



**Board Meeting Minutes**

**5.20.2021**

**Attendance:** Jayana Marshall,, Linda Myers, Jim Hutcheon, Jace Denton, Mel Bilodeau, Fred Meldicott, Joanne McCaughan, Cristina Rodriguez, Grace Cox(*Staff Representative*), Fern Moore (*Board Coordinator*)

## **Agenda**

**Agenda Review**  
**Mission Statement**  
**Land Acknowledgment**  
**Member Comment**  
**Announcements**  
**Commitments Review**  
**Hiring Proposal**  
**Staff Report**  
**Committee Reports**  
**Break**  
**Marketing Proposal**  
**Board Retreat July**  
**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.

## Member Comment

*Desdra Dawning-* Member and Former Board Member serving 3 years off and on. She had an experience that she wanted to share that got started with working with the Member Relations Committee and continues. She continues to have an interaction with one particular Staff person, it was sideways and not direct today but it made her sad. We are needing to get together and work together. We all fall down sometimes. Having been on the Board at that time, she felt a disconnect with the Staff and Board. The Staff needs the support of the Board whether they think they do or not. The Board is in a space to help and support and be the backup for all the hard work that the Staff do. This Co-op supports so many people in the community with good food. The Staff need the Members but not just as customers, but as true active Members that are lifted up in participation and in Co-op affairs. She doesn't see enough participation or an encouraged shift in perception that moves away from the adversarial stance that she has seen in 10 years as a Member. She is saddened about Staff participation and power plays with Working Members. A healing needs to happen to survive the coming changes with the economy. The Staff need to wake up to the deep wounding going on and find ways of coming together and working with each other. The Board needs to be on the same page if the Co-op will survive. There's no one to go to in the stores, the ordinary person can not find 'managers'. The system is holding us back from cooperating with each other. She can be of service in moving this work forward. Her heart hurts for the Co-op. There is too much dissension and difficult emotional stuff. We need to get into our hearts and get it together.

*Joanne echoes her concerns. We have to take a hard look its been a hard year for everybody and we have all done our best. There are hard situations that are brewing and she wants to work on solutions.*

Jayana asked if we could discuss this more either at the July Retreat or later in the agenda.

Jim: We could try but he is not sure any action would come to that in a meeting.

Mel: It feels she is expressing a vague thing that has lots of pieces to it. As a Board we are excelling in keeping an eye on things, assessing and surveying. Its a big problem with chunks to solve.

Linda: This could be addressed in the newly formed Co-op Health Committee. It seems this would be the place where it could be looked at and developed. Nothing is actionable, but a lot can be down. The article that Joanne sent out applies to this. Specifically the concept on an Intercultural Survey. This might be something we might be able to use to review the Co-op and the Collective.

Jim suggests that we invite Desdra to join the Cooperative Health Committee. She offered to be useful and she could voice her concerns and assist in developing actionable items.

Mel doesn't know what the Co-op Health Committee is currently doing. She feels it is imperative to involve Big Picture CAT. Possibly invite them to one of our meetings and let them know the house is burning.

Linda informs that the new Co-op Health Committee has not met yet. We will set up a meeting when we get back.

## **Announcements**

None

## **Commitments Review**

- ***Grace will coordinate with CSF and Staff on locations for the sandwich boards***  
*Has a proposal about this: her perception that by June 30th enough things may have changed to accommodate space for signs. Joanne agrees.*

- ***Fred will draft a Board recruitment/elections task force proposal***  
*Pending. Board Recruitment is included in Board Development Charter We do need to include Elections coordination somewhere though*

