



Board Meeting Minutes

9.17.2020

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

Agenda

Agenda Review

Announcements

Mission Statement

Land Acknowledgment

Organizational Health

Commitments Review

Staff Report

Committee Reports

Break

Potential Co-op Investment

Board Elections and Annual Meeting Check In

Commitments

Meeting Eval

Next Facilitators

Executive Session

Announcements

- Linda shared that the registration for Provender 2020 opened up today. This years conference will be virtual and will be held the weekend of October 21st-23rd. They are offering an unlimited access Staff Pack that costs around \$500 and grants access to 15-20 participants. Grace also received the information from Provender and sent it out to the Training Team to make a determination on which package to purchase. We will purchase additional passes if needed.

Land Acknowledgment

As we all deal with smoke inundation from the many acres of wildfires burning on the west coast, it feels appropriate to acknowledge the impact these fires are having on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The Confederated Tribes of Colville is made up of 12 separate bands which include Colville, Eniat, Lakes, Methow, Moses-Columbia, Nespelem, Okanogan, Palas, San Poil, and Wenatchi. The reservation is 1.4 million acres, and there are 9,520 tribal members.

As of the 17th, there are 5 active wildfires. The Hewa Field Fire, the Fry Fire, and the Inchelium Fire each total under 5,000 acres. The Cold Springs Fire, however, is over 190,000 acres, and only 25% contained. The fires have burned or threatened many houses, farms, and outbuildings. The tribe has many needs, including safe housing and transport for livestock.

Monetary donations should be sent to:

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

c/o Billy Nicholson

ATTN: Fire Relief Fund

PO Box 150

Nespelem, WA 99155

Proposal

Joanne proposes that we donate \$1,000 to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Fire Relief Fund

- *Grace will send out the Colville Nation report to all*
- *Grace will arrange for the donation to the Colville Nation*

Organizational Health

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT#1

Joanne, Linda, Mel and Jim formed a Subcommittee on Accountability back in May. They have been interviewing various people and gathering information on types of organizational health assessments. One of their inquiries was with John McNamara of the North West Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC). John wrote his dissertation on a comparative case study of the Co-operative Index that included the Olympia Food Co-op. John was also involved in a Assessment 5 years ago with the Co-op. The sub committee would like to propose doing something similar, but see it through to completion this time. The Cooperative Index tool will be used again. The Assessment begins with a questionnaire for Staff and then follow up interviews and further assessments, either as groups or individuals.

In order to see this through, the Organizational Health Committee of the Board will assemble to coordinate preparation and follow through with the entire assessment to a final product.

Feedback:

Peter asked if we can we see the last assessment results and what allowed it not to happen?

Lina Replied that the reason we want to redo it, is it was done five years ago and 50% of the Staff are new and the opinions and challenges may not be as relevant.

John added that Staff at that time, had chose a different route for Strategic Planning that choice mostly had to do that because of the labor hours available.

Peter doesn't think that that it will be dramatically different. It would be interesting to see what happened last time and why it did not move forward and addressing the challenges of moving the recommendations forward.

- Linda will send the prior Organizational Health Survey to all

John adds that no deep analysis was done then with the survey data in the the last assessment, its raw data mostly.

Mel adds that Ami from Humane Resources updated her that they are moving forward with a survey to Staff about Evaluations.

John shared that The Co-op Index was developed by a St Marys Research Team in Halifax, it is based on an open index. The Index is based on a Polish researchers work in Warsaw that measures the ability to actualize values. It is a means to measure how well the Coop adheres to the Co-op values and principles. There are 173 questions and 32 operational dimensions including values and principles. Over the last year the team reconvened with longtime developers and revised the index, it is now 63 questions. It also now includes ways to research how Co-op values correlate with human dignity. They boiled down the dimensions and there are now only 10 dimensions of Co-op Health. They did a test of the index with a few different types of Co-ops and it ran well.

The most important value that we see not being addressed in the index is the lack of hierarchy, one of the goals is too see if this creates disconnects within the organization. This value is one we find focused on in Worker Co-ops and even though Olympia is not one, it is a worker centered Co-op that holds a similar value.

The Survey pulls the results and separates them out by demographics. We use a census instead of a sample process, the power of the census is that you don't have to do probabilities. The other power of the census is there is no where to hide and encourages conversations to happen that possibly wouldn't happen. The last time we did the survey we did get everybody to participate. Full participation does take a little pushing and championing and the Committee would support that getting done.

John does recommend that the Board think and plan who would participate in the interviews and the Committee could create the report and present recommendations to the Board.

The Assessment would take roughly 20-30 hours of Staff time for NWCDC, which is a little under \$5,000. As of next year there won't be any funding for Olympia, as its our last year for Rural status funding.

