

## 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

### Topics:

**1. Columinate / Strategic Plan:** the WC has been working with an outside consultant to review the Co-Op's practices and procedures so as to come out with a plan of how to be a successful and sustainable business. Out of that process an ad hoc committee has been created to formalize a strategic plan with specific goals, metrics, and timelines for outcomes.

**2. Philosophical Conversation:** as we come up with a strategic plan for how we need the business ran to stay afloat, we also need to keep in mind our principals and our role in the community. We will discuss what our value to the community is, what are our strong suits are, and what is special about what we bring to the table in comparison to our competitors.

These concepts must be kept in mind every step of the way to guide our decision making process.

**3. Role of the Board:** after we come up with what our value is in the community and what we want to focus on as our guiding philosophy, we will talk about what role the board plays in that vision. How do we make sure that these concepts stay in the forefront of our minds? How do we support the WC and others while there are so many transitions? When do we step in and when do we step back?

**4. Financial Statements & 2020 Budget:** we will have a brief review of how to look at financial statements and things to focus on; the most important thing is to review and not be afraid to ask questions! Hopefully this conversation will make P&Ls and Cash Flows less overwhelming! We will also review the tentative 2020 budget (it will be adjusted at year end to better reflect 2019 actuals and projections for 2020). We will need to approve the tentative 2020 budget, with the understanding that we will be re-approving in January after adjustments are made.

### Schedule

Date	Time	Session	Session Leader	Attendees
Saturday, November 16	9:00-9:30 AM	Set-up + Breakfast	<b>Karen &amp; Vince</b>	N/A
	9:30-10:00 AM	Recap of Small & Strong Conference and Take Away Ideas	<b>Debbie &amp; Sara</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Sara, Abby, Annica
	10:00 AM -12:00 PM	Workers Collective discussion about Columinate, Strategic Plan, Marketing...	<b>Annica??</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Sara, Abby, Annica
	12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch	N/A	N/A
	1:00-3:00 PM	Philosophical Conversation around the Co-Op in the community	<b>Wendy</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy Arrived at end: Rhiannon
	3:00-3:30 PM	Break	N/A	N/A
	3:30-5:30 PM	Role of Board in the Vision we See for the Co-Op	<b>Debbie</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Rhiannon
	5:30-7:00 PM	Dinner	At Casablanca (dinner provided, drinks must be purchased by individuals)	N/A
Sunday, November 17	10:00-10:30 AM	Set-up + Breakfast	<b>Rhiannon</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Rhiannon

	10:30-12 PM	2020 Budget & Review of Financial Statements	<b>Collin</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Rhiannon
	12-12:30 PM	Break / Lunch	N/A	N/A
	12:30-2:00PM	Retreat Recap & Next Steps / Action Items	<b>Alex</b>	Karen, Vince, Collin, Debbie, Alex, Wendy, Rhiannon

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Minutes

Saturday, November 16

- Firestarter (Karen)
  - What do you want people to know about you or what does nobody know about you? What's your superpower?
- Poem (Vince)
- Recap of Small & Strong Conference and Take Away Ideas (Debbie and Sara)
  - [see PowerPoint named *Small & Strong Conference 2019*]
    - Understanding the Economic Impact of Co-Ops in small towns
    - Employment Best Practices for Small Employers
    - Strategies for Addressing Common Small Co-Op Challenges
    - Intro to Financial Statements for Directors & New GMs
    - Understanding Your Co-Op's Community Relevance
    - The Power of Produce
    - Making the Most of CoPos
      - *Wendy*: Did it feel like there was an opportunity to make a better connection with CoPos?
      - *Sara*: Got to know the names of different people and what specific areas they can service, as well as some additional features available in CoPos.
      - *Rachel*: It would be good to post something along the lines of "if you spend \$1.00 in the Co-Op, \$1.60 is generated in the local economy".
        - *Wendy*: Agree, I believe there are more specific numbers for Milwaukee.
        - *Vince*: They suggested having at least 10-30 days of cash on hand. Cost of goods and labor is roughly \$82,000 for a month.
- Workers Collective discussion about Columinate, Strategic Plan, Marketing... (Annica, Abby)
  - [see attachment *Co-Op Retreat WC Presentation*]
    - *Annica*: We've been working with Brittany at CoLuminate and wanted to give an overview of the overall goals:
      - Creating a vision of the coop to drive a marketing plan
      - Creating a budget formed by patterns in the store/cafe
        - The key is sales - sustainable, achievable sales goal based on growth
        - Stop the hemorrhage and have modest growth of 2%
      - Generate sales growth through various tactics
    - *Abby*: Has been working on delegating more tasks to staff.

- *Annica*: Alex created a spreadsheet that shows how some of our best-selling items compare to local competitors.
  - Working on coming up with everyday value items, signage for these items, items that are important to have in the store.
  - Every product needs to serve a unique need and is something that the co-op wants to sell--serves co-op mission and the needs of our members.
  - Having volunteers go through things with a sustainability mindset.
  - Documenting metrics--sales growth, customer count, average basket.
  - Alex walked through the co-op and started taking photos. Brittany walked through and gave her feedback:
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    - Clutter when you walk in
    - Produce area should always look full--abundant supply encourages people to buy
    - Clear lines of sight of produce to the cooler
      - Put the café counter space where the produce is.
        - Will encourage people to stay in the store longer.
        - Talked to the person who made the store register counter and he is suggesting put it along the window
    - *Abby*: It would be nice for people to feel like they can stay longer for brunch and move produce to the center of the store on an island to avoid having the little inlets.
    - Keep windows clear and open--WC moved some unnecessary items away from window to start in short term.
    - Will move coffee away from window.
      - Maybe a bussing area?
    - Product placement optimization
      - Seasonal end caps
      - Mindful about display
    - *Vince*: Did she say anything about floors?
      - *Annica*: She did not, since we have so many other things to focus on
    - *Abby*: She praised us for having a large selection of snacky grab'n'go type items near the way out.
      - *Annica*: The question is, is that what we want to be known for?
    - *Karen*: Did she have thoughts on the items below the counter? ○ *Abby*: She did not, but we have had thoughts. Thinking about mason jars or disposable cleaning tools--items where you don't have to go look down and read.
    - *Vince*: Did she say anything about the warehouse look of chips? ○ *Annica*: Yes, we'll get to that and we have already started making changes.
    - *Abby*: She asked why we have so many different hodgepodge racks. ● *Annica*: Why do we have dog and cat food, and cleaning supplies so close to our produce? Alex rearranged items by product, not by brand. ● *Abby*: Criticized the bulk area that looks messy.

- *Annica*: We could hang chalkboards to block and provide information.
- *Abby*: Thinking about category management so that product placement makes sense and aren't scattered. The customer experience is improved because they are able to find the stuff they came to buy.
- *Debbie*: So both end caps are full of chips?
  - *Abby*: Yes, we're trying to focus on reducing negative space by having full displays, but also having fewer items on sale that relate to each other. Seasonal guide is good for that.
  - *Karen*: Is that referring to the cider being spaced out (on the shelf).?