- ***Jayana will email her investment ideas to Finance.***  
*Complete*

- **Grace will announce the new Committees to Staff and contact Internal Hiring**  
*Complete*
- **Grace will contact Internal Hiring about filling Eco Planning**  
*Complete*
- **Grace will make a report on how many hours are allotted for Staff on the Committees**  
*Pending. There are not specific hours allotted for Board committees. We will include this in the 2022 Budget . We addressed the hours for new committees and plan on conducting a survey about Committees for hours before budget time.*
- **Jim will come back with more details on the Board Staff Mixer and the budget.**  
*There is a reservation at Priest Point Park and we initiated a permit to serve alcohol, if we chose too. We are looking at options for food and it should be fine regarding the budget set. The majority of the cost is paying staff to attend. The mixer is scheduled for September 14th*
- **Joanne will come up with a continuing education for the next meeting**  
*Sent out to all. We will discuss at next months meeting.*
- **Grace will inquire about sharing the Resolution team report with the Board**  
*Pending. Sent an email out and waiting for a reply*
- **Mel will send the compost proposal to Jace**  
*Complete*
- **Jace will create a google calendar for committee meetings with login info**  
*Calendar is made and will send the link and login to all.*

## **Hiring Proposal**

Staff Member Arwen, attended to present the Hiring Proposal.

Labor systems analyzes the staffing needs for the Collective. A Hiring analysis hasn't been down in some time and Covid has thrown us off the rail. Our Sales are finally going

back up. Working Members have temporarily left or left long term because of the pandemic. This is a significant amount of people and we have felt the crunch without their help. It shows how much we depend on Working Members and appreciate their contribution in running the stores. We initiated a Temporary Hire system for Part time work and that has helped a lot. A few Temp Workers have left and some are not taking as many hours. The Temp system, according to Proposal, ends in September. The Deli is also gearing back up and need Staff. For all these reasons, we need to hire people!

Since the last Hiring analysis: 6 Staff have left or moved to Part Time. We have a couple people looking to leave with no known date of departure. There are also still some Staff that are affected by the pandemic and its restrictions and have more home needs to attend to as a result.

The Proposal sent to Collective was for 3-5 Staff and it was approved. The formulas used agreed to 4 people. This accounts for anything that may take place before anyone is hired and because people have expressed they are leaving. Temp Staff might apply for these positions, which would take away from Part time help we have been using. When the Deli gears back up to production we will need workers there, 2 people have left and one transferred out of the Department.

*Feedback:*

Jim: Thank you for this work. Given that Staff have consented to a proposal, he is trying to balance that with consenting up to 6 hires

*Arwen answered that Hiring had a meeting with Labor CAT and discussed this as an option, we would have to do a new consent process. We ran the numbers and it was the same. Based off of everything we have, we seem confident in our projection. There are people who are working on a proposal for a long term Part time worker system.*

Joanne: As far as Temp Staff coming onto permanent positions, is there any difference in that process?

*No, they go through the regular Hiring process. He has heard Temp Workers express interest but this is all speculation. He knows that some Temp Staff have applied.*

Mel feels that Hiring is a very operational thing and will Consent and expresses permanent Consent for future proposals concerning Hiring.

## Proposal

Labor Systems proposes that the Collective hire between 3-5 new members.

## Consent

## Staff Report

Grace has followed through on soliciting Staff for the 3 new Board Committees and Eco Planning and the Local Committee. When she went to the Internal Hiring Coordinator the response was people are overloaded right now and to not be disappointed if we don't get people in the positions right away. We have possibilities to solicit specific people after we hear back from all Staff. Feedback is welcome.

Three people are interested in becoming part of the Eval CAT. It has been understaffed for a long time. The last time we tried to Staff it, it failed to reach consensus based on the people proposed to fill the positions. The new proposal is in the proposal journal now and will come out next week. They all understand a key piece to the work is making changes to it so we can bring back peer accountability and evaluations.

We are working on a proposal for ongoing Temp Staff / Part Time workers. There is a lot of discomfort with the notion that some Staff would not be part of the governance long term. The fact we were thrown into this system in order to survive the pandemic has given us a chance to see a system that wasn't perfect could be successful. Often we are reluctant to accept things unless we know it will be right for everybody, and this has been a unique opportunity. We have seen a first draft of the current Proposal which received feedback and will be redrafted to reflect that.

Staff had 2 more sessions with Cathy Frome on Difficult Conversations. We structured them in short sessions. 60-65 people have been attending. There is not enough time to get all the work done, but the feedback from participants has been very good.

