



Board Meeting Minutes

12.16.2021

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

Agenda

- Agenda Review
- Mission Statement
- Land Acknowledgment
- Member Comment
- Announcements
- Commitments Review
- Co-op Index Survey Report
- Labor CAT - Flex Worker Hiring Proposal
- Break
- Staff Report
- Committee Reports
- Board Vacancy
- End of the Year Review
- Commitments
- Meeting Eval
- Next Facilitators

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.

Sonny Davis, Quinault Tribal Member passed away this month. He presented at the Annual Meeting a few years ago about tribal fishing rights and sold products from his company Quinault Pride. We honor his contribution to the community and our local fishing industries.

<https://www.colemanmortuary.net/obituary/joseph-sonny-davis>

Member Comment

None

Announcements

- John McNamara is present the Co-op Index Survey report to the Board
- Tanzania and Trudy newly elected Board members are also present
- Linda received the formal agreement for Colluminate CBLD. She will send it back and we will be getting login information and she will send out to all

- Linda will send out Colluminate link to all

Commitments Review

- ***Co-operative Health will look into IDI tools with Parfait Basel***
Work in progress with Anti oppression CAT. Jim and Jayana sent notes of thanks to Parfait.

- Joanne will send out continuing education piece on co-ops in Washington state.

Pending.

- Everyone will submit Committee Reports via email

Some were sent in. Continue commitment

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

In process. Waiting for charter update approval today.

- Grace will check in with Email Coordinator about Board Member emails and will ask reset on that password and share with all

Set a deadline in January

- Fern will let the email coordinator know about the change

Complete

- Fern will let Corey know about the change in Secretary

Complete

- Grace will send out the vacancy process to all and the information about the last time we had appointments

Complete

- Fern will ask Harry to include Linda in Expansion emails

Complete

- MRC and Board Development will discuss and develop Board recruitment

Pending.

- Linda will respond to the feedback sent in regarding the Annual Meeting

Complete

- Linda will send out the link to the Provender sessions to all

Complete

- Linda will forward email from Columinare to all

Complete

- *Grace will check with NCG about development fees that we could use
Complete, we can get reimbursed .*
- *Fern will amend the BDC charter and send on to staff pages and website
Pending*
- *Fern will send the updated and formatted committee charters to Jace
Pending will upload to google drive*
- *Jace will take the houseless discussion forward with others and report back
Complete. will forward to Grace.*

Co-op Index Survey Report

John McNamara from the Northwest Cooperative Development Center attended to present the findings of the Co-op Index Survey 2021. He presented a slideshow of the results to the Board. This is the second time the Co-op has completed the Co-op Index survey. This is a new version, so the results will look different. In short we are trying to measure how the value and principles are embedded in the operations of the business.

The Co-op Enterprise Model:

How Co-ops engage the economy, which is people centered. Our main purpose is to benefit the Members and operate along the values. To distribute power and control, democratically. This also measures how Co-ops engage with their community and how they apply those values and principles into the community.

The Co-op Index is suited to understand the Co-op enterprise model. This is version 3.0. A means of measuring operationally (one thing found is the concept of values correlate with human dignity) values and principles to model human dignity, other dimensions include; solidarity, social responsibility, and added personal dimensions (how they perceive the organization and themselves) and operational dimensions (business success and strategy)

From a 30,000ft view, there was general agreement with the statements. Each of the dimensions are made of different questions. The overall score is 53%. 67 Staff completed the survey, so overall the index is higher.

John started the presentation of results with a focus on “Well Above and Well Below” scored items.

Well Above:

‘Social Responsibility for others’ - This metric is based on specifically on the Olympia community. We scored really well, as well as ‘Human Dignity’ and ‘Business Success’.

‘Social Responsibility for Others’ - 71.2 % Including ‘*Co-operative is concerned about the community where it operates*’, ‘*Undertaking actions to support our Community*’ John recommends that it might be a good exercise to identify what those actions are. (environmentally sustainable business had more ppl disagree but it still scored high)

‘Social Responsibility’ overall index was over 70%. He was surprised ‘fair prices’ didn’t score higher, ‘ethical trade issues’ are high. Staff are being honest about dealings with the Co-op, there was more variance on ecological consequences in its decisions.

‘Business Success’ also scored high. Keep in mind the survey was completed in September in between waves of the pandemic. The Co-op has dealt with stress from this. The biggest agree or disagree was ‘*The Co-op seeks out new ways to improve operations*’ the other one was ‘*The Co-op as a model for other businesses in the industry*’.

‘Human Dignity’ scored the lowest: ‘*all cultures are equally respected*’. The highest scoring was ‘*people have the opportunity to influence which tasks are performed*’

Well Below:

‘Fairness’ - *job assignments based on staff experience, staff are held accountable in a transparent and fair manner, compensation also divided evenly.*

Which is interesting, and how it may conflict with wage differences between highest and lowest pay.

