Board Members in Attendance: Debbie Powers, Karen Reynolds, Wendy Mesich, Tyler Rudzimski, Wesley Hampton, Carolyn Weber

Others in Attendance: Jill Capicchioni, Jen Langkammer, Nick Baran, Allux Metoxen, Quinn WIlder

Note Taker: Rachel Messenger

Facilitator: Debbie Powers

Time Keeper: Tyler Rudzimski

Minutes

* Introductions + Pronouns + Check Ins + Firestarter (5 minutes) If you have one particular memory at the Falcon Bowl
  + Review Facilitation Style + Hand Signals
* Check In On Communication (10 minutes)
  + Wendy: Staff talked about better communicating with the board. Will take coordinator minutes.
  + Karen: Will this include Workers Collective (WC) meeting minutes?
  + Wendy: Yes
  + Debbie: Completed one-on-ones with all of the coordinators. Will try to do this as regularly as possible given how much time it takes.
* Coordinator Reports / Strategy (30 minutes)
* Store (12 minutes)
  + Jen:
    - Showing positive growth since January, steadily going up. Big difference right after the call for support was sent out. Getting busier with weather warming up, people coming in for smaller items, snacks, etc.
    - Had some issues with aphids that now seem to be resolved. No new products in March, but featured Alice’s Garden, Full Circle Healing, and JPA elevated.
    - Having challenges with tardiness and some performance issues. Working to enforce them and have conversations. Developing policies where they are lacking.
  + Nick:
    - HR manual has no policies, but mainly ideas. Trying to write policies in order to better hold people accountable. Might not be clear what’s happening because policies are written on a case-by-case basis.
    - Morale is spotty with some frustrations, especially with recent events regarding racial diversity.
    - Wendy is going to help cover the store where there are gaps in coverage, and the Admin Coordinator starting will help, too.
  + Tyler:
    - HR policies – what is the flow for approval?
      * Wendy: As of right now, the coordinators are in charge of the policies until a workers collective organizational structure is developed.
      * Nick: Back in December, created an attendance policy since there was nothing in place. Took it to the WC to share and it’s now posted on the board as the current policy. For example, how to handle when someone has to be absent due to a medical condition but doesn’t have a note.
  + Karen:
    - Would be helpful to know how many volunteers we have, how many volunteer hours, staff hours, coordinator hours, etc.
      * Wendy: There’s no time clock, so it would take some work to prepare numbers. We talked at the last coordinator meeting to discuss hours.
      * Nick: I do calculate the schedule, which don’t get sent to the board, but they can be. Hours are listed for what they’re scheduled for.
      * Karen: I’m interested in seeing how staffing hours change when there are volunteer numbers. Totals for coordinator hours.
      * Tyler: Do you cut when it’s slow? Or if they’re scheduled, they stay.
      * Nick: Yes, sometimes if slow. Back to policy, some people will leave early without seeking coordinator approval first.
      * Wendy: We do like to keep a certain amount of people on staff at night for safety.
      * Nick; Going forward, once we have a consistent set of volunteers, then we might just schedule one person until close with volunteers.
    - Debbie: Can you give an overview of what happened with the freezer cooler?
      * Wes: Tried flipping the breaker and it didn’t seem to resolve the issue. Had to transfer items into the basement, but it was too warm for some itemsi n transfer and so was lossed out. Probably more than $200 worth of products.
      * Nick: The freezer had $1,000 worth of product in it. There will be some loss – either heavily discounted or lossed.
      * Debbie: Everything is being tracked?
      * Nick: Yes
* Café (12 minutes)
  + Allux:
    - See report for top sellers.
    - From February-March saw a slight increase in sales (approx. $2,500). Waste numbers are included.
    - Hired 2 new people on: Jackie and Anna. They were training this past week.
    - For the chili cookoff event, the co-op made $460.
      * Karen: People bought the chili in the store because of it.
      * Allux: They made 2 batches of it because it was highly requested.
    - Debbie: A few items didn’t get filled in on the report that should be. See if those can be completed or suggest if they should be removed. Asked for clarification on recent events.
      * Allux: Still trying to fill in scheduling gaps, so had to close early on Saturday. Cannot speak to what happened Sunday.
      * Debbie: Freezer was left open on Sunday in the café so they had to spoil everything in there.
      * Allux: We were very busy Saturday, had 4 people in the kitchen. Were not able to get a whole lot of prep done and didn’t have the full crew until close (just Allux, trainee, and a volunteer).
      * Wes: Freezer is often the cause of needing to spoil items. Don’t think that the person working Sunday knew that something needed to be prepped.
      * Wendy: Sounds like the café staff didn’t reach out to their managers when something happened.
      * Allux: We do have a system in place. There’s a prep sheet that gets completed daily. Should have been marked as much as possible. Café staff have been told to reach out if need be, it’s likely they don’t want to bother people on their day off.
      * Tyler: Something that might help are night notes. If the closers leave a recap by email for the openers, it would be really helpful to see what they do.
      * Allux: Not everyone has access to internet. They do typically leave notes on paper.
      * Karen: Thank you for all your work. Can you speak to one of Shannon’s notes that the timeline for steps to figure out café reopening steps are pushed back.
      * Wendy: We made a goal today.
      * Allux: At one of the café meetings, some workers expressed that they’re not ready to open yet. It seems like some are changing their minds and have a timeline of events to aim to open the bar by Mother’s Day and by Memorial Day have a full opening of the café. Will need a big cleaning effort to get everyone ready to move in. By June, will hopefully have a fully running café (completely open for dine-in, clean, tidy).
      * Carolyn: Note on communication – the store had a notebook for communication. It was helpful to know something was out or there were some questions. Ensures information transfer from shift-to-shift.
      * Allux: We only have it for closing for now. Right now for morning and mid is only by verbal communication. I will look into a little notebook for the café.
    - Wes: When is the next café meeting?