Just today we received notification from Provender. They will be holding the conference virtually again this year, October 6-8.

***- Grace will send out Provender registration and details.***

May Day! The only day the Co-op is closed happen to fall on a Saturday this year. Facilities did a number of projects while we were closed: repainted the bathroom East, parking lots re-stripped at both stores. We also discovered months ago a significant leak on

an outdoor spigot under the concrete. One of our many heroes Dennis, who can do anything, fixed the leak and poured the concrete by hand. The new Eastside fruit rack is up and is beautiful. Skagit Co-op donated parts on a refurbished fruit rack in a demonstration of cooperation between Cooperatives!

Finance CAT has been approached by Staff people and by UNFI about crypto currency. UNFI has a connection with Cloud Coin who have ATM's that are Crypto ATM's. We are going to investigate, because we have been asked too. We haven't heard from Members that they want to pay with crypto coins and there has been a lot of information on the amount of energy it uses to process. Which raises real questions on the environmental impact of crypto.

Jayana asked who approached us?

*We received an email from our Sales rep at UNFI that they have these crypto ATMs available and NCG gave them permission to contact us. The email was sent to a bunch of buyers at our Stores and those Staff approached us to gather more information.*

Masks! Like everyone we were taken by surprise by the CDC announcement and Inslee's endorsement, which left a lot of us questioning and concerned about this shift. One reason being, there is no way to see if someone has been vaccinated and no one was interested in checking vaccination cards. We are continuing the mask mandate at our stores. We have a lot of Members calling and asking and applauding the decision that we are continuing with the mandate. The Covid Task Force also has taken direction from Labor and Industries as well as the local Health Department. As of Monday night neither L and I nor the local Health Department had weighed in on this issue. On Monday night over 50 Staff members got together via Zoom at 9:15pm and talked for 2 hours about the CDC change. The vast majority spoke to keeping the mask mandate. This could all change at any time of course. There was support in masking till we reach the 70% vaccination rate. Thurston County is currently at 40-50% adults vaccinated. We did have a small group of people opposing wearing masks. They all showed up together and tried to push the issue and weren't allowed in the Store without masks. They gave up and left.

## **Committee Reports**

**Advocacy** – has not met

**Board Development-** met twice and working on a couple tasks and doing recruitment of their own for Committee Members. They talked to Working

Member CAT about recruitment from our Working Member pool. Fern approved an announcement for the upcoming Table about the Board application period.

**Capital Campaign** - There are 2 spots for Members at Large on the Committee. Former Board Member Ben will serve as a member at large.

**Cooperative Health** - has not met

**Co-Sound** - They are getting an Americorps Vista Volunteer to work with the Steering Committee. They are moving ahead with planning the Membership Drive this fall and looking to incorporate by the end of the year.

**Eco Planning** – discussed the Compost project proposal and that is moving forward. They also discussed finding a way for the Co-op to recycle plastic film, possibly by partnering with other grocery stores in the area. We are unclear if that is doable yet. The Committee also submitted stuff for the upcoming issue of the Table.

**Expansion** – Thanks the Board for responding to the proposals sent via email. There will be a brief report in the Executive Session.

*- Fern will add the Expansion proposals to the April notes ‘ Decisions out of meeting’*

**Finance** – talked about the Expansion project and reviewed First Quarter Statements and the Budget Report showing the panic buying and rollercoaster of 2020. This year there was a small profit. The Margin budgeted for first quarter was exceeded by 40% : Margin exceeded 1.1% East 1.7% West. We talked about the PPP loan balance which was showed on cash on hand and was booked as Revenue. We are doing great, but not that great. We talked about the Curbside program ending and are preparing a survey for users to shape how we could move this program forward if the survey deems it worth continuing.

**Local** - has not met

**Member Relations** – no report

**Organizational Health** - has not met



**Personnel** – met last week and heard about the update for 3 Staff joining Eval CAT. They also heard from Probationary team and standard termination procedures. They spent a lot of time in discussion for Executive Session.

