

Minutes for the 2020 Board Retreat

February 20-21, 2021 via Zoom

Saturday, February 20

In attendance: Wendy Mesich, Karen Reynolds, Debbie Powers, Jeannie Stranzl, Alex Handwerker, Rhiannon Kurtz, Rebecca Nole

Unable to attend: Vince Bushell

Facilitator/Timekeeper: Rebecca Nole

Note-taker: Rachel Messenger

Minutes:

- Arrive/Welcome/Settle-in (**All**)
- Housekeeping/Check in on access needs/Agenda overview (**Rebecca**)
 - Karen read a statement from Vince on why he was not able to attend.
 - Rebecca reviewed the agenda.
- Board member Roles/Expectations (**Rebecca**)
 - What is your job as a Board member?
 - Karen clarified that the Call for Candidates page from 2018 provides guidance on the two main types of board roles (executive committee and volunteer liaisons). At the time, we were not getting as many board members, so we got rid of the need for executive committee members to volunteer in the store or cafe, but the volunteer liaisons still did.
 - Debbie - the role of the board is to make sure the decisions made by the co-op are made in good faith for the co-op in support of the member and upholds what the co-op is, its place in the community, and supports longevity.
 - Wendy - Fiscal responsibility, ensuring the long-term vision and planning.
 - Karen - Doing committee work and projects. The things that need to get done.
 - Alex - Agree with Wendy. Also supporting staff and the workers collective to help them out with whatever they need. Things that the staff might not have time to do or need training on. Access to resources.
 - Jeannie - Nothing to add. Not as strong of a grasp on the difference between the volunteer liaison or the executive committee roles since I joined as the volunteer liaison.
 - Debbie - That's something I want to get out of the retreat is what the volunteer liaison means since there have not been opportunities to volunteer in the store or cafe. What do we do with those roles that aren't on a committee, like the volunteer liaisons. Maybe the community on the ground?
 - Rhiannon - Being a resource for board members in how I'm involved in the co-op based on our specific roles in the co-op and in the community.
 - Do you have the support/training to do your job?
 - Debbie - As far as the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, we do sign those every year.
 - Debbie - We have 4 executive positions (Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, President) and 3 volunteer liaisons.
 - Karen - There are supposed to be 5. The one that isn't an officer position would be a committee chair.

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- Rebecca - Is this working? Was it created to offer different options, to make it more accessible? Are you getting more board of director interest? Do you have diverse representation on your board?
- Rhiannon - From what I can see, I think having the structure that we do now with the volunteer liaisons doing committee work does well. As far as representation goes, we're all pretty white on the board and the staff. As far as socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds, I don't know that the space feels accessible to anyone who isn't white or a crunchy granola person.
- Karen - I think when this first came out that it did help a lot in getting board members. It's why people joined who previously wouldn't. We are also not very strong on recruitment so we don't know if this is helping.
- Debbie - As far as the volunteer liaison position, it's what brought me in the door. There are more direct conversations with people who are volunteering. It makes for a nice small step to join the board. It's tough to tell if it's working because of the lack of recruitment and COVID changes. It's tough to delegate tasks because everyone is busy or taking on a lot already. We've been working on a lot of projects and many of the tasks fall on the president. Some of that is due to me taking on more than I can take on, but I think more structure to how things are delegated out so we're not waiting for people to raise their hand to take it on.
- Wendy - I came back to the board after many years and saw a lot of changes. I think the volunteer liaison is a great way to get involved. I think it is important for people to work in the co-op to be able to better understand the store and cafe and make decisions that support the staff. I also think that we need to improve recruitment efforts so we can go outside of our own circles. It has to be central to what we think about when it comes to recruitment - it can't just be us doing what we think is comfortable. We have officers and at large members. The way the board has decided to run is to have executive committee members who are officers and then the volunteer liaisons. I think the only thing that's weird is the executive committee category because there are only three legal officers.
- Rebecca - I don't think it's helpful to focus on the nitty gritty of how many officers. I think the point about the language about forming committees is important.
- Debbie - We don't have an executive committee that comes together and makes decisions as that group and I think that's a good thing. In other boards, that committee typically delegates out, but ours does not. Might be something to consider in the future.
- Rebecca - You have to figure out how to spread out the tasks so it's not all falling on one person. What should be revisited is the structure. How can it be more updated to what's going on right now and take into consideration how it's worked and what's been challenging. Are these hours and expectations for board members still realistic? What are the things that can be delegated and who needs work to do? When I was on a board, we would start each quarterly meeting with a review of all the action items we completed.
- Board survey?
 - Not covered