      * Allux: Not scheduled yet because Shannon is waiting on people’s availability.
      * Wes: Do café staff understand that if there’s no manager on duty that they can make some decisions? For example, if they need to push back breakfast back 30 minutes and know to communicate out to the coordinators and store staff on duty.
      * Allux: I don’t think they’re aware of this, but do encourage mroem proactive communication with coordinators.
      * Debbie: I would be concerned with staff making those decisions without coordinator approval.
* Volunteer Coordinator (6 minutes)
  + Wendy:
    - Have 16 volunteers on open shifts in store and café. There are quite a bit of openings yet, so more recruitment to do.
    - Haven’t had any no shows.
    - Pre chili cookoff went well and had a great experience with the photographer.
    - Co-op was on the news!
    - Finished designing the menu, worked 6 shifts between store and cafe
    - Reminder all hands on deck June 4-12: commuter station at the Daily Bird. Need to happen earlier in the day, Bike week block party, Vegan MKE expo, Locust St Fest
      * Debbie: Could you please send out a specific request for these?
      * Wendy: Yes.
    - My SMART goal for the month for the next 4-5, will require at least 15 contacts. 5 orientations. Hoping for 20 new volunteers this next month.
    - Want to make a template for an event that people want to propose that requests certain information so we have it right away.
    - Nick: It’s starting to feel more normal with volunteers working.
    - Karen: I appreciate these goals. It might be a good place to put a change in volunteers and staff.
      * Wendy: It would probably be a separate coordinator report.
      * Karen: Note that more volunteers will help sales.
* Committee Reports (15 minutes)
  + Finance Committee (8 minutes)
    - Wendy:
      * We did lose $16,400 (inventory month). YTD loss is $43,629. Over $8,000 had to be transferred from savings to checking. Nothing transferred over in April.
      * Need a new treasurer since it’s tough to stay on top of all of the goals on top of other coordinator duties. Request for the board to help schedule meetings and follow up on goals until a new treasurer/chair of the Finance Committee is in place.
      * Looking at the Profit and Loss sheet, significant growth is taking place, although February was a bad month. Note that we will be adding more coordinator positions, which will impact future numbers.
      * Need to determine how much loss we can manage without cutting what we offer. Since we’d likely have to cut labor, which would cut what we can offer.
      * Karen: I want to acknowledge that this is scary and appreciate everything that everyone is doing. How do the coordinators feel about it given the goals you’re making? The Admin Coordinator will help free up time for the other coordinators to do their specific jobs.
        + Nick: There have been times where things seem really bleak. Things are trending upward based on the course we’ve been taking. I don’t personally feel like the game is lost.
      * Debbie: I do think this sheet is helpful to see and would be great to continue seeing at the board level. Note that January the store discount sales were disproportionately massive. Note in the café, that even though sales have gone up that the cost of goods went up significantly.
        + Wendy: This usually happens just after we do inventory. Look at the quarterly numbers for a better indicator of any changes.
        + Debbie: Would this be related to waste not being put in regularly?
        + Wendy: Vendor invoices do not always exactly align with the month that the items are used.
        + Tyler: I assume we’re doing cash based accounting instead of accrual based accounting?
        + Debbie: Accrual based, but it’s not always being put in on time.
        + Wendy; Admin coordinator will help out with tightening this up.
      * Karen: We’ll do a follow-up on Wendy’s ask for help with the Finance.
  + Communications (5 minutes)
    - Wendy: Will send out the budget that the Communications and Finance Committee put together for advertising. We would like to see a similar budget in place to what was there before, but not used for advertising. Reached out to OnMilwaukee and Milwaukee Record for more information. Will send out information on all that the advertising package includes for approval by email.
    - Karen: I’ve been skeptical because we’ve asked for a marketing person and it’s been tough. This could be really good, but I’d want to see their proposal. Coordinators will fill out the marketing spreadsheet and get back to Karen.
  + Membership (2 minutes)
    - Karen: Gotten close to the 6,000 membership bought over time. Last month was really high since 2 lifetime memberships were bought. Reminder to categorize whether it is a new member or membership renewal.
      * Debbie: What is a non member sales?
      * Karen: We have the name, but it’s not categorized correctly.
      * Wendy: It’s a data reconciliation thing. I’ll reach out to Rebecca Knoll about a membership drive.
      * Wes: We have a door hanger.
      * Wendy: Information is outdated so we’d need a sticker to cover it up.
* Break (10 minutes) (end at 7:25)
* On-Going Equity & Inclusivity Work (20 minutes)
  + Check in on timeline for Ubuntu work.
    - Debbie: Looking to make big strides on this work this month.
  + We will take a break from the Racial Equity Implementation Guide (REIG) for Food Hubs
    - Debbie will work on looking for short videos, audio resources, and thought-provoking questions to discuss each month that take a more organizational approach to assessing our racial equity and inclusion
    - If you have any resources you would like to discuss, please send to Debbie!
    - Debbie: Will try to keep it to what folks can work on during the meeting.
  + Discuss the culture of the Riverwest Co-Op and the incident at the March Board Meeting
    - Debbie: Want to see how we can be better about calling each other out and integrated better practices into our daily lives.
      * Karen: So we’re talking about the term that was used, right?
        + Debbie; Correct, someone used the term “colored people”. The statement was said and it wasn’t called out until the end.
        + Karen: I really appreciate that Nick mentioned it at the end of the board meeting. I have a lens of white privilege. I feel tongue tied when stuff like that happens, but I think it would be help if we all agreed to call it out.
