

ANF to phase down from lack of fundings

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The executive committee of the Alaska Native Foundation has instructed its president, Frank Berry, to phase down its operations as the organization looks for funds to continue operations. Berry expressed optimism that the funds will be found and the organization will continue, although with somewhat different emphasis than it has in the past.

In the event that funds were not found, the phase-down would allow ANF to close its operations this summer, if necessary. If such a closure did take place, Berry is hopeful that it could be restored in one form or another as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the Executive Committee has rejected a

close-out plan for the April-June quarter proposed by Berry and told him to work with a steering committee to devise another plan with pared down costs.

Under Berry's proposal, the administrative staff of the organization would stay intact for close-out which could lead to the organization incurring up to \$80,000 in debt. Berry said financially the organization passed its break-even point at the end of February.

The Executive Committee's action came at a meeting Tuesday, March 29, in Juneau. The organization had hoped for action from the Board of Directors but lacked a quorum. Board action is now expected to be taken in mid- to late-April in Anchorage.

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ANF plans revised agenda

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While being told to start phasing out the organization, Berry has been told he can go ahead with fund raising efforts that he believes could promote the life of the organization.

"What we need to do is find a way of shutting down without cost, or finding a way to blossom," said Executive Committee member, State Senator Vic Fischer.

"Do the phase out as planned, but if lightning strikes . . ." commented Vice Chairman Byron Mallot.

Berry will work with a steering committee which includes the executives of three organizations that were invited to participate at the March meeting. They are Janie Leask of the Alaska Federation of Natives; Perry Eaton, President of the Community Enterprise Development Corporation, and Bob Lohr, Executive Director of RurAL CAP.

According to Berry, a shutdown would leave an inactive corporation which could be brought back into active status at some future date.

Discussion at the Executive Committee meeting centered on whether the organization had outlived its purpose, whether it had a constituency, and whether it should have a constituency.

According to Fischer, "in the beginning there was no

question whatsoever about mission." Called originally the Alaska Federation of Native's Charitable Trust, the organization was founded as a research arm to marshal arguments for the Native Claims settlement.

After the claims settlement, Fischer continued, its mission was helping regional corporations get on their feet. After that the effort turned to assisting villages.

Berry had reviewed the current status of the organization at the Feb. 16 Executive Committee Meeting and in a memorandum to the Board of Directors on March 25. According to those documents, the Village Management Assistance Project, which has provided assistance to village corporations as part of the Foundation since 1978, most recently with Bureau of Indian Affairs funding, was scheduled to expire on March 31, 1983.

A report assessing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, funded by the Administration for Native Americans, is expected to be completed April 7.

Lastly, the Alaska Native Leadership Program is scheduled to expire on June 30. The program was funded this year by the University of Alaska but direct funding from the legislature has been requested for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

Mallot questioned whether the organization had evolved into another nonprofit chasing government funding. "If it has, it is redundant," he said.

Leask said she felt there was a role for an organization to do research and studies, such as 1991 materials and the development of educational packages in conjunction with instructional television. However, she questioned the current structuring of the foundation.

Eaton questioned whether the organization had the decisive leadership or the constituency to continue. "There is a purpose," he said, "but whether you can position yourself is questionable."

Lohr expressed his concern that this could set a precedent for other organizations. He pointed to the lack of versatility in ANF's funds, however, "Most successful statewide organizations have some basic source of funding," he noted.

Berry argued that it was an injustice to close without trying to find out whether the organization had a constituency. He said that if the organization could spend money to phase out, it could spend it to restructure and to locate its constituents.

According to Mallot, ANF was created not to have a constituency but to be "an arms-length, research, educational-based institution."

"There is no question," he

said, "that ANF fell into the role of a statewide organization responsive to villages."

There is a strong need for that, but ANF has not been able to have those villages as a constituency, he continued.

Mallot concluded that the organization needed to look at the whole process of cutting costs.

As a member of the new steering committee, Eaton summed up the meeting.

"I don't think that \$80,000 is fixed," he said. "We can play with that."

He said he saw a commit-

ment to phase out the organization financially, not to end it.

"I'm going to say 'start shutting down,'" he told Berry. "Go phase things out, but if you can make it work in the meantime, OKAY."

By that time, Peter McDowell, the director of the Office of Management and Budget in the governor's office had joined the meeting.

McDowell said his interest in ANF was in some of the research needs. "We don't know very much about these needs," he said.