



Board Meeting Minutes

6.16.2022

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

Absent: Cristina Rodrigue, Joanne McCaughan

Agenda

Agenda Review

Mission Statement

Land Acknowledgment

Member Comment

Announcements and Checkin

Commitments Review

Approval of May Meeting Minutes

Hiring Proposal

Proposal for Delegation of Hiring / Firing Decisions

POSTPONED

Proposal to replace Mission with Purpose

Staff Report

Break

Committee Reports

The Purpose of Board Committees

Governance System- Policy Governance

Board Communication - Internal Messaging System

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.

Member Comment

None

Announcements

- Linda sent email about Columinate webinar on Board elections next week. We should all try and attend
- Linda had a recent discussion with Jade Barker from Columinate about a retreat on policy governance. It would be 5-7 hours on a weekend. They are looking at September dates. Her availability is the weekend of the 24th and 25th. Please make a note of that and we will decide later (*add to agenda next month*)
 - Grace needs a four week notice to take a Sunday off.
 - Tanzania would like it to be in person if possible, for cohesion and support.
- Linda announced that the Board Development Committee will meet on Weds June 22nd at 5 pm. They will be meeting about recruitment and policies and procedures.
- Linda would like to meet in person next month,
 - Tanzania would like too and is craving in person collaboration.
 - Wendy agrees.

- Fern will send out an email to all about meeting in person

Commitments Review

- *Fern will check with BPC about using the same Zoom link every month*
Complete
- *Board requests to include Mission Statement in Board packet*
Complete
- *Fern will contact website about Board photos*
Complete
- *Joanne and Grace will work together on the sandwich board for CSF outside of stores*
Pending
- *Grace will email the NCG statements to all*
Complete
- *Linda will send invitations to the policies and procedures meeting*
Complete
- *Fern will send out the bylaws task force document*
Complete
- *Grace will talk to tech about upgrading Zoom for Board and Staff that can serve for both sets of needs.*
Pending
- *Everyone will investigate internal messaging services*
Complete

Meeting Minutes Approval

1. Approval of May Meeting Minutes

Consent

\$106,000 and not \$160,000 in Graces comment (*Fern will make the edit*)

Hiring Proposal

Staff Member, Arwen attended to present the proposal on behalf of the Labor Systems Team. The process is when Staff consents it gets brought to the Board for approval, then the Hiring team makes the moves to hire. The Labor Systems team does an analysis every 3-4 months, as a regular checkup. The formula that we use is to give us perspective. Arwen reviewed this proposals analysis for the Board. The other thing that factors into the analysis is confidential information regarding people that are leaving, we use this in our equation. There are currently a lot of hours that are open, and this ebbs and flows with vacations. We know people are planning on leaving. In our past hiring group, 6 months ago, they were flex workers (part time), so that doesn't really help with all the full time hours that are currently unfilled. We need 5.8, but we don't hire fractions of people. We are proposing hiring 4-6, the Hiring Team will make an assessment of the needs at the time and the available candidates.

Proposal

The Board authorizes the hire of 4-6 new full time Collective staff members

Consent

Stand Aside- Trudy

Feedback:

Linda- It would be great to have an explanation of scheduling for our new Board Members

Arwen replied that at the Co-op we all make our own schedule, and decided what shifts we want to work and when. This gives people individual autonomy.

We balance that out with a pool of shifts that are open. As now there are good amount of shifts that are open, there are floor shifts, coordination hours and management hours. The Flex system will help fill floor shifts, but right now we are seeing a large amount of coordination and management hours open. 79 hours of floor shifts are open and 11 hours of coordination a week.

Linda observed that we are recruiting on Instagram and Facebook, and she thinks that is great.

Trudy is confused to why we are having trouble covering shifts.

Arwen replied that we are just under 80 Collective members and part time Flex workers are not obligated to work a certain amount of shifts. They are surprised that the number of Collective members is not included in the proposal. They will make sure it is included next time.

Linda would like to see a detailed snapshot of the history of hiring Collective and Flex workers.

The Labor Team members recently made a commitment to make an excel spreadsheet about this and they will share it with the Board when its complete.

Tanzania would like to know what the opinion is about how serious the open hours are.

Arwen answered that the Co-op is going thorough a interesting growing phase, the part time is new and we need it to address the uncovered hours. He is one of the people planning on leaving, people may be leaving because of economic pressures and are looking for something else. The Co-op, in terms of the values in autonomy and health insurance is a wonderful place to be and the Co-op salary depending on if you have kids, own, rent and where you live may not be enough to provide.