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- *Sara*: They say that "abundance sells", so it's better for it to appear full.
- *Wendy*: Did we have curtains for the overhead bulk?
  - *Vince*: No, but it was discussed.
  - *Alex*: Thinking about doing something like that or organizing better.
  - *Debbie*: How much would a bunch of chalkboards cost? ○ *Annica*: We would limit it to just above the bulk area, but maybe curtains or plants above the coolers.
  - *Abby*: We haven't done any research into how much chalkboards would cost.
- *Abby*: It seems like a lot of products are unintentional and there's no aesthetic pattern. Could lead to anxiety for customers.
  - *Annica*: Think of space, how to navigate the store.
  - *Abby*: Alex put beans at eye-level since it's a staple.
  - *Annica*: Veggie cooler is broken, but is getting fixed on Tuesday.
- *Abby*: Going to consolidate storage above the back coolers. ● *Annica*: Talked to Peyton about fixing the holes in the wall and water damage behind the beverage cooler and then will paint it to make it more warm feeling.
  - *Abby*: The cooler is what you first see when you walk into the co-op.
  - *Vince*: Several of the header lights in the coolers need to be fixed.
  - *Annica*: This is where we could have chalkboard signs and plants.
  - *Vince*: Air conditioner is not functioning.
- *Abby*: Want to eliminate the repack area so people can come in and bulk up their own items.
- *Debbie*: What's repack?
  - *Annica*: The plastic-packaged items. Doesn't follow our sustainability efforts.
  - *Wendy*: It's also very inconsistent what's available.
- *Annica*: We've stopped piling things next to the ATM. Moved the rack

next to the repack area over there so it's better for special orders. ●

*Abby:* Moved a stand next to the registers with more grab'n'go items.

Boomerang bags is now next to repack area.

● *Annica:* Moving grab'n'go next to register and being strict on the \$5 credit card minimum has helped our sales grow.

○ *Debbie:* There's a lot of potential to market the grab'n' go in the store since it's new and it isn't obvious that you can now grab sandwiches from the beverage cooler.

○ *Annica:* We're still working on consistency of the grab'n'go area.

● *Wendy:* For the produce, that's a lot of square footage of product.

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○ *Annica:* That's why we're going through the store to take stock of current inventory and thin it out to make room for restructuring. Figure out what is essential.

● *Abby:* If there's a produce cooler, making it black.

● *Abby:* Support that we want from the board on these efforts:

○ Ad hoc committee and support the marketing plan

▪ *Annica:* Getting support from Brittany and from my father. He's offering free consultant work.

▪ I created a super simple social media calendar. It's in its rough stages, but it's something we're working on getting out there. Also a part of the CommComm, but is an important part of the ad hoc committee.

○ Create a customer survey on customer experience. Don't feel that the WC can do this based on current projects

○ Work on creating relationships and lines of communication for community connections. ▪ Talk to people in the neighborhood and document.

▪ Example: A massage therapist approached the co-op to see about offering the same discount at both organizations.

○ *Abby:* Wishes that the board could be more cohesive with communicating with the WC. ▪ Example: One board member to email the WC at the WC email, and not individual members if it concerns the WC as a whole.

● riverwestwc@gmail.com

▪ We get many emails from different board members who aren't talking to each other. Streamlined communication would be very helpful for us since we have a lot of complex things going on for us right now since we are all at or above hours.

● *Debbie:* We'll be taking a list of action items, so could you please write the items on the board?

● *Karen:* Did someone say gmail is problematic?

● *Wendy:* Yes, it's unprofessional that we change it when we have had other emails (@riverwestcoop) after 18 years.

● *Karen:* It feels really wonderful that these things are finally happening with CoLuminate. Really appreciates everyone's energy. Are you interested in other ideas? What's the best way to share it?

● *Annica:* In terms of something specific?

● *Karen:* In terms of what to go over the cooler, things like that.

● *Annica:* Email it to the workers collective.

● *Debbie:* Could you please clarify the communication issue? I'm aware that there are a lot of side conversations, but what are your specific needs since I can't be the point of contact to funnel all communication.

- *Annica*: First idea was to have everyone send things to the President, which we know can be a lot. It would be good for the board to work together to come up with a way to do this, whether it's delegating to someone else.
- *Wendy*: I think putting a few rules of thumb, such as subject matter specific to specific to a certain person. Should talk to other board members.
- *Abby*: Being more mindful about communication. Check in with board before determining what to relay to the WC. Consider whether it can wait for the next board meeting.
- *Vince*: At a previous board retreat, we decided to give power to the WC to make decisions for the day-to-day operations. Would like the WC to  
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focus on refitting the store. We're a nonstandard business in the community and is inviting the WC to take ownership of the business. Don't forget about the upstairs, deck area.
- *Collin*: We all have roles and titles--we should trust each other to do those roles. Try to avoid side emails and let people do their work. ●
- Karen*: What we as a board will have to figure out is how to funnel ideas.
- *Debbie*: For the sake of timing, are there any specific talking points you'd like to cover at the meeting?
- *Abby*: I think the philosophical discussion will funnel into the marketing plan. I would like to hear if anybody has any particular ideas for changes to the store--aesthetics, branding, those kinds of things. It will be a collective effort to figure those things out.
- *Collin*: What's the next step for the ad hoc committee? ●
- Alex*: Will send out the doodle after this meeting.
- *Wendy*: The ad hoc marketing plan is the same as the refit or separate? ●
- Abby*: They are the same.
- *Wendy*: Is there a certain amount that we'd be willing to commit to the refit of the store? Important to determine what financial support and person power support the board can help provide to these initiatives.
- *Karen*: Do we think that we can do this without paying anyone to help with marketing?
- *Annica*: There are certain people who have asked to be on the ad hoc committee that do this for a job. We have asked one person for her rates to see if we could go that route. There is someone else willing to do it as a volunteer.
- *Karen*: Concerned about the CommComm being asked to do a lot. ●
- Debbie*: If the WC wanted to hire somebody in that capacity? What's the system for that?
- *Collin*: Are we talking permanent position? We can't do that? Have to present a job description and contract.
- *Annica*: It would be a project-to-project basis.
- *Vince*: Marketing is a really broad term--could be refitting the store, social media, talking to people in the neighborhood. With some planning, we'll have to hire someone to reset the store.
- *Annica*: The WC plans to pool resources to guide that. Specifically what type of marketing we want to see from the ad hoc committee. ●
- Rachel*: I would suggest coming up with a 5 year plan for how often we expect to hire somebody for the marketing position, what that costs, what's the

return on investment. That will help evaluate whether it should be a consultant, part-time, or full-time position.

● *Collin*: We should identify the need first then hire the person. ● *Karen*: Is there anything we need done sooner where we can pay them to do that sooner than in a month?

● *Wendy*: The WC is empowered to make expenditures up to \$1,000 before asking the board for permission. If they had to put an ad in the paper or something, could happen from time-to-time, but not an ongoing basis. How much is the Currents ad each month? ● *Collin*: \$200

● *Wendy*: From experience at hostel, 5% should go into marketing. What are the co-op's monthly sales?

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● *Collin*: \$70,000 to \$80,000

● *Wendy*: The fact that we only spend \$200 can help us better understand why we aren't seeing more people shop here. There's a disconnect between what we want to see and the actions we're taking. Spend the money now to actually go to surgery instead of putting a bandaid on something.

● *Collin*: We have talked about this before.

● *Debbie*: Because these conversations have been happening for a long time, it would be good to have the WC feel comfortable reaching out to the Board to ask questions about last year's retreat. Review notes and see where the conversations were.

● *Collin*: 2-3 years ago, there were some conversations where people weren't sure if we needed to advertise outside of the neighborhood. Happy to see that people are on board with extending our network.

● *Wendy*: One of the tasks of CoLuminate to track trends. What help do you need from the board? Accounting experience?

● *Abby*: We would like to learn how to be more involved in the budget creation and decision-making.

● *Collin*: That was due to the lack of interest, not because there isn't the structure.

● *Wendy*: It should be that the WC has to be involved as a part of their role.

