



Board Meeting Minutes

12.17.2020

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

Agenda

Agenda Review
Mission Statement
Land Acknowledgment
Member Comment
Announcements
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Staff Report
Committee Reports
Temporary Hiring Report
Break
Balanced Scorecard Reporting
End of Year review
Commitments
Meeting Eval
Next Facilitators
Executive Session

Land Acknowledgment

We start the meeting by taking a moment to honor the land and the people whose ancestors have been stewards of this unceded land since time immemorial. We acknowledge the contemporary communities of Squaxin Island, Nisqually and all the people of the Medicine Creek Treaty.

Grace would also like to acknowledge Deb Holland who has been nominated as the Secretary of the Interior. She is the first Native person to be appointed to any cabinet position in our government. The perfection of it being the Department of Interior is exciting and holds great promise. She is from Laguna Pueblo reservation where Grace's good friend Bob is from.

Member Comment

Hardy Carcamo - Co-op Member wanted to hear and be present. He hopes to participate more in the future and learn. He is from Chile originally. He talked to people in the Co-op about participating. He is feeling happy to be here and would like to participate in the future as well.

The Board thanked him for coming tonight and introduced themselves.

Announcements

- Mel announced that we had the first COVID case in Staff and wanted to be acknowledged
- Ben loves his hummingbird mug so much. Thank you very much everybody. He also appreciates the very special card. He looks forward to remembering his time on the Board.

Commitments Review

- *Grace will coordinate with CSF and Staff on locations for the sandwich boards*
Pending

- Linda will send the approved minutes to the candidates

Fern will forward minutes to Jayana

- Fred will recirculate Johns thesis and attach his paper

Pending, he wants NWCDC Staff to look at before he shares

- Grace will send out the black bean song to all

Complete, Fern sent it out

Staff Report

As Mel announced we have had the first COVID positive case on Staff. The news came in on Tuesday night. Staff were notified at 11pm. The Staff member is feeling better already but was somewhat symptomatic. They had not been in the store since Tuesday the 8th. We are ten days past that point already. Grace set out to find out if she could get tested, but nobody would test her asymptomatic. Once you are ten days from contact there is only four more days that you need to worry and it takes 5 days to get your test back. Everyone she talked too recommended that she did not get tested. We are doing everything we mentioned. Since the beginning it has been the recommendation from the Health Department to have a plan in place for when a Staff Member tests positive. We had this plan in place assuming it would happen sooner or later. We are concerned for the Staff person and we are not surprised rather amazed it didn't happen earlier. We sent out a notice to the Membership and received 25 emails today. The vast majority said thanks for the transparency. One person said COVID isn't real and our Staff person jut has a cold. Several people wrote in asking specifics about when the Staff Member was in the store and asking if they should quarantine. Most were very kind and supportive of the Co-op. Assuming the Staff Member continues to improve, we will weather it just fine.

Joanne- Rite Aid will do a test when you are asymptomatic and they require no payment. They are doing a study and want people to get tested.

Some Staff have stopped working in the store this week, we believe in response to the positive test we have had, which is fine, we are covering the shifts. We are doubling down on the sanitizing in the building. We are also keeping records on health check ins at the beginning of shifts for Staff and Working Members. Checking to see if the worker has any symptoms at all and taking temps.

Business has been really slow. We don't know if it has to do with the positive test or because it is the week before Christmas.

Staff have been stable. Nobody has quit and we aren't planning on hiring in the short run. The most recent hires onto the Collective were hired as 'generalists' instead of into departments. We trained them in Front End tasks and starting to train them in other areas.

We are approaching the end of the three month segment of temporary hiring and all indications are that we will want to continue it. We have a report to review later in this meeting.

Finance is working on the budget and all the documentation is in to get the PPP loan forgiven, it could be up to 3 months before we get the final approval. The only three Co-ops that have heard back got full forgiveness of the loans.

Committee Reports

Advocacy – has not met

Co-Sound – has not met

Expansion – has not met

Eco Planning – working on creating a composting project if anyone is interested let Mel know.

Finance – Fred, Linda and Grace are all on Finance and will present the budget to the Board to review and consent. the finance committee recommends that we consent to this budget. This is the third draft of the budget.

BlahBlah COVID. We don't know what to predict, we don't know if they will find the other half of the vaccines they promised

The first assumption we used was too expect COVID to be an issue for us for at least the first 6 months, thats optimistic as we don't know how it will ebb and flow.