Proposal for Delegation of Hiring / Firing Decisions

POSTPONED

Proposal to Replace Mission with Purpose

To be clear this is not Graces proposal and she is not attached to it. She did hear loud and clear from responses to the email that there is a significant objection to this proposal. There has been some progress made with Staff people who were blocking.

Feedback:

Trudy did research on this. She looked at a consulting firms website. Vision leads to purpose and that becomes the mission statement. She also researched the definition of mission and she thinks we don't need to change it based on that information.

Wendy asked if the reason for this proposal is to have a different name for it. Tanzania got that gist as well.

Wendy did the same research as Trudy, it only has a religious connotation if you deem it such. She wants to be in support of Collective members coming together and feeling a certain way. She doesn't want to shut it down if there a lot of people that have feelings about it.

Grace added that this idea didn't start with Olympia Food Co-op, but with Tribal peoples in California. Most of the Nations in California were invaded by Catholic priests that came in and setup 'missions' and these were the source of the genocides of Native people. She first heard of this 30 plus years ago, as act in respect for the genocidal history. Using the word 'mission' can be extremely painful for people. With her work in Anti Oppression and Anti Racism, she has known people that were sent to boarding schools and heard their stories. She may not utter the phrase 'mission statement'. Personally, she thinks it is worth us considering when people of color are asking us. The majority of Staff support not using the word 'mission'. Our Staff Vision and Purpose document does not use 'mission'.

Wendy is all for it if that with this context. People are hurt by the word and its important to not come against that.

Tanzania appreciates that.

Trudy discussed this with her Lakota friend who was adopted out to a Mission and her response was this is 'white guilt'. Call it whatever you want it doesn't change history.

Wendy responded just because she is Lakota does not make the opinion an authority. Tanzania responded that Trudy is speaking from her view. Natives may feel both ways.

Linda shares that a lot of words can be taken out of context and some are offensive. She also decided to look up the definition of mission (a task regarded as an important duty, a task that is assigned or begun) The connotation is not bad to her ,but she has not been affected. Mission should not be confused with vision, because they serve different purposes. In some ways she feels it is word-smithing.

Tanzania would like to speak to everyones point made this evening. She is trying to use equitable discernment. To make the best decision that is most equitable for the people. How do we measure this outside of emotion? How do we measure the level of the impact? How do we do this respectfully for everybody and acknowledge both sides.

Being a black person while being candid and honest, she recognizes a large beautiful effort to uphold Native culture. There is no statement at our meetings to acknowledge the enslaved people of 400 years. Should she ask for that ? Some people would say yes, and some would say thats to much. Tanzania asked Fern about her opinion regarding this proposal

Fern explained the process of this particular proposal within the Collective. It went to all three meetings and feedback was gathered. It is now in process via the Proposal journal

- ***Fern will compile the feedback from the ‘Replace mission with purpose’ proposal and the next steps in the process to the Board***

Tanzania would love that. She wants to be in support and in-tandem with the Collective.

Linda would stand aside rather than block. Words can be harmful and if its taken out of context its harmful.

Tanzania asked about the reasons to a stand aside, two parts? what about blocking?

Grace explained that there are multiple positions to come from for a block or stand aside. The way we teach and have it archived procedurally, is stand aside; when your values don't align with the stated values of the organization and feel the need for that to be acknowledged, conflict of interest. Blocking can be because; of the organizational capacity, we don't have the organizational unity, the jurisdiction to make this decision, it doesn't align with the values ie takes us out of our stated values, or that will cause intrinsic harm.

The Board will follow up with this as needed and will review the report from Fern about where the process is at the moment and Staff Feedback from the meetings.

Staff Report

Staff have begun working with LaDonna Sanders Redmond on Diversity Equity and Inclusion for the Collective. The work starts with an Intercultural Development Inventory, which is an individual survey to assess where we each fit in terms of cultural understanding. We are in the process taking the survey as of this writing (6/10/2022) and will have the first of three workshops. We expect the work to take up to two years.

At our last round of Collective meetings, we discussed the same proposal that is on our Board agenda tonight concerning changing from using the term mission. At this time the Staff is not close to agreement on the proposal and the proposal is currently on hold.

The list of open Staff positions on Board Committees has been posted again, and solicitation emails have been sent to appropriate Coordination Action Teams and work teams.

The latest group of newly hired Flex workers have started working.