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- Review 2019 Retreat Action Items (**Debbie**)
 - Debbie - Some of the things on here have been done or are no longer relevant. I wanted to check in on things that haven't gotten movement on them but are still valid and we might want to kick off again.
 - Strategic ad hoc committee - This has been done.
 - Alex - The last thing that is still somewhat in progress is the advertising initiative.
 - Debbie - We still have some additional hours with Columinate to use.
 - Customer survey and focus group
 - Wendy - A survey was done but the part about outreach to the neighborhood/community didn't happen.
 - Rhiannon - That's what I remembered.
 - Debbie - I think some of that ties into Ubuntu and learning how we can make it into a more inclusive space. Should we do another survey outside of Ubuntu?
 - Rhiannon - I don't think that would be bad to do that on a regular basis. Once a year seems reasonable to me to see what the community's thoughts on are on how we're doing.
 - Wendy - If we're trying to spruce up our social media, we could engage Facebook polls on specific things. Correlate it with the membership drive - ask people if they want to participate in other things. I feel like out of all of the surveys that we always do, we don't learn a lot that we didn't already know. It's still important to involve our members, but I do think we do a good job of doing that in other ways like continuous conversations. I don't think we need to do another survey outside of Ubuntu this year for that reason.
 - Creating a system of clean and unified communication with WC
 - Debbie - This is on my plate to do.
 - Community connections
 - Debbie - Wendy and I started a list of community resource contacts. Next steps are for us to share it so we can keep people updated over time.
 - Alumni board meeting
 - Wendy - This didn't happen. I still think it's a great idea and can get it done if I have a partner in crime to help.
 - Jeannie - What does alumni mean in this context?
 - Wendy - Former board members or longstanding staff, volunteers, or members. We'd like to engage them for the historical knowledge, why decisions were made, and hopefully involve them in current work.
 - Rebecca - It's quite common for cooperatives to have advisory committees that are made up of former board members and staff. This might just be a once a year email, or some phone calls.
 - Centralized space for minutes, data, forms
 - Debbie - This has not been completed but should be done.
 - Rebecca - Who is the current secretary?
 - Debbie - Rhiannon

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- Rhiannon - Based on the board meeting two weeks ago, we managed to compile all of the board meeting minutes on a Google drive. I believe that's most of the way done, if not completely done.
- Jeannie - I did take on adding it to the website, but will do it.
- Rachel - REASON WHY NO CENTRAL LOCATION
- Debbie - We did get access to this. Liz has the credentials and cleaned up the board@riverwestcoop.org email address.
- Diversity training
 - Wendy - Debbie and I have made progress on this with Ubuntu.
 - Debbie - We have a meeting coming up for how to raise funds for this because it is \$25,000. Wednesday, March 10 at 6PM on Zoom. All are welcome to join, please reach out to Debbie.
- Recruit new board members
 - Debbie - Wendy is listed as on charge of this but it was also everybody to pitch in. I don't think this is on Wendy anymore since the communications committee has taken some of this on by adding it to the newsletter.
 - Karen - I think it's important if we all can reach out to anyone we can think of. Many board members in the past were recruited from person conversations since simply seeing something written isn't necessarily going to grab people's attention.
 - Debbie - We should think about how we can avoid nepotism by just reaching out to people we know or who already volunteer a lot. Have to figure out if we want people who have never stepped foot inside the co-op.
 - Karen - I think it would be helpful to come up with a list of what we are looking for. That would help us recruit and candidates understand how they can contribute.
 - Debbie - You might want to talk to Liz about that, too, because she was asking about some qualities and strengths that would be useful for the board member roles.
- Send an email to the writer of the Currents with information about how the board would like to be involved with the communications going out
 - Rhiannon - Isn't that what Vince does?
 - Debbie - He does work for them, but this is in relation to people who would write articles for the Currents.
 - Karen - We don't have any writers right now.
 - Debbie - This can go into the parking lot until we get someone who is a writer on the Communications committee.
- Clean up Riverwest cooperative
 - Debbie - This has been taken on by the Communications committee.
- Structure for quarterly board retreat recap
 - Debbie - I took care of this by putting it on every board agenda. We never get to it. I'd like to start putting the most pressing items on the list so we always have them.
- Developing a minimum wage

