

11:00 – 12:30 EDT

Present: Timothy, Pamela, Jeremy, Peter, Lisa, Ayesha, Manoj, Sue (Chair)

## Revised Agenda

1. Welcome with well wishes exchanged
2. Financial situation, program bottlenecks and fundraising needs
  - #1. Reduce the inventory
  - #2. Raise funds for shipments
  - #3. With reduced inventory, organize shipments
  - #4. Puerto Rico program
  - #5. Get help with management and administrative tasks
3. Discussion of future options: brainstorming

### 1. Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and invited participants to speak. To a person, each Board Member expressed their pleasure in seeing Timothy and Pamela and they in turn expressed their thanks for the Board's support and well wishes. The Chair thanked Board members for finding the time on short notice and reviewed the agenda, revised after the Chair and Treasurer met with Timothy and Pamela on 24 May. She explained that this was not the usual bimonthly agenda. Rather than reviewing financial statements, an overview on the financial situation would be given.

### 2. Discussion of financial situation and workplan bottlenecks

- a. **Financial.** There is not an immediate cash flow crisis and there are several points of good news:
  - a. Requests and funds for shipments continue to come in.
  - b. PPP loan repayment schedule was re-negotiated and approved.
  - c. Federal and state tax returns were filed for 2021.
  - d. Advice from the new auditor resulted in lower audit costs, initially. However, Pamela reported that the state of Illinois requires the full, more expensive audit, which costs about \$5000 more. A Board member asked if it was worth it.

The most pressing financial needs are to reduce high storage costs and secure more financial stability through longer term funding.

- b. **Workplan.** Timothy and Pamela outlined a number of areas which are bottlenecks. It is difficult to predict how things will go week to week and therefore some backup to make sure things are moving would be welcome. The top needs are:
  - a. Getting commitments met, including shipments and Puerto Rico work
  - b. Managing continuing requests
  - c. Central administration and fundraising support

The issues were discussed in five activity areas, as noted in agenda above.

### *#1. Reduce the inventory*

Desktop machines are no longer being accepted, only laptops, tablets, and smart phones. An inventory of machines in continental US exists in three locations: Boston (Hull), Chicago, and Columbia, MD with some old computers in each site. The situation varies across cities as do possible solutions. The inventory in Puerto Rico is treated separately, below.

**In Columbia, MD**, there are quite a few good desktops. The proposal is to take laptops out and sell all rest of the 1500 computers to an asset firm. The WCE lead in Maryland is ill and unable to assist. Tasks identified:

- **Pam & Tim** request WCE people to pull out 150 laptops. They would then need to be moved to Boston for consolidating in shipments, unless they were shipped from Maryland. Advisory Board, volunteers, or former Board members in the area may be willing to help.
- **A Board member** to identify an asset firm that can purchase the rest of the inventory. This involves getting inventory numbers from Pam, conducting an online search, and making phone calls. The asset firm can liaise with Timothy and Pamela for access and scheduling.
- **Board member** to identify recycling firm to take away any machines that are deemed too old. One option <https://www.abetterwayrecycling.com>

**In Chicago**, the inventory is good desktops and laptops. WCE's Chicago lead is on the non-profit Board of [TechLit Africa](#). Discussions have been ongoing about collaborating and adopting WCE activities. Tasks identified:

- **Timothy and Pam** to explore how they can assist. TechLit may want to raise funds to buy desktops from WCE at a bargain cost. They are focused on Kenya but are looking to expand to 4-5 other African countries.
- **A Board member** to follow/track as backup

**In Boston (Hull)**, there are computers in Timothy and Pamela's garage and they need to be sorted to see which ones are worth shipping. In the storage containers, there are a lot of old ones and they need to be separated and given to a recycler. There is a possibility of moving those in the garage to a space for staging shipments. Tasks identified:

- **Pamela and Timothy** can organize the help for the Boston inventory with help from volunteers or hourly paid staffing.
- **A Board member** to follow/track as backup

### *#2. Raise funds for shipments and #3. With reduced inventory, organize shipments*

The discussion combined these two areas of need. The Board discussed a multi-pronged approach, involving hiring a Development Officer, securing an in-kind donation from a logistics firm, and supporting in-country fundraising.