Jim adds that other companies they researched are \$15,000- \$20,000.

The entire process of the index is about 30 hours. The Committee will be writing the final report, John will help facilitate; but the report is your report and ideally you share it with Membership and Staff. He can start anytime after October, due to the grant cycle.

Feedback:

Grace shared that based on her experience of doing the larger survey, she found that there were a number of questions that some Staff didn't know how to conceptualize perhaps specifically because we are not a Worker Co-op. Maybe those questions have been revised since then. The last time we did this process, we didn't get back around to why people gave the answers that they gave. There are things that can be proven to be true that people say didn't happen. She is not sure if this would have been addressed within the follow up interviews. One example is on financial training, some participants answered that no training was given, even though it is a training requirement for Collective membership.

John replied that he does see what could be a Canadian bias with hierarchical culture. Co-ops in the US are so much more collectivized. Before the last survey, he went through the questions with Staff Member Mo to neutralize it as much as they could. We never got to the point of follow up interviews and you are right the interviews are important to understand where the gaps are.

This may be something the Committee can work on, further neutralizing the survey questions.

Fred is interested to see what we find out and his concern is in bringing it full circle and how we will operationalize all of that. If theres not meaningful buy-in at the Collective level it might be a waste of time. Staff would be paid for their time to take the survey. He wonders are we trying to implement these outcomes on a Board level or is it the hope that Staff will incorporate it?

Linda answered that we are interested in having the 2 Staff Members on the Committee have a real commitment to this work and Staff are aware that this work needs to be done. We need to talk about it as Board/Staff project. We are hoping that throughout the process we will all understand that this will be for our betterment. The Staff membership change over has been 50% since the last survey and what they think and feel matters to us greatly.

Mel feels that it is imperative that once we gather information we share it with them all along the process. She also feels that if the final report prescribes any recommendations to make any procedural changes, we give Staff ample time to review it. Time to chew and absorb it is important.

Fred asked if the Committee will make recommendations for changes as well?

Linda feels that this depends on the results and the overall process itself. We want it to be fully collaborative and their thoughts and needs are at the front of this project and address the changes we all need.

Fred asked Grace if this would need to go thru a Staff consent process?

Linda clarified that we propose that the Committee makeup would be consented to by Staff.

Grace feels that the question hinges on how we budget the labor for it and especially in a time when our labor budget is already set and currently overspent. There is also the question of if we need a consensus versus sampling and last time we were told 100% participation and in a given time period. This is also during a time when Staff are asked to deem what work is essential. She does feel that consenting is a way of getting participation.

Jim reminds that we are not talking about implementing this process tomorrow. We are hoping to start the survey in 2021. In terms of Staff buy in, it is intended to being done with Staff Members and the Committee membership will be consented too. There are follow up interviews as well as focus groups to give voice to the opinions and the aspect of being heard fosters buy in.

Linda adds that things will be colored in a way, with all the changes and upheavals this year and she is not sure how that would color the results. It may be difficult to be focused on day to day when we are in emergency situation.

Grace points that the makeup of Committee is worded in here and Consenting to the Committee membership (1st paragraph)

Jim notes that Board consents to Board membership and Staff consents to Staff membership.

Fern changed the wording to clarify this.

Fred asked if anyone would care is he helps John process the survey for his Masters?

Jim shared that Sam recused himself last time.

Fred says he would be willing to recuse himself, but he does not gain in anyway.

Joanne asked if we anticipate resistance to participation?

Grace replied that it is hard to say. Resistance is us. In fact she wears her 'Resist' t-shirt on the floor once a week. There will be people that will not like the expense.

Proposal

To create a temporary committee of 3 Board members and 2 Staff members, the Organizational Health Committee, to gather feedback and develop a process to support Collective/Organizational Health through focus groups, trainings and other methods as determined by the committee. The makeup of the committee Staff members will be consented to by Staff and the makeup of the committee Board members will be consented to by BOD. The committee will re-administer the Cooperative Index Survey, which has been refined and greatly shortened. The Index is a tool to measure staff function and organizational health. The index measures values and identifies internal weaknesses and strengths. After completion of the survey, follow up will include interviews and small group meetings to analyze the results. Final recommendations will provide direction for the collective and board to prioritize areas for improvement and move organization in a healthy direction.

John McNamara, from the NWCDC, has refined the Co-operative Index since it was last administered in 2016. John was able to obtain grant funding covering the costs of his time for administering and analyzing the survey for OFC. There are 43 new staff (approximately 50% turnover) since the survey was administered in 2016. Staff will be paid for taking the survey and participating in focus groups. Staff time, approximately 40 hours, will be paid out of the Board budget.