The second assumption that we based the budget on was rather than the usual approach, where we try to build net cash increase and break even point on the

budget, this year we are willing to set as a goal an ending cash goal of 20 days of cash on hand. We increased this goal because it represents us ending the year with at least a million dollars in cash. We are banking on forgiveness of the PPP loan. We would accept anything that is less of a loss of \$250,000. We are hedging against disruptions in business and supply chain, but we got there. This budget shows us ending the year with 1 Million 51 Thousand and change with a net loss of \$170,000 that includes a 26 cent an hour wage increase. Its been a hard year and this year has taken the cake. We want to reward people for hanging in there and doing the best we can. We also want to acknowledge we are all taking on additional labor. The Deli has done an outstanding job reconceptualizing how we sell ready to eat food at the Co-op.

The other thing that differs is that with all the increased labor this has pushed us to raise our labor per sales hour metric. We have tried to keep it at 23.5% . This year it will be 25.6%. We do want to have a deeper conversation with how we set that goal in the future.

Feedback:

Ben would like us to encourage Staff to be aware of the consumer price index. In his opinion this raise is not enough. It is okay to keep up with the CPI but maybe ask more in the future and the cpi index

Joanne asked if the raise is included in labor as percentage of sales ?

Grace replied that where you can see it is in the average wage for 2021

Mel asked how much is allotted to the Board for this year.

\$15,700. Which is mostly used for the Annual Meeting and Trainings

Mel continued that last year we consented to a Eco Planning budget sadly we will miss out on the funds this year.

We could re-propose this in 2021. We need to talk about Committee budgets

Joanne asked about the newsletter, has this changed from last year at all? Should we be distributing them better? She heres they are not getting out to the Membership as well.

There was a small decrease in what is circulated. We are getting the smallest quantity that we can. If we changed the format we might be able to change the quantity produced.

Mel wanted to share that we could be on the verge of a larger a economic collapse and wants to be conservative and trusts that we all have that in mind as well.

Proposal

The Board approves the 2021 Operating Budget

Consent

Local - has not met

Member Relations – Staff Member, Alejandro reported about the anti maskers at the Co-op. It sounds difficult to deal with but not severe. The Task Force redid the letter for anti maskers and will clarify what is the next step. They hosted an Annual Meeting follow up. We have a recorded version of the meeting. Joanne will write an intro for the recording and at the beginning of the year it will be published in the Table. The Committee is also finalizing the application for requesting new Members at large for the Committee (4 members of large) A big Thank you to Peter for his participation in the Committee in the last three years.

Personnel – They met last week and Consented to Harry joining the Committee. This proposal goes to Staff for final Consent. They are looking for another Staff member as well. We will update also in Executive Session.

Standing Hiring - has not met

Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) Liaison – has not met

Temporary Hiring Report

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT#1

Staff Member and Hiring Coordinator, Erin sent a report on the temporary hiring program to the Board. She was unable to attend to present. Fern will forward all feedback to the Hiring Team.

Feedback:

Linda- Do you feel like we will need extra staff like this in the future?

This is our gut feeling, but we have the ability to be pretty creative.

Joanne- Are temporary Staff and former Staff getting the same benefits and pay package?
There is a differential. Former Staff were rehired to the pay scale they were previously at.

Fred appreciates that Staff has concerns about people doing the same labor without the same benefits. He would like hiring to put priority on these folks to be hired on a normal contract before the applicant pool is considered.

Jim sees that there is some concern from regular Staff about their ability to get working hours are there ways to deal with this? Even though we are relying on these folks.

Linda replies that there were 2 Staff that shared those concerns and it didn't seem that these Staff members were using the systems to get hours. She assumed there was a coordinator overseeing these temporary workers. She liked the idea to create one and recommends we do.

Grace replied that there are some people that are doing that job of coordinating the temporary scheduled. Scheduling has been working with them closely. There was one 2 week period of the schedule when the person who was doing the scheduling mistakenly prioritized the temp workers. What scheduling has done since then is came back to the collective to clarify the order in scheduling and ways to engage the system to get the hours available. Just because we are looking for floor hours doesn't mean we don't have other co-op work like meetings and coordination work. The temp workers do not have that.

Jim asked when do contracts come up?

The end of December.

- Fern will forward all feedback to the Hiring Team.

Balanced Scorecard Reporting

Fred has an idea for us too mull over and consider if we want to pursue next year.

Some noticed that Mission activity was missing from the budgeting process this year, balance score card reporting will address that.

Balanced Scorecard reporting is careful measuring using financial and other reports to report on our Mission performance. Essentially creating a regular report that shows the progress of our financial, strategic and mission objectives.

The Scorecard is based on two concepts: the 'Association' which is the Membership and their shared needs and the 'Enterprise' which meets the needs of the Association. The Cooperative brings these two into alignment.

The Mission objectives and how you measure them is the basis. One example is waste reduction for Eco Planning. We come up with a way to measure waste and report it. Member engagement is another are we could measure with the Member Relations Committee creating measures.

We figure out how we will measure, set up targets and create initiatives to meet those targets. There is a whole process of using these lenses, with KPI (Key Performance Indicators) and coming up with your targets.

