



**Board Meeting Minutes**

**9.17.2021**

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

**Agenda**

**Agenda Review**

**Mission Statement**

**Land Acknowledgment**

**Member Comment**

**Announcements**

**Commitments Review**

**Staff Report**

**Break**

**Committee Reports**

**Co-operative Health Committee Vacancy and Charter Update**

**Board Budget 2022**

**Board Recruitment 2021**

**Commitments**

**Meeting Eval**

**Next Facilitators**

**Executive Session**

## Land Acknowledgment

We start the meeting today 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

None

## Announcements

- Fred Medicott sent his resignation from the Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors via email today

*See Attached Document #1*

- Mel asked where is Medicine Creek?

Jayana answered in the Nisqually River Valley. The Creek comes down in the same Delta as the Nisqually Delta.

- Grace is going to be traveling in a couple weeks to DC to see her comrade Karen Zimbelman be inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame. She was invited to attend and it will be on NCG's dime.

- Jim shared that the Hood to Coast Relay Team had a great race. The team was made up of Board members, Staff and Working Members. It was a small team but represented the values of the Co-op.

- Jim announced that we could use more Board Members to do some tabling for Board Recruitment. Linda and Joanne were planning on tabling at the Eastside. Jim can set up a google doc. We will discuss further in the scheduled agenda item.

## **Commitments Review**

- ***Co-operative Health will look into IDI tools with Parfait Basel***  
*Pending. In process*
- ***Fern will forward Committee Charters to Website and Staff Pages***  
*Complete, in process of finding the last ones.*
- ***Harry will send the Final Alternate Staff System to all***  
*Complete*
- ***Jim will send out an email to organize Board tabling***  
*In process*
- ***Mel will send out the key note speaker information***  
*Complete*
- ***Grace will check in with Alejandro C about the MRC link and Jason about getting Staff on the the Member Relations email link.***  
*Pending*
- ***Everyone will submit Committee Reports via email***
- ***Grace will send out allotment request via email***  
*Complete*
- ***Jayana and Linda will work with Grace on Board Line item budget request***  
*Pending. They submitted a place holder number for Version 1*
- ***Joanne will get Member Relations Committee input and info to Jayana for the Fall issue of the Table***  
*Complete, the issue is out!*
- ***Jace will write something for publication in multiple venues for recruitment***  
*Complete and sent out haven't gotten any feedback.*
- ***Joanne will send out continuing education piece on co-ops in Washington state.***  
*Pending. Move to next months meeting*

## Staff Report

Grace does not have as much to report as we have recently been heavily engaged in Version 1 of the 2022 Operating Budget. After last year and this year, it is a crap shoot with one interesting complexity. For the last 5 years there has been zero inflation in the food at home index which is the grocery index. Although in the last 30 days it is showing a 5% inflation rate. What that means for budgeting is inflation in sales growth assuming you are reselling the same amount of goods. We sell at a higher price which increases the sales growth. The last time we had inflation in food at home, it was not near the level we are at now. What we saw in the bigger crash was stepping down, meaning someone who was buying a premium product bought a lesser quality product and fine dining customers went to chain restaurants etc. This allows individuals to have some control of spending and their lives. This throws sales projections into a tizzy and on what we can and cannot predict that people will spend.

The future is murky and what is also true is that we have increased wages every year. In part because food wasn't inflating but rents were, so people could eat but not keep a roof over their heads. We are also facing 'not' being the leaders in the starting wage in grocery. We aren't anymore and we won't be in the future. We are looking at a healthy increase to the wage scale for next year, a 93 cent an hour wage increase. If we can maintain that level we will move forward in the way we always do. Our Co-op COLA system has increased it in dollars and cents instead of percents, 1.6 to 1; top to bottom on the wage scale. We are proud of that. If the gap is too big the higher paid workers lack empathy and impacts equity of the wage scale. We are committed to keeping it equitable and to work collaboratively. We are also proposing to stop calling it Co-op COLA and instead refer to it as the Annual Wage Scale Adjustment. Finance and Labor CAT have brought this discussion to Staff.

The last Collective meetings Draft 1 of the Budget was discussed. Kitty and Corey looked at the complexity of the budget document as a whole and found ways to change it. By rearranging color coding too make it user friendly. In addition to getting reasonable numbers for revenue and expenses, and graphing with labor, and where we will fall with wages and benefits. We aren't looking at an increase in benefits currently, besides small programs, there is one about plasma spinning and joint health. There is also not an appetite amongst any of us for increasing co-pays and contributions. Finance Committee hasn't reviewed Version 1 yet but will soon.

In terms of other Staff issues, Grace wants to open a conversation. One of the things we are seeing, partly because we are a Collective and Staff join and stay and stay a long time so we are somewhat an aging workforce, we are experiencing a high level of Staff people that have aging or dying parents and are needing to care for them. People are going across country and moving parents into facilities.

There are so many conversations in the world about staffing issues, and Grace isn't hearing about this being talked about. The estimate is about 10 of the 80+ Staff are dealing with this right now. The impact is on who is available to take on the projects and extra work. A lot of these people have a lot of Coordinations roles. It is less of the cost but not having people available.