The Organizational Health Committee has been proposed in 2020 to commence work in 2021.

Consent

Stand Aside- Grace

- Fred will ask John to share his thesis

Commitments Review

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

Complete

- Joanne will contact the call of action request with our approval

Complete

- Grace will contact Hiring with the results of the proposal and requests

Complete

- Fern will get a copy from Jim of proposed application for notes

Complete

- Linda will check with Robyn about election materials

Complete

- Grace will ask about application language within Co-op community

Complete, have one phone appointment next week

Staff Report

There was an incident at the Eastside store the before yesterday in which a Staff person was shoved by an Anti Masker. The person pulled out a Target bag with eye holes on it and as the Staff Member was explaining that it was not an approved face covering they shoved her and proceeded into the store. They picked up one item and a Staff Member who knew her, rang her out. The customer has been identified and the issue has gone to the Resolution processes. This was the first time its gotten more physical and technically it is an assault and could be prosecuted, but that is never our inclination.

Joanne asked if the shopper is permanently banned?

The person hasn't been notified yet. They will get an official document from the Resolution Team

Other than that people are tired. We have new Staff and are hiring Temporary Staff as the Board consented too last month, those interviews are happening next week. There is a larger pool to draw from with covering cashiering and front end shifts which has been a great relief. We are changing how we do the door work with the smoke. It took us out of our normal practice. We are working on ways to work the door inside while monitoring the customer count and the masks. We are setting up systems so that shoppers can self sanitize their carts and baskets. The smoke also reduced the numbers of Anti maskers as they wore the masks for the smoke!

Sales are strong and we are working on opening the extra lanes at both stores. There is a big bottleneck happening during the midday rush that gets really intense. We are trying to accommodate everyone and move people through the lanes faster. It is hard to assess overall Staff morale. Financially things are doing better so that's a relief. The Curbside program continues to be successful and there is a group of Staff looking at various delivery options out there.

We passed 2 proposals this week at Collective meetings. We are trying to create a Staffing emergency plan that will be phased and that was really successful and interesting conversation. We also reviewed Fall hours the holidays, We are doing the same thing we did last year. We are changing the Turkey process for this year. We are going with Preorder only. We don't know what is going to happen this year with gatherings and feasts. We used to do preorder only, long ago. This year is too much of a guessing game and too much potential loss. Heads up you will have to place your order early!

We added 3 extra feet of wine to Westside store. The Eastside does not have any cold beer or wine but the Westside does. Overall it has been going really well.

Committee Reports

There was discussion about adding more time to Committee Reports agenda item (20 min) Jim would rather recommit to sending them out via email. The Board recommits to send committee reports to all and when provided ahead of time, they will be included with the Board Agenda.

Advocacy – no report

Co-Sound – They are active again and hoping to be incorporated by the end of the year and then they will be starting the Membership drive.

Expansion – did not meet

Eco Planning – no report

Finance – Corey sent out the most recent reports including the analysis and projections. We are better than we had thought we were.

Local - did not meet

Member Relations – Met twice and have made great progress on the Charter and are close to having it completed. They amended a couple lines in the Unwanted Customer interactions Process to align with the Appeals Process close to being finalized. They are also working on Annual Meeting.

Personnel – There was a positive update from Evaluations and the progress on the revamping of that process. Also positive development that there are no current investigations going on. There was a successful Conflict Resolution between Staff Members. The special ESP process is progressing quite well. A report heard had lots of positivity about possible outcomes. The meetings of this group have been frequent and any resolution will be brought to Staff for consent in the near future.

Standing Hiring- reviewing applications.

Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) Liaison – have been meeting regularly to get ready for the Fall funding cycle. They have reworked the application forms so people can apply online. They are also looking for permission to set up a sandwich board.

Jace shared that they signed up for the reminder prompt at the register and doesn't get asked, it seems a lot of cashiers don't prompt to Round up. Perhaps we could reinforce this in Cashier training. Pointing out the auto option on the form is also a great option.

- Joanne will send the CSF sandwich board request to Fern for the next meeting

Elections Task Force- This task force is comprised of Jim, Linda, and Fred.

Board Pages Task Force- This task force is comprised of Fred, Jim, Grace and Mel.

Capital Campaign - This task force is comprised of Jim, Peter, Fred, and Ben.

Accountability Subcommittee- This group is comprised of Linda, Joanne and Mel.