      * Wendy: Clarification that Nick called it out after receiving a text. The bigger issue was that some of us heard it, some of us didn’t, but nobody said anything. We didn’t take the time to pause with it and stay later to talk about it. Maybe all the white folks on the board and staff could find a way to do some role playing and find some language when things like this do happen. We can create a better environment by calling ourselves in. Let’s come up with some language that we use here to pause a conversation and give ourselves some space if another incident occurs in a meeting.
      * Nick: One thing that I mentioned at the last meeting that I think is important to consider, is that in some circumstances, you could give someone a soft correction assuming good intent. Of course, there are certain words/terms that cannot be handled that way. Jen showed me a meme, “we don’t talk enough about integration, placing black and brown people in white places”. Traditionally, black and brown people have not been a part of white society and we are still having conversations about how to bring people in to places where they have been traditionally excluded from.
      * Tyler: I believe that when it happened, I corrected myself immediately because I flip flopped the words.
        + Wendy: It was more that we didn’t correct it and less that you misspoke. One thing we discussed was – would we have reacted differently if it were someone with darker skin at the table that tends to be more marginalized? How can we make sure this feels like a safe environment? To not just present as safe, but also be a safe place.
      * Jenn: Speaking on my experience with what happened, I was more upset that it fell on me to speak up. Being a person of color in a place that is very white is very exhausting. There’s a lot of racist things said that are ignored to just keep moving. If the co-op wants to be a safe space for BIPOC, then each person will have to work past the discomfort of speaking up.
      * Debbie: Thank you for being vulnerable and sharing your experiences here. I think it’s important to set the standard for calling each other out, don’t take it personal if you get called out, not trying to avoid the discomfort by pulling someone aside later since calling it out in front of the group is how we show that it’s a safe space, We do need to move it along with the Ubuntu work – I’m committing to finding that funding to make that training happen, but we can’t wait until then and do this type of work in our day-to-day interactions now.
      * Nick: This type of language is pervasive. We’ve had other situations happen where we didn’t’ call out troublesome conversations. I did look up the YWCA – we did just miss a 6 session course that they offer. I will keep an eye out for other similar events that we could attend.
      * Karen: I like what Wendy said about role playing and feel like a few of us individuals could benefit from doing that. For outreach, talked to Gibson for some ideas on how to promote diverse hiring practices.
      * Wendy: This is making me think that I should add more to the volunteer orientation to talk about how we conduct ourselves. We should reach out to Ubuntu to see if they’ve changed their structure at all. There are other orgs that we could look into, as well.
      * Debbie: We should schedule a meeting after this one to talk about some of these things. Will be important for future board meetings to communicate our expectations.
      * Wes: Professionalism, I’d like more from staff and volunteers when interacting with customers.
      * Jenn: One suggestion with wording, “We need to work harder to not be so white”. There are times where people may take ownership of their privilege/position of power. Could start with something like “as a white person, speaking to other white people here…”. It makes a really big difference to let others not in those groups know that it’s not directed at them. Something to practice, could be written out.
      * Tyler: Is the term “black people” acceptable?
      * Wendy: It depends on the person. Some are uncomfortable with that term, BIPOC, African American. We also need to recognize that not every person that comes to the co-op is going to have the same background, knowledge, in a different place of growth. We need to spend more time with that since we are not all where we want to be.
      * Allux: I am also willing to send free articles on racial diversity. It’s tough when white people talk to other white people to come to that understanding.
      * Jenn: Great newsletter to sign up for: Anti-Racism Daily. I am comfortable with brown person.
      * Wendy: It’s not enough to not be racist, but what is being shown to white people is that if we’re not actively working against it then we’re letting it continue.
      * Karen: I really appreciate that Allux is offering to send us articles and want to learn more where to find information.
      * Rachel: Ubuntu has a great bibliography online.
      * Wendy; I have a spreadsheet of information that I can share, too.
      * Allux: It’s important to remember that everyone here is willing to unlearn since not everyone is going to know how to interact with all types of people.
      * Debbie: It’s great that we’re creating a culture where people are willing to share with one another to further this understanding.
      * Carolyn: Thank you to Jen for the information shared in the newsletter article.
      * Debbie: Before the next meeting, will look into resources to share. This conversation was a great step towards organizational change.
* Schedule June Board Meeting (5 minutes)
  + Reminder that the May board meeting is May 23.
  + Monday, June 27 6-8pm
  + Board agreed to set up a special meeting for communications budget, parklet proposal, and wrapping up board retreat planning. Could be virtual if easier:
    - Wendy: Will need to get approval soon since the city needs time to approve the permit (2-5 weeks).
    - Group can do May 2 from 6:30-8:30pm via Zoom.
      * Debbie will create Zoom link.
      * Wendy will prepare materials to review. Will aim to get communications proposal out tomorrow (4/26).
* Update on Board Retreat Planning (15 minutes)
  + **Date**: May 28/29? June 4/5? Other dates?
    - Best weekend so far: June 4 & 5.
    - Nick to check with Jen if that day works, as well.
    - Coordinators tasked with coming up with a 3-hour window to attend the board retreat. Aim to get this over to the board by 5/2.
  + **Time**: 9:30 – 5:00 on Saturday / 9:30 – 1:00 on Sunday?
  + **Location**: Riverworks? Debbie’s house? Other suggestions?
  + **Agenda**: (tentative)
    - Saturday
      * 9:30 – 10:00: Breakfast
      * 10:00 – 10:30: Team Building Exercise
      * 10:30 – 1:30: Continuous Improvement Plan Development
      * 1:30 – 2:00: Break
      * 2:00 – 5:00: Next Steps (and Dreaded Conversations)
        + WC Roles, Definitions, Wages
        + Increase Revenue