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- Debbie - This will come after the Restructuring Committee conversations.
- Just One (Team Building) Part 1 (**Rebecca**)
- BREAK (**All**)
- Budget - What is it good for (**Wendy**)
 - Wendy - I wanted to go over how to look at the budget today at a higher level and tomorrow we'll go over it line item by line item. The way the budget process has worked in the past is that the Finance Committee manages it. The Finance Committee hasn't had a chance to look at it, so that still needs to take place. Ideally, going forward we would have the Finance Committee and board look at it quarterly. It will help the staff plan ahead. It will get voted on in the December meeting.
 - I used a new sheet this year. The first document is the full budget broken down for the year. The majority of the expenses are divided in 12 as we go forward. We go over actual expenditures with Shannon, Shelly, and Shannon to see if there are any glaring issues.
 - The monthly budget breaks out some of the licenses and fees and when they show up. I did not work on it to get us down to a zero balance budget because I don't think that's realistic, however I do have it where we are making money at the end of each month.
 - There's no grant or PPE money on there since those aren't certain.
 - Debbie - I'm confused why you're manually entering all of the actuals vs the Quickbooks data. Wouldn't that be less time consuming and reduce the potential for human error?
 - Wendy - I would like to, but I don't have access to Quickbooks.
 - Rebecca - Did you get the second round PPP?
 - Debbie - Not yet.
 - Wendy - We haven't applied yet. It's on my to-do list.
 - Rebecca - This is pretty well organized and pretty clear. I can tell a lot of work over the years has gone into this.
 - Wendy - This budget assumes that the cafe will be open this summer.
 - Karen - Since we haven't done the restructuring, how did you figure payroll? What did you base it on? Staff we have now or projected?
 - Wendy - I started with what our payroll is currently. Jumping from \$15,000 to \$17,000 is an extra 32 hours per week at \$15/hour, which is a heavy PT position. \$500/month is about 8 hours more per week. I had talked to Shannon about the current capacity of labor hours and what it might mean to add more later.
 - Debbie - My comment was on the wages, especially looking at the revenue that we're expecting, which is about a 40-45% increase. If we want to get to where we want to be on the revenue side, that's staying with no management in the cafe and one manager in the store. This might have to come after the restructuring, the wages are not realistic to the proposal coming out of the restructuring.
 - Wendy - I did ask for those numbers. I did look at past years, specifically the last year we made a profit. The budget does rely a lot on the decisions that we make.