This work ties into Jims idea of doing a Board evaluation. Its a way to measure and quantify the stuff that is less obvious than cash in and cash out. One way or the other the Board could be asking for better information and more information from the Staff. He feels like all of our Staff is working across the purposes and we could create a better container to hold the business and mission and be able to see how these things intersect.

He doesn't have a specific proposal, but wants to know if there is general interest to explore this idea to try to develop better reports to inform strategic planning and our work as the Board.

Feedback:

Peter asked if we would need to reinstate the Annual Board retreat? He thinks we should.

With things as they are, we should take a whole year to develop it and then launch it for 2022.

Ben believes this is really great stuff. He sees a paradigm shift in the organization to make this work. The organization would benefit from this. The challenge is finding continuity thru the years and the life cycle of a Board member. The key is to keeping it going

We make it Ferns job to ensure continuity.

Joanne asked if we could get some of these materials sent out so that we can look at in depth. Then discuss at the Board meetings perhaps 15-20 minutes each meeting and talk about it and ask questions.

Fern will add it as a standing agenda item.

Mel is excited to start something like this. She appreciates Bens advice to keep it going.

Jim agrees we should distribute these materials. He sees this also as a model for strategic planning, it gives us something concrete to work with. We had little process for the last strategic plan. We could consider of creating a Task Force to develop this idea, in addition to Joannes idea to a standing agenda item. One of our downfalls is serious forward thinking.

Grace liked what she saw and agrees with the suggestions. Perhaps we could take two or three of the goals of the mission and use it as a practice item. She has been through a lot of organizational strategic planning sessions and the systems she has been taught over the years is same wine in new bottle and it has been hard to embrace one system. Choosing one and doing it and staying with it and really learning it is a challenge.

Fern has been watching the Board and Staff struggle with strategic planning and not have a common understanding which has been detrimental to any plan built. It would be great to introduce Staff to this idea early and build the understanding together to ensure success.

- Fred will send out the balanced score card documents to all

Hosting a reading group separately around this work is interesting and we could invite Staff there to build this language. Fred hates strategic planning and from the business school lens you measure what you manage and manage what you measure and the continuity comes from the reports. We can have checkins each meeting. We could also have committees do a practice run of how and what to measure.

End of Year Review

We survived !

Ben shared that this year has been unquestionably the most bizarre. The Co-op still lives! We have gone to a group of folks to a 15 million dollar a year organization. The Co-op has a unique function in our community. We are the only organization people can go to and buy affordable wholesome produce affordable to people. He can go to Haagen and buy green leaf lettuce for 4 bucks and he can go to the Co-op and get it fresher and local for half. He is glad to see the Co-op is making thru the crisis. A few highlights of his term on the Board is that he loves that its all about the food. There is always great food involved in our work. We have shared food and great times. The Eastside salad bar is absolutely fantastic! He isn't a vegetarian but he damn well could be if he lived next to the Eastside Co-op. Another highlight is the Hummingbird Project. It is quiet amazing we supported a group of kids that had a dream of creating a solar project in Washington State. We should all be proud of these accomplishments for the future.

Fern asked how was the year in zoom?

Mel would like us to connect outside of the business realm of meetings. She is open to facilitating a dance party.

Joanne enjoyed the opportunity to see into your lives and your space. It is very different then in our conference room. This is more relaxed. It would be great to share a meal or a theme, make it celebratory.

Grace asked if anyone else logged on for the first night of Provender. They did a tasting a beverage that was really well done. Something like that would be nice.

Jayana suggests somehow we coordinate for a dinner option or get a care package of new products.

We could use the board budget for this and coordinate pickup at the stores.

Jim used to ask for cheese that blew through our dinner budget. Fern has been doing a great job with managing this on line and her capacity for taking notes is impressive. He is behind the idea of further Board social activities with the limitations to what we can do.

Commitments

- Grace will coordinate with CSF and Staff on locations for the sandwich boards

Pending

- Fred will recirculate Johns thesis and attach his paper

Pending, he wants NWCDC Staff to look at before he shares

- Fern will forward all feedback to the Hiring Team.

- Fred will send out the balanced score card documents to all

Meeting Eval

Next Meeting

Facilitators

Jayana / Joanne

Executive Session

Decisions out of Meeting

1. Approval of November Meeting Minutes - decision made via email

Consent

2. Executive Session Proposal

The Board had a special meeting in executive session on Dec 6, 2020 to consider a proposal from Humane Resources/Personnel Committee.

In attendance: Jace, Cristina, Ben, Linda, Mel, Joanne, Grace, Jim

The Board consented to the attached proposal.