We filled internal positions including the Sign Co-Coordinator, which will be Grace. A couple people stepped up in supporting Working Member CAT and are enthusiastic and have been Working Members in the past. We are still struggling having someone take over Anti Oppression CAT. With the lack of a Coordinator the Training team will coordinate that work. We have openings on Board Committees and as long as people are working more floor hours they don't have time to take on this work. Sorry for that but we are working on it.

In other news Hot coffee is back at the Westside!

*Feedback:*

Mel has a mission in life to share anti carpal tunnel exercises with people 'Spread your fingers wide up and down, when your wrists are angled back pretend to squeeze the tips' Feel free to share that and then her journey in life will be complete.

Jim shares that are two people here that are dealing with caring for parents right now and why one of our Board members resigned. Its real and does have an impact.

Jayana thanks Grace for bringing this up, its a huge issue in our society.

## **Committee Reports**

**Advocacy** – has not met

**Board Development** - has not met and they now have an opening with Fred resigning, if anyone is interested in serving on the Committee for the rest of the year talk to Mel or Jim. Jace expressed interest. The more minds the better!

Thanks Jace for stepping up.

**Proposal**

**Jace will serve on the Board Development Committee for the remainder of 2021**

**Consent**

**Capital Campaign** - meeting next week with the Finance Committee

The Committee is made up of Jayana and Jim, Jill from Staff, and Ben Witten is the Member at large. There is lots of movement and good ideas.

**Cooperative Health** - Co-op Index Survey was sent out to Staff last week. Two days ahead of when we thought. To date 44 Staff have responded and tomorrow we will send reminders to the remaining Staff. Fred was also on this Committee and we now have an opening.

Joanne is interested.

**Proposal**

**Joanne will serve on the Cooperative Health Committee for the remainder of 2021**

**Consent**

The Charter does not have Members at Large and we want to add up to two members at large to our charter.

**Proposal**

**The Board approves adding two Members at large to the Cooperative Health Committee Charter.**

**Consent**

*- Fern will amend the Cooperative Health Charter and forward to Staff Pages*

*- Fern will check Freds Committee memberships*

**Eco Planning** – has not met. They continued to email back and forth and reached out to Facilities via email. Jace hopes to attend a Facilities CAT meeting since so much of our work overlaps.

***- Grace will email Tina the Facilities CAT facilitator about inviting Jace to a meeting***

**Expansion** – has met twice. We have some exciting news. We received an email from Mike Reid about the Knitting mill warehouse which was Fishtails old warehouse. They are looking for someone to fill that space and have interest in the Co-op using that space. Three weeks ago Grace, Joanne and Jim toured the building and came away with a sense of cautious optimism. It is worth considering. Expansion met and will schedule another walk through with more members of the team. We are hoping to also invite have an expert on refrigeration. This is just one possible space that we are looking at.

Mel is concerned about black mold. Please swab.

Joanne was happy to go through the building and visualize how we would be downtown. She is cautious of the age and history of the building and wants detailed history. She also has concerns about parking, there is none.

**Finance** – has not met

**Local** - has not met. Still has no Staff Rep.

**Member Relations** – They are continuing to plan the Annual Meeting scheduled to take place on November 6th. It will be hybrid meeting including Zoom and in person at the Olympia Center. We hope to engage in a way that is healthy and conscientious. The Annual Meeting Speaker will be Terry Chaucke who will be talking about healing through this time of difficulty. The theme is Healing our Community. There will be no food and drink this year instead there will be goodie bags handed out at the end.

We need to have an agenda and needs to be done on quickly and approved by the Board.

*Agenda Brainstorm-*

*Staff report, Finance, Board report, Member q&A, Board Candidates intros*

***- Fern will send past annual meeting agendas to Joanne***

***- Joanne will email out the annual meeting agenda***

*Feedback:*

Jim thinks its a bad idea to have an in person meeting. He feels that its a little misguided to have an in person meeting when we recently cancelled the Board Staff mixer and the Board is not meeting in person.

Linda feels that she has been participating in in person events and we aren't asking for vaccinations and we are providing an option to attend via Zoom. She does not have a problem to also have the option to do it in person.

Mel has been in public with masks on and with social distancing and believes in the power of the mask.

Jayana hasn't been to the space before. Whats the room capacity? Can we safely expect there to be sufficient social distancing.

*Two years ago we had it there and it was packed because of beer and wine being on the ballot. The city wouldn't provide the space if we weren't being safe.*

Jayana agrees with Jim and also sees the perspective that Joanne shares and offering both is fine. Due diligence must be paid attention to safety.

Grace shared that there was a big turnout for the 40th anniversary. There are Members that are mad about the mask mandate and we may get that energy at this meeting . She would like to ask the Board to enforce the mask mandate. Regarding Staff attendance when you are developing the Agenda, if you want to ask people to participate in presenting that needs to happen sooner than later to accommodate scheduling.

Mel thanks Grace for saying that about enforcing masks. It did come up in Member Relations and it sounded like there wouldn't be any staff participation in person at all. She wants to go easy on the Staff and not expect them to coordinate to enforce mandates.