Membership Discounts

Raise Prices

Outside Funding

* + - * + Closing Plan

Close café?

Cut staffing?

When would we ultimately close the doors completely?

* + - Sunday
      * 9:30 – 10:00: Breakfast
      * 10:00 – 12:30: Discuss & Approve 2022 Budget
      * 12:30 – 1:00: Retreat Recap & Action Items
* Follow Up For Restructuring (10 minutes)
  + Administrative Coordinator Position Is Hired!
    - Wendy: Start date probably won’t be until May 16.
  + HR Specialist Position Is Posted
    - Update on where that’s at
  + Will discuss at the retreat:
    - Workers Collective Roles & Definitions
    - Wage Structure – Note that if people have ideas for how to structure that, send to Wendy so she can plug it into her spreadsheet tool.
* Reminder of Action Items
  + - **Plan General Membership Meeting (GMM)**
    - **Communications Policy**
      * Debbie is supposed to take a stab at it; anyone else willing to give it a go?
    - **Set Up Columinate Meeting Including Board Members**
      * What do we think would be the best use of our 3 or so hours???
    - **Board role in staff and coordinator on-boarding** 
      * Debbie is supposed to draft talking points including:
        + State of the Co-Op
        + Role of Board /Coordinators/Staff
        + How to communicate with the board
      * All new staff meets with a board member within first 2-3 weeks
      * What is the process for assigning a board member to the new staff member
      * Training new coordinators right now – make sure there is support
    - **Structure for Volunteer Liaisons**
      * Timeline to bring this back?
      * Communication between liaisons?
      * Reporting to the Board?
  + Community Contacts List
  + Retreat Garden Plot Items

Next meeting: May 23rd at 6:00pm