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- Karen - How do we get this into being used by the cafe and the store?
 - Wendy - I'm designing a spreadsheet that Sara can put in as she's making the schedule. It will translate how much money that's going to cost. This way they can make a schedule that doesn't go over the budget.
 - Rhiannon - Thank you for putting this together Wendy. I would like to become more comfortable by looking at this quarterly. This is hard to look at given that there are going to be changes. This is a great place to start, knowing what we need to plug in as things are happening. I think a lot of our budget is going to depend on how we incorporate volunteers and remain a facet in the community. How can we get people involved in this process?
 - Jeannie - I like that it's easy to read at a glance.
 - Debbie - There is another conversation about what wages will be since we're still paying hazard pay. This will take place after we discuss the structure of the management, as well as the priority and timeline of filling positions.
 - Karen - I just want to make sure we talk about the advertising part more tomorrow.
 - Wendy - That is attached as a separate budget.
 - Debbie - The way that the board expenses is broken out isn't true because we don't spend money monthly as a board. I think some money in staff training and development is good, too.
- Stretch Sequence (**All**)
 - Board Responsibilities & Functions (**Rachel**)
 - Review exit interviews summary
 - Debbie - What fits into this and a couple other categories is boundaries. People have many roles at the co-op, and it would be beneficial to know which hat you're wearing and being intentional about which role you're in at the moment.
 - Karen - Is this meant for us to keep in mind so we can be mindful of how we present ourselves? Are we trying to problem-solve?
 - Wendy - As the board is involved in different levels of the hiring process, knowing this feedback is really important. I do think we should have more access to these exit interviews, especially if these things have come up in the past. That way the board can speak about them openly and honestly. Per the micromanagement, can you clarify what that means?
 - Rachel - That specific board members are following up on their own individual channels, but also there are not clear boundaries and training for staff on what the board does.
 - Debbie - It was brought up to share with the board any feedback that's about them on there. I was blindsided by high turnover and the negative feedback about the board on there. I thought we were actively working on these things when people were getting frustrated and would like to find a way that we can make staff feel more comfortable when they're having these concerns before deciding to leave.
 - Rhiannon - It does seem to me that no matter where you work, there tends to be that dynamic between 'the management' and 'the staff'. There's issues across many facets of the co-op. I don't have an answer to better integrate the board

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and the staff, I thought we were doing much better. It should be a part of the ongoing conversations.

- Rachel - Bear in mind that this isn't only about the board. A lot of this speaks to how things are going for the workers and their dynamics.
- Wendy - I feel like we've been doing a good job of emphasizing positives. We could go back and look at minutes and see how often we've promoted vs criticized. Criticism tends to be taken harder. Where were the cafe managers asked to turn things around quickly?
- Rachel - The cafe situation was the result of a staff member asking for certain items to be made right away for a customer who wanted them. The customer didn't see their favorite item in the grab'n'go and complained, so the staff member demanded cafe staff to make it. I also want to call attention to how this feedback is being received -it feels like a lot of people are expressing that they thought this stuff was being done and are being frustrated that it's not being taken that way. How can we take this feedback seriously and turn it into positive action and move forward? Defensiveness is a normal reaction to criticism, but it isn't constructive.
- Debbie - I like the idea of having a board member meet with a new hire to explain the function of the board and their role. Doing the one-on-ones with staff went really well. It's not feasible for one individual to do that every single year, however I do think there's variations of that that could be done annually where these types of conversations take place. Check in on where burnout levels are at.
- Wendy - That's great but we're also being asked not to micromanage. How am I supposed to know that there's an issue with a staff member if it goes to the managers or HR? As far as long-term staff and board members, there's only a few of us who have been around. I'm not sure why names aren't being said. I don't understand how that helps at all. How are we supposed to hold people accountable if we don't even know who's doing what? I'm curious about what onboarding with managers is like if people don't know. I hope that helps us catch issues more quickly. How do we hold individuals accountable if their behavior is destructive in the co-op if we can't talk about who it is?
- Debbie - There was a concern with the actions of a board member. We decided that Rachel's role as HR is not for the board, but only employees. Rachel and I sat down with the board member in question and worked out a solution. There was a process in place, but the employee still felt like it wasn't addressed well enough and included that information on the exit interview.
- Wendy - You two decided to do that, but if nobody knows about it then what do we do?
- Karen - What does it mean about people coming in without prior communication?
 - Rachel - That they would come in during open hours and not shop. Instead they would go behind the register or up to the office and not be willing to have a productive conversation with the employees on the clock to let them know what their plan is. It feels like there's a lot of conflict.

