

MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting

Friday • January 27, 2006 • 10:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Law Offices of Riddell Williams • Assembly Room
Seattle, Washington**

ATTENDANCE

Members present: (by phone): Juan Aguilar, Pete Garza, Dixie Kracht, Alicia McRae, Mario Villanueva, and Tomás Villanueva (in person): Gloria Burton, Erik Nicholson, John Smith, Michael Youngquist. Members not present: Guillermo Castaneda, Mike Gempler, Billie Heath, Heyward Watson. Ex Officio members present: Janet Abbett – CTED and Mary McBride – Office of Senator Murray. Staff present: Tom Byers and Kristi Buck – Cedar River Group, and Brien Thane - Office of Rural & Farmworker Housing.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Smith, Board Member, called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. welcoming everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the December 16th, 2005 meeting were reviewed.

- Tomás Villanueva moved for approval, Erik Nicholson seconded and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Annual Meeting Date and Nominating Committee Meeting Date.** Tom Byers requested a change in the date of the annual meeting to February 24, 2006 so the Nominating Committee can convene and the Board will be able to choose new officers.
 - Tomás Villanueva moved for approval, Mike Youngquist seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
- **Executive Director Search Committee Report.** Tom Byers reports that the Executive Search Services contracts have been fully executed and he understands that they are working on refining the job description.
- **Contract Extensions for ORFH/CRG.** The contracts between Trust and the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing and Cedar River Group are set to expire at the end of January. There is an extension clause in the contracts allowing the parties to extend the existing contracts for ninety days with Board approval.
 - Erik Nicholson moved for approval of the extension of both contracts, Tomás Villanueva seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Brien Thane distributed financial reports in a new format, including both a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement for December. Brien reported that as of December 31st, the Trust had a favorable balance of \$75,904.36 and expenditures are at or below projected levels in all budget categories except supplies and postage. The Board members observed that the new format is somewhat confusing and that greater detail is required so that the amounts earmarked for various projects are clearly delineated. Brien said that he would work with Tom to develop a matrix to illustrate the earmarking of funds for specific uses.

- Mike Youngquist moved for approval of the financial report, Erik Nicholson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

FUNDRAISING REPORT

- **Plan for meeting with local lenders (Craig Nolte's proposal).** Tom Byers described Craig Nolte's draft meeting schedule and passed out a handout created by Craig. In a discussion with Tom, Craig raised the idea of using the Federal Reserve Bank's power to convene as a way to enable the Trust to hold meetings in different locations with smaller community banks. Craig believes that this will: 1) build the knowledge and support of the Trust and its work; 2) get the financial institutions more involved; and 3) expand the network of support within the community.

Craig suggested the idea of having a series of five meetings (one within each district) to coincide with the initiation of the farmworker survey at particular harvest times within each district. Craig would like the approval and agreement of the Board that the Board members would participate in the areas that meetings will be held. Erik Nicholson said that he favored the idea in general, but that we need to work with Craig to make certain that those who attend really have the power to make decisions for their organization. He felt that would not be true for local branches of national banks. Tom said that he would raise that issue with Craig. The Board members unanimously agreed to participate and work with Craig Nolte on this endeavor.

FARMWORKER SURVEY COMMITTEE REPORT

Peter has agreed to have data from pilot survey (Yakima, Wenatchee and Okanogan) counties fully analyzed a week from today, and the Farmworker Survey Committee will then meet and go over it. Peter and Alice are still working on getting the list of growers from the State. Erik Nicholson and other Board members raised questions about how we can be certain that we reach the appropriate numbers of women and non-Spanish speaking workers. The committee members present took note of those concerns for discussion with the research team.

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

Tom Byers reported that work on the Trust website is now well underway. Rhonda Peterson of the Cedar River Group staff is assembling the text and graphics, and has contacted a technical expert suggested by Pete Garza. The technical expert is from a farmworker background, and has solid credentials and reasonable prices. The goal is to have the site operational this spring.

2006 STATE ACTION AGENDA

- **January 11, 2006 Hearing Report.** Brien Thane and Mario Villanueva reported on the Trust's participation in the Housing Committee's legislative hearing on the Home Security Fund (House Bill 2418). The Trust presented one of seven panels that spoke in favor of the Bill's provisions. Mike Gempler, Mario, Brien and Tom spoke for the Trust and provided the Committee members with a written summary. The hearing was very well attended and Committee members seemed supportive.
- **Senator Murray's Meetings.** Mary McBride reported that Senator Murray met with the Governor and members of the Democratic caucuses in both the House and Senate, stressing the critical importance of affordable housing, and farmworker housing in particular. The Senator is very supportive of the Home Security Fund, and will do what she can to help secure its passage.
- **Status of the Home Security Fund.** Brien and Tom reported that the Home Security Fund legislation was revised in order to secure its passage with bi-partisan support. The bill still includes \$4 million annually for farmworker housing, with an emphasis on on-farm, grower provided housing. In addition, the new language dedicates \$4 million to a voucher program to enable farmworkers to secure housing in the private sector. This change caused a great deal of concern among our allies in the Low-income Housing Alliance because it shifted funds from housing production to a voucher program with little chance of really meeting the need. In conversation with members of the Alliance, Brien has emphasized that the Trust Board was not involved in pushing the idea of vouchers in any way. The current wording of the bill leaves the Trust Board with serious challenges: 1) we must develop a position on the voucher program; and, we must find a common position on the issue of seasonal housing or risk having our Coalition break apart during the legislative session.
- **Board Discussion.** The Board members quickly agreed that they wanted to work to forge an agreement that was true to all interests. The Board worked hard to reach agreement on a common position on the Holmquist amendment (the voucher program), and agreed to state our strong preference for spending the money on construction, however we agreed not to oppose the voucher program if the Speaker believed it was essential to passage. Turning to the most difficult issues, the Board and staff acknowledged that our failure to wrestle with the seasonal housing issue earlier had left us in a tough spot. While everyone agreed that issue could not be settled in an afternoon, they also agreed that the Trust's future depended on reaching a solid accord on seasonal housing, and assigned a nine-member committee to negotiate a solution. (Burton, Garza, Gempler, Heath, Nicholson, M. Villanueva, T. Villanueva, Youngquist, Thane). With these agreements in place, the Board spent the final two hours crafting substitute language for the bill. Several options were developed, written on a blackboard, and read aloud repeatedly for the members on the phone. The work was interrupted momentarily by Mario Villanueva's announcement that he had just received an e-mail announcing State approval of three large farmworker housing projects sponsored by the Trust's nonprofit partners. That announcement seemed to give everyone new energy and a

half-hour later, agreement was reached on substitute language, subject to ratification by the absent members. The new language we will recommend is:

\$. . . 4 million shall be dedicated solely for projects and programs that meet the full spectrum of housing needs of farmworkers and their families. In implementing this provision of the bill, CTED shall work with the Board of the Washington State Farmworker Housing Trust . . . ”

- **Next Steps.** Tom Byers agreed to write a memo to the absent members describing the agreements and asking them for ratification prior to a meeting between farmworker advocates and Reps. Springer and Miloscia next Tuesday.

NEXT MEETING LOCATION/TIME

The next meeting of the Board will be in Olympia at the Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED), Friday, February 24, 2006.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: _____
Secretary

Approved: _____
President/Vice President