‘Strategy’ - seems to have challenges. How well are Staff in talking about the future among themselves? How engaged are Staff and Board in engaging in long term planning and the future of the Co-op? How are these things discussed? Can Staff make those decisions, but maybe they don’t think they are heard?

There are contradictory answers here and is another area to investigate.

‘Solidarity with Others’ - Co Sound is trying to get up and running again to create these oppourtunities within our community. This could be a Covid related issue. That there have not been ways to engage. It could be about communication as well. How do people know what the co-op is doing?

Personal Dimensions Overview:

- 'Take into account ethical trade issues' 80% agree
- ' Ecological decisions' 60% agree
- ' Help people when i can' 80% agree

Staff are an empathetic crew. How does that translate into their work at the Co-op?
There are ways to leverage this into our own strategy and into a competitive edge.
How can we be championing these elements?

90% are 'Concerned about Community', 'Coworkers well being taken into account',
'Co-op values and principles'.

80% agree that they can 'influence tasks', 'support ethical trade', 'fair pricing'.

65% are 'trustful', 'honest in dealings', 'socially responsible'.

Areas that need research:

- Job assignments are determined on Staff expertise
- Co-op exchange experiences
- All cultures are equally respected
- Future of the Co-op
- Efforts to develop Co-op sector

60 -70% non positive agreement:

- People understand requirements for success
- Clear vision in management
- Compensation is fairly calculated
- Cooperative respect
- Helping people have skills to better communicate
- Building respect for opinions
- Engaged in long term decisions
- Staff are guaranteed decent and safe work conditions
- Effort of individuals is honestly appraised

"Co-ops are about Human development as much as Economic development"
Ares Mendez from Mondragon Co-operative.

‘Solidarity with others’ (co-operative community) and ‘Strategy’ scored lower.

Jim found it odd that one would be so high and one would be so low

John replied that it could be the wording of the questions and partially communication.

Next steps:

Identify key strategic areas to support

Anonymous interviews

Facilitated discussion with Staff (possibly with outside facilitation)

Create proposal to support Staff

Develop implementation and review of proposals

Quick Ideas:

Open book management

Interdepartmental peer training

Unify strategic planning between Board and Staff

Policy Manual - create one (can compare answers from survey and see the disconnects)

Make the Policy manual available to Directors and Staff

Periodic review of all Policies by Staff and Board (biannual review)

Periodic review of vision, mission, and bylaws by Membership (5 years)

Feedback:

Trudy requested a hard copy of this report.

- John will send out hardcopy of the Co-op Index presentation to Linda; Linda will send to Fern to share with the whole Board

Linda is hoping we could take some of the next steps, quick ideas, and the low positives and flesh out a plan to put in place. Prioritize how the business is operating. It was surprising that the survey found we didn't have a clear vision about business management, maybe its disconnected. That one was a hard one for her.

Jim shared that it strikes him it could be interpretive what people think ‘manager’ means. Are there any other statistical analyses of co variance or just this level of percentages?

John answered that historically we try to get 100 percent participation. We could do additional analysis and spend lots of time within each metric.

Jim replied that he is interested because it can have more of a variance. John mentioned follow up interviews as a next step. Jim flagged ‘social responsibility’. Overall great job evaluating and analyzing and having it available to look at it and think about it.

Grace shared one quick reminder that Staff have not seen these results yet. She loves that we are thinking about the process for the next steps. We should stay focused on process and not solutions. Ultimately the best and most successful solutions will come after interviews are conducted. The survey results could lend themselves to things like a world cafe style conversations amongst Staff. Where Staff can revisit questions and talk with each other about what they meant. A solution based inquiry. She would hope that we move forward with John with making the same presentation of results for Staff.

Mel commented that she is happy Grace mentioned process. She hopes that the future Board can commit to those hours being paid for Staff.

John shared that someone on the Committee has the raw data. Theres a lot of data and it will be a great resource. Let him know when you want him to present to Staff.

Labor CAT - Flex Worker Hiring Proposal

Staff Member Erin attended to present the Hiring Proposal for Flex Workers. We are recommending all 14 applicants for the Flex Worker positions. The Hiring team is excited to offer positions to people who weren’t able to commit to the Collective positions. Thank you for consenting to the Flex Worker Proposal it’s an amazing change. We are thrilled to be trying it out.

All of these people worked through out the pandemic as Temporary workers. One person didn’t meet the minimum hours recommendation. The team didn’t feel like it was worth the amount of hours, especially as we near 100 workers which puts us into a different class. With that any questions or comments?

Feedback:

Linda noticed that there are 3 applicants in the finalist pool for the Collective positions. If they are interested in full time how does that work?

