



Board Meeting Minutes

5.21.2020

Attendance : Fred Medlicott, Joanne McCaughan, Cristina Rodriguez, Peter Brown, Jace Denton, Linda Myers, Jim Hutcheon, Mel Bilodeau, Ben Witten, Grace Cox (*Staff Representative*), Fern Moore (*Board Coordinator*)

Agenda

- Agenda Review**
- Announcements**
- Mission Statement**
- Commitments Review**
- Olympia Community Solar Proposal**
- Staff Report**
- Organizational Development Specialist Proposal**
- Committee Reports**
- Commitments**
- Meeting Eval**
- Next Facilitators**
- Executive Session**

Announcements

None

Commitments Review

- ***Fred will email Eco planning sustainability report to the Eco Planning Committee***
Pending.
- ***Fred will send the finance notes out to all***
N/A
- ***Cris will send out the grocery store worker guidelines***
Complete
- ***Grace will send financial analysis of curbside pickup***
was with finance report
- ***Grace will checkin with the Outreach team about the website.***
Staff has been given the freedom to do work that has been on the back burner and this is good at home work. Staff received an email from the current coordinator inviting people to change language and suggest things for the website
 - ***Grace will forward the website coordinators email to all***
 - ***Grace will let the Coordinator know that there are suggestions from the Board concerning the website***

Olympia Community Solar Proposal

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS #1

Fred received the offer from Olympia Community Solar about the Hummingbird Project shares. The documents were sent out via email for the Boards review.

Feedback:

Grace- what budget and how much we want to do and how we would pay? The Eco Planning Committee does not have its own budget at this time.

Fred- We had talked about using the money from the end of the year donations to endorse this project. Its not a 'meaningful' investment for the Co-op but he wants to support them.

Ben - If its in the budget he would consider it a good thing to do. This has a good impact on the community and aligns with our values. It is not a good investment and we do get our money back, but it takes a long time. We don't earn any money on it either. He is curious to know how much we have budgeted to give to a non profit and what percentage would we like to support the Humming bird Project.

Jim - The end of the year donations amount was around \$9,000. We used some for the Tom Nogler fund. Jim would like to propose that we use ten shares equalling \$3,000. This leaves us some money to donate to other causes.

Mel asked if anyone wanted to be more conservative with the proposal.

This still leaves us with \$6,000. Staff also got year end bonuses.

Proposal

The Board authorizes the purchase of 10 shares of the Hummingbird Project to be allocated from the 2019 year end profit distribution.

Consent

Grace mentioned that we need an invoice.

We should also advertise that we are supporting this project .

- Joanne will contact Monica to write up an article about the Hummingbird Project

- Ben will contact Mason and Jim will sign applicable paper work

Staff Report

Life goes on in COVID. A huge amount of what Staff has been working on is cleaning and sanitizing. Jim is doing our door keep position three days a week. The door position can be one of the toughest positions it's the place people are prone to have a moment. Early on customers were all in this together and as time goes on we are noticing they are weary. They are weary of being at home and being afraid.

Front end workers are experiencing an odd push back as of late. We haven't taken the step to require people to wear masks. When we get to phase 2 opening, there is a requirement for masks in public places and its on the establishment to enforce that. Door people are getting attacked. This is a tough conversation for us, we want to protect the Co-op from enforcement. We don't know how to enforce and we would rather inform. We are feeling the tension of the shoppers and members. On Saturday, 3 separate customers confronted her because she was wearing a mask. There are moments that it is more adversarial than it was for a while. We are sanitizing and are huffing peroxide and alcohol. People that are working are working more hours face to face with customers. There are a lot of people that we don't see because they are on long term leave. There has been lots of support around peoples privacy.

We did get our payout on our last paycheck for hazard pay. We don't normally move so quickly, but because we are being driven by the PPP money we have had to make decisions quickly and have the conversations on how to distribute hazard pay. There is a lot of unity around it. We don't have a base value of valuing work over other work, what is hazard? Anyone that is working a shift in the store of any kind will get the same bump. We had consensus of Labor and Finance CAT on that.

Online orders and Pick up is going well and the Members that are using it are loving it. We are starting to have other conversations about the pickup. Everything was created as an emergency system and we need to make it adapt long term. Two staff people gave notice. Both are moving on to better things. Neither are leaving in anger.

Feedback:

Fred- Curious have many Staff gotten sick?

No. We don't have a requirement to report your symptoms. Because of our schedule system people have readily shared when they are symptomatic. 4 people have had the test and all have tested negative. We aren't even experiencing the normal cold or flu symptoms. The good news is its easier to get a test than a few weeks ago.

