

Report to: Mississippi Field Staff

From: Charlie Cobb

Re: Staff Executive Committee Meeting held in Jackson on May 15, 1964

Present at the meeting were Lawrence Guyot representing the 5th district, Mateo Suarez representing the 4th district, Jesse Harris representing the 3rd district, Don White representing the 1st district, Mendy Samstein and Dona Moses from the Jackson office, and myself as staff coordinator.

Campaigns

Much of the discussion centered around what we could do to help make the campaigns more effective. We felt that the basic problems were a lack of transportation and a general imobility on the field. As a partial solution, we would like to see traveling teams of 4 to 5 people in each congressional district working on the setting up of meetings for the candidates, making new contacts, organizing for precinct meetings to be held between June 16th and July 13th. Some names have been suggested for these teams: 1st Don White, Jerry Austin Emma Bell; 2 people from Hattiesburg 2nd Willie Magee, Mathew Hughes, James Jones, Sam Block, Mary Lane 3rd Gwen Gillon, Doug Smith, Fred Anderson, Jesse Harris, Mac Cotton. If we can work out the transportation, we would like to have the teams on the road by Monday of next week. We are expecting three additional cars this week-end.

Mock Election

Since there are only sixteen days between now and the June 2nd primary, and recognizing the shortage of staff, money, transportation, and time, we decided that it was not feasible to hold a freedom vote on June 2nd. However, we felt that it was important to demonstrate the significance of the Negro vote, and the vote getting potential of our current candidates. Therefore, we decided to hold a Freedom Vote on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July, utilizing the additional staff personnel, transportation, and money(?) of the coming summer workers.

June 2nd Primary

There is a need to break down the fear of, and to get the Negro communities accustomed to going to, the polling places. As we did during the primary election last summer, we have again decided to send Negroes to the various polling places around the state with affidavits to be given to election managers stating discriminatory voter registration practices, resulting in their denial of the right to vote.

WATS Line

Dona Moses will be the WATS line operator. The things she will be doing are: 1) making nightly calls to the roving field teams 2) developing local contacts and a key contact list 3) making nightly calls to the various projects around the state 4) helping to set up meetings and aiding the staffs efforts for larger attendance at meetings

White Community

There is next to no program in the white community, and it was felt that we should begin now to start dialogue and communication with the white community. To aid in this, we hope within the next week

to ~~not~~ have a person responsible for developing a program in the white community. The question arose as to why there was no program in the white community, and three major points were raised: 1) The feeling among some of our staff members that the white community is too racist 2) an understandable fear for physical safety 3) and probably most important, the lack of organizational direction. Conclusions were drawn that there were at least three areas of concern in the white community: 1) researching the attitudes of the general white community and researching the power structure 2) organizing the poor white 3) putting the ~~xx~~ southern white liberal and moderate in positions where they will have to work (e.g. prodding the Hodding Carters and the Ralph McGills).

Staff

We are asking all project directors to submit the names of all the staff workers in their projects, and accurate job descriptions. Also submitted should be the names of those to be considered for re-location. I will be responsible for getting job descriptions from those working in Jackson. These will all be compiled and mailed back to you.

Hunter Morey is COFO's legal coordinator, with the stipulation that he shall not determine our legal policy, the filing of suits, nor have the final decision on the hiring of attorneys. It is also strongly recommended that he sit down with the law students when they come down this summer, to further define his function.

There should be a COFO project in Jackson, with field personnel assigned specifically to this task.

W We suggest that each project have one person specifically assigned to handle the press.

The orientation for the summer workers will be held at Western College for Women in Ohio. At least 35 staff people should plan to be there from June 15th til the end of June.

A deputy registrar for the freedom registration can be any person of any age, interested in organizing around voter registration.

After the COFO meeting sunday, there will be a general staff meeting sunday night. After the general staff meeting, the staff will meet along district lines that same night. After the district meetings there will be a meeting of the staff executive committee along with the persons who will make up the traveling teams and Aaron Henry and Annell Ponder.