Grace added that Finance CAT is looking at how to analyze what's happening financially in the world and how this impacts our workers. Our operational benchmarks are really strong and even when we added a dollar an hour to every step of the wage, it was not enough with inflation. We are looking at how we can add to the wage scale to keep up with what other employers are offering and how we can keep roofs over people's heads.

Committee Reports

Advocacy - has not met

Board Development - will be meeting on the 22nd

Capital Campaign - in packet

Cooperative Health - minutes submitted to the Board packet. Linda added that they gathered reports and studies from the various Consultants we have contracted over the years. They reviewed John's thesis on the Co-op, as well as exit interviews. Suggestions have been made to move forward, but it's hard to get actionable work to move forward. We fall down all the time with this about how to get the information into practice. They also looked at Co-op Conversation in 2012. Once again the data was put to use but again suggestions turning into action

Tanzania asked if there is a Wellness CAT, that organizes events and supports staff morale.

Fern answered not currently. She had an old idea of a Quirk Committee that would do just that.

Eco Planning - no report

Expansion - in the process of working on a single source document that has everything we have looked at over the years and what the results were, as well as contacts. This will be ultimately to transmit what we have done to new people and to act as an archive. The Committee also heard back from Habitat for Humanity about project updates.

Finance - has not met

Local - not active

Member Relations - Annual Meeting scheduled for November 5th. They are working on the Member Guide book and are seeking more Staff input. A draft will come back to the committee. Tanzania will be joining the Committee meetings.

Personnel - Some mediations took place using the Dispute Resolution Center. Humane Resources is continuing trainings on difficult conversations and feedback.

Standing Hiring - has not met

Purpose of Board Committees

Linda had conversations with Jade and Big Picture CAT about what the Board does. One of the main things is looking to the future with visioning and strategic planning. In looking at our long list of Committees, our Committees are operational, an example Eco Planning. Member Relations, Standing Hiring and Personnel are policy guided. Why do we have these Committees? None of them see active. She doesn't know and is confused that we spend a lot of time on them.

Feedback:

Fern gave background on the Committees. The mission statement letters are the basis for the Committees (Provide information about food, Make good food accessible to more people, Support efforts to increase democratic process, Support efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society, Provide information about collective process and consensus decision making, Support local production, See to the long term health of the business, Assist in the development of local community resources) The Committee Charters clearly outline the work of the Committees and how they support the

organizational goals and process. She and has seen them work well for organization and our stated values and goals. The Committees are also a place that all three arms of organization (Board, Staff and the Members) work together and collaborate towards these goals. She agrees they are not as active as they were. Perhaps the pandemic played a role in that as well as them be being under represented with Members at large and Staff actively seated in them.

Linda responded that in the articles she went out Board Committees are about Board work.

Tanzania our Board is about supporting the organization. We need to be discerning and be equitable as a Board members.

Grace added that in line with what Fern is saying, the Board is small right now. Our work load is 9-10 people and we are not always available. Another factor in the functioning of Committees is that we have had times where the Committees have thrived. She called out Eco Planning, because they were thinking about specific projects and in reevaluating and revising the Charter they reenergize the work. Letting the Committees go because they aren't Staffed might be hasty. Establishing criteria might be a better option. Grace would love to collaborate on that . We need inclusion with Staff and Board participating with each other and not excluding people because of their Staff status.

Trudy has been a Member of the Co-op for 20 years and a Working Member for 5. The Membership has not been involved at all since the boycott. She has seen nothing ever that the Membership is involved in ever.

Linda controversy brings out the Members. By not hearing chatter we might think they are happy.

Governance System- Policy Governance

Policy Governance is basically to write the policies down and assign an authority to check to see if these things get done. It gives the Board information that we need to oversee the business. It is not that complicated. She has been looking at policy registers as guides. We can take policy registers from Co-ops like us, a Co-op in Vermont that was once a collective as an option. If we don't sit down and start doing that, we won't know if policy governance is for us. We may decide it won't work for us. It gives the Board information that we currently lack.

Feedback:

Wendy asked if this would be a good time to talk about the GM idea?

Linda responded not really.

Linda had a interesting conversation with Joel Brock who worked at Peoples Co-op and was their Staff Rep to the Board and then was on the Board. They brought policy governance into the organization. He said it did wonders for communication because the Staff Rep wasn't responsible for the monitoring reports being written, they had to create the 'link'. Once we get into some sort of format that would work for us we can consider it. The Collective won't decide if we do it or not, but it would be nice to have their input.