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- Wendy - There's a lot of feedback that's great here that I'm glad I know. I don't want to skip over the Board member getting into the employee's face. That feels like a violation of the code of conduct.
- Rachel - I do want to finish out by saying that I understand that there is some frustration in getting information this way, but the intention was for Debbie and I to bring it back to the board to come up with a system for managing these situations. I am working with the employees to try and coach on managing some of these issues and the reason it is helpful for the board to know is to reinforce what the staff might need. I believe that offering professional development opportunities is one solid way to promote education and confidence at the same time.
- Just One (Team Building) Part 2 (**Rebecca**)
 - Taken off to save time.
- BREAK - Check in (**All**)
- Board & Staff Connections (**Rebecca, Debbie, Rachel**)
 - Worked in the Google doc to identify opportunities and action items as they relate to the exit interview feedback.
 - Rebecca - Remind me when Board members are brought on and when their first board meeting is.
 - Debbie - Usually March/April and then after that.
 - Rebecca - You have a moment where your board is trained along with the employees. I recommend doing this annually and not just for new folks. I have done this before and think having an outside facilitator do this would be helpful. I recommend that you do this at a separate time from a board meeting and have cross-training where the board trains the staff and the staff train the board.
 - Rhiannon - The president has hosted an open house. I like the idea.
 - Debbie - I think what you're referring to are the open houses that we had at the Public House as a part of the call for board members. It was very lightly attended. It sounds like Rebecca is recommending that we open up the existing board orientations to include all staff, but that's scary from a logistics standpoint.
 - Rebecca - Staff should be paid to attend this.
 - Wendy - We can write it into their job description that they have to participate in how the co-op works. It might mean that some staff might not want to work for us anymore, but we shouldn't let it limit growth.
 - Debbie - Part of the difficulty is a lot of staff are very part time and don't have much availability.
 - Rebecca - It's the job of the board to address what's happening.
 - Karen - What is a good way to thank staff that's meaningful. What about in a board meeting?
 - Rachel - Thanking for the work they have done even if they haven't gotten all the way there. Recognizing the progress/stepping stones.
 - Rhiannon - Adequate compensation. It's important to recognize that a lot of people have more than one job. While a livable wage is important, I don't see people jumping to get involved at the co-op while everything is up in the air.

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Restructuring, I think, will give us a clearer idea of what our long-term plans are. The pandemic hasn't helped any, so things like our hours, what's offered, & how to get involved have been in a state of constant flux. I see this as a major barrier to getting people involved. Personally speaking, I wouldn't feel enticed to throw my time & energy into an organization if I thought it was just as likely to go sideways regardless. Again, that's me projecting how I feel about the stability of the co-op. I think people are willing to come on & help temporarily, but aren't interested in being "stuck" long-term or willing to spend more than a couple hours a week lending their time & energy to a structure that is often changing.

- Debbie - If we can get the orientations in place, then the board can work on figuring out how we can better connect with staff. I think it would be important to have someone purposefully share information with people who feel like they are not receiving it.
- Wendy - My surprise was that management staff doesn't understand board roles. Debbie takes on a crazy amount of work as president because of the title. That's not very cooperative culturally, so how can we encourage other board members to grab larger projects. I do agree that having more defined roles than when the co-op first opened would be beneficial.
- Alex - I do think it's a good idea to have a board member meet with staff to talk about the board's role. I would be willing to do that.
- Jeannie - This is the area where we're all talking about these things more broadly and abstractly. These things are very much affected by who lives in the neighborhood and has connections to people at the co-op. There's a lot of personal connections and institutional knowledge that I don't have.
 - Karen - I'd like to ask Jeannie if there would have been anything helpful for you to know.
 - Jeannie - No, not really because you don't know what you don't know until you start. Last year at my job, especially in the last half, was completely insane and was working more often than normal. I wasn't able to participate as much then, but lately have had more capacity to get involved.
- Karen - I wonder if we should define certain duties that cannot be taken on by the president. I'm not sure how to break that out to avoid it so that it doesn't all fall on the president. Has anyone checked in with Shannon to see how she's doing? Should we have someone from the board check in with her? With new management coming, we should have the all of board and management meet, and also every year when there's a new board. Ideally at an orientation but maybe at the least 30,45 minutes of a board meeting set aside for learning things about each other and roles, questions. Best case is with staff which is hard to arrange, but have it open to them.
- Debbie - I agree that the ability to delegate is really important for officers. I think having more structure to what's in someone's job description would make it easier for folks who don't have that skill set. Maybe we have a staff liaison that meets with them. This role could be the person who collects the board's feedback/votes and channels it to the WC as one voice. If there's complaints or an issue about a board member, then maybe this role is to bring those concerns to the board. If not that, we should still figure out a solution for that.
- Alex - I think we talked about having a role like that at the last board retreat. I'd be willing to do that.
- Wendy - I disagree that we should give specific tasks since that could hinder us in the