● *Rachel*: We don't have that in writing anywhere, so we can't enforce it. We would have to add it to the structure.

● *Abby*: We would like to be involved.

● *Karen*: We have simply updated the budget from the year before but not really understanding if this is a good methodology. It would be good to learn how to do this.

● *Vince*: Encourage that we don't advertise until we know what we're advertising.

● *Wendy*: There are several budgets that we could talk about. There's the capital budget, operating budget, departmental budgets. Does the WC feel like you need workshops? Spreadsheets?

● *Abby*: Annica's dad is going to help us with consultation for free. Don't have specifics now.

● *Karen*: It sounds like the WC needs to see the budget and add in numbers that are accurate.

● *Vince*: A budget is a projection.

- *Debbie*: We're going over the budget tomorrow, so we can go into detail on that there.
  - *Collin*: No information is being kept from anyone. Information is shared at board meetings, I can't make WC meetings, and nobody seems to want to attend Finance Committees.
  - *Wendy*: Customer survey/creation would be one person from the board.
  - *Rachel*: I suggest identifying a significant sample size for the survey, determining methods of distribution, timeline for receiving feedback, and how to analyze. What about a focus group for some of the big changes that will come to the co-op?
  - *Wendy*: When would the WC like to see the customer survey information back to you? What would be useful?
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- *Abby*: As soon as possible.
  - *Rachel*: The person in charge of the survey should map out the minimum time necessary and propose that to the WC to see what's possible. Make sure we follow the steps to make sure the numbers mean something.
  - *Wendy*: There's a big difference between whether they need it urgently or by the summer.
  - *Abby*: It's urgent.
  - *Vince*: The store is going to be refit in any case, so we can't delay that. ●
  - Wendy*: I'm trying to get details on the specific asks of the WC to the board. We should try to find someone who is experienced in survey and data analytics to take on the project.
  - *Annica*: Willing to help create the survey, but can't take the lead. ●
  - Vince*: Has experience with surveys and can provide some information he has.
  - *Karen*: Who is going to start with the list?
  - *Wendy*: One of the board members is going to take on the survey as a project--that's the first step. Next, creating the relationships in the community. Is there a way to formalize having past board members come together twice a year to get input on current events. How do we make sure community relationships stay in the institution?
  - *Debbie*: There would have to be a very specific way to go about that since not everybody who leaves the co-op would have the best feelings about the place. How can we encourage it to be a positive space and have productive conversations? Could quickly turn to bringing up bad experiences at the co-op.
  - *Wendy*: We wouldn't advertise with flyers. But instead specifically ask people to come to these meetings and have structure to the meetings. Other, are there specific other types of relationships that the WC is looking for right now?
  - *Abby*: We've talked about sharing discounts with local organizations. One thing to consider is how to prove membership at the co-op? Keep memberships updated? Make sure the infrastructure for that is solidly in place. Create incentives for volunteers--you get a punch for showing up and becomes a coupon to a business on a list of those on a list of partners.
  - *Karen*: Are you talking about people who work at those business or

customers?

- *Abby*: Customers.
- *Vince*: Do you participate in the RW business association group as a part of the hostel?
- *Wendy*: Yes.
- *Vince*: We do not. There are two major festivals and the Skyline music series. We barely participate in them, but should change that. ● *Wendy*: What I'm hearing is that, for now, we are looking to make relationships with local businesses where there would be some sort of discount reciprocity. Is that the main thing right now?
- *Annica*: We would like to create a database of these types of organizations.
  - *Rachel*: This sounds similar to a community assets map, which could funnel into a needs assessment. This would identify what services/products are available in the community but also which are not. The co-op could possibly add in some of the needs to their offerings and then advertise it!
  - *Collin*: Is there a centralized place for minutes, data, forms, etc?
- *Annica*: WC is working on this.
  - *Karen*: Where could people add in information about experiences with events and other processes?
  - *Rachel*: Create a lessons learned register, basically an excel spreadsheet, after certain projects, events, that can be added to throughout the lifecycle of these situations. Centrally located and easy to find for future reference.
  - *Debbie*: For example, the seasonal end caps. Document what went well and what didn't go well.
  - *Karen*: Is google docs a good place for this?
    - *Wendy*: It's great, but needs structure and permissions to be properly managed. Other question-how is staff attendance at the WC meetings?
- *Abby*: Paula and sometimes Scott.
  - *Sara*: Paula is still involved in the CoLuminate, as well.
  - *Wendy*: Do you want more staff involved in the WC?
  - *Abby*: There is a lack of interest, however I have made it clear that involvement is encouraged. We have regular cafe meetings that are pretty informative. Sometimes it's difficult to catch new people up who only attend some meetings when we try to have constructive conversations that continue from the next week.
  - *Alex*: WC will send out the WC minutes via the WC email going forward.
  - *Karen*: Is strategic planning included in the marketing plan ad hoc committee?
- *Annica*: Current focus is on marketing.
  - *Wendy*: There's a strategic plan committee coming up with the current focus on marketing plan. There will be subsections.
  - *Alex*: The main focus is generating a marketing plan and message. Can call it the strategic plan committee.

#### Philosophical Conversation around the Co-Op in the Community (Wendy)

- *Wendy*: We're going to start with the value-focused side of this conversation. Everyone please

write down 1-3 things you think should be a part of the RW Co-Op and Cafe's vision and purpose.

- *Debbie*: Welcoming space for all community members with clear guidelines, a place where people can have a voice with clear avenues for being able to influence the co-op, breeding ground for creative thinking.
- *Rachel*: Support local economy (product choice, accessibility), community development (sense of belonging, support), sustainability practices (internal and what we support: product choice, donations, collaborative efforts).
- *Alex*: Community focus + development, local and affordable food in the neighborhood, safe space, value members' input.
- *Collin*: Viable business model, community hub, ethical as possible
- *Karen*: Gathering place to learn about new things and network, sell good food (nutritious, local).
- *Vince*: \$15 minimum wage, develop and expand connections to the art/literary/theater community, add employment as a cooperative value that is a part of our mission
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  - *Karen*: Could you expand on that last part?
  - *Vince*: We don't talk about the value of creating our jobs in our mission.
  - *Wendy*: Do one of the seven cooperative principles speak to employment?
  - *Vince*: No.
- *Vince*: Also, fair and sustainable wages and benefits, the Board and WC are equally responsible for fulfilling our mission. Having a livable world is becoming more and more important. Could be a brand item for us.
- *Wendy*: Model different style of organizing as opposed to mainstream for the community and beyond, something that is transferable, meet our community's needs and improve overall quality of life, help our neighboring communities, mentor young leaders (specifically under 25)
  - Emphasize: Food for people, not for profit
  - *Vince*: Comment about our slogan--we have to make a profit in order to stay in business.
  - *Karen*: Or they think we're a non-profit.
  - *Wendy*: It's just what we've used.
  - *Collin*: Our motivation is not profit, it's our people.
    - *Wendy*: At the end of the day, once you've hit all the basic goals of the organization are non-monetary, it's alright if we balance out at the end of the year at \$0.
- *Wendy*: We are going to review some of the language of the goals outlined in the bylaws to see how we're doing so far and if we're on track with our current goals. Essentially, the goals are supposed to match the purpose/the mission of the co-op. We should be creating strategies every year for how we're going to meet those goals--short term and long term. Have to look at the old stuff, as well as the new stuff.
  - *Vince*: Should we take what we each wrote down to try and see where they fit into the bylaws? We are in a much different place from when we opened 18 years ago from what the community wants and what we can offer. The restaurant was going up, but that was tapered off, as well. What do the people want? Sit down and eat food or buy and make it themselves? There's a lot of stuff to talk about, including values.
  - *Wendy*: Historically, the line of "fair prices" was put in there as a check for future leaders of the co-op to always keep that in mind. We aren't the lowest, but that's due to decisions made in the past--e.g. How our mark-ups have worked. I think there's ways to sort it out if we feel comfortable making on some products and not all.
  - *Debbie*: That ties back to the concept of "food for people, not for profit". We are not

driven by that profit. We are not inexpensive by any means, but we can't be because we give such a hefty discount to members and volunteers. We are trying to make the food as affordable as possible while still staying in business.

