



## Board Meeting Minutes

2.17.2022

**Attendance:** Wendy Davis, Trudy Springer, Linda Myers, Cristina Rodriguez, Joanne McCaughan, Tanzania Ertel, Grace Cox (*Staff Representative*), Fern Moore (*Board Coordinator*)

## Agenda

Agenda Review

Mission Statement

Land Acknowledgment

Member Comment

Announcements

Commitments Review

Working Member Discount Proposal

Committee Reports

Committee Assignments + Officer Assignments

Staff Report

Break

Board Communications

Census Review

Four Pillars of Governance

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

**Mel** - Proud Member and Volunteer for 25 years. She is glad to speak after the Land Acknowledgement and the Mission Statement because that is what she is here to speak about. The Mission Statement stated 'to make human effects on the earth and its inhabitants positive and renewing' with that some one decided there should be an Eco Planning Committee of the Board. If we wanted to talk rainbows and unicorns, we could bring out that Committees Charter, its very lofty and non committal. She believes we should be restorative with our ecological practices. Customers and people on the land that we occupy don't treat it with respect. Theres a ton of trash at the Eastside. There is a lot of area to keep clean. On multiple occasions she has done her feel good work and picked up trash around the property. Does it feel good to go to a Co-op that has trash everywhere? The trash could be from the customers or people on the property. Its clear that people can respect boundaries when they are clear. She believes the trash issue at the Eastside is a big deal. Perhaps this could be a Volunteer position, to connect a whole bunch of things, the trash has to do with avoidance culture. Its a problem and its grown to a proportion that it affects morale of the customers and workers. Eventually avoidance nips us in the bud, and problems can develop because of it. If we shift the paradigm to earth medicine and offer volunteers hours, we can be restorative ecologically. Offer people more opportunity to talk about these things, it would make people feel better about being part of the Co-op community. She believes if the policy is attractive enough we could get Staff and Board on with ecological restoration. Grace said a lot of the practices we can adopt regarding Eco- Planing are operational and not policy. The more she thinks about it, it is policy. The Board is here to steer the Co-op. Staff does a great job keeping the shelves stocked. The more she thinks about eco practices she realizes that a lot of eco practices don't have to do with the operational functioning of a grocery store. The Board needs to step into their leadership around ecological practices. She feels strongly about trash and feels there is a huge connection here with the morale of staff. A lot of people are in survival mode. Getting people from Facilities onto Eco Planning was the goal but with no avail. Out of 90 staff ,there has only been one person who has rose to the challenge of being on the Eco Planning Committee. She is here to beg that we adopt

more things around ecological soundness and not contribute to avoidance culture. The trash really brings her down and she is here to beg and advocate for the land.

Joanne- Is there a way that staff has up keep for the property built into their job descriptions? How does that work?

*Grace answered that its not that there is one person that has that job title. It does rest with Facilities, the external and internal systems for cleaning and maintenance. She can name at least one or two folks that walk the facilities every morning. As we typically find syringes. It could be in their purview to set up a Working Member position to support this and we have neighbors that work in the landscape area. Its not because we are not doing anything and she does not think it is impossible to ramp that up. She agrees that the Eco Planning Committee has been defunct and she is not happy about that. It needs to be a Staff CAT or assigned to a job description. Its unbalanced that Volunteers and Members talk about it and the Co-op doesn't have things in place to keep that balance. Perhaps it is time to deem Eco Planning a Staff Committee. She does not want it to die.*

## **Announcements**

- Saturday March 19th 8-1130am there is a 3.5 hour Cooperative Board Leadership Training- 101 Basic Training in Cooperative Leadership. This is the second time it is being offered this quarter.

***- Linda will send out the link to Board training 101- Cooperative leadership to all***

- Jade Barker our CBLD consultant has been invited to come to our next board meeting first on the agenda due to time zone difference.

## **Commitments Review**

***- Fern will send Board contacts to Daniel for Board photos***  
*Complete*

***- Harry will send complete Flex worker proposal to all***  
*Complete*

- ***Fern will send out email to all with committee template and to staff***  
*Pending. Assignments not complete*
- ***Fern will send out the bylaws policy***  
*Complete*
- ***Linda will invite Fern to Board Development meeting***  
*Pending*
- ***Fern will forward assignments to Staff and Website***  
*Pending. Assignments not complete*
- ***Fern will forward Zoom link to Board before every meeting***  
*Complete*
- ***Fern will email new Board to confirm contact information***  
*Complete*
- ***Linda will send link to the article 'Four Pillars of Governance'***  
*Complete*

## **Working Member Discount Proposal**

Linda wrote this proposal after talking about it for a year. She talked to Finance and the Working Member CAT for feedback on this proposal. She attended a Working Member CAT meeting and they encouraged her to write this proposal. Harry wrote to her and clarified that it is in the Bylaws that the Board sets the discount. She worked with Finance committee twice regarding this proposal.