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figure. Nobody can do so many large projects in a row. What form can we communicate with staff while they're working without being in their way?

- Karen - We should share all the things that the board does over the year and begin to delegate it out. List the known projects throughout the year and assign to the members of the new board. Or maybe at least some of them and determine ones that should be taken on by members other than the president and ones that the president could use support. At the very least note what there is and that it needs to be spread out.
 - Planning orientation, board/management/staff meeting/get together?, GMM, Board recruitment, leading/facilitation meetings, writing the agendas.
- Debbie - With people taking the lead on other projects, I tried to give different levels of time commitment but people still aren't signing up for them. I want to encourage everybody to evaluate what they can help with and offer their time so it's not all one person leading.
- Rebecca - Recommends an ombudsman. Have a role where somebody that has the experience as a member at large to be an anonymous person who can mediate and facilitate. Or have a buddy system where a board member is paired with a staff to check in regularly or ask questions.

- Closing & Overview for Sunday (**Rebecca**)

Sunday, February 21

In attendance: Wendy Mesich, Karen Reynolds, Debbie Powers, Jeannie Stranzl, Alex Handwerker, Rhiannon Kurtz, Vince Bushell, Rebecca Nole

Facilitator/Timekeeper: Rebecca Nole

Note-taker: Rachel Messenger

Minutes:

- Arrive/Welcome/Settle-in (**All**)
- Housekeeping/ Check in on access needs/ Agenda overview (**Rebecca**)
- Would you rather? (Team Building) (**Rebecca**)
- Statement of Volunteer Value (**Rebecca**)
 - Vince - At the beginning we were only volunteers. This went on for 3-4 years. We met in a basement for a few years before we found a place and spent a year rehabbing it before opening it up to the public. The first person we hired was Shelly. I wasn't sure how I felt about the volunteer model recently, but was reminded through conversations how having volunteers sets us apart as not just another corner store. At the beginning, we had talked about having volunteerism be a requisite for membership, but moved away from that to be more inclusive. The cafe opened later and has been difficult to run due to COVID. I'm hearing that it's an integral part of the co-op for some. I was one of the original champions to open it. We are not the co-op we were a few years ago, and that's because the volunteers aren't there. The more time people spend in the co-op, the more that they spend. It also opens up a space for community connections. Folks have said that this business is a core to the community.
 - Rebecca - Having the historical context for the volunteer trajectory is a really unique story that needs to be told. Some of the things that I pulled out of hearing from Vince

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are stakeholderhip, community, core value, tied to identity. membership, day-to-day collaboration and connection. Our goal is to create a document that demonstrates our shared value of volunteers. How to shift from challenge to opportunity. How many volunteers were involved in the day-to-day operations?

