipend (Florence) – hopefully funded through Rotary Club
- Training – \$7000 for 2 U,S, volunteers travel expenses, hopefully funded through the DH Ross Foundation
- Pela Tsoeu Implementation
- Project evaluation – \$3500 funded by the Panhuisse Foundation.
- Preliminary deployment – limited quantity of hardware and software, funded by Solon Foundation
- Nohana Power – replace deep cycle batteries at Nohana Primary, funded by the Solon Foundation

The budget was unanimously approved by the Board.

## **FUNDRAISING**

### ***Grant writing***

Grant applications still need to be submitted to Rotary Club, Solon Foundation, the DH Ross Foundation, and the Panhuisse Foundation. Janissa is working on this with Emily Miller. Janissa offered to write the grant request to Panhuisse Foundation, with an emphasis on STEM education, and submit it to Vicki.

The grant to replace deep cycle batteries at Nohana Primary is to be written by the Nohana Primary School staff and funded through the Solon Foundation. Matlabe has been slow to do this, and Janissa has been pushing Florence to push Matlabe. Janissa last spoke to Florence about this on 4 December and Florence said Matlabe had made no progress. Fortunate offered to contact Matlabe and assist with him on this.

Janissa stated that, now that she is stepping down as President, she wants to pass her fundraising duties on to someone else. She asked if other Board Members would assist with grant writing, but no one felt qualified to take this task on. Janissa will continue to search for other volunteers to help with this.

Vicki asked that we send copies of all grant requests to her for her records.

### ***Research on additional funders***

Computer manufacturers: Henk will approach Samsung and Dell in South Africa for possible funding. Janissa will ask Volunteer Emily Miller to research grants from Samsung or Dell, using the selling point that we will be creating free educational software their users can access, and they can promote this for their company's benefit.

Rotary Club: Henk will contact Rotary in South Africa, starting with the Linwood Rotary Club in Pretoria. Janissa will contact Rotary in southeastern Idaho.

SAAB & Antenna provider: Henk will contact them to see if they might donate hardware to L2L.  
Public donations

### ***Recycling***

Janissa has a number of boxes placed in community to collect small electronics and ink cartridges for recycling. It is unknown yet how much we will collect from these efforts.

Janissa has attempted to recruit volunteers for recycling through VolunteerMatch.org. Three people volunteered but all then dropped out of touch.

Sherrie also has some boxes out in her community.

Janissa encouraged all U.S. Board Members to put boxes out. She will send them the necessary information, signs, and flyers.

### ***FIPE***

FIPE is still up in air about funding of further scholarships at Nohana Primary School. Sherrie mentioned that, if we need short-term cash for things other than scholarships, FIPE might be able to assist with funding, but FIPE cannot provide any long term funding.

## **PROJECTS**

### ***Ketane***

January Server Training:

Arrangements for Tony's visit to Lesotho in January to conduct server training for the Ketane teachers were discussed. Florence is handling the logistics and other arrangements.

The training is currently set for 12-16 January, possibly at Morija (1 hour outside Maseru). Teachers want to ask questions rather than have formal sessions, but Tony is resistant to this idea, saying he has too much new information he needs to tell them.

Tony is paying all his own expenses. Florence's stipend should cover her expenses, if it is held in Maseru or Morija. Teachers have been asked to pay for their own transportation and food, as part of their investment in the project. L2L may have to pay for the teachers' lodging, depending on where it is held.

October Computer Training:

No specific plans have been made yet, but the Ketane principals have agreed that this would be a good time for training.

Sarah is planning to go, but we would like to have another, yet-to-be-determined U.S. volunteer to go with her.

### ***Pela Tsoeu***

Initiation: Henk will talk with Florence and Mamatsepe about initiating the project at Pela Tsoeu. Florence should start laying the ground work for this, with Mamatsepe's assistance, then Henk will go to speak with the local leaders and the community. They will then work on getting the community involved and invested in the project.

Hardware: Decisions about what hardware to deploy still need to be made.

Evaluation: We also need to begin making arrangements for the pre-project evaluation at Pela Tsoeu. Fortunate will contact Sarah Howard about this. In the past, Sarah Howard's concern and reluctance to participate was because of the difficulty getting to Ketane. Fortunate thinks that because Pela Tsoeu is more accessible, she would be willing to go there.

Volunteers: Janissa would like to have Mamatsepe and/or a Peace Corps Volunteer to live at Pela Tsoeu full time to do community organization work, leadership training, data collection for the project evaluation, computer training, and initial project implementation work.

## **LESSONS**

### ***Lesson development for XO laptops***

Janissa has spent a lot of time recruiting over a dozen new programmers and graphics volunteers via VolunteerMatch.org, orienting them to L2L, and providing them with some training. It is still early days, so there are no finished lessons have been received yet, but several are close.

### ***Schemes of work***

Janissa has received a few lesson plans from Ketane teachers via Florence. Getting the teachers to submit them is like pulling teeth. Plus, Florence has to go to Ketane and copy them by hand, then enter them into her computer to send. Nohana Primary has a copier, but it is possible that because of their battery power issues, it is not available for use.

### ***Curriculum***

Fortunate said there has been no news from Lesotho on their proposed curriculum changes.

## HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

### *Scratch software*

Henk reported that Scratch is strictly a desktop tool and currently does not work on mobile devices such as Android phones and tablets. Scratch developers are working on making a mobile app, so it would be good to continue making L2L lessons using Scratch.

### *Computers hardware*

Scratch does work with Linux, and especially the Raspberry Pi. This means that small computers could be built that would use Scratch. The Raspberry Pi costs about \$25, but you have to add a screen, keyboard, and mouse. One question is how durable a Raspberry Pi machine would be with young children.

Tony has some ideas on getting small inexpensive laptops. Henk will discuss hardware options with Tony.

### *School servers*

Henk will have Elbert, one of his engineers, talk to Tony and meet with him in January when Tony is in Soweto.

### *Shipping laptops*

XO-1 laptops: Janissa has 10 XO laptops and a few spare batteries, donated by I Love My XO, that need to be sent to Lesotho. She had hoped to have the XOs carried over by Unadilla Rotary Club members, but they cancelled their December trip. There is a chance that students from Wittenberg University, who make annual trips to Lesotho and have taken laptops over for us in the past, may be able to take them over in late 2015. These laptops are destined for Kokobe Primary School.

Pueblo West High School Dell laptops: There are still 49 Dell laptops from PWHS in Kathy and Sherrie's basements. One Dell laptop, without its case, was shipped by Sherrie to Mamatsepe, for Mamatsepe to use in developing lessons. Mamatsepe agreed to deliver it to Matlabe in January 2015. We are waiting to hear from Matlabe on his arrangements for powering the laptops before shipping them. There is about \$1000 of funding dedicated to pay for shipping the laptops. It costs about \$80-85 to ship one laptop without its case, so this funding will only cover shipment of a small fraction of laptops. The remaining laptops will go to a 4H project in Colorado that Kathy has contact with.

## BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES & TASKS

Board member responsibilities and tasks for 2015 were confirmed, as follows:

### *Janissa*

- mentor Henk and Florence
- develop lessons and coordinate program development volunteers
- organize and transfer donor information to Vicki
- organize and transfer hardware database information to Vicki
- transfer all L2L files to Henk
- write grants for fundraising and coordinate with other fundraising volunteers (As stated previous, Janissa wants to pass this responsibility on to someone else as soon as possible.)

### ***Henk***

- president's duties as defined in our charter
- overall project supervision
- liaison with Basotho
- oversee Pela Tsoeu expansion
- hardware and software selection

### ***Sarah***

- secretary duties as defined in our charter
- taking notes at meetings and producing minutes
- sending out meeting notices and reminders
- filing annual incorporation papers
- developing lessons
- October training in Lesotho
- website management

### ***Vicki***

- treasurer's duties as defined in our charter
- bookkeeping & accounting,
- compile donor database,
- compile hardware database
- not fundraising

### ***Fortunate***

- track changes to Lesotho curriculum
- lesson development,
- October teacher training, though she needs to know dates before confirming
- mentor Florence
- evaluation for Pela Tsoeu
- not fundraising

### ***Kathy***

- blog
- will consider helping with some fundraising

### ***Sherrie***

- ship PWHS laptops to Lesotho
- liaise with FIPE scholars
- not fundraising other than recycling

See these minutes for other responsibilities not listed here.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

It was recommended that we make more use of email for board communications.

It was also suggest that we produce a monthly newsletter, though it was suggest that an easier alternative might be to use the blog for keeping everyone updated, if everyone will use it regularly. It was agreed that Board Members should send any progress and news to Kathy to post on the blog. We should also ask Florence to submit posts for the blog.

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

### ***Next meeting***

The next board meeting will be held in early February, with 7 February as the proposed date. It will be held at the same times as this meeting – 5 pm South African, 10 am Eastern, 8 am Mountain/Arizona Time.

### ***Future scheduling***

For financial reporting reasons, it was agreed that we will schedule all future board meetings, after the next one, at the close of each quarter – January, April, July, and October.

The meeting was adjourned.