

THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING – MINUTES FRIDAY APRIL 27, 2007 9 AM – 10 AM HOSTED BY FOOD BANK OF ALASKA

Participants

Committee Members:

Bruce Klein – Executive Director, Nome Community Center
Susannah Morgan – Executive Director, Food Bank of Alaska
Mike Rochin – Director of Emergency Assistance, New Hope on the Last Frontier
Chris Scott – Executive Director, New Hope on the Last Frontier
Linda Swarner – Executive Director, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
Henryk Szadziewski – Program Manager, the Alaska Food Coalition
Andrea Thistle – Program Director, Valley Open Bible Fellowship
Apology: AnnaBell Stevens – Labor Liason, United Way of Anchorage

Guest:

Shawn Powers – Advocacy Program Manager, Food Bank of Alaska

Committee Governance - a loose framework

Henry reminded participants that the purpose of the committee was to agree on a policy agenda to form the legislative ask from state legislators at the next Alaska Food Coalition Annual Member Meeting in Juneau. The formation of the committee was deemed necessary because members had expressed concern over the preparations for the legislative ask at the last Annual Member Meeting. Henry added that the committee is a member driven initiative and asked for a spokesperson to bring agreed items from committee meetings to the membership at teleconferences. Andrea said she would do this.

The Alaska Food Coalition Legislative Agenda for FY 2008

Henry invited Shawn to discuss the first three policy proposals on the agenda. Shawn informed committee members on each proposal in turn:

1. State legislation in support of school breakfast, which could take these forms:
 - State funding for startup grants to get breakfast programs going in schools that do not have them

- A state match to supplement the federal reimbursements for breakfast—i.e. the state pays a school a certain amount for each breakfast it serves
 - Mandates requiring that all schools or schools meeting certain criteria (high proportion of students in need, poor performance) serve breakfast
 - Funding for universal free breakfast programs
 - Reporting requirements where schools must report reasons for non-participation in the SBP
2. State money for food stamp outreach during next year's legislative session, which could be used to get a federal match.
 3. Transportation funding for food banks to help get more America's Second Harvest food to Alaska. This essentially would increase the amount of food that could be brought to Alaska through America's Second Harvest's Choice System.

Bruce said that the third of these proposals had limited use in rural Alaska, but that he was very supportive of work on the first policy proposal. He added that he would be willing to share information and statistics from Nome on recent school breakfast initiatives

Linda said that excitement over food stamp outreach has been limited in Kenai, while Chris commented on the success of Shawn's food stamp clinics at New Hope on the Last Frontier. Both were very supportive of the school breakfast proposals. Andrea asked Shawn about food stamps outreach efforts in the valley. Shawn responded that there had been a favorable reception to recent efforts.

Susannah thought that CSFP in rural Alaska was a federal legislative ask rather than a state one. Bruce thought that it was worth raising at the meeting as a future and additional source of assistance to rural Alaska.

Henry talked about the importance of seeking funds for capital improvements to the charitable anti-hunger network. He said that this is a project that the AFC has been working on for 18 months and with its completion a dollar amount would soon be available for a comprehensive modernization of physical needs in the charitable food network. All members agreed on the inclusion of this item in a legislative ask.

Additional proposals were solicited and Bruce brought up the impact of the increase in by-pass mail rates on the amount of food shipped to rural Alaska. Susannah said she would contact Steven's office on this issue.

Henry asked the members for any advice on strategy and Susannah commented that detailed information was now required on the proposals including a dollar amount attached. These would need to be added to the Governor's budget in October. It was also suggested that members keep up relationships with legislators in the interim and that they should invite them to their agencies between sessions.

Henry asked about meeting frequency and the members agreed that the next one should be mid-summer with short check-ins each month – perhaps even by e-mail. Committee members also agreed that Andrea should take the school breakfast and capital improvements proposals to the members for approval at the next teleconference.

The meeting was adjourned at May 4, 2007.