- *Karen*: It is important that we bring to mind the nutritious aspect of why the price is higher.
  - *Rachel*: Taking in the big picture, this goal will help us make smarter business decisions in other areas so that we may continue to keep our prices fair.
  - *Vince*: We are selling organic food, which is not cheap. It's tough to compete with nonorganic products on price.
  - *Alex*: That's one of the things the WC is doing with CoLuminate--what are the value items that are nutritious that we should have in stock at a fair price. Mark-up on other items that are not as nutritious.
  - *Karen*: Are you talking about raising prices on other items yet?
  - *Alex*: No decision made yet, still discussing.
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- *Debbie*: Talking about adding value to the community--what was important to members? From the Small and Strong conference, there were different examples where it could be affordable prices or gathering space.
  - *Vince*: It's interesting to see how someone else viewed our co-op by looking at the walk-through pictures. It is warm and fuzzy to me, but it is warm and fuzzy and shabby.
  - *Debbie*: At the Small and Strong conference, everyone's jaw dropped when I mentioned our discount amounts. Most have 1-2% discount at the most, or do not offer across-the-board discounts to members at all. We have to mark up our prices more in order to balance out our discounts. That creates an exclusive community, on top of not providing an aesthetically pleasing environment.
  - *Wendy*: It's a bit of a jump to call us a secret community. Look at how many members we have.
  - *Debbie*: Has a friend who feels like she isn't really welcomed into the co-op community. Like there's an in-crowd.
  - *Wendy*: Has sent people there from out of the country (from the hostel) and they love it. There are people who are going to go into the co-op and feel like it isn't their space. We are different in the sense that our community board is in a different location, e.g. not near the bathrooms like in some other organizations.
  - *Karen*: If our stuff is marked up, then you really need a discount for it to be affordable. That provides the initiative for people to become members. I didn't feel welcome the first time since nobody said hi. The second time, had a much different experience where someone said hi and then she felt comfortable signing up to volunteer.
  - *Collin*: If we want to look at member discounts, then we can do that. Just need to look at the numbers. Member sales have been decreasing.
  - *Wendy*: We are at a different place than we were 18 years ago--basically a bunch of weirdos decided to create their own space since they couldn't find what they were looking for in existing organizations. We wanted different products and a different economic structure so that we can keep our world sustainable. Used to promote that becoming a member supports certain initiatives, but can also buy other products elsewhere since we don't have everything available.
  - *Karen*: What is the goal of this exercise?
  - *Wendy*: Our job is to figure out what the values and goals in the bylaws mean to us this day in age. How we all interpret these items.
  - *Vince*: These are not as valid as when they were originally written. I was more interested in the community aspect more than the food. How can we do these types of community outreach efforts if we aren't profitable?

- *Wendy*: We are looking to build the capability and capacity to do so. ○ *Debbie*: For all members to have a voice via the democratic manner...it is really important that members know the different ways of becoming involved. I have a different view of it after the bylaws committee. It gets to a point that everyone has such busy lives and not everyone wants to be involved in that level of the co-op. There's only so much we can do to try and get the word out if people are not making an effort on their end. Not all members know where they can seek out this information. There are people who pay \$20 for the membership and that's all they choose to do or can do given their availability. Last year, we agreed on the avenues of communication that were feasible given our labor capacity and what people currently use. Three methods: email, website, in store.
- *Karen*: Totally agree. Enough people don't know that the co-op is having a hard time. We haven't gotten the word out that much. A big part of it is that everyone is busy with other things. We have board members who can talk more to talking points who work or  
2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule  
volunteer at the co-op. We have an amazing writer who would put another article in the Currents.
- *Wendy*: Talk about niche community.
- *Vince*: Already asked for another article to be written in the Currents. ○ *Karen*: Mailchimp isn't reaching people. The Currents is a big way to reach people. ○ *Vince*: Thanks to Debbie for all the work she did on the bylaws. It was a big educational thing for everyone for how difficult it was to communicate and then get blamed for not doing a good job.
- *Rachel*: Important to point out that we are operating largely on volunteer labor, so we cannot rely on volunteers as a consistent method of communication. We established the three methods of communication at the board retreat last year based on what's possible given our current situation.
- *Collin*: If there is going to be an article about the board retreat, I think we should see it first and be asked first before an article is requested.
- *Vince*: Okay sounds good. I don't think we're helping ourselves if we don't share what happened at this board meeting.
- *Karen*: What happened to the people who were emailing the Board looking for insight and assistance?
- *Debbie*: We got back to them. Vince set up a call. It is important that the board is cohesive in our method of response.
- *Alex*: FYI, I have no idea what this email is about.
- *Wendy*: In the past, Riverwest Cooperative Alliance was a great place to share information with local co-ops.
- *Debbie*: Hopefully we have a model that is sustainable and replicable. Need to clearly document and store information. We have it as an action item.
- *Rachel*: I can be hired out to come up with a system and rules if anyone would like. Since I'm HR, I can also help uphold them.
- *Wendy*: The board can help support these goals by making sure there's room in the budget to carry out the necessary action items.
- *Debbie*: Question for Rachel - Should we include how to read financial statements in the board orientation?
- *Rachel*: Not during that time, since that one is only 3 hours and it's really hard to get people to meet for more than 3 hours. The orientation should stick to how to generally function as a board since that takes the entire time. I think that it would be a good idea to use the end of the board meetings (maybe 20 minutes) to train on specific items, such as the history of the board, financial statements.
- *Wendy*: Agreed, it would be good to offer opportunities for more one-on-one sessions

on topics needed, as well as have the Finance Committee provide a training if the need is there. Now, let's circle back to action items for the year--this will be in Debbie's portion.

- o [See below for table of notes from the big paper items listing out the goals of the bylaws in the first row, with idea for what this means today. It is detailed out by things the co-op currently does and its areas of improvement]

2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

	To provide nutritious, wholesome food to the Riverwest community at fair prices (that is, prices that are low as possible without sacrificing the co-op's other goals).	To operate the co-op on a sound financial basis for the long-term benefit of members and the community.	To operate the co-op in an open, democratic manner so that all members can participate in decision making.	To serve as a model for other community-owned businesses in Riverwest and elsewhere.	To reach out and expand services to segments of the community that might not initially be involved in the co-op.
W e d o	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Produce</li> <li>● Local</li> <li>● Organic</li> <li>● Prices vary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor finances</li> <li>● Create a budget</li> <li>● Accountability of staff (by means of HR position)</li> <li>● Strategic plan o Store redo o Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate with Meta House</li> <li>● Volunteer Outreach</li> <li>● EBT option               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● RW Elementary School Trips</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Educate about food system at Locust St Days               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Service Learning</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Educate students on co-op</li> <li>● Round-ups</li> <li>● Fundraisers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● People ask for help</li> <li>● In the past: Riverwest Cooperative Alliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information shared via Email, website, in store</li> </ul>