One piece that is not included in this proposal, the affect it could have on the budget. The budgeted amount for 2022 was \$78,000 for Working Member Discount. In the budgeting process, was it ever brought up that there was increase being discussed? Working Members are an integral part of the operation of our stores. Pre pandemic, there were volunteers throughout the store, We could put this in place with a risk of overspending the budget line. We have the money in the bank and with inflation, the gold card does not go very far these days. There are people that depend on that gold card so that they can afford to shop at the Co-op. It may help encourage people to sign up for this program, an added incentive.

Feedback :

Grace- This basic proposal has been considered multiple times and has bounced between WM CAT, Finance and Staff. It is her personal opinion, that this will not be harmful to us financially. We are currently sitting over budget in sales and margin. Budgets are guesses and they change. One of the issues that has been talked about is by increasing the cost of the card is that we have 10 or 15 Volunteers who are sitting with 800 - 1500 hours sitting on the books. We don't log that as a liability for the Co-op and that's a big jump in the accrued liability. We asked that some attempt be made about those hours and she does not see that addressed in this proposal.

Linda talked to Pat and Alejandro from WM CAT about that. She didn't include it in the proposal as it's more in the implementation of this change. On the date of implementation, it would affect any hours above that line. Below that line it's 5 for a gold card. She also thinks they should be contacted and notified that they have a standing balance of hours. It didn't seem complicated to Pat and Alejandro upon implementation. Maybe it would help to include in this the date of implementation and about hours accrued in the proposal.

***Add to the Proposal***

***This will apply to hours booked beginning April 1st 2022. Working Member Cat will work with Staff to implement this change.***

**PROPOSAL:**

**Increase the Working Member discount. Actually, keep the same 25% discount, however, a discount 'gold card' would be earned with 5 hours of volunteer work. Currently the requirement is 7 hours for earning a gold card. A gold card will continue to offer a 25% discount on \$100 of purchases. This will apply to hours booked beginning April 1st. Working Member CAT will work with Staff to implement this change.**

**Consent**

**Stand Aside- Grace**

***- Fern will email proposal language to Working Member CAT***

## Committee Reports

**Advocacy** – has not met

**Board Development** - has not met. meeting soon doing a lot with CBLD program.

**Capital Campaign** - Apologize for the verbal report. The current Members are Grace, Linda, and Jim as member at large and three Staff members, Bradley, Jill, and Mary Jane. Their task is to develop a capital campaign to raise significant amounts of money to fund expansion. In working with the Expansion Committee, we come up with a location, plan, remodel, that would help with the process of expanding. The City of Olympia is working with a developer to create around 245 apartments up Lansdale, at the end of that road. This project is in the preliminary phase and utility companies came this week. We are hopeful this project will trigger upgrades on Lansdale. This work is more related to the Expansion Committee, but the Capital Campaign Committee is committed to working closely with Expansion. In particular, engaging the Membership. They are aware it is easy for Members to have survey fatigue. It might be useful to designate a project manager for the funding, they are looking into suggestions. The first steps include recruiting Members at large onto the Committee and be clear about what we might be looking for. We are interested in people that have experience in raising large amounts of money. We are committed to raising funds in lots of ways, so that no one is left out and make it possible for people that can give small and large donations. They met with Matt from Astoria Food Co-op about their successful Member Drive. They also met with Colluminate consultants specific to raising money. The Committee also committed to read a handbook from the Food Co-op Initiative regarding Capital Campaigns. We are hoping to meet with Kelly the General Manager from Bozeman Food Co-op who had an extremely successful funding campaign. They are planning on having the campaign to launch in 2023. So this is the year to build the campaign. They will also be talking to other Co-ops in Washington state. There are some ways that people raise funds inside Co-ops that we can't do within our corporation status and we will investigate that further.

