

Friends of Eswatini - Board Meeting Summary - December 20, 2020

Attending were: John and Patty von Reyn, Scott Lewis, Melissa Weber Horton, Mike Burke, Tom Gutnick and Amanda Blood.

Our meeting was conducted by Zoom Videoconference, sponsored by Mike Burke.

This summary was prepared by John and emailed to Board members on 12/23/2020.

We began the meeting by welcoming our two new Board Members: Michael Burke, who will be serving as Treasurer, and Amanda Blood, who has volunteered to help with planning the Peace Corps 60th Anniversary celebration and reunion to take place in 2021. We spent the first few minutes introducing ourselves and briefly discussed our experience as RPCVs in Eswatini.

Treasurer's Report. Scott delivered his last Treasurer's Report, as Michael Burke has taken on this role. We started the year with \$4630, and after various donations to nonprofits providing health services in eSwatini and funding the showing of the documentary, *The Towering Task*, ended the year with \$1666 (though there is money still coming in this month from dues and donations). In addition, the Treasurer facilitated disbursement of funds collected by a group of FoE RPCVs that fund an educational assistance project for young women in Eswatini. John met with Mike at BB&T Bank last week, adding Mike and removing Scott from the FoE account. (FYI, BB&T is in the process of merging with SunTrust, and the new bank will be called Truist)

2020 Accomplishments. We reviewed our accomplishments during the year:

- John discussed the several-months-long move of FoE's website content to a website hosted by NPCA's Peace Corps Connect using SilkStart. The new website gives us membership management tools, automated email capabilities, and other tools that will enhance FoE's ability to manage the group.
- Melissa discussed the funding of various nonprofits providing healthcare services to Swazis during this year of COVID. The Luke Commission and Cabrini were recommended by recent RPCVs. In addition we funded Bantwana and Young Heroes. Typically FoE assists PCVs serving in Eswatini by funding their projects that have been vetted by the Peace Corps Partnership Program. However, with the evacuation of RPCVs in Eswatini, there were no projects to fund this year. She also sent information to the Board via email about Swazi SHEroes, a nonprofit started this year by individuals who were involved in the Peace Corps program in eSwatini. This may be a potential nonprofit that we can contribute to in the upcoming year.

New Business

- **60th Anniversary PC Reunion Celebration.** The celebration in Washington, D.C. is currently scheduled for July 29-31. NPCA leads the planning effort for this and has not released much information about it to date. In addition to the events sponsored by

NPCA, FoE has, in the past, sponsored activities for eSwatini RPCVS during the celebration. Examples are: FoE activities open to all attendees, business meetings/social get-togethers at DC restaurants or bars, receptions at the eSwatini embassy, participation in the March by Country from the Lincoln Memorial to the JFK Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. As mentioned earlier, Angela has offered to help coordinate FoE's participation for next year.

- **End of Year Fundraiser.** Scott has run an end-of-the-year fundraising effort the last few years to raise funds for the various projects we support. We agreed that we would do another this year and Scott will work with Mike on this effort.
- **New Board Bios for FoE Website.** As new Board members, we'll need to add Mike and Amanda's photos and bios to the website. Here is a [link](#) to show what has been posted about current Board members.
- **Leadership Position.** John had announced he would be stepping down from the group leader position at the end of the year. As no one has stepped forward to fill the position, he will continue to serve until a new group leader can be found and approved by the Board.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Wednesday 2/17/20 at 7PM EST.