A r e a s t o i m p r o v e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prices vary</li> <li>● Margins need to be better</li> <li>● Support WC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Consultants</li> <li>o Funds</li> <li>o Training</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Consistency in product</li> <li>● Value items</li> <li>● Low cost staples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need to be seen as legitimate and high functioning</li> <li>● Prepared for meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do your homework and communicate</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Training of Board Members on how to read statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Member scholarships</li> <li>● Engage communities of color</li> <li>● Diversity Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visibility outside of RW</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Sip and Purr Cafe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have capacity to provide help to those who ask</li> <li>● Document how we got sustainable</li> <li>● Amplify our Awesomeness via social media and telling friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make membership information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Visible</li> <li>o Accessible</li> <li>o Engaging</li> <li>o Educational</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

#### Role of Board in the Vision We See for the Co-Op (Debbie)

- *Debbie*: How can the board not work in silos and be one functional unit? How can individuals contribute without burnout/exceeding capacity? What resources can we tap into so we're not on our own (e.g. CoLuminate does board retreat things).
  - o Some questions for each person to write out:
    - Think about how you see the board's role in the co-op's restructuring/changing environment?
    - What is your specific position's role in that? What is your specific piece?
    - What do you currently do to influence the co-op? What values do you bring? ●

[Notes from big paper]

- o Listen and speak to the members; be their voice in decision making.
- o Invest money into changes needed and spend it wisely.
- o Oversee big decisions made by smaller committees.
- o Be more visible and available to WC, members, and the community.
- o Promoting diversity and outreach to the larger community.
- o Support the WC.
- o Hold up accountability for the Board and WC.
- o Do our homework - emails, minutes, prep work.
- o Fostering relationship with WC and be seen as a resource.
- Specific position:
  - o *Alex*: Mine is to be the worker-board member liaison.
  - o *Karen*: Committee work.
  - o *Debbie*: Being main line of communication to help compile all thoughts so that we streamline communication to the WC. Be more concise in communication and have more productive meetings. Maintain a presence in the co-op--have more people on the board who are regularly in the co-op and/or at events.

- o *Karen*: Also valuable that we also have a café staff member on the board.
- o *Rhiannon*: Part of the reason I wanted to join the board is because there was not really any employee representation on the board at the time of joining. Someone has to explain why things operate the way that they do in the café in order for the board to have a better understanding. I would like to attend the WC meetings, but am incapable given the timing. I would like to find a way to be more involved in the co-op if I can rearrange my school schedule next semester.
- o *Karen*: Since you've been on the board, do you feel like people feel more comfortable with the actions of the board?
- o *Rhiannon*: I think it is not as big of a deal anymore since there are a lot of longtime employees who have a better idea of what the board does and who they are. I'm not sure how much of that is that people actively understand and how much of it is indifference. If employees read the minutes, that could help. The change to the report templates will help.
  - o *Wendy*: I need to get my volunteer shift in order. Helps communication to have board members in the store. Talk co-op in general to people in her life. Would like to spend time helping recruit board members for the interim positions, as well as May elections.
- o *Collin*: Finance and HR stuff. Keep working at it and see what more can be done.
- o *Debbie*: Anyone disagree with any of the board roles we came up with?
- o *Rhiannon*: Could we clarify what "hold up accountability" means?
  - 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule
- o *Wendy*: We don't kick people off the board for not upholding their duties. How do we do that? We have an HR function for holding staff accountable, but what do we do for the Board?
- o *Debbie*: It's hard to know how to set it. We all have busy lives and whenever we don't have deadlines, things often don't get done. What are the consequences of not meeting them? Not firm and strict, but how do we address it?
- o *Wendy*: We have something for staff to follow when they are not doing their roles, but not the Board.
- o *Rachel*: I think we should set some rules and stick to them. Historically, the Board was scrambling for members, so it was difficult to implement strictness. Now, that is not as much of a problem. I think that people choose to join the board for a reason, and that should be to contribute in a meaningful way. I also notice that the Board tends to have this conversation a lot about what the rules of the Board are and how to maintain accountability. I think that a plan should be ironed out and the Board should stick to it for a certain time. Then, the plan can be reevaluated as needed to see if it's working or needs tweaking.
- o *Wendy*: I think it hurts our ability to recruit new board members if we have a reputation of not holding members accountable/not everyone does their work. We could make an effort
- o *Rhiannon*: We could try some tactics, like making someone take minutes if they don't do their tasks. Or we could have other things that people should help out with if they're not doing their role.
- o *Debbie*: We should have some subjectivity to it, since we want to be understanding of things that come up.
- o *Wendy*: We need to have someone keep track of these types of things--who would do it? Secretary?
  - o *Rachel*: The board should come up with a bare bones list of rules for what all board members must do. Should be things people would actually want to follow through on and have written procedures for how to manage individuals who break those rules.
- o *Debbie*: It is really frustrating to have people not follow through with action items. I like

the idea of only having something be an “action item” if someone takes it on.

Otherwise, it’s a parking lot item.

o *Karen*: I think it’s important to come to a group decision on certain rules--policies, board meeting start times, communication if need to miss a board meeting/event, etc. o *Wendy*: I noticed that only certain people tend to take on action items. It would be nice to see action items get dispersed more instead of the same people taking them on all the time. For example, the committee head could take an item back to the committee to delegate the task to someone. The committees are currently not that strong, so this is tough.

o *Karen*: Annica is working on getting people to join committees.

o *Wendy*: It would be nice to be able to email people who checked the “I would like to serve on a committee” box when we notice that a committee needs more support. o

*Karen*: Alex has been coming to the CommComm meetings.

o *Wendy*: Who is all on the CommComm committee?

o *Karen*: Annica, Tomasina, Paula, Josie, Belles, , Jason

o *Debbie*: I value that there’s a lot of work being done outside of the board meeting.

Arguably all of us are stretched really thin, so taking on extra stuff can be really hard. I am 100% for committee strengthening so we can feel like it can get done and not burden the committee head. In general, a lot of things need to be allocated to certain roles on the board.

#### 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

o *Karen*: We can’t just throw things on the CommComm for things we should pay someone to do. Debbie, are there any things on your plate that you would like some help with?

o *Debbie*: The biggest thing is when I ask people at meetings to take on something, and nobody speaks up. Or when someone takes it on, but doesn’t follow through. I have also done some projects and nobody seems to read them or provide any feedback. I could do things so much better if I was able to delegate more items.

o *Karen*: Could it help to ask people again at the end of the meeting if they can step up to take on any outstanding items?

o *Rhiannon*: Could we have a wheel with everyone’s name that cycles through to see if they are able/available to complete the action item. If nobody, then parking lot. I’m more likely to take on a task if someone asks me than speak up for myself.

o *Debbie*: The wheel idea might be very difficult for some, especially if they do not feel like they have the capacity to take on more at that time. If someone feels forced or guilty into taking on a role, it might not be a good fit. People really just need to self-motivate and take on roles that are suitable for them.

o *Rhiannon*: If we had more board members, it would help with some of these problems. o

*Karen*: I am way more likely to help with something than take it on myself. ● *Debbie*: We talked a lot about how we’re going to hold ourselves accountable as a board. How can we improve how we monitor accountability of the WC and praise them for doing things well. o *Rachel*: Tell me if WC members aren’t sending in monthly reports or attending board meetings.

o *Karen*: I think Sometimes people haven’t come because they figured enough other people were already going. Lately, has not been as big of a problem.

o *Wendy*: Will create an attendance list for WC + board members as a part of the secretary role.

o *Karen*: I believe we came up with the rule that people can’t miss more than 2 board meetings in 12 months.

o *Debbie*: Yes, but we should evaluate those on a case-by-case basis.

