

## THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



### **POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING – MINUTES THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007 2 – 3 PM HOSTED BY FOOD BANK OF ALASKA**

#### **Participants**

##### *Committee Members:*

AnnaBell Stevens – Labor Liason, United Way of Anchorage  
Susannah Morgan – Executive Director, Food Bank of Alaska  
Mike Rochin – Director of Emergency Assistance, New Hope on the Last Frontier  
Linda Swarner – Executive Director, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank  
Kerri Burrows – Program Manager, the Alaska Food Coalition  
Andrea Thistle – Program Director, Valley Open Bible Fellowship  
Ruth Riley-Elvsaaas -Program Director, Food Bank of Alaska

Apology: Bruce Klein – Executive Director, Nome Community Center  
Chris Scott – Executive Director, New Hope on the Last Frontier

##### *Guest*

Shawn Powers – Advocacy Program Manager, Food Bank of Alaska

#### **Farm Bill Update**

Shawn updated committee members about the progress of the Farm Bill. The 2007 Farm Bill has just passed in the House and will soon be debated in the Senate. On a positive note, CSFP was renewed with a lower income eligibility level for seniors, an increase in funding for TEFAP was approved and several improvements for the Food Stamp Program were added. The goal now is to keep this motivation for positive change rolling by contacting Senators Ted Stevens and Lisa Murkowski and asking them to build on the progress made in the House Farm Bill. Contact Shawn Powers at [spowers@foodbankofalaska.org](mailto:spowers@foodbankofalaska.org) for sample letters or send your own to the following addresses:

Senator Ted Stevens  
522 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
FAX: (202) 224-2354

Senator Lisa Murkowski  
709 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
FAX: (202) 224-5301

### **AFC Legislative Agenda FY 2008**

There were two options for legislative funding proposed in previous meetings:

- School Breakfast Initiative
- Infrastructure Improvements

**School Breakfast Initiative-** Shawn has been working with several organizations throughout the state in regards to getting movement on the School Breakfast Initiative. While a specific dollar amount hasn't been agreed upon, there are two flyers that are available for use to help educate members about the benefits of this initiative. Kerri will send these flyers out with a cover letter to all coalition members letting them know what progress we have made and what information will be coming down the pipeline.

Shawn asked if anyone has suggestions on how we would like to present the School Breakfast Initiative to legislators at the Annual Meeting. All were in agreement that a tangible object was needed to make an impact; paper was too easy to throw away. Discussion of putting custom labels on a cereal box got a good response. Shawn and Kerri will organize a plan and implement for Annual Meeting.

**Infrastructure Improvements-** In response to current legislative trends, the committee decided to table infrastructure improvements on the legislative front and instead focus on coordinating a large capital request for a few sustainable coalition organizations. Susannah and Linda both agreed that the legislative waters are very muddy and focusing on one ask for this first year might be the best approach.

### **Hunger in Alaska Fact Sheet**

The committee was very responsive to the Hunger in Alaska Fact Sheet. Susannah mentioned that the numbers needed to be connected to stories and we need to instruct members how to use these numbers to their advantage. Shawn reiterated that picking a phrase that we can use time and again will help to keep our cause on the minds of legislators. Susannah also mentioned that we needed to add more Hunger Study numbers to this fact sheet.

### **Other Business**

Linda asked if we had a date selected for the Annual Meeting and suggested talking with Rosemary Hagevig at Catholic Social Services for a conference room. Shawn reminded the group that Sen. Johnny Ellis offered to connect us with a room for any presentations. He will be meeting with Sen. Ellis in a few weeks and will verify that offer. Kerri will work on solidifying a date for the Annual Meeting.

Susannah brought up the issue of AFC quarterly legislative updates. We are currently getting an extremely poor response on those updates and need to come up with ways to get members to send us their numbers. Mike and Andrea both noted getting the numbers were difficult because of the demands on the organizations. Mike suggested a form and Andrea suggested week-by-week numbers and meals served instead of lbs. distributed.

Susannah and AnnaBell both like the idea of singling out a district and contacting each organization in that district to let them know the AFC is contacting their legislator and would they be willing to spend some time to put the numbers together. Shawn mentioned that there are always numbers being released on a national level and pairing those numbers with local stories might be a fresh take on the issue.

Kerri will test out these methods to see what strategy is most effective. At any rate, all were in agreement that we must keep putting our name out there or our issues will be quickly sidelined.

With no other business, Linda adjourned the meeting at 3 pm, August 30, 2007.