

Board Members in Attendance: Debbie, Vince, Karen, Alex, Jeannie, Rhiannon, Wendy

Others in Attendance: Rachel, Sara, Annica, Morgan, Shannon

Note Taker: Rachel

Facilitator: Debbie

Time Keeper: Debbie

Minutes

- Check Ins + Pronouns + Firestarter (5 minutes)
- Short Term Needs (45 minutes)
 - o Essential roles of each person, and who will take those on in the interim?
 - Alex
 - Closing – shift and register
 - Payroll & tips – Morgan plans to take that on
 - Stocking & refreshing products
 - Tracking things for Columinate – finance-related (e.g. sales)
 - Became liaison between managers & staff, as well as WC & Board
 - Scheduling for store
 - Unload truck on Thursday mornings
 - CoPos liaison & expert.
 - o Question: How often does Alex need to deal with them?
 - About 6 times in the last few months. Is not too much trouble, but needs to pass on the contact.
 - Annica
 - Point of contact w/ volunteers
 - o Communication
 - o Orientation
 - o Identify and assigns tasks
 - o COVID volunteer plan – volunteers self-report
 - o Liaison with volunteers on committees
 - o Opening & closing store, working register
 - Question re Alex and Annica's roles: How many open hours need to be covered?
 - Annica & Alex work 30 hours/week each.
 - Most days are overlapped with other workers in the store, but weekends are not. Recommendation is to have at least 2 people in the store.
 - Volunteer Coordinator role: About 80% is dedicated to volunteer & WC manager role during COVID times, was higher before since it was easier to step away from the register with volunteers covering store work.
 - Collin
 - Treasurer:
 - o Reports for board & prepares financial summaries.
 - o Regular communication and coordinating reports with accountant and Shelly.
 - o Head Finance committee & share minutes with the Board.
 - o Responds to café re: waste, transfer.
 - Grants – applications and monitoring
 - o Documentation of roles
 - Annica: Already has a lot of stuff written out, but needs to compile and centralize.
 - Alex has not yet started writing down his procedures, but doesn't anticipate that it will take long.
 - Both Annica and Alex are willing to come back part-time and train replacements.
 - Suggestion to allow more than 30 hours per week for Annica and Alex to fit in documentation aspect of the job.
 - o Contact sharing and email forwarding.

Do you have any questions on the minutes or wish to attend a future meeting? Please contact board@riverwestcoop.org for more information.

- Alex: Will work on gathering few names and numbers and add to Annica's WC's shared drive.
 - Annica: All volunteer contacts may likely be easiest share by providing access to her gmail contacts. Same with MailChimp. Can transfer all contacts over once a replacement is found. Can export from gmail via lists and added to the shared drive.
 - o Hire extra staff for the store?
 - Need to fill about 50 hours of store work/register.
 - Thursday coverage: 8 hours (Annica), 3-6 hours (Alex)
 - Bells and Ousia are looking to get some part-time work.
 - Bells: Can do up to 10 hours in short-term.
 - Ousia: Can do up to 20 hours in short-term.
 - Annica is interested in contacting volunteers about LTE opportunities.
 - Perhaps Board can help with unloading trucks and closing register.
 - o Is it an immediate need to fill the volunteer coordinator and evening store manager positions, or can we take a beat to think about the structure?
 - Suggestion: We shut down for 3 days. During those three days we really look at the structure, the values, the roles, the organization, the operational flow of the coop. After those three days we come in with our brand new and strong system - we hire people right into that strong system.
 - Concerns about shutting down as a resource to the community.
 - Idea shared to meet in the middle with reduced staff and WC focused on daily workshops to come up with a plan.
 - Opinion shared that if the co-op wants to have volunteers working during this time, then need to start the hiring process soon.
 - Note that hiring staff doesn't offer much of a break to managers since they have to be trained.
 - Taking care of our customers can't happen if we don't take care of our staff.
- Break (end by 7:30!!!!)
 - Long Term Needs (45 minutes)
 - o Is the structure we have working?
 - Issues:
 - High turnover rate in management.
 - Lots of disorganization and lack of clear structure.
 - Disconnect between roles and responsibilities, including between WC and Board.
 - Request to shift focus from focusing on making money when holding meetings.
 - Staff have not had consistent management styles given high turnover.
 - o Same with why Board & WC relationship has been difficult.
 - Need to figure out how WC can feel more comfortable bringing up issues with the Board to the Board – through HR?
 - Suggestions:
 - General manager that could be chosen by the WC with at least one board member on the hiring committee (as per standard hiring committee).
 - o GM option doesn't necessarily mean that they are the boss at the top of the pyramid, but could be taking on other roles.
 - o If GM route is pursued, consider a different title, such as Operations Manager that tracks more closely to a democratic system.
 - Everyone required to be on workers collective
 - o WC has a huge divide of responsibilities between managers and staff – could consider going to a different model of everyone

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- o being required to be on the workers collective (Example: Seward Café in Minneapolis, MN).
 - o Could become a worker-owned cooperative.
 - o Note that staff is comprised of part-time workers trying to run a full-time operation.
 - o Historically café tried to make a café WC and it fell through.
 - o Will need to clearly define requirements for the staff on WC and be mindful of what's reasonable and realistic for folks in those roles.
 - o Create hiring committees?
 - Majority would not like to start the hiring process right away, but instead focus on hiring temporary workers to cover store duties.
 - In the interim, Sara and Morgan can take on some of the managerial duties until the restructuring takes place.
 - o Shannon will be helping out more responsibilities in the café to help out.
 - WC would oversee the hiring of LTE employees.
 - Board members should only take on duties if they can follow-through and support the WC during this time.
 - o Including reading and engaging in the WC minutes.
 - Vote from Board:
 - Are next steps to either (1) proceed with hiring the Volunteer Coordinator and Evening Store Manager roles right now or (2) hold off on starting the hiring process for these positions until the restructuring conversations take place and the WC can proceed with hiring LTE staff to cover the necessary tasks in the interim?
 - o Annica would consider doing ONLY the volunteer coordination role after the hard deadline. Conversation for a later time, no decision made right now.
- o Consensus of those present: Option 2.**
- Action items:
 - o **Debbie** to send out an email to schedule a second meeting and continue the conversation.
 - To be discussed at a future meeting (items on agenda that were not discussed or other items brought up):
 - o How to address the issue that was brought up about the WC feeling like they didn't get a break when COVID first hit.
 - o Board retreat this year.
 - o Consider manager raises—some are only making \$1 more than staff positions.
 - o Restructuring questions:
 - Do we need to hire someone specifically for volunteer coordinating during COVID? Beyond?
 - Could we think differently about the evening store manager role? Did the managerial part fill a full time job?
 - o GMM – survey results and next steps
 - o Seek out more board members – with special strengths and availability.
 - To be discussed at upcoming board meeting.
 - o What can the board take over? Does any board member have capacity to help?
 - To be discussed at upcoming board meeting.

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