**Cooperative Health** - This Committee met on Tuesday. It is comprised of Joanne, Wendy, Linda and Adam from Staff. They reviewed the Charter and decided to leave it as is. They talked about Co-op Index Survey results and reviewed the questions. Two categories showed agreement to the statement regarding social

responsibility and social responsibility to others. They also reviewed the questions with low level agreement. They are looking at the questions that can lead us to the next steps. This discussion needs to happen with Staff. They are not sure where to go next, perhaps they could discuss that with Grace. John had ideas on how to initiate these conversations as well. There are lots of discussions in the general aspect to view co-operative business and the long term health and it is all interrelated. They will be talking with Member Relations and Outreach in how that can be addressed. Wendy asked about the newsletter as a vehicle for this, perhaps an intro in the newsletter would be a benefit for us. Linda will be touch in Mo, who is the editor of the 'Table' and perhaps other publications in the community to do this.

*- Fern will send the most recent Cooperative Health Charter to Linda*

**Eco Planning** – has not met

**Expansion** – has not met

**Finance** – has not met

**Local** - has not met

**Member Relations** – Was successful in talking about commitments around the Member guides. A Staff person is leaving the Committee and they are looking for someone to recruit. They also talked about this years upcoming Annual Meeting. Our 45th anniversary for the Co-op is in August. Co-opatopia Olympia will be happening in May. One of the Staff members is involved with organizing that. We are hoping to have an outdoor celebration in August or September. Mel will be serving as a member at large on MRC.

**Personnel** – Chavez, from Staff will be joining the Committee. He does HR and Conflict resolution work and takes notes for Evals. Evals has recently completed a survey with Staff regarding peer to peer evaluations.

**Standing Hiring** - has not met

## **Committee Assignments + Officer Assignment**

### **Proposal**

**The Board approves the Secretary assignment to Tanzania Ertel  
Consent**

**Advocacy** – 2 open seats - Cristina

**Capital Campaign** - 3 open seats (Expansion / Finance) Linda, Grace

**Eco Planning** – Cristina

There was discussion if Eco Planning is best rested as a Board Committee. How do we allocate the money? How do we fund this work and do the projects. Its too operational. If no one takes it and runs with it at some point we may think about a way to Charter this work with broader goals via the Committee. It could be seated into operations via Facilities etc.

**Expansion** – 2-3 open seats - Linda, Joanne

**Finance** – 2 open seats - Linda, Grace (Staff)

**Local** - 1-2 open seats - Wendy

**Member Relations** – 4 open seats (CSF liaison) - Joanne, Trudy, Tanzania

**Standing Hiring** - 1- 2 open seats

*- Fern will update the Committee template and Officer assignments*

### **Proposal**

**The Board approves the Committee Assignments  
Consent**



## Committee Openings

### **Standing Hiring (1-2)**

Advocacy (1)

Capital Campaign (2)

Eco Planning (1-2)

Expansion (1)

Finance (1)

Local (1)

Member Relations (1)

### **Newsletter Liaison**

Discuss other Task Forces

## **Staff Report**

Biggest news for the month is happening in the world of training. Our newest staff members on collective track, start their training Feb. 15, and our crew of Flex workers are being receiving expanded department level training as they become available for a wider variety of shifts. 16 staff members are signed up for a free 4-part Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training courtesy of National Cooperative Grocers, and an ad hoc group including Training CAT, Big Picture CAT and at large staff members is considering a multi-year contract with DEI Consultant LaDonna Redmond Sanders. Our personnel team is receiving a variety of HR trainings including Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) and Washington State EEOC.

The Covid Task Force completed a staff survey around issue related to vaccine mandates and mandatory testing. As one might expect, results were widely split. On Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> the Task Force held the first of two forums for staff to review the results and take the opportunity to speak to each other about our concerns and positions.

The facilities team as usual had many irons in the fire. Biggest single project is replacing the Westside's produce refrigerated display. Equipment purchases are running about 16 weeks out, and the team hopes to make the change on May Day when we are closed for the day.

Merchandising CAT is working with departments to make sure that our special order policy is clear and aligned between departments. The Evaluations CAT has just completed a staff survey gathering data and opinions on the past and future of peer evaluations. Finance CAT will be leading the staff through a 2021 year end review and is also discussing best ways to look at floor space usage in relation to sales. Floor staff continue to grapple with occasional customers angry about the indoor mask mandate.

## **Board Communications**

This month Fern sent out a Board packet that included the Agenda, meeting documents, committee reports, commitments, and past meeting notes. The idea is that Board packets will go out on Fridays at noon a week before the monthly Board meeting. Please send Committee reports to Fern so that they can be included.

Linda had asked Fern about the process of approving meeting minutes via consent by email. The first agenda item in meeting will be consenting. Fern needs the notes be reviewed before the week before the next meeting and edits sent prior to the Board packets so that they can be approved at the meeting.

