

## MAFRA Steering Committee Meeting Minutes – Fall 2010

15 September 2010

Attendees: Dean Rennie, Stef McLachlan, Amy Yonda, Paul Chorney, Jacinta Wiebe (phone), Celia Guilford, Stefan Epp (staff), Anna Weier (staff)

Chair: Anna Weier

Originally, we had hoped to start this meeting with a ceremony to centre us for the meeting. Anna said that this had not been possible due to the changes in the date for the meeting, so she opened with a story about work happening in the Spence neighbourhood.

### **Principal Investigator Update:**

Stef talked about the upcoming SSHRC meetings in Ottawa, which will be a chance to meet with other CURAs and build connections. Currently several people have been looking into applying for a partnership grant, including the three CURAs, Food Secure Canada, and the Canadian Association of Food Studies, among others. Stef will report back when he knows more.

Stef has also made contact with John Sinclair's CURA in Kenora. Stefan will visit Kenora to connect with their Project Coordinator and attend their annual general meeting.

Paul said he is interested in learning more about the BC CURA, which is working with schools.

Stef asked if people thought that a national network was a good idea (with MAFRA having a role in it). This is a new type of partnership grant and would provide \$500,000-\$2.5 million over 5 years. It would extend to health and ag scientists and potentially to other stakeholders (industry, government). Are people supportive of this? A proposal would be due by January 2011.

Dean said that it seemed like a good idea as we emphasize building alliances.

Paul asked where the money is from.

Stef said that it is a SSHRC Partnership Grant.

### **Project Staff Update:**

Stefan provided an update on World Food Day activities, which will be held in cooperation with Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The event will include a 10x10x20 presentation (10 speakers with 10 slides each for 20 seconds per slide – fast paced 'snapshots' of food justice in different situations) and a participatory art project. It will be held at Ellice Theatre. Canadian Foodgrains Bank is able to pay for the event, and we are providing in kind staff support.

Stefan has also been involved with several other organizations lately. These have included the Canadian CED Network Gathering organizing committee, the Growing Local steering committee, and the Winnipeg Food Policy Working Group. These connections have helped us get food on the agenda, lend our expertise and connections, and build networks with community organizations.

Paul mentioned that he is really impressed with the Winnipeg Election Guide prepared by Stefan and Dayna.

Stefan mentioned that there is also a Manitoba version of the guide for those outside of Winnipeg – both the Winnipeg and Manitoba versions available from [www.winnipegfoodpolicy.org](http://www.winnipegfoodpolicy.org).

Anna has been working on a communications strategy. She has also been working to create a more interactive and accessible food calendar on our website and has been working on organizing an indigenizing workshop for October or November.

Stef pointed out that the video Dean worked on for the Organic Food Council of Manitoba was very well received. They won the video in a draw from our communications survey.

Jacinta said that she can come down on a Friday to help Anna with the indigenizing workshop. Anna will follow up.

### **Governance Document:**

Anna explains that if people would like to set aside sections of the document for discussion, we will set those aside and attempt to find consensus on the rest of the Governance Document.

Stefan provided an overview of the document, highlighting key sections throughout.

Paul suggested changing the community term on the executive from four months to one year.

Stef suggests that there be a period of overlap of one meeting.

*Carried by consensus: the term of the executive committee will be changed to one year in length with an overlap of one meeting.*

Stefan suggests changing the set meeting dates from always being on the same day of the week to ensure that people are able to make it to meetings – the day of the week will be rotated.

*Carried by consensus: the meeting dates will rotate through the days of the week.*

Celia says that meetings should never be had on a long weekend.

Anna proposed adding an additional point to the mission statement: “to provide support and facilitate the work of other groups and organizations that work towards food justice in Manitoba.”

*Carried by consensus: to add the additional statement to the mission statement: “to provide support and facilitate the work of other groups and organizations that work towards food justice in Manitoba.”*

Stef proposed to renaming the sub-committees as ‘ad hoc committees.’

*Carried by consensus: renaming the subcommittees as ‘ad hoc committees.’*

Anna proposed that we seek consensus on the document, with the exception of the section on seeking funding and making decisions by e-mail.

*Carried by consensus: the governance document, with the exception of the section on seeking funding and making decisions by e-mail.*

Stefan proposes adding an additional point to the Steering Committee Governance section: “A motion in writing, with e-mail approval or signed by 75% of Steering Committee members is as valid as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Steering Committee. Decisions should be made by e-mail preferably only in exceptional circumstances (for example, due to time constraints).”

General agreement that this was a good idea.

Celia proposed that an absence of a response should be taken as consent.

Stef asked what time frame people should be given to respond.

Celia said that it can vary widely – hard to have a set limit.

Stef suggested that we should first attempt to seek consensus before relying on 75% approval.