● *Debbie*: In order to improve the cohesiveness of the board, how can we improve our practices? o *Wendy*: There are going to be a lot of big changes coming to the co-op, so as a board tasked with long-term planning, what should we decide we want to see in the next year.

Communicate that to the WC in a clear message--guidelines on how to set timelines. o *Debbie*: The idea of the strategic plan is where the timelines should come through on. That we're not doing double work without all of the people in the room who are going to be enacting them.

o *Wendy*: Our goal can be to support the strategic plan by setting a certain date. o *Debbie*: The goal of the board meeting is to receive the reports and be kept up to date on what's being done. A lot of it lately has been around retreat items and CoLuminate. I struggle with what other topics to discuss at the board meetings.

o *Rachel*: Has it been determined what the goals of the board meetings are? Is it to provide the WC with guidance, work on certain tasks, research and discuss best practices, etc.? Perhaps it could partially be a workgroup session to get some action items accomplished during the last 20 minutes.

o *Collin*: For the next board meeting, we could create the accountability model for the board. We would have to be prepared with ideas.

o *Wendy*: Can the consulting part of CoLuminate be wrapped up and final report ready by the December board meeting?

o *Alex*: Probably not since we still have about 6 hours left with her and those likely won't be used up by then.

#### 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

o *Wendy*: That's one item that we could review and provide feedback on as a board. Our job is to look ahead and find other things that we think are important, such as community and member outreach. Some goals are immediate and others are long-term. We could timeline out other items like Locust Street festival so we have enough time to prepare and have a meaningful presence.

o *Debbie*: Some of that is committee work, for example: events.

o *Wendy*: There are items that we ask the board to support.

o *Karen*: The board could decide what they want it to look like.

o *Wendy*: What are the things that the board did last year that we need to plan for again? What are things that we didn't do but we want to do? For example, I wrote down diversity training to look into that.

o *Karen*: We came up with a lot of stuff, are we going to go through and see if there are any more action items? At the next board meeting, we can check in to see if people can still do what they volunteered to do.

o *Debbie*: There are more things listed up there than we can take on at this point in time given our current capacity. We need to prioritize some of these items and others may end up getting pushed off. As the board, how do we keep all of these awesome things in mind, but not delegate more things to the WC or committees who don't have the bandwidth?

o *Wendy*: The value statements are not action items are for the WC, these are more thoughts in mind that they should have when making decisions.

o *Karen*: Do we want to go over these at a board meeting and prioritize?

o *Rachel*: Could maintain a list of parking lot items that are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Updated each time with what's still relevant, accomplished, or new items thought of. o

*Karen*: With the strategic planning, do we have enough board members helping out? o

*Alex*: 3 or 4 board members responded to the email, so that seems good.

● *Debbie*: Where do we go from here?

o *Wendy*: We could have board goals for the year. If things continued exactly the way they are, when would we run out of money?

o *Collin*: It depends on several factors, but roughly a year.

o *Wendy*: I would like to see one of the board goals to be that we are taking more of a diverse input. Go to neighboring communities, namely west, and make sure

underserved communities are involved.

o *Collin*: Should we put “creating 3 board goals for the year” on the next board agenda? o

*Wendy*: That would be a good idea, use last 20 minutes to work on that.

o *Karen*: Something we may want to do is make sure that we review the previous board’s goals when we bring on a new board. This is the first year that the WC is really taking on a lot. This is a good thing that the board now has the problem of trying to figure out what to do.

## Other

- *Wendy*: Can you remind me of the timeline for the interim board positions? What’s the next line of communication?
- *Karen*: It didn’t go out in the most recent newsletter. Will add it to the next one. ●
- Wendy*: Can we get the language that was used so we can disseminate that to our own networks? Can we send another email outside of the standard timeline?
- *Karen*: We can send a special one.
- *Wendy*: Were we going to have candidates by the December meeting?  
2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule
- *Debbie*: No, but all we have to do is send out the word within 60 days of the resignation. We are coming up on that soon.
- *Rhiannon*: Do board members have to be over 18? We should tap into student populations who want to get involved.
- *Debbie*: My personal opinion on recruiting board members is that we should stick within our current network. However, if we are reaching out to other communities in other capacities, this will grow our network. You do have to be a member in order to be a board member.
- *Wendy*: What about a meet and greet? Sunday post-brunch rush with board members available to chat.
- *Alex*: I would recommend doing the one-on-ones instead of setting up an event like last year. ●
- Karen*: Do we want to talk about what we want in the article tomorrow?
- *Wendy*: The writer should send the board a list of questions instead of her only talking to one board member or reviewing minutes.
- *Rhiannon*: I would be happy to be a point of contact.
- *Debbie*: It does need full approval before going out.
- *Wendy*: Let’s tell Vince this tomorrow so we’re all on the same page.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Firestarter (Rhiannon)

2020 Budget & Review of Financial Statements (Collin)

- *Debbie*: [see attached document *Financial Statements* for reference] When reviewing financial statements, look at both the forest and trees. The big picture and line items that stand out. o  
Three main financial statements:
  - Income statement (profit and loss)
    - Did the co-op have a profit or loss in a given period? Does the margin on sales pay for something else?
    - Shows the breakdown of budget items (e.g. cost of goods sold, personnel, occupancy, operating expenses, admin, marketing,

governance, discounts, profit)

- What does it mean to miss your targets by just 1% or 2%?
  - Might seem little, but could have a big impact--which areas increased or decreased (labor, sales, etc.).

- Cash flow statement

- What your cash position is--how much you realistically have.

- Balance statement

- Snapshot of where you're at currently, including assets.

- Volunteer labor

- May inhibit long-term sustainability

- Workers compensation and liability issues

- Fair Labor Standards Act issues

- *Rhiannon*: Do you have a general percentage comparison of our volunteer labor?

- *Debbie*: Less than 1/3 of the participants at the Small and Strong Conference used volunteer labor at all. Of the few others who do, it is very lightly used, or  
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it is volunteer work from the board because their co-op survives by a "working board".

- Cash flow statement

- *Vince*: I don't think we have a cash flow statement.

- *Collin*: We usually see similar information in the balance sheet. I have pulled up the cash flow statement. It's in the Quickbooks statement.

- *Wendy*: I have accessed them before, but usually only to do further investigation.

- Balance sheet

- *Debbie*: Assets are what you own and what is of value to you (e.g. cash, equipment, building if owned, inventory). Liabilities are how much you owe your vendors--once you pay it, it moves on to an expense (e.g. accounts payable, business loan). Equity is how much stake the members have.

- *Vince*: Accounts payable could be EBT where we're waiting for the government to reimburse.

- *Debbie*: Also, if we cater an event and we're waiting for an invoice to be paid. ○

- Dashboard

- *Debbie*: (Referring to slide) This is an example of what we could work towards developing to show a summary of goals and progress towards them.

- *Debbie*: They recommend that you do your financial reporting right after you do your inventory to improve the accuracy of numbers.

- *Vince*: Inventory thrown away or stolen is considered shrinkage.

- *Collin*: The rest won't change, so you can still look at sales and cost of labor. ●

- Looking at the RW Co-Op's Profit and Loss sheet (Collin)

- *Vince*: The line that's important to look is the Net Operating Income because that has to do with Operations.

- *Wendy*: You do want to keep an eye on the Net Income since it can show if taxes were paid late.

- *Collin*: The main things to look at are the Café and Store sales for the month.