Proposal:

After consideration of the original recommendation from the Humane Resources Committee *see below, the Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors consents to initiating Standard Termination proceedings for employee A. A. on Dec 7, 2020.

The initial communication to A. A. informing her of the beginning of Standard Termination will include a deadline for a response by 8:00pm on Dec 9, 2020. If no response is received then automatic termination will take effect on Dec 10, 2020.

***Original recommendation from Humane Resources:**

The Humane Resources Committee recommends to the Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors, that the employment of A. A. be terminated on Dec 8, 2020 unless she has responded to inquiries about her return to work, classes coordination, and has signed the staff Behavior Agreement Contract.

Consent
Stand asides: Grace

Attached Documents

1. Temporary Hiring Report

WM Temporary Hire Report for BOD

December 2020

In September we hired 8 current wms as covid emergency temporary workers. Additionally, we still have 3 former staff who are working as temp workers, who are currently working hours ranging from (5-10 hr/wk), (15 hr/wk) and (29 hr/wk).

The contract for the wms as covid emergency temporary workers goes for 3 months at a time and allows them to work a max of 29/hours per week (If they worked over 30 they would be considered FT employees). The contracts are currently in the process of being renewed and a member of our personnel team expects that all 8 temp workers will renew their contracts. These 8 people are collectively covering approximately 150-230 hrs per week.

The proposal that achieved staff consent allows the temporary wm contracts to be renewed up to 3 times. If in that length of time we still need temporary workers due to COVID continuing to limit permanent staff's ability to work, I would need to write a proposal to staff (and I imagine to the BOD) to extend this time period. There are also 3 wms who did not apply by the deadline, but who are interested if we have a need to hire more temporary workers (we don't at the moment, but I will contact them if we do).

I solicited information and commentary from our training team, our scheduling coordinators and our personnel coordinator to try to get as much information as possible to share with you about how the program is going:

One person from our emergency coverage team said that the WM Temp worker program is essential at this point.

The scheduling rep who responded said that she thinks we hired the right amount of people. She said they are able fill a good chunk of shifts with temporary staff, and that the schedule looks much better than it did before we hired them. I will add that anecdotally, pre-temp workers I was regularly being asked to work on my weekends and/or work long days, and this is rarely the case now. It is also much less frequent for us to have uncovered shifts on our schedule, though as the scheduler pointed out, temp workers are still not able to cover everything that is open. She mentioned that scheduling the temps has added to the scheduling workload (and thus hours used to coordinate them), but feels that with some tweaking they can reduce this as time goes on. One concern that was raised by 2 people is that some permanent staff who are working in the stores have expressed that they are struggling to get enough hours since we hired the temporary

workers. Our scheduling systems are set up so that permanent staff look at and pick up open hours before they are offered to temporary workers. The scheduler who responded said that when she looks at the data, the people who are complaining about not getting enough hours are largely having this issue because they are not utilizing or interacting with the scheduling systems we have in place for picking up hours. Still, some staff feel that we could discuss changes that would ensure that collective members have more chances/time to pick up open shifts before they are offered to temporary workers.

Another idea suggested by a member of the emergency coverage team is that it might be helpful for both the temporary workers and the organization to have a coordinator or point person for the temporary workers to funnel any organizational or procedural questions through. I will be in contact with training, personnel, and scheduling to see if/how we might like to approach this idea.

It was also mentioned that two of the wms we hired as temps struggled at first to get enough hours as they were trained in areas that did not frequently have shift openings (bulk east and produce west). Since then they have both been trained to cashier and are able to get hours that way. The scheduler said that the fact that almost everyone we hired had previous cashier experience (even if it was not at the Co-op), was very helpful. I would add that when we hired the 8 wms, we had door shifts open that we thought they'd be filling, but due to our strained financial resources, we are now staffing the door exclusively with wms, so there were less hours available for some of the workers than the hiring team anticipated.

Some staff continue to have concerns about having workers who do not have the same benefits as permanent staff. One member of the personnel team worked on finding an affordable emergency assistance program (EAP) that will be available for both permanent and temporary staff starting in January of 2021. EAP programs offer emergency counseling, financial advising, and legal assistance to workers. She is also planning to bring a proposal to the staff and BOD to increase the wage of the temporary workers sometime soon.

Overall, the feedback from the teams I talked to is that the temporary wm program has been essential to keeping our stores staffed and running. It sounds like we have had some minor issues to work out, but that for the most part things have been going well and that having adequate labor has greatly reduced workplace stress and contributed to much better staffed stores. If any member of the BOD has any questions or thoughts about the temporary wm positions and program, I encourage you to email me. If I don't know the answer to your question, I will try to connect you with someone who does. If you'd rather set up a time to zoom or talk on the phone, please just let me know and I'd be happy to set that up with you!

Thanks,
Erin Majors
OFC Hiring Coordinator