- Wendy - About 40?
- Debbie - I think it was closer to 200.
- Alex - I think it was closer to 60-70.
- Vince - I don't think the exact number is important. It wasn't a set group. It would change since some people volunteer short-term or long-term.
- Rebecca - My goal isn't to get into the weeds, but to understand what the goal is for today. I want to know who those people are. Is it a letter that we want to send out? I'm trying to tease out how we're going to communicate out with the group.
- Karen - My feeling on this is it's important to communicate to the community and the membership. Not only current volunteers, but anyone who has been a volunteer.
- Vince - Yes, send out to all volunteers. Every time we get a new volunteer, it creates a new opportunity to share this vision and this culture. It creates a network that we don't have anymore.
- Rhiannon - I think we need to revisit to see if our business is sustainable in the ways we incorporate volunteers in our day-to-day operations. We need to reach out to the membership generally. We need to acknowledge that things won't look the same way as before.
- Wendy - I've heard that sentiment before. What that is is a big part of that statement. It reads that we're thankful for volunteers and we're working to get back to where we are today.
- Rebecca - I do hear that we have consensus to have a statement like this that would be sent out to the membership community. I'm hearing that Vince created an original document that was then edited. Can somebody put it into the format of a letter that would go out to the community.
 - Wendy - I think this is a great idea. I don't think this is the point of the conversation on volunteerism. I thought we were going to make sure we were on the same page with the future of volunteerism. Sending it out is a good thing and will help the co-op in many different ways, but it isn't the reason why I thought it was on the agenda.
 - Rachel - FYI the future of volunteerism conversation will take place after the restructuring meeting.
 - Rhiannon - I think it's great and is more about the history. I don't see it as a statement of gratitude. Maybe we can more explicitly throw that in there. I see it as a valuable document.

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- Karen - I don't know that this is what it was written for. I thought it was written for us to talk about volunteerism and to work towards bringing volunteers back. I know that we can only talk so much about that at this meeting. This document looks great for that purpose but wouldn't be the statement sent to the community.
- Wendy - I would be thinking "and now what?". I would wonder why it's being sent. It doesn't engage me. Until we have that answer, I don't think we should put it out there. Unless it was a way to engage with volunteers for those reasons, I don't think we should send it out.
- Vince - You all only received part of the document, which is more of a call to action to get us to move forward. My concern is that this is a difficult process to run a business this way. We're in a crisis period and not being able to make decisions quickly is a problem, even before COVID. I feel a little bit concerned about that because I was asked not to.
- Debbie - I am struggling about the best way to go about this. There's an elephant in the room. I feel very strongly that the decision about how we move forward with volunteerism is going to take a lot of work and time to come to an agreement on that. I think that people need to be in the room need to be in that discussion, specifically people that work directly with volunteers. It was made very clear to me that we need to talk about the importance of volunteers and the history. The original document was encouraging the board to make an immediate decision this weekend, which means that those people would not be in the room. That's just to give some context.
- Karen - I'm confused about whether we're talking about if it's the decision for all the staff and the board, or if the purpose of the discussion is to inform the decision. Pros and cons of volunteers in different positions, what it would look like, but not requiring consensus of the management/staff in addition to the board.
- Rebecca - I think that conversation will come later. What we're doing now is acknowledging that the document you're looking at now is not complete and disjointed from how it was originally intended. What I would like from all of you is a volunteer to complete it.
- Wendy - I don't know how we can write something when we're being told that people aren't expressing their opinions and we don't have enough people in the room to make the decision. How can we restructure is a part of whether volunteers are a part of it. I'd like to learn more about why they don't want volunteers back in certain capacities. What I feel like is it's been kicked and kicked down the line. I don't want to send something out and then realize that we're not bringing people back.
- Rachel - The goal was to have the conversation after because the only difference between the employee org structures being presented would be the number of

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staff hired depending on whether volunteers were brought back or not. We didn't intend for it to be pushed out so far, but wanted to be mindful of the timing and priority given COVID limitations for who can be on site. To speak to why some people haven't spoken up, I think part of it is because when they share their views, people tend to jump on their words because it's a very emotional subject. We wanted to have this conversation in a structured setting where everyone felt safe and heard.