- *Vince*: The percentage is the cost of goods sold over sales.
  - *Wendy*: Have we been hitting our target?
  - *Debbie*: According to the number suggested at the Small and Strong conference, the store's cost of goods sold percentage is at 75%, but we should be closer to 60%. Payroll, salary, wages, should be closer to 22% for just a store but we're at 24%. The café is going to be higher, but is at 44%.
  - *Collin*: Some of these numbers you'd want to look quarterly (e.g. cost of goods sold).
  - *Vince*: Accountants sometimes use the parenthesis to notate negative numbers. This one uses the negative sign "-".
  - *Collin*: The payroll cost for the café has improved. It's the lowest it's been in a long time. Abby has been making a good effort to refine labor practices.
  - *Wendy*: What would be helpful for me is to see a comparison to the previous year and the YTD when we get them. Also include goals for different areas.
  - *Vince*: For the café, 1% of labor cost is \$3,000.
  - *Wendy*: What is our net income goal for the café? Percentage? Normally, cafes in stores don't make large margins. Restaurants usually run 2-5% if they're lucky.
  - *Alex*: Not sure, was discussed before he joined the CoLuminate group.
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- *Collin*: The store took a loss in October since the cost of goods was up.
  - *Wendy*: That's why seeing the YTD is good since you can see the big picture.
  - *Debbie*: Did we do inventory in October? Does it make a significant difference?
  - *Wendy*: We did the last one in September and it would have affected September's numbers.
  - *Vince*: The inventory is fairly critical and a sloppy inventory can throw things off. This is all compared to the gross income.
  - *Wendy*: Was 2017 the year that we started to see a drop in store sales?
  - *Collin*: This was the last year of plateau before the drop.
  - *Vince*: Trends are that café sales are highest in the warm weather.
  - *Debbie*: I'm surprised that 2018 sales were higher than the 2017 sales in some areas.
  - *Collin*: We can use this to start planning inventory for certain periods. For example, stock up for summer months. How we can we better project to operate at full capacity but get our numbers back up.
  - *Wendy*: There's a minimum fixed amount to have our doors open. If we know what our bare minimum sales need to be to be in a good spot. 3 years ago in the café, what was different? Were there nightly specials? What were the factors--internal and external?
  - *Vince*: Labor costs play a huge role.
  - *Wendy*: Some of those spikes in labor costs are 3 payroll months or vacation paid out.
  - *Rachel*: Can we pull biweekly reports to see a better representation of the cost of labor over time?
  - *Collin*: Yes, it's possible. Abby and the WC are starting to discuss these items. Wendy mentioned tracking anecdotal data and I wrote down what types of things we should look into.
  - *Rachel*: I really like the dashboard idea and providing the board and WC with the numbers in a digestible format so that it's easy to read. We should ask the WC to then reflect on what happened that month and code it in the data (keywords that are later searchable). Can use Pivot Tables and Power Queries for evaluation and analysis.

- *Wendy*: I like the idea of a nighttime baking shift so things are always full and it doesn't interrupt busier café times.
- Profit and Loss January - October 2019
  - *Collin*: We are at 79% of our sales goal for the year.
  - *Rhiannon*: Why are we at 162% of our office supplies?
  - *Vince*: We have a small budget, so going over it makes a big difference.
  - *Wendy*: If there's a subset of event expenses that parses out which are store sales and events sales, then we could have a clearer picture.
  - *Rhiannon*: We had the Vegan Expo and street festivals, the RW24, Clarke Street Fest, etc.
  - *Debbie*: We haven't gone through and costed out the different events we participate in.
  - *Karen*: Does a part of the events expense include communication?
  - *Collin*: That depends on what things are spent on.
  - *Karen*: When are we going to be adjusting numbers?
  - *Collin*: Over the next month and a half.
  - *Karen*: What do I need to find out with the Communications Committee?
  - *Collin*: The idea is to reach out since we have to talk to the Workers Collective since we're looking at things like the training budget.

#### 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule

- *Rachel*: We have done that in years past, but not thoroughly. It would be good to implement that as a new practice.
- *Vince*: We're in the negative at -\$32,721.78.
- *Collin*: We have a budget tracker to see where we're at with our goals.
- *Debbie*: Do you have the budget that we can look at? Or are we going to look at it at the December board meeting?
- *Collin*: Board meeting. Do we want to project sales for where they are at this year? That would be a loss.
- *Wendy*: We're not going to approve a negative budget, but we need to be realistic. Need to work with the managers to work with labor budget and make best estimate. Logically, the larger changes will take some time to happen. We need to see the strategic plan once identified to get a better understanding of timelines.
- *Vince*: We should be passing a budget before the end of the year to abide by the bylaws, with refinement in January and February after we get Year End numbers.
- *Collin*: We will have a budget to approve after the next meeting. There will be a finance committee meeting, but I need to talk to the members to see when that can happen.
- *Wendy*: We should email committee heads to get their numbers.
- *Debbie*: Please send me the request to put the budget on the agenda meeting so I can make time for it. I don't know if we need December's numbers to pass a budget. I do want to mention that next year, we will probably see a net income loss throughout the year since we will be investing in many things throughout the year.
- *Rachel*: Why can't we approve a negative budget if that's reality?
- *Vince*: That is malfeasance. The board should be guiding the business to make a profit.
- *Collin*: This is about operating a sound business, so we should project that we are going to at least break even.
- *Vince*: If we create a capital budget, then it should be separate from the Operating budget.

- *Karen:* So a lot of this depends on figuring out the cost of goods since that might change because things haven't been priced out in the café, we're going to change the produce in the store.
- *Wendy:* Can we revisit and reapprove the budget on a quarterly basis. We can be realistic and show that certain months may have a loss, but will make it up in June.
- *Rhiannon:* It is best to still assume that we're selling things at the same cost of goods in the café until changes are actually made while we're putting together the budget.
- *Wendy:* The budget helps us set goals for payroll and cost of goods.
- *Karen:* We want to revisit the numbers after we revise prices.
- *Wendy:* We want to revisit the numbers when we iron out the strategic plan. Make sure we dive in every 3 months.
- *Collin:* We'll have a plan with where we should be at a certain point in time so it will make those review sessions easier to do.
- *Karen:* We want to keep on schedule with what we want to do after the GMM.
- *Wendy:* That's the goal of the continuing board members. One more thing, I have an expenditure that I'd like to add--Diversity Training to help us meet some of our goals. I did some research into a group called Ubuntu and reached out for ballpark numbers. Roughly \$5,000 for the year would cover what we need now. Could be a part of the  
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capital budget for improvement and is important for us to make room for these types of trainings in our budget.
- *Karen:* I think that's great to include in our budget. We want to make sure to do our research and choose a quality group.

#### Lunch Break

#### Retreat Recap & Next Steps / Action Items (Alex)

- Small and Strong
  - *Wendy:* The strategies for overcoming co-op challenges--our images in the community, tell our story inside and out, the importance of our entrance, product mix, fresh food that is visible, consistency, merchandising basics, promos, welcoming place to gather.
  - *Debbie:* What do we see as the one or two words of the image that we're going for? What we want to focus on?
  - *Wendy:* Why don't we close with that? Let's mull it over.
  - *Karen:* We talked about how much money stays local--the economic impact.
  - *Wendy:* We should get Milwaukee numbers.
  - *Karen:* And give that to someone to market.
  - *Vince:* Paula likes the word sustainable for our practices and our products.
- Workers Collective
  - *Wendy:* WC is getting a more holistic view of what's going on, trying to be more purposeful and practical. Goal is to evaluate budget patterns and have a 2% growth in sales.
  - *Debbie:* What impacted me the most was looking at the pictures of the walk-through and what changes we can make, big and small.
  - *Rhiannon:* What was a takeaway for you for one of the comments made in the store?
  - *Debbie:* Placement of items in the store.