**Standing Hiring** - reviewed applications

**Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) Liaison** – Grants have been awarded to 5 applicants. 1. The Estuarium; for the ‘Meet the Beach’ events 2. Helsing Junction Farm: for a farm succession project, they want to pass the Farm leadership on to younger women. 3. New Traditions. They were looking for a new piano. The old ownership kept his baby grand piano. 4. Meta-microbial: They are doing fungus experiments that enhance the Puget Sound with fungi that assist the local salmon. Everyone who applied was able to be funded, except for one person. They have submitted the same application three times and have not made the changes requested.

## **Board Retreat July**

The next Board Retreat is scheduled for July 25th.

Jim and Jayana met and propose the following Agenda.

Hear from Departments 30-45 minutes (Wellness, Garden, Produce, Deli)

Big Picture CAT

Balanced Scorecard Session

Why are you here Conversation- A chance for people to get to know one another and show vulnerability. A time to reaffirm their intent and mission for being on the Board.

*Feedback:*

Mel, Joanne and Jace spoke to Produce being the Department we hear from.

Linda- Could we ask questions in advance?

*Jim would be happy to facilitate that*

***- Jim will reach out Produce managers and BPC for the July Retreat***

Joanne- 'Why we are Here' sounds fun. It would be great to report back what the other person said to the group, to practice active listening.

## Yelp

Mel has a concern that she wanted to discuss. With her work with Outreach she learned that the Co-op pays Yelp \$8,000 a year. She would like the Co-op to not participate in extortion marketing. Would this be a Bylaw change? Operational change? What can we do to stop this from continuing .

### *Feedback:*

Grace does not think its a Bylaw change. It falls between Operations and Policy. It could be a Policy to guide Operations. What you want to say is stop giving money to Yelp. Its an easier process working through the Board. She shares the sentiment and cannot consent to the current wording. There have been court cases around vulnerabilities with Yelp and wording classifications.

Linda - Recommends that Mel speak with whoever handles that aspect of operations and speak directly to them. Get information about what are we getting for this money, why, what do we get and why is it worth supporting them.

*Theres a Staff person from Outreach and MRC who has defended this money quite well and the defense is that it is so valuable for many reasons including, we can contact people that leave a bad review and work things out with them. \$8,000 is a lot of money and She wants that money to go towards something more proactive. They are a company out of San Fransisco.*

Fred asked if we should be discussing the marketing expenses? Perhaps setting a Policy concretely about Yelp and how it is counteractive to our Mission.

Jace agrees with the concern but wants more research and information compiled about why we justify this expense.

Linda adds that the Board should be able to ask questions about any of the expenses.

*Yes, it is okay to ask questions and get more information. Making a policy about Marketing specifically should show that it is against our Mission .*

Mel is interested in speaking about changing the language in the proposal and open to what Grace might say about it in particular. Thank you for making time for this today, its been weighting on her mind since she discovered we give them money so they don't allow negative comments and that we pay them to show the good reviews.

*Linda included that because we pay them, it also puts us at the top when someone does a search.*

## **Commitments**

- ***Fred will draft a Board recruitment/elections task force proposal***  
*Pending. Board Recruitment is included in Board Development Charter We do need to include Elections coordination somewhere though*
- ***Grace will inquire about sharing the Resolution team report with the Board***  
*Pending. Sent an email out and waiting for a reply*
- ***Jace will send the link and login info for the google calendar of Committee meetings with login info***
- ***Grace will send out Provender registration and details.***
- ***Fern will add the Expansion proposals to the April notes ' Decisions out of meeting'***
- ***Jim will reach out Produce managers and BPC for the July Retreat***

## **Meeting Eval**

Jayana- we did drift and then we got back on time!

## **Next Meeting**

Continuing Education- Article sent by Joanne  
Hiring - Checkin with Erin about policy change

## **Next Facilitators**

*Fred/ Mel*

## **Executive Session**

No decisions made.

## **Decisions out of Meeting**

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

**Consent**