

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

Others in Attendance: Sara, Shannon

Note Taker: Rhiannon

Facilitator: Debbie

Time Keeper: Wendy

Minutes

- Settle In + Check Ins + Pronouns + Firestarter (10 minutes)
- Review Facilitation Style + Hand Signals + Zoom Specific Info (5 minutes)
- All Reports (15 minutes)
 - Store

Sara: all things are going smoothly, health inspection came today with just a few things to tweak. The inspector even bought a membership.

Debbie: Yay for Soul Brew Kombucha. More equity & inclusivity at the co-op has come up, so it's good to see more Black-owned businesses & products on our shelves. Check out the video from Outpost about how to intentionally & thoughtfully demonstrate the diversity of product sources.

Sara: Katie Jesse provided a list of various Black-owned businesses in Milwaukee so we'll be reaching out.

Vince: Are all the staff vaccinated?

Sara: Everyone has had at least their first dose, Rhiannon is fully vaccinated.
 - Café

Rhiannon: I included the top 10 best selling days just to get an idea of some trends. Seems like Saturdays & Wednesdays are best-selling ones.

Debbie: It's good to see the increase in the cafe sales, though i did see that there were some pretty big losses

Shannon: the biggest loss was from servicing one of our coolers, something like \$700, but other than that our expenses haven't been too high.

Karen: Thank you again Rhiannon & Shannon for both taking on so much more since we lost a manager - please everyone be sure to thank all of the staff. I really liked the new info in the report.
 - Finance Committee

Wendy: We lost 11,000 in Feb. compared to 500 in January, though some of that was 1700 insurance payment, utilities which should have been in January, some phone/internet/repair costs also added up. Store sales were down 4000 but cost of goods was up for 4000 which accounts for a big chunk of it. Though there was a jump on each side this is to be expected. Payroll hasn't really changed. There were also a few less days in Feb versus Jan, which means altogether less sales - not sure if anyone can speak to the difference in cost of goods.

Vince: Important thing for the finance committee is to get us through the first quarter, so once March is done we can look at the numbers again. Important thing is whether we get more PPP money & therefore allow us to open the cafe, which should also help the store sales. Rather than putting more pressure on Wendy right away, let's look again after we've had our first quarter. I know everyone's trying hard, but again we'll have to look more closely after the 1st quarter.

Wendy: Voting on the budget & letting communications/advertising money actually be spent should help. Also for the next PPP we'd get more money if we applied as a restaurant rather than as a store. I do keep hounding them to push our application forward to get the process moving, but being in good-standing will help us secure those funds from the state.

Sara: We were very slow for the really cold days in Feb, but we're well-stocked now for the warmer weather. We only have one new vendor this month.

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RIVERWEST COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 03.22.21 7:00pm – VIA Zoom

- o Human Resources
No questions for Rachel
 - o Communications
No questions
 - o Membership
Karen: We had about half the sales in membership this month, not sure why that is - it's more reflective of how Februaries usually look but still it's a bit of a drop in sales by members, Katie & Amelia put together the sponsored membership form.
Vince: It seems to be a really good program - are we going to do it again?
K \$440 set aside,
D: about \$220 from round - up
Sara: We hope to do it again for the next round-up.
 - o Sustainability
Debbie: Jason & I spoke before this meeting, & he's really sad to leave the role on the committee but has a lot of other commitments that he needs to take on. That said, there's projects for the committee he wants to take on once he's settled into all of his responsibilities. He did recommend a new committee lead named Blue who has also taken on a lot of projects, has been on other committees in other orgs. Blue will be taking over the committee head position right now & is looking forward to working with a future volunteer coordinator. Amelia has been doing a ton of work & heading a lot of projects, & Jason said to keep her motivated/acknowledged as she's been a major asset.
Karen: I would say after this meeting Jason should get a direct thank you for all the hard work; I can take on sending that out.
 - o Volunteer Liaisons
N/A
- Sponsored Membership Program (5 minutes)
Debbie: Not a lot of forward movement since the Feb meeting, we were mostly looking at how much money was coming in for the drive. We were setting a limit for how many memberships would be given a month just to make sure the program had some longevity. The documents will be run by our lawyer, Nola, to make sure we aren't doing anything that would make us liable. We are not setting up a new "tier" of memberships, but a potential issue we saw was that members can normally pull their equity. If that applies to sponsored members, we're looking to make that \$20 go back into the program for another future member. If you do get a membership & want to apply for the following year, we were thinking someone should have made at least one purchase with their membership. We were at around \$440 in for donations & \$220 in from round up, but there's still lots of talk about how to promote the membership drive & how to promote it again in April or maybe May.
Wendy: I want to make sure we track the funds & let Brian know where they are, make sure they're being tracked properly. We can talk about this separately.
D: Katie is also keeping some spreadsheets.
W: I'll try to start an email thread for that convo.
 - Membership Drive (5 minutes)
Karen: There were some problems with the past links I sent out, but should be fixed. Lots of creative ways have been brought up to broaden the target
Debbie: Goal is to get more support from our lifetime members, re-activate our lifetime members to keep them more involved. We also talked about using that as a space for mentioning the future of volunteerism, but nothing set in stone. Important to keep this demographic in mind for finding new board & other committee members.
K: About half of our members haven't shopped since the pandemic started
D: Most of these ideas are likely to be communicated thru email, though there is an idea for a flyer campaign to put them out in a 2-block radius around the co-op. If that succeeds, maybe keep expanding that circle to include a general periphery