Joanne clarifies that everyone will be masked. The Olympia Center has their own security and will clarify if they will be enforcing masks.



Grace mentions maybe Co-op branded masks.  
Jayana adds print shops are 4 weeks out.

In other Committee news, Mel shares that the two hard copies of the Member guide in both stores is close!

**Personnel** – They held an interest meeting at which Staff member Adam expressed interest and was Consented to by the Committee and will move on to be approved by Staff. They talked about the current case going on with a Staff member on standard termination and the behavioral contract in process. We are at the end of the time with that and the individual came close to doing well but didn't make it. We are looking at extending the contract or something else.

Mel wanted to share information she heard about the BPC, they don't have a working Charter to base things on.

*Grace clarified that CATs don't have Charters. They have Job Descriptions. Staff has seen an updated draft of it recently.*

Linda who is on BPC?

*Grace answered Adam, Mo, Nichelle*

**Standing Hiring** - has not met

**Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) Liaison** – had a retreat and are revising the application. They will be meeting again in a month and posting info on how to apply for grants.

## **Board Budget 2022**

They have not met yet but will be meeting to put things together. The Board was asked to share any ideas they have concerning expenditures next year.

*Feedback:*

Joanne would like us to include outreach to other Co-ops in Washington state. She feels that it is important to engage and build those relationships and would help our Co-op. We should consider it and talk about it further.

Jace supports this idea. One way of doing that is to invite them to our Annual Meeting and and go to theirs.

## **Board Recruitment 2021**

Jim made a corny video and sent it to the Staff people to post to the website and social medias.

Linda has been tabling and one person who was interested happens to be a Flex Worker and we have this new category at the Co-op.

What is the policy about them being a Board members?

*There is no restriction for Staff people running for the Board. If elected they would run into things that they would need to recuse themselves from. There can often be a conflict of interest.*

Linda does feel that it is a conflict of interest, having someone on staff wears different hats.

Jace pointed out that Grace mentioned that Staff are dealing with aging family etc, and noticed that we have a wide variety of ages of people that shop at our stores but a smaller range of ages that are applying to work at the Co-op. Why don't younger people apply? We offer wages etc.. Not sure how we can engage people to run for the Board or join Staff .

***- Fern will email the Board about if any Board applications have been received.***

Thank you goes to Linda and Joanne for getting the ball rolling on tabling. Having a presence outside is a way we can actively get people involved. Talk to your network and talk to people you know. Make them aware its an option.

Mel also thanks them for tabling and has intention in helping. Baby steps for empowering our Membership! Thank you for doing it.

Jace adds that maybe something we need to ask ourselves is why do people run for the Board? What makes it appealing? There are lots of volunteer oppourtunities out there with less commitment.

food can be charged for tabling using the outreach account

Grace shared that we have a thriving community of new worker Co-ops. Maybe we could send recruitment materials to those folks and give them an opportunity in learning. We have provided a Board Member to the Sustaining Fund and we could perhaps recruit there.

Joanne responded that Desdra and her did that at their last meeting.

Jace adds that a big perk to running for the Board, in their opinion, is getting to learn about Co-ops. Maybe there are lots of people who are interested in Co-ops and want to learn more. Some direct Outreach to places like the Flaming Eggplant or New Moon might be successful.

- ***Jim will send out tabling document to all***
- ***Fern will send out Outreach charge account info for all tabling***
- ***Fern will track down recruitment cards for Board***

## **Commitments**

- ***Co-operative Health will look into IDI tools with Parfait Basel***  
*Pending. In process*
- ***Jim will send out an email to organize Board tabling***  
*In process*
- ***Grace will check in with Alejandro C about the MRC link and Jason about getting Staff on the the Member Relations email link.***  
*Pending*
- ***Joanne will send out continuing education piece on co-ops in Washington state.***  
*Pending. Move to next months meeting*
- ***Everyone will submit Committee Reports via email***
- ***Fern will amend the Cooperative Health Charter and forward to Staff Pages***

- *Fern will check Freds Committee memberships*
- *Grace will email Tina the Facilities CAT facilitator about inviting Jace to a meeting*
- *Fern will send past annual meeting agendas to Joanne*
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## **Meeting Eval**

Jayana acknowledge everyones commitment to position and purpose and is so impressed that we can take an hour and half agenda and make it last two hours.

Mel needs policies for Member Guide.

*Email Staff Pages Coordinator*

## **Next Facilitators**

Jayana / Mel

## **Next Meeting**

Annual Meeting Agenda Approval  
Continuing Education

## **Executive Session**

No decisions made.

## **Decisions out of Meeting**

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

**Consent**

## **Attached Documents**

### **1. Fred Medicott's Resignation**

At this point its clear to me that I can not commit to finishing out the year as an OFC board member. There are several committees that I was on whose projects I am invested in and if possible I would like to reconnect with them as a member-at-large at some point,

I really enjoyed working with you all and have learned so much from the experience, I am truly sorry that I am closing out our time together in such a shoddy way. Thank you all so much.

Fred Medicott (he/him)  
September 17th 2021