Mel - Was waiting in line at the Eastside recently and noticed there was no music. She thinks we need to buy some new speakers at both stores to relieve the pressure and make people dance again.

Jace- Concerning curbside pickup there have been a lot of substitutions was this because of the supply chain?

Yes, but we are seeing better stock on the shelves. More products are coming in and more substitutions are available. We are starting to be able to fill online orders without as many substitutions. There is a major disruption in bulk rice. One of the larger companies is stopping production of 25 lb bag and moving to packaged only. There are areas like that will remain a problem. SKU rationalization is cutting the bottom 25% and that hurts us and our Members. The issue with substitutions are a brand name changed or a pack size changed.

When people are placing orders for bulk items, is there a way to specify paper bag packaging instead of plastic?

No, but She will recommend that as an option. People can include as much as they want in the text field. She hopes we can continue incorporating our values in the future.

Organizational Development Specialist Proposal

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT #2

Linda submitted the proposal to the Board for consideration.

She has been thinking about this for over a year and was getting Minutes from a Personnel Meeting and came across 2 reports that startled her and after hearing discussions here and there, she feels the the Board needed to take some action on the situation. The initial recommendation came from an investigator to hire a Development Specialist.

She would like the Board to begin a process to look at what needs to be reviewed and consider hiring a specialist. Perhaps a task force determine next steps with this proposal.

Feedback:

Jim - has already talked to Linda about some of this. There is already an Anti Bullying Proposal in the works this will be coming before Staff for consent soon. COVID has disrupted a lot of things that were in process. At the time this investigator did his report the Accountability and Eval systems were not active. Humane Resources has since been activated and changed the situation. We should give it a chance. An evaluation is important and he supports the idea of a Task Force. He would be interested in participating in it.

Peter- Are we actually having evals and functioning accountability?

Jim answered that Humane Resources is active and they are handling Personnel conflicts and they have been active. Grace shared that we are not back 100% to our former Eval process, what will come back will not be the same process. Fern shared that there is still a shared value in yearly evals.

Joanne is concerned about bullying behavior in Staff, if we need to hire someone to address that we should prioritize it.

Ben - Do we have people in mind to hire or what the cost would be?

Fred replied that consultants can range from \$3,000- \$12,000.

Linda added that the task force could compile this information.

Linda's intention was to start the conversation about Evaluation systems and how we handle Personnel problems. Most Personnel issues start with bullying and social issues. She is not sure how beneficial it is to have everyone in the decision making process. And it seems like the processes are broken. The suggestion was from an investigator. We owe it to the Membership and the Staff Collective to do this.

Mel - is on the Personnel Committee and still does not understand the details around the new eval and Accountability system.

Humane Resources was tasked with revising the Accountability system and evals. Eval CAT will be reorganized. There are groups ready to act when our energy is redirected from the covid response.

Grace- The Personnel Committee is the Board's committee. Does it need to be a separate task force? in terms of allocation of resources.

Back in the day, 1994, when it was 13 Staff people We held a value that your eval should not be the first time you hear the feedback. This value does not work at our size, there is an added complexity and the number of locations. The ease of being accused of having a motivation based in social power issues is really easy. It is hard to take the time to have those conversations without triggering reactions in sharing feedback. There's a whole sense of enforcing that original value to a Collective this size. This is why it has been hard for us to just identify consultants able to work with us on these issues. If you go down the HR path, HR law is built to support adversarial and hierarchal relationships. The difficulty is finding the right consultant who can understand the difference in a collective and when all the workers get the opportunity to decide together. The biggest complications with HR law, is the degree to which we can not know, there is no sharing information.

Cristina adds that unrecorded Evals is problematic (face to face feedback)

Fred- We need to get clarity around the performance eval process and that has nothing to do with anti bullying. Accountability is not an evaluation process. So these should be differentiated. Bullying is also specific. There is an overall lack of clarity. He will send out a document that includes a ' definition of bullying'. They go so far to differentiate between bullying and attacking. We need to be clear about what it is that we are trying to address.

Humane Resources is that a Staff CAT?

Yes

A consultant will be hard to find for OFC and expensive. He thinks it would be possible for the Board to impose an anti bullying policy. We would need to realize that Staff might never implement them and we would be imposing on Staff and would create friction. Before hiring a consultant, we need to get clarity on Humane resources and the next steps. Assist them with a literature review. We could look at existing successful models. We must be thinking carefully and proactively recommending that the Staff implement new procedures.