## **Feedback :**

Grace- My suggestions would be to continue to treat the items as independent documents and transmit them as a single zipped folder. Another option, would be to build the contents list as live links that go directly to the place where the document in question begins. My third thought is to create a Board Drop Box where the files can be shared and accessed by each of us. Board pages could serve this function once we're really up and running with it. I'm happy to work with you to develop an accessible technological solution if you'd like.

***- Grace and Fern will work on and bring back next month***

***- All Board Members will send feedback regarding Board packet and meeting minutes***

## **Census Review**

Fern sent out the Census information to the Board for review. She did not include mailing addresses this year, they are not needed unless Corey has something that he needs to mail to the Board individually and in that event Board Members will be contacted. The Board agreed.

***- Board Members will send any changes to Fern regarding the census information***

## **Four Pillars of Governance**

Linda sent out a link regarding the Four Pillars of Governance. Linda read some of the link to the Board. We will dive deeper in CBLD in the future.

The Four Pillars are Teaming, Accountable Empowerment, Strategic Leadership and Democracy.

## **Commitments**

***- Linda will send out the link to board training 101- cooperative leadership to all***

***- Fern will send out email to all with committee template and to staff and website  
Pending. Assignments not completed***

***- Linda will invite Fern to Board Development meeting  
Pending***

***- Fern will email proposal language to Working Member CAT***

***- Fern will send the most recent Cooperative Health Charter to  
Linda***

***- Fern will update the Committee template and officer assignments***

- *Grace and Fern will work on Board Packets and bring back next month*
- *All Board Members will send feedback regarding Board packet and meeting minutes approval*
- *All Board members will send committee reports to Fern by the Friday before the next Board meeting*
- *All Board Members will send any changes to Fern regarding the census information*

## **Meeting Eval**

- Linda admits she didn't keep track of time very well
- Joanne shared that the facilitation was very good
- Grace hopes we can agree to try to raise hands

## **Next Facilitators**

Joanne / Grace

## **Next Meeting**

Committee Assignments and prioritization  
Jade Barker ( April Meeting)  
Board Communications

## **Decisions out of Meeting**

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

**Consent**

## Attached Documents

### 1. Working Member Discount Proposal

2/3/22

#### **PROPOSAL:**

Increase the Working Member discount. Actually, keep the same 25% discount, however, a discount 'gold card' would be earned with 5 hours of volunteer work. Currently the requirement is 7 hours for earning a gold card. A gold card will continue to offer a 25% discount on \$100 of purchases.

#### **HISTORY:**

Taken from the Winter 2021 Table:

"The Olympia Food Co-op is a unique grocery store for many reasons, one of the most noteworthy is our **VOLUNTEER WORKING MEMBER SYSTEM**, which has existed from the very beginning and has involved thousands of members over the years.

Working members are the blueprint of our organization! Families and clubs created the Co-op over 45 years ago. At first there were no employees, instead, members contributed their labor to acquire and share healthy food.

Benefits to the ORGANIZATION:

- Provides a pool of support and expertise
- Many staff members were working members before being hired
- Allows staff time to focus on management and other job responsibilities
- Creates positive word of mouth promotion of the organization
- Creates a dependable base of return shoppers
- Is integral to achieving our organizational goals
- Is integral to the viability of our not-for-profit business model"

The working member discount has not been increased for at least ten (10) years. The trend reflected in the Co-op Budget (actual expenditures) shows that participation in this program has decreased each year since 2015.

Year	Actual \$ Amount Expended for Working Member Discounts
2015	\$176,420
2016	\$161,692
2017	\$153,830
2018	\$149,800
2019	\$147,252
2020	\$106,051** Pandemic year

2021           \$ 73,504 \*\* Pandemic year

The trend shows that the number of hours worked and then rewarded with the discount decreased 5 years in a row BEFORE the pandemic. Does this reflect that members are too busy to volunteer and/or are not as willing to volunteer their time for a \$3.57 per hour worked discount? When the pandemic hit, working member participation plummeted because of the risk of catching COVID-19.

The Working Member Program is currently working to rebuild its pool of volunteers. An increase of the discount would/could be a key factor in the process to attract new working members and also see the return of past working members.

**FROM THE BY-LAWS:**

**DISCOUNTS AND SURCHARGES** Working Members will receive discounts on goods purchased from the Cooperative. Non-members will pay a surcharge when purchasing goods. **The Board shall determine the procedures and amount of special membership categories and discounts, including Working Member discounts and non-member surcharges.**