- *Wendy*: That ties into being purposeful and practical.
- *Vince*: Fresh look and mindful about placement.
- *Wendy*: Telling our story. Looking at price comparison and what the discounts mean. How we can encourage folks to become a member given the benefits. Why the hodgepodge racks? We have a fear of spending racks, but we also try to be sustainable by utilizing old materials. Good to find a balance there.
- *Vince*: The walk-through, they talked about having a more unified look.
- *Wendy*: I want us to keep in mind that there's a tone set by the way a place looks. I don't want to go too corporate, sterile, glossy.
- *Vince*: It would be good to redo the floors, they look horrible.
- *Wendy*: I was thinking about looking at the outside. Build a fence and tuck in tables and chairs at night.
- *Vince*: Seating near the window--we could build a windbreak outside, in front of the front door.
- *Alex*: Yes, that's a part of the plan.
- *Wendy*: The WC made a few requests of the board.
  - Board members to participate in ad hoc committee tasked with creating marketing plan
    - WC put together a marketing packet as a guide for ad hoc 2019 Board Retreat Topics + Schedule
  - Create a customer survey and possibly hold a focus group to gather data on customer experience
  - Work on creating relationships and lines of communication for community connections (create a database?)
  - In the future...cohesive/unified board, only email WC email
    - One board member tasked with communicating/emailing WC
      - Encourage communication between board members
      - Streamline communication with the WC
- *Karen*: How do we streamline communication with the WC?
- *Alex*: Simply, if it's a general board question, then a message should come from the board as a whole.
- *Rachel*: It's in the President's role to be the voice of the co-op. This isn't really put into practice.
- *Wendy*: At the Public House, we had a practice in place where all members of the board had to be copied on all emails to the workers. That way everyone is kept in the loop and there's no side conversations.
- *Debbie*: Several WC members have shared a lot of frustration since there are so many one-off emails with questions or ideas. They might be clashing or overlapping. ○ *Rachel*: I recommend that anything that needs to come to the board be sent to all board members instead of just the President. That would help people better regulate themselves since many things can wait until the board meeting.
- *Debbie*: I already get a lot of emails and don't think that people want to be receiving all of those.
- *Wendy*: What about tasks and action items? This would need to be separate so we can still make progress on work done. Can we have a listserv or an easier way of adding the correct people.

- *Vince*: Committee should be communicating with committee members and then present to the board. Not everything needs to involve all board members.
- *Wendy*: There's a middle ground we want to hit between reducing communication but not so sparse that it's once a week from Debbie.
- *Karen*: It was mentioned that it would be helpful to have "urgent" written in the subject if it's important. We get the WC minutes--what if I have questions on the minutes? How do we get that information?
- *Alex*: Could we pile our questions and send them the WC?
- *Rachel*: I think using the comments feature would work nicely to have everyone see the comments and responses. Are people willing to receive feedback about sending too many emails or not responding to emails?
- *Alex*: I can make sure we have comments enabled so that the board can add in their comments.
- *Wendy*: I like the idea of sending it out in an email since it would encourage people since that's easier for me to see.
- *Vince*: It might be easier to address the note taker correctly.
- *Alex*: It is going to be a Google doc and will have comments enabled. It would make sense for the person who took notes be the person who checks the comments. I'll have to double-check that with the WC and confirm this process.

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- *Debbie*: This is important since this was a direct and concise request from the WC, and should be taken seriously as such, but we should get through the rest of the sessions since we're running out of time. Also, we do not need to be so concerned about communication within the board, but between the board and WC.
- *Karen*: Let's revisit this conversation to see how we're doing.
- **Bylaws goals**
  - *Wendy*: How do we support the WC by means of the goals? [read through the big paper items]
  - *Vince*: Believes that two of the goals could be merged.
  - *Wendy*: These are very different.
  - *Debbie*: They are separate since one might be more about networking, but the other is more about helping others replicate similar business models.
  - *Vince*: We cannot do all of these things.
  - *Wendy*: The goal is not to be able to do all of these action items. It's more about guiding decision-making in the strategic plan. These are the values we should be thinking of. ○
  - *Vince*: I disagree that we are going through the bylaws that were written 18 years ago to guide the conversation today.
  - *Wendy*: My goal was to look at where our goals are now, but we have to work within the structure we are given.
  - *Vince*: It's philosophical and my philosophy is different. I don't agree with the criteria based upon the bylaws.
  - *Rachel*: I suggest that we table this for now and create another ad hoc Bylaws committee if we want to revise them.
  - *Wendy*: My goal was to see where our values changed by checking in on the items from 18 years ago. If we can't agree that these 5 statements are good mechanisms for decision-making for the year, then this argument is going to continue at every board

meeting. This is our road map for what we're trying to do. If you don't agree with something that we came with to evaluate and use as a tool.

- *Vince*: When these were written, it wasn't really refined to what we were trying to do back during the creation of the co-op. We should whittle these down to help better guide the WC in their strategic plan.
- *Debbie*: I value that we had this conversation since it helps us see what our high-reaching goals. These are big picture goals where can brainstorm what that might look like, not necessarily action items.
- *Collin*: Ditto.
- *Wendy*: When we're creating the customer service and focus group, if the goal is to better address the food goal but don't consider that we have a goal of reaching out to communities that aren't typically involved in the co-op, then we will never accomplish that goal.
- *Vince*: I'm thinking about time. A lot of these seem like action items to me since we're not doing them.
- *Rachel*: Yesterday, we talked about a practical way of dealing with this big list of action items, parking lot items, and items that were brainstormed but we might not be able to do for a long time. These should be brought back to the board meeting on a quarterly basis so that things aren't lost and we can take care of things as time and resources allow.

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- *Vince*: If there's a customer survey ad hoc committee, I think they should be empowered to take care of that and the board doesn't need to be fully involved.
- *Debbie*: [went over big paper items] Action item out of that was to come up with a list of the board rules.
- *Collin*: We will continue to evaluate years, months, quarters to make decisions. If anyone has any requests for specific information, please let me know.
  - *Debbie*: I think a summary of information that qualifies what they mean would help us better understand the flow of how business operates.
  - *Rhiannon*: We are always going to be looking at sales, income, cost of goods, gross wages, net operating income.
- Action Item List
  - Strategic plan ad-hoc committee - Alex, Collin
  - Customer survey and focus group - Wendy
    - Ensure that outreach to neighboring/underserved communities is a part of the process.
  - Creating a system of clean and unified communication with WC - Debbie
  - Community connections - Vince
  - Alumni board meeting (next quarter) - Wendy
  - Centralized place for minutes, data, forms (digital database) - Collin
  - List of board rules for accountability and system for checking ourselves - Rhiannon
  - Diversity training scheduled - Wendy
  - Recruit new board members - Wendy
    - Send special newsletter
    - Post call-for-candidates on store and website
  - Send an email to the write of the Currents (Josie) with information about how the Board

would like to be involved - Debbie

- Fix email - Wendy, Debbie
- Structure for quarterly board retreat recap - Debbie
- Parking Lot (no assignments)
  - Developing a livable minimum wage
  - Business associations, festival participation
    - Blifferts
    - Company Brewing
    - RRF
    - Woodland Pattern
    - Linnemans
    - Public House
    - Riverwest Elementary
    - COA
    - Cream City Hostel
- Ideas to Share with the WC
  - Blank order forms for café (with check boxes for additional choices, e.g. V/D choice)