Linda - The process of how we work through dealing with these problems may not be working. We could invite Humane Resources to work with us, it shouldn't be separate. It's a hinderance to our organization to have these undercurrents. We need to understand how things happen, is it structural? we don't know. We need to understand how we can help before we hire a consultant.

Mel - she asked Linda if she thinks the collective has gotten to big?

Fern spoke to Fred wanting a flow chart of conflict, evals etc for months and for years we have talked about Board Staff Relations.

Jim - he shared that it can be frustrating to understand the operational divide. He would like to propose creating a task force.

Grace- We need more about processes that we have in place. She can support a task force and its a lot of work. The ESP process was not designed for individual conflicts. There are multiple steps in the organization for individual conflicts, mediation, conflict resolution etc. She gets why this example came about, we ended up using systems that weren't designed for interpersonal conversation.

Peter- about definitions, you can't have operations without policy. It is a policy, how we act together. How do we define operations and policy? This has to be looked at as well.

Fred would be willing to consent to a task force, but wonders if it could exist in the Personnel Committee. If they could request that Humane Resources assist them in gathering the documents and report back to the Board. Fred would be happy to be involved in that work.

Joanne would like a time frame around this. What to expect with timing, decision making, etc

Jim suggests August. Grace suggests implementing the task force and having them bring back parameters for work and a timeline.

Proposal:

The Board authorizes the creation of a Task Force to review the current Collective structure and organization, especially the evaluation and accountability processes.

Consent

First step would be to set up a Task Force to:

1. Determine the scope of the review. Define objectives.
2. Research where to find an Organization Development Specialist.
3. Interview and hire an Organization Development Specialist.

This would be a Board project funded by the Board budget.

Task Force - Jim, Linda, Mel, Joanne

- fact find and gather what is in place and what needs to be evaluated
- what are the specific processes and what are the outcomes of those processes.
- what are the procedures and what are the problems we are trying to identify

The Task Force will meet next week

Fred asks for us to distribute 'Hell or High Water' He feels it is essential for Board development and education to read that book, it would give us a common language. The Collective read this book last year together. We had hard copies and electronic.

- Grace will send hell and high water to all.

Committee Reports

Advocacy – did not meet

Co-Sound – no report

Expansion – no report

Eco Planning – no report, few emails no meetings. Since Robyn is on leave they request someone else to help .

- Grace will send hell and high water to all.

Finance – has not met. We skipped first quarter inventory and we are coming up on another one. Statements are not thoroughly reconciled, if we had done inventory they would be. Sales have been a roller coaster. They are working on 18 month cash projections and revamping the budget in the age of Covid.

Mel - are we still dishing out money to advertising at this time ?
Grace will find out that answer. We spend less than half of a percentage on advertising and outreach. We already have scaled down advertising budgets as most of the events are cancelled.

Local- has not met

Member Relations – Fern mentioned that Annual Meeting planning begins this time of year and Member Relations should think about this.

Personnel – met last week had updates on issues. There was discussion on the anti bullying policy and forwarded it to the investigator for comments.

Standing Hiring- no report

Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) Liaison – has been meeting a bit online. They sent out a request for applicants to deal with Covid related issues. We hope people respond to those rfps and hope to hold interviews online. They applied and were granted non profit status.

Elections Task Force- no report

Board Pages Task Force- no report

Commitments

- *Grace will forward the website coordinators email to all*
- *Grace will let the Coordinator know that there are suggestions from the Board concerning the website*
- *Joanne will contact Monica to write up an article about the Hummingbird Project*
- *Ben will contact Mason and Jim will sign applicable paper work*
- *Grace will send hell and high water to all.*

- Grace will send hell and high water to all.

- Fern will set up zoom with mo and will send link with agenda

Meeting Eval

Good Meeting

Request for meeting link with agenda

Don't forget to mute

Next Meeting and Facilitators

Executive Session

Decisions out of Meeting

1. Board Message to the Membership 5/7/2020

Joanne, Jim and Grace collaborated on the attached message to the membership. Since it will be sent in the name of the Board we want to be sure that this message is acceptable to everyone. We are also sensitive to the fact that we would like this to go to the membership as soon as possible. Please reply with your consent. Please reply with your consent or objections by Friday, May 8th.

Consent

2. COVID Hazard Pay

From: Harry for the Finance CAT
RE: Proposal on Covid Hazard Pay
5/7/20

Hi Board:

Sorry to come to you with a rushed proposal. We are trying to address Covid Hazard Pay immediately for 2 reasons:

- 1) This has been suggested and requested from Staff for over a month. We did not feel comfortable to create a proposal until we had assessed our financial condition. We'd really like to apply Covid Hazard Pay as soon as possible.
- 2) We are in the Paycheck Protection Program spending window. The closer we get to spending or exceeding 75% of the \$918,000 loan on labor costs, the better our chances of full forgiveness or high level of forgiveness. We have until June 12th to do this which encompasses the next 3 pay periods.