- Rebecca - What I heard from both is the goal to have respect and intention behind these conversations. Reminder that we all love the co-op. Be kind to each other, be kind to yourselves. We're here for mutual respect and gain.
- Jeannie - Speaking as a volunteer and as somebody who only engaged as a store and cafe volunteer, I think we at least need to really be careful and cautious about we reintroduce volunteers into the building. We should do it a very small amount anytime soon. Some volunteers have been around a really long time and you might trust them to be on their own. A lot of volunteers, especially to attract and recruit new ones in our diversity efforts, new volunteers need more supervision and guidance. This will be tough since we're trying to limit how many people are in the building at once. Pre-COVID, there were 3 of us in the store, the store manager, and people shopping. It would fill up really quickly. There's only so much we can come up with a solid plan to bring them back unless it's on an extremely limited basis. It could put even more of a burden on paid staff that are already pretty strained. That's why I see the argument for increasing the capacity of paid staff first.
- Wendy - COVID is a whole thing, how we'd bring back volunteers. If we brought them back at all right now, it would be very slow and handpicked. We could figure that out and come to a consensus pretty easily. If there's any frustration in my last statement, it's because I've asked this multiple times and need time to think about it. I want to know who has varying views. Every time it comes up, I'm told we'll talk about it later and this way. I think the salient points are less hidden. I feel like I'm in the dark.
- Rhiannon - I agree it's hard to formulate these opinions. With all due respect, it's important to understand that people feel this way. I started back in 2017 and have been hearing that volunteers are crucial to the cooperative. I think it's a testament to how dedicated the community is to the co-op. I don't want to rely on volunteers in the cafe. It's never the volunteers that are the problem, it's the way that we rely on the volunteer structure. I have heard people say that we're hemorrhaging money, and that's disturbing to me that the bottom line is not at the forefront of people's thoughts, but is a part of the reasoning. I think it's necessary to pay \$15/hour, generally speaking, and don't agree that volunteers should be brought in to offset that. Volunteers often don't show up because they're people and they have lives. It bothers me that we incorporate volunteers

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the way that we do without having sufficient paid staff. If we have a stronger staff, we'll be better prepared for bringing back volunteers.

- Karen - I've had that concern and I've heard that's an issue. Part of the issue is restructuring, trying to figure out wages, volunteers, and all of that relates to each other. If we have more staff, then we're more strapped to pay staff, meaning, the money has to come from somewhere -- basically savings until sales income covers it. If we have more volunteers, then we have fewer staff. If we don't bring back volunteers, how long do we have to turn things around while paying wages for the amount of staff needed?
 - Alex - I agree with what Rhiannon said. I have experience as a store manager and a cafe volunteer where it causes problems and staff have to work late because volunteers didn't show up. Or you have the volunteer coordinator doing the labor if people don't show up, which means they can't recruit.
 - Rachel - I hear that we want to gather ideas sooner. I can talk to Debbie about how we can do that so everyone has that information. I'm thinking of some sort of shared document that asks for opinions and putting reasons why.
 - Debbie - I'm not prepared to have this conversation today and we don't have time.
 - Karen - I'm glad to hear Rhiannon and Alex talk about that. I get why volunteers in the cafe could make it worse and therefore not be economically feasible.
 - Wendy - I don't know how we were going to look at this document and not talk about our feelings of volunteerism. Looking at the budget and volunteerism and the bottom line. It would have been really difficult to start the co-op without volunteers. The more volunteers and the more profit we can make, the more staff can get paid. Years ago we started profit-sharing. Almost every single time that staff have asked us to raise wages, we've raised wages. If we didn't bring volunteerism back, we wouldn't be able to survive. We would go to 3 staff who work 60 hours a week and have a more traditional model. It worries me when the fact that we rely on volunteers is pointed at. We're trying our best in a difficult situation.
- Budget Approval (**Wendy**)
 - Vince - Rather than taking up time here to ask my questions, I'll take time offline with Wendy to do that together.
 - Rebecca - When will the Finance Committee be?
 - Wendy - I'll send out the meeting information to folks.
 - On the horizon/Identify retreat action items (**Rebecca, Debbie**)
 - Worked in Google doc.
 - Rebecca - We didn't get through the whole thing, so how about the Board works through the rest of the list at the start of the next board meeting.
 - Goodbyes in the round (**All**)
 - Each individual shared how they like to be appreciated.