Potential Co-op Investment

Fred brought this item for Board discussion as we had previously identified it as a possibility during the discussion around the Capital Campaign. Specifically we had talked about investing Board resources. One example given was purchasing preferred shares in Equal Exchange. Fred recently got a hold of their Equity Coordinator and they will not be doing another preferred share offering for another year or two. They are currently just taking notes, so we that is an option. Fred recommends we also could support several businesses that are closing and enable converting them to Worker Co-ops, creating a shared capital of cooperative lending. He wonders if people still have the stomach for this or should we set it aside.

If the Board has interest Fred could write a report about options for potential investments.

Feedback:

Joanne thinks it would be worth learning about.

Linda is wondering how our cash is going to hold up?

Jim is thinking Fred is not proposing investing that much.

Fred replied that it could be anything from a couple grand to hundreds of thousands. There are also different rates of return.

Ben has a lot of thoughts on this. He supports Fred creating a report and presenting it and feels that he could probably compliment it in many ways. It could help round out this ongoing conversation for the Board. Ben can speak particularly to investing in general and impact investing. One of the things he sees with non profits and consensus decision

making is that there are often people in organizations like this that have issues with investing or the governmental regulatory environment that goes with it . It is often difficult to get an organization comfortable with investing. He would like to support this conversation.

Grace would also like to see a report. We are hearing from the Co-op world that we all have to stay as liquid as possible, at least for the next two years and possibly much much longer than that. The State workers are back in furlough and the total amount of money available in the economy will be tight. When that happens people will shop down a level. The second huge unknown is what is happening in the supply chain. Food supply coming from China is starting to fall apart in a significant way. Those two factors are reasons to hang on to our cash in a liquid form. The Finance team will want to consider investing

- Fred will write up a report about possible investments.

Board Elections and Annual Meeting Check in

The Annual Meeting will be held virtually on November 7th ‘Inspiring a Just Future’ from 11-2 pm.

They are looking at speakers focused on environmental and social justice. Mel is really hoping to have interactions between people with discussion groups. We might need facilitators for each topic. We will get the list of topics out to folks to review and volunteer.

Perhaps we could have a little training in facilitation in training for the break out groups. We don’t have a host / MC chosen yet either.

Fred recommends that we do a test login and conduct trainings a week to the day of the event at the same time the event will be. Fred is willing to help with that training.

- Linda will send out the list of Annual meeting discussion group topics

- Joanne will send out Annual Meeting Agenda for consent at next months meeting

The Board discussed recruitment and encouraging folks to run. The Task force has drawn up a list of places to send out announcements for recruitment.

Three seats are up for election this year. The Application Deadline is September 30th and we have one application as of now.

Commitments

- Grace will send out the Colville Nation report to all*
- Grace will arrange for the donation to the Colville Nation*
- Linda will send the prior Organizational Health Survey to all*
- Fred will ask John to share his thesis*
- Joanne will send the CSF sandwich board request to Fern for the next meeting*
- Linda will send out the list of Annual meeting discussion group topics*
- Joanne will send out Annual Meeting Agenda for consent at next months meeting*
- Fred will write up a report about possible investments.*

Meeting Eval

Grace would like acknowledge that she was trying to wordsmith a document that she was standing aside on.

Next Meeting

Annual Meeting Agenda approval
CSF Sandwich Board Request

Facilitators

Joanne and Fred

Executive Session

No decisions made

Decisions out of Meeting

- 1. Approval of Aug Meeting Minutes - decision made via email**

Consent

Attached Document

Proposal: Organizational Health Committee

Introduction:

The OFC Staff Collective has historically struggled with its accountability and evaluation processes; research shows that the collective has attempted to resolve this problem over the years. The accountability/evaluation processes are not working and the organization's structure makes it difficult to resolve. The organizational structure of the collective needs to be examined and analyzed to determine what steps should be taken to correct our course forward.

Background:

In 2015 the Big Picture CAT and BOD members started a Collective Health Revitalization Process. The aim was to see to the long-term health of the organization and improve relationships within the cooperative. Working with John McNamara from the Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC) the first step in that process, a survey called the Cooperative Index was administered to staff in 2016. The survey is a tool to measure the cooperative's function and health. The second step, consisting of follow-up interviews and analysis was not completed at that time.

Recently, a sub-committee of the Board of Directors (Jim H, Linda M, Mel B & Joanne M) began meeting at the end of May 2020 with the consent of the BOD (May 2020 meeting) to determine next steps. The committee's initial task was to research the possibility of finding and potentially hiring an Organizational Development Specialist to engage in the necessary research. However, this work cannot commence without BoD approval; funding for the project is not included in the 2020 BoD budget, so would need to be planned for 2021.

Proposal:

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The Organizational Health Committee, proposed in 2020 to commence work in 2021, would continue the work that was begun in 2015.