We only had Consent on the Temporary Workers thru December and we won't hire for Collective positions till the end of January. That would give these workers a month long gap of not being employed, that is why we recommend them now for Flex positions. They will be considered for full time Collective positions, which may open more Flex position. Scheduling is looking at how many Flex workers we need before we hire 4 new Collective Members.

Linda asked if there were any applicants outside of the current Temp workers.

Not yet. The Schedulers told us up to 15 Flex positions and we had 15 Temporary workers. So we decided to open it up to our current Temp workers. 3 other Working Members were interested and were sent applications. 2 of them didn't submit applications. The next thing we need to discuss on Hiring is how to open up the Flex worker positions to the general public. We hope to open that pool in January.

Jim wants to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work in screening a tremendous amount of applicants. It is a pleasure to look thru the recommendations and know some of the people.

Thank you. We wanted to approach this with integrity and care. Personally, she has worked with many of these people for the twenty years she has been here. It increases our diversity and field. Its wonderful and feels like a real win for our community. This is exciting for her.

Mel has concerns about one of the recommended hires. They had a conflict with someone at the Co-op and is not being scheduled with other workers as written in the document.

Yes, it was written in the document. The conflict was outside of the Co-op it is not work related. The applicant did not know about the conflict and has reached out to Con Res and Scheduling about a mediation with the Staff Member.

Mel would like to share personal experiences that she has had.

The Board went into Executive Session to hear Mel's concerns.

Proposal

The Board approves the hiring recommendations of the 14 flex positions.

Consent

Erin will notify applicants and will notify Staff when the positions have been accepted.

Staff Report

Not much has changed since the last report. Late October through the end of January are particularly busy times for the Staff, as business is at its highest levels of the year. As a result, we spend our time moving products from trucks, stocking and selling the products as quickly as possible and moving customers through the registers with as much efficiency as we can muster. Coordination and Management work becomes more operationally focused, so some of the Coordination Action Teams (CATs) and Departments cancel or reschedule meeting times to provide labor to run the stores.

Big Picture CAT continues to provide meeting and scheduling support to the Staff, as well as joining with other CATs planning for the coming year. For example, Mo from BPC has taken meetings with Training CAT to plan all Staff trainings.

Anti-Oppression CAT remains unstaffed, but Collective commitment to the work remains high. Training CAT, along with BPC and a handful of individual Staff members have taken the lead on planning for 2022. Training CAT will also be welcoming a new member. Sage is in the process of being consented to join Keziah and Grace on the team. Harry will be stepping down from coordinating new Staff training but will remain active as a trainer.

Facilities is in process on several building improvements. A second alarm panel has been added at the Eastside so that the first Staff in the morning can choose where they feel the safest entering the building before sunrise. The crack in the floor between the kitchen and the dairy cooler has been repaired. At the Westside research is being done to determine how best to replace the front doors to improve accessibility.

Labor CAT is creating formulas to determine future needs as to the timing and number of Flex workers to hire.

Merch CAT is working on updating several policies. We are also bringing a proposal to boycott Kashi products and RX bars as they are owned by Kellogg which is being called in response to Kellogg's refusal to continue negotiating with striking union workers and the threat to replace the workers with non-union workers.

We are slowly filling many open CAT and Management positions. There is a great deal of training happening.

Committee Reports

Advocacy – has not met

Board Development - sent via email

Capital Campaign - sent via email

Cooperative Health - has not met

Eco Planning – has not met

Expansion – has not met

Finance – has not met

Local - has not met

Member Relations – has not met

Personnel – will discuss in Executive Session. They also reviewed what was happening in regards to Personnel and improvements being made with Con Res and getting the Eval process getting back up and running.

Standing Hiring - has not met

Board Vacancy

There are 3 open seats on the Board. (Fred and Jayana's seats and one that has never been filled)

We had thought we punted this question to the Board Development Committee as a conversation to consider a Proposal in January or February to fill said vacancies. We have enough Directors legally, but do we have enough people to accomplish what we want to do in the next year?

Feedback:

Jim shared that going into 2022 the total will be 7 Directors and we have operated with fewer than that. We were at 6, its not ideal and depending whats on our plates it isn't a disaster and we shouldn't panic. Board Development could be charged with recruitment for appointees.

Linda shared that we shouldn't rush to fill seats. She tabled 12 times during the Election. Maybe we could do feet on the ground recruitment and share information about our vacancies : 1 one year, and 2 two year seats? She would like to work on it with Board Development Committee.

Jim would argue/advise other than simple advertising that we post notices. We don't have control of who shows up and have had to decline a few people who volunteered. We can be more selective on recruitment for vacancies.

- Fern will check term lengths and confirm them with Linda for Board Development

Next Steps :

The Board Development Committee will discuss and make a determination on filling the vacancies with a Proposal to the Board.