Consensus was sought on a modified text.

*Carried by consensus:*

*If a motion is made in writing requesting e-mail approval, we will first seek to reach consensus. If this is not possible, e-mail approval of 75% of Steering Committee members is as valid as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Steering Committee.*

*Decisions should be made by e-mail preferably only in exceptional circumstances (for example, due to time constraints).*

*An absence of a response by a Steering Committee member will be taken as consent.*

*Normally, two business days will be provided for Steering Committee members to respond to an e-mail motion. Staff will follow up with Steering Committee members to encourage their participation.*

Stefan said that concerns had been raised on the section regarding seeking additional funding. He read a new modified version.

Celia said that the new version is much better.

Stef suggested that instead of just referring to the Principal Investigator, the text should refer to the Principal Investigator or anyone else writing funding proposals for MAFRA.

Paul suggested changing ‘encouraged to’ to ‘will’ in paragraph 1.

Jacinta pointed out that this new text is very different from the previous text.

Celia said that it would be good to send it around to everyone for general feedback, but that we can pass it by consensus in the meanwhile.

*Carried by consensus:*

*1 MAFRA's funding position is different than many of its community partners, as it has access to funding pools intended for university researchers. MAFRA will focus its efforts on finding funding from academic funding bodies as its primary source of additional funds.*

*2 There may be opportunities for MAFRA to apply for funding from non-academic sources. To avoid duplication or competing with key community partners, the Steering Committee should be notified of and approve these funding proposals prior to applying for non-academic funds.*

*3 If funding is being sought for MAFRA projects not previously approved by the Steering Committee, whether from academic or non-academic sources, the Steering Committee needs to be informed of and approve the new project.*

*4 Conversely, if academic funding is being sought to further MAFRA work already approved by the Steering Committee, the Principal Investigator (or anyone else writing funding proposals for MAFRA) should inform the Steering Committee but can proceed with the funding proposal.*

*5 Should the Steering Committee approve any funding proposal, MAFRA community partners will be approached to participate where appropriate. Likewise, opportunities for allocating funding to support community partners will also be explored.*

*6 If the Steering Committee rejects a source of funding proposed by the Principal Investigator (or anyone else writing funding proposals for MAFRA), they may still apply for the funding but will not do so through MAFRA (for example, the Principal Investigator might apply through the Environmental Conservation Lab at the University of Manitoba). With the support of the Steering Committee, MAFRA could provide a letter of support for these projects, even if it is not actively involved in project outcomes.*

Break to move cars.

### **Community Project Funding:**

Stefan introduced the Project Selection Process document. He proposed that we divide the document into two parts – the criteria and then the process.

Stef questioned the mandatory requirement that “a significant portion of the work needs to take place in Manitoba.” He asked what about northwestern Ontario?

Stefan said that MAFRA should have a Manitoba focus, especially given the limited funds that we have and the extent of the interest and need in Manitoba.

Stef said that we could say that we are increasing the project's scope in response to a need from an isolated region. Northwestern Ontario not served well by Ontario. There are also many isolated Indigenous groups in northwestern Ontario.

Paul said that there is not a lot of money. He asked if there would be strategic reasons to expand to northwestern Ontario – more funding opportunities?

Stef said that his interest in doing this comes out of a need, and it comes out of a connection with the CURA in Kenora.

Jacinta said that the control of the money needs to stay in Manitoba, but the work could happen anywhere. She wouldn't want to exclude people outside the province if there is a connection with them.

Stefan said that the question should be reframed. He said it is not a matter of excluding northwestern Ontario but providing opportunities for Manitobans – because by including northwestern Ontario it reduces the money available for Manitoban organizations.

Anna proposed changing the section to read 'an organization that does significant work in Manitoba' as a balance that would allow bioregional work.

Stef suggested that the text read 'normally in Manitoba' and that people can make an argument why they should be included.

Jacinta said that some northern communities are very close to northern Ontario. Initially projects would be from Manitoba but include people in Ontario.

Celia says that it is tough to come up with a single standard.

Amy was concerned that basing the standard organizationally might create barriers to participation.

Dean asked if interprovincial work would not fall better into the new national partnership.

Amy said that work should actually happen within the province.

Stefan said that the wording 'significant portion of the work' does not exclude cross-provincial work – as long as an important component is happening in Manitoba.

Paul said that MAFRA would lose credibility if we are giving money outside of Manitoba.

Celia said that she is hesitant to say yes, hesitant to say no. This is a really fabulous idea, but probably outside the scope of the current project. Sounds like another funding proposal!

Anna proposed then that the original wording is fine after all.

*Carried by consensus: The Project Requirements and Application Information.*

Paul asked why we set a limit of \$7000.

Stefan said that it had been in proposal.

Stef said that that was so a minimum of three projects per region would be funded.