Tanzania maybe not a general manager, but a 'link'. She wonders how would this negatively affect the Collective? She is wanting morale and Committee functioning to go up. Wouldn't that be beneficial if we had something like that? or a GM, what does that mean for us?

Wendy thought it would be appropriate time to discuss the GM idea.

Linda shared that BPC is what is not working. The struggles she sees there is no oversight. Adam was not at the last meeting they had scheduled. What was scheduled to discuss with him was envisioning what it to be and what BPC does now and how can we use the structures the organization has.

- Fern and Grace will write up a BPC report including the job description for the Board

Tanzania asked if BPC and Expansion could be the same thing? She sees how it could be helpful.

Board Communication - Internal Messaging System

Tanzania brought this up at the last meeting. Some free messaging systems communication apps include: *signal, discord, WhatsApp, slack*

Linda read about Co-ops and Slack, as well as other businesses using it. Messages are categorized by topic. The benefit is without having to look at email. She has no problem with what we are using now.

Tanzania is on Discord as well as Slack. As a Board Member for Interfaith Works and multiple Committees at work, email does not do the full job. She should be able to text Grace whenever. Instant messaging is customizable and free. She really likes to be in instant communication. There are benefits to being able to communicate instantly and consistently. Email is a black and white document to refer back too. Once we get going in a thread she can't keep up and when its multiple threads its not good for anybodies schedules and well being. She lives by her Slack and is advocating for it. She feels that it needs to be a priority, but doesn't have to be a decision tonight.

Linda suggested that maybe we pick a freebie and try it and experiment.

Grace is fine with whatever we try and will participate in trying to learn a new system. Staff has wanted something better for a long time, it was in a long list of things to do. There is no one on Staff that is taking the lead on this. It would be someone from the Tech Team. If we wanted to do a platform that worked for Staff and the Board that would be great. She makes a personal plea, that she is in lots of groups that use lots of things and it gets difficult to manage it won't be successful for her. In terms of money, something that could be used for Board and Staff would be part of the Tech budget. We can use the boards budget as well, we have \$18,000 for Columinate, Provender, and the Annual Meeting. We would need to look at the budget.

Linda asked Tanzania which one should we test.
she would like to try out Slack.

Tanzania also suggested to maybe look at Teams from Microsoft for the organization.

- Fern will ask Tech to look into Microsoft Teams

- Everyone will start Slack

Commitments

- Fern will talk to tech about upgrading Zoom for Board and Staff that can serve for both sets of needs.

Pending, has not heard back.

- Joanne and Grace will work together on the sandwich board for CSF outside of stores

Pending

- Fern email the Board about in person meeting for July

- Fern and Grace will write up a BPC report including the job description for the Board

- Fern will compile the feedback from the 'Replace mission with purpose' proposal and the next steps in the process to the Board

- Fern will ask Tech to look into Microsoft Teams

- Grace will send out board facilitation training materials to all

- Everyone will start Slack- ing

Meeting Eval

Fern will invite next Board Coordinator to the next meeting, if they are approved for the position.

Linda mentioned there is Board Facilitation training through CBLD on Sept 7th

Next Facilitators

Wendy/ Tanzania

Decisions out of Meeting

None

Attached Documents

1. Proposal for Delegation of Hiring/ Firing Decisions

To: The Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors

From: The Personnel Committee

RE: Proposal for Delegation of Hiring/Firing Decisions

Date: May 13, 2022

BACKGROUND

Currently (through May 2022), recommendations for hiring and firing are brought to the Board of Directors for consent. Hiring and firing are operational processes and are not in the scope of Board of Directors' work. Our bylaws state that the Board is to employ staff, however, it has the authority to delegate any of its stated duties to the Staff Collective (Management).

PROPOSAL

The Board of Directors delegates the decision-making regarding Hiring and Firing decisions for all Collective and Flex staff positions to the Personnel Committee of the Board. The Standing Hiring Committee of the Board will review Hiring Team recommendations and approve finalists for the hiring of Collective and Flex Staff positions.

The Personnel committee will make final decisions by consenting upon Hiring Team recommendations for hiring of Collective and/or Flex Staff Workers.

The Personnel Committee will make final decisions by consenting upon recommendations from Humane Resources Committee, the Staff, or the Personnel Committee regarding termination of Collective and/or Flex Staff workers.

Decisions on Appeals to termination will be made by consensus of the Board. The Board will make the decision based on a review of the termination process to ensure that all steps were followed correctly.

Following any decisions made regarding hiring/firing of paid staff, the Personnel Committee shall report the actions to the Board of Directors.