End of Year Review

Linda shared that it was wonderful working with Jim, Mel and Jace and she is sorry to see them go. She will see you around the Co-ops and when we have special projects we know how to call.

Mel shared that the Co-op is such an interesting monster, she says that with affection. We have the potential to create a workspace that is restorative in nature, like permaculture to communities. A restorative place to work not one where it feels like survival. She feels greatly about increasing morale.

Linda thinks that has to come from within the Staff. We are big picture and they are operations. Within that group they feel the morale with an outside facilitator or consultant. We don't know, but it needs to be staff initiated.

Joanne is wondering how things will come about as we get more involved with Colluminate and Provender in developing relationships outside of our Co-op and how that will influence us and how we can incorporate those skills to find strength and unity looking forward.

Linda shared that the Colluminate consultant assigned to us is Jade Barker who has worked with Peoples Co-op. She was chosen to work with us specifically because she has worked with Co-ops that have collective management. There are challenges that come with that. Our Missions are the same as other Co-ops, but how we manage ourselves is different. Linda is pleased with the choice of the Consultant.

Jim has set the intention to plan to continue as a Member of large in the Expansion Committee. This is the end of his 5th year that is one ninth of the Co-op history and it seems like an eternity. He has appreciated all the work that Fern does for us and continuously and in a great way. Even though we talk about accountability and how its broken, we have had more termination proceedings in the last two years then in the history of the Co-op, so accountability is being used in some sense. He is proud that people are able to step up and make difficult decisions. Working with a diverse group of people is always interesting. He has learned so much from working with every one here and thank you for a wild ride.

Grace shared what a ride these last few years have been! As Staff , We ask a lot of our Board members and we appreciate you so much. Sometimes she wished she talked less. The meetings run long but the quality of the conversation is very high. Thank you for your commitment all these years. The Co-op has sustained her for nearly all for her adult life , so thank you.

Mel shared that in the future if you want to invite her to Board socials, you can do that. She wants to hang out with you all.

Joanne wants us to think about what meeting in person again. She understands that we are fraught with concerns about the virus but at some point perhaps. Board Development Committee could discuss coordinating exit interviews for outgoing Board members.

Mel hopes that the Member Guides are able to be finished in the next year. It seems easy to accomplish and she is hoping someone takes that on.

Grace asked where it is stalled at the moment?

Mel has two small three ring binders that need completions. They need to incorporate basic member policies. Charters would be great to have as well

- Mel will get the binders to Joanne to take the Member guides forward with Member Relations Committee

Joanne thanks Jim, Mel, Jace for their service and thank you for your leadership and help this year.

Training for New Board

Training will be open to seated Board Members, after the initial scheduling with the new Directors.

- Grace will send out a doodle three training sessions (organizational overview, consensus, finance)

Commitments

- MRC and Board Development will discuss and develop Board recruitment
Pending.

- Joanne will send out continuing education piece on co-ops in Washington state.

Pending.

- Everyone will submit Committee Reports via email

Some were sent in. Continue commitment

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

In process. Waiting for charter update approval today.

- Fern will amend the BDC charter and send on to staff pages and website

Pending

- Fern will send the updated and formatted committee charters to Jace

Pending will upload to google drive

- Board Development Committee will discuss coordinating exit interviews

- John will send out hardcopy of the Co-op Index presentation to Linda; Linda will send to Fern to share with the whole Board

- Fern will check term lengths and confirm them with Linda for Board Development

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- Grace will send out a doodle three training sessions (organizational overview, consensus, finance)

- Fern will send out committee charters to new board members

Meeting Eval

Great Presentation of the Co-op Index Survey!

Next Facilitators

Grace / Joanne

Next Meeting

Officer Assignments

Committee Assignments

Decisions out of Meeting

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

Consent

2. Request for Consent via Email - 12.8.2021

Dear Fellow Directors,

The Personnel Committee received a few inquiries regarding the recent termination and requesting clarification. Because this is a committee of the Board, it is ultimately up to the Board to reply and any reply in the name of the Board requires consent. I have crafted the following reply. **The Co-op's attorney has reviewed it and has no problems with it.**

I am requesting that we consent by email to this response so that we can expedite replies.

Cooperatively,

-Jim

Proposed reply:

We understand your concerns around hiring practices and policies in regards to the termination and offer of a Flex employment position. Following consultation with the Co-op's attorney it is clear that the Board of Directors has the authority to make such an offer and we will continue to consult counsel.

The Board of Directors has been trying to manage an unusual situation. We believe that person participated in good faith with the Probation Committee. However, the

person was unable to meet the agreements and goals set in the termination process. The concerns with their performance were in regard to coordination responsibilities; therefore the Board of Directors felt that offering a Flex position was a way to address coordination concerns while still allowing them to remain employed on floor shifts if they choose.

Consent