Celia suggested setting a range of \$500-\$7000 to let people know that smaller grants are welcome too.

Stef suggested offering particular amounts (ie one \$7,000, two \$3,500, and six \$500) per region per year.

Paul thought it better to leave it flexible.

Anna suggested leaving decisions up to the regional committees but provide range and say we might not give the full amount. Having particular amounts adds a layer of playing a game.

*Carried by consensus: stating in the funding call that grants will range from \$500-\$7000.*

Stefan presented a document outlining seven different models for selecting projects. He said that his personal preferred option was a Steering Committee + (SC+) model, including regional committees of the Steering Committee members and three volunteers for each region.

Stef asks what this does for conflict of interest, given that most people will be submitting proposals.

Anna said that larger models will also have conflict of interest (for example, where the meeting is). She has a hope that most organizations who are part of MAFRA have an interest in general alternatives to food systems.

Stef says that everyone will be in a conflict of interest position. The internet could open it up – provide accountability and transparency by posting proposals online.

Celia likes the internet idea – it makes things accessible to everyone – they can then provide feedback on them. Transparency is most important. This also provides an opportunity for more interactive dialogue.

Stefan suggested finding the three volunteer positions on the SC+ committees from people who hadn't put in a proposal to mitigate the conflict of interest further.

Anna suggested bringing in an outside facilitator to these sessions – will help reach consensus.

Stefan asked how criteria will be applied, while also wanting to have regional autonomy (how do you tell applicants what the committees are looking for when it might be interpreted very differently in each region).

Stef suggested that Food Matters Manitoba sit on the urban committee.

Paul said that Food Matters has a lot of northern programming as well.

Anna suggested that Food Matters could select which committee it wanted to sit on.

Paul will talk with Kreesta.

It was agreed that this decision did not need to be made at the meeting.

Paul asked if a staff member could facilitate these meetings? Is it a lot of money to spend on external facilitators for a small grant pool?

Stef said that the staff would do a good job but it is more about optics.

Stef said that we could spend \$300 per region – so less than \$1000 total. This would provide valuable facilitation skills and free staff up to act as resource people.

In regards to Stefan's question about criteria, Stef proposes that we keep the criteria as is, and that each committee will decide how to implement those criteria.

Anna proposed that we use these criteria for this year. If regional committees express a concern about the criteria, they can develop differentiated ones for the next year.

Stef proposed that we outline on the proposal who will be on the committees (and can just mention that three additional volunteers will be added).

Anna said that we will figure out FMM's committee role and report back along with send around application form before it goes out.

Stef said that we should be proactive around volunteers.

*Carried by consensus: a Steering Committee + model for project selection, and that we outline who will be on the committees on the application form and that the application form will be sent around for Steering Committee feedback before it is publicly released.*

**Budget:**

Stefan reviewed the document. He also outlined some lines that have potential flexibility for this year. In particular, he suggested opening up student and community conference attendance funding beyond just MAFRA projects this year (as there will likely be no MAFRA projects that require travel up to the fiscal year end).

Celia said that it should be sent out to everyone and have a chance for applications.

Stef asked if we should form a community committee to divvy up the money.

Stefan thought that this was a lot of work for a very small pot of funds.

*Carried by consensus: Money for students and community conference attendance will be extended beyond MAFRA projects for this year. This information will be shared at the same time as the call for proposals goes out.*

Discussion regarding national networking (line 11).

Anna thought we could still use this money for some kind of national speaker(s) and should be left in.

Stef said that we could use these funds to help facilitate partnership grant writing by bringing people together.

Anna thought that the traveling would be to make presentations – more open than just a meeting.

Paul suggested that we could have that person make a presentation when they are hear.

The budget line is left as is.

Stef asked if we have flexibility to borrow against future years.

Stefan said that we do have extra money because we have \$100,000 in Y1 funds that we got just after we got the project started so do have some flexibility. The governance document mandates that we notify the Steering Committee if we exceed particular budget lines.

*Carried by consensus: the budget.*

**Other Business:**

Stefan said that we have several Steering Committee spots to fill. Margo Malabar of the North End Food Security Network has expressed interest.

Stef mentioned we might also want an international perspective – ie Raymond Ngarbouli.

Paul suggested Damon Johnson.

Stef says that this is an opportunity to increase diversity.

Stefan proposes that we can continue this conversation by e-mail.

Stef asked how do we articulate researchers and students with community projects. Researchers are getting money, so what do they put into the project?

Anna said that we have included a section on the application form that asks applicants if they want to work together with a student or researcher.

Stef said that we could have an annual meeting to share research – everyone who gets money would present at this meeting. If money is freed up from other parts of the budget it could go to this travel.

Anna presented logo options. These will be circulated by e-mail.

Meeting adjourned.