Regarding the planned recruitment of a Development Officer, alternatives were discussed:

- a. Use 100% to ensure broader fundraising, and possibly some management support
- b. Use some piece of the \$50K grant from Act 20/22 Society for a person to focus on Inspire Girls funding in Africa
- c. Use some small proportion of the grant to support in-country funding, perhaps \$2,000 per country and the rest for the Development Officer hire.

Timothy and Pamela have some people who can assist with organizing the shipments of smaller boxes but not containers. It is also complicated to master the shipment process paperwork.

Jeremy estimated we have 5000 computer sets to ship and with 500 computers to a container, we would need at least \$5000 for most shipments to cover shipping costs for a total of \$50,000, In response, Lisa is approaching a potential donor and his church in California to make a contribution of ~\$20,000 to address the shipment backlog. Also, Manoj suggested that the Field Associates could explore potential donors within their countries, and he offered to support 2 or three Field Associates in developing a proposal and contacting various donors in countries where he has contacts. Ayesha agreed to help 2 or 3 Field Associates with their needs with WCE as well.

The following next steps were identified:

- **Sue** to revisit the Development Officer TOR **with Timothy and Pamela** and launch a new recruitment
- **Timothy and Pamela** to prepare a **1-pager** to send to Lisa regarding shipment needs
- **Lisa** to make the request to the head of the organization for the potential donor
- **Manoj and Ayesha** to each work with a subset of Field Associates in countries to fundraise. The support would involve putting them in touch with possible donor contacts, assisting in the preparation of proposals and other WCE related needs.

#### *#4. Puerto Rico program*

Timothy reported an excellent contact, Rob Nieves, who can assist with rolling out the Puerto Rico activities. He is a professor and head of an association supporting teachers with educational technology and has experience training teachers. Rob has volunteered some and has the skills to find schools, get computers set up in the schools, and help develop clubs to maintain the equipment and train teachers. Perhaps some of the \$30K for coding in Puerto Rico can be used to hire Rob and pay for logistical help. The inventory includes ~1200 machines but some have been there in storage close to 3 years due to the pandemic.

- **Timothy and Jeremy** to have a call with Rob Nieves to secure his engagement
- **Lisa and Jeremy** speak with Robb about ideas for use of **both** Act 20/22 Society donations, the \$50K and the \$30K for coding activities
- **Jeremy** to assess inventory
- **Jeremy** to donate his company's local transport support to deliver machines to schools

#### *#5. Get help with management/organizing*

Because it is difficult to predict what Timothy and Pamela will be able to tackle, some solutions for support with management and administration work is needed. The Board discussed greater use of BC intern, funded with the healthy SJ Internship Fund account, to help with some of these tasks. A new need was also identified by the auditor, to ask donors to unblock their donations to give greater flexibility. Pamela will continue to do the bookkeeping and financial reports. Tasks identified:

- **A Board member** work with Pamela to secure donor agreements to unblock donations
- **Timothy and Pamela** to explore with the SJ Internship Fund Board flexibility to pay graduate students more, even for half-time work

- **Timothy and Pamela** reach out to attract broader range of graduate students, including through faculties of management, education, and not only communication.
- **Sue** to connect Timothy and Pamela with contact in the BC School of Education
- **Timothy and Pamela** to reflect on discrete tasks for help
- **Intern** to update WCE Board page

### 3. Discussion of Vision of the Future

The Chair outlined four scenarios:

- a. Status quo
- b. Merger with another organization
- c. Partnership with an organization, which played to WCE's strengths such as its extensive network
- d. Having a narrower focus, continue a subset of programs, e.g. Inspire Girls

The Board members agreed that the future shape of WCE must be based on Timothy and Pamela's priorities but that the options need to be explored quickly. The first option is not likely possible. Several Board expressed the hope that WC as an organization continues rather than is merger under something. Partnering with another organization deserves investigating. Options mentioned were Tech-Lit Africa and the Internet Society which has country chapters and includes the Public Interest Registry (PIR). As this discussion was just for brainstorming, no conclusion was reached.

The meeting ended at 12:25 EDT.