Here is the reasoning:

- 1) Finance CAT believes from observing trends that we can cover this extra spending on the Labor Budget. We also believe that we will achieve forgiveness on a high level of the PPP which supports this expense.
- 2) Given the level of risk and stress, it would be a huge morale boost for those workers working in the stores.

There is a payroll that will be completed on Tue May 12. We would like to get this approved in time to start the Hazard Pay with this payroll. We are also concurrently working a proposal for how to distribute the Hazard Pay if it is approved.

Proposal:

The Board authorizes Co-op to pay a Covid Hazard Pay hourly increase for shifts worked in the stores. The Board authorizes to spend up to \$100,000 over a 16 week period starting March 16, 2020. The Board authorizes the Staff to distribute the money as agreed upon by consensus of the Collective.

Attached Documents

1. Olympia Community Solar Proposal

I'm proud to announce that Olympia Community Solar is ready to enroll our Hummingbird Community Solar Project! We're offering 800 solar units at the price of \$300 each. We hope that the Olympia Food Coop will consider participating.

If you would like to purchase a solar unit for yourself, for a friend, or donate a unit to a non-profit please download the attached documents and follow the instructions. Each year Olympia Community Solar will send you the value of your unit's electricity production. Once you are paid back for your units, the project will be donated to the museum. Based on the amount of interest we've received we expect the project to sell quickly, so sign up now to secure your units!

The 100-kilowatt solar array will be installed atop the Hands on Children's Museum by A&R Solar in November 2020. The project features 297 Sunpower solar panels, a 100kW Solaredge inverter, and online production monitoring. We're partnering with the museum to leverage the system as an educational resource for all of the museum's visitors.

Thank you for all your support getting us this far! If you have any questions just email or call me. We have a team standing by to help.

All my best,

--

Mason Rolph

Olympia Community Solar

Olysol.org - mason@olysol.org - (434) 962-3234

2. Organizational Development Specialist

Background

From the Olympia Food Cooperative By-Laws -- Board General Responsibilities and Duties:

“The affairs of the cooperative shall be managed by a Board of Directors”

Specifically--

The Board monitors the financial health of the Cooperative.

It adopts, reviews and revises Cooperative plans.

It adopts major policy changes.

It maintains free-flowing communication between Board, Staff, committees, and the membership.

In a recent investigation of harassment/discrimination among staff the investigator noted:

(These are direct quotes from the report)

- “While OFC has committed to promoting and maintaining a healthy working, learning and social environment where each individual is treated with respect, this investigation finds that OFC is faced with a rampant bullying culture at multiple levels and with several Collective members engaging in bullying behavior. Consequently, morale and productivity have suffered, and many Collective members feel demoralized. Workplace bullying is usually repeated, health-harming and abusive mistreatment of one or more persons by one or more persons, which often culminates in toxic work environments. Bullying is also a behavior that a reasonable person would find hostile or offensive. While differences of opinion, interpersonal conflicts, and occasional problems in working relations are often an inevitable part of working life, this investigation finds that the level

of pervasive bullying has escalated and created an unacceptably dysfunctional environment.”

- “If OFC does not address the bullying climate it will be a disservice to the Collective members. A bullying situation often says more about the organization than it does the individual, and a lack of consequences reinforces bullying behavior.”
- “All witnesses interviewed agreed that while the Coop’s values were in the right place, Coop policies not only had to be updated, but should be revised to reflect the growing Collective numbers.”

Witness statements:

- “Some of the negativity comes from lack of structure. It’s time for a structural change.”
- “There is an overall lack of accountability in our organization.”
- “The Coop policies and Bi-laws have watered down our ability to act on bad behavior.”
- “The Coop is a contentious environment”
- “There is very little respect and professionalism at the Coop.”
- “The Coop is going through a painful growth period; without the Evaluation System, things are unraveling. There is also a lot of fear about being called a racist.”

Recommendations from the investigator regarding the Organization:

- “Implement Bullying Policies into OFC Handbook and have several all staff Bullying/ Harassment trainings.”
- “Hire an Organization Development Specialist to determine new policies and how to potentially restructure the Coop (Collective) to create behavioral accountability.”

Proposal to the Board:

To begin a process to hire an Organization Development Specialist to review the current Collective structure and organization, especially the evaluation and accountability processes.

First step would be to set up a Task Force to:

1. Determine the scope of the review. Define objectives.
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