North Carolina Open Government Coalition

Board of Directors Meeting on June 8, 2006

Attending were Jon Buchan, Sue Wilson, Jim Hefner, Rick Thames, Melanie Sill, Hugh Stevens, Beth Grace, Jordy Whichard, Pauletta Brown Bracy, and Judy Burke. Absent were Frank Barrows, Ross Holt, Howard Lee, Tom Ross and Dennis Milligan.

Ms. Sill opened the meeting with a review of the seminar. She said she learned that more that six weeks advance notice is needed and that Friday is a better day for attorneys. She noted that the timing of this year's event was locked in by the national Sunshine Week events. She noted that an impressive number of attendees stayed for the entire seminar.

Mr. Whichard presented a financial report and noted that the organization's funds have been switched from a money market to a linked disbursement account. He estimated the balance at $26,800 after payments to Mr. Barrows. There was a discussion of auditing and records keeping. The board agreed having Mr. Whichard and his assistant manage funds is appropriate so far.

The board discussed its pending grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, but with no announcement on the amount, no action could be taken.

The board also discussed fundraising efforts, including a request to the NC Association of Broadcasters and proposals to seek money from the Fred Fletcher Foundation, Frank Daniels and Don Curtis. Mr. Whichard and Mr. Stevens discussed the NC Press Foundation, whose First Amendment efforts have in recent years been overshadowed by its Newspapers in Education program. It was discussed that the organizations should not have parallel efforts but work together, but Mr. Stevens said the Foundation's funding is relatively limited.

The board reviewed proposals to affiliate with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Elon University. The board agreed to pursue the offer from Elon by obtaining more information and after receiving information on the Z. Smith Reynolds grant amount. The board discussed accountability, whether the director would be an independent contractor or on the staff of the university and other issues, including the benefits of affiliation with an institution.

Sue Wilson, Jon Buchan and Beth Grace were asked to serve as a nominating committee and consider expanding the board with a person from Elon University and the consideration of more people with an eye toward fundraising.

Pauletta Bracy discussed her draft strategic vision concept for the coalition with an emphasis on measurable outcomes as follows:
1. Review organizational structure to ensure efficient operations; report with recommendations; hire executive director
2. Expand membership base of organizations by 10 percent
3. Seek funding to support organizational operations and activities, set priorities and secure grants
4. Promote the organization through effective communication strategies; plan with measurable goals and objectives; report on successful practices
5. Plan an educational program; conduct annual workshop and evaluate
6. Summarize activities of the year; produce an annual report and disseminate to constituents and stakeholders.

It was discussed that another goal should be to reduce dues to bring in some smaller organizations, expand membership of organizations and have someone to focus on membership renewals in addition to new membership.

There was a discussion of reducing the cost for memberships for nonprofit organizations to $100 from $250.

Mr. Whichard said he would extract a list of current members and contact those whose memberships are due for renewal. Rick Thames said he would also help with renewals.

The next meeting was tentatively set for mid-September at Elon.

In other business:

* The board discussed the issue of being unable to obtain non-binding advisory opinions from the state Attorney General's office, which were available in the past. Mr. Stevens suggested staking out future attorney general candidates for their positions on seeking expanded authority from the General Assembly on issuing advisory opinions. In other states, an assistant attorney general can handle such requests.

The minutes of the August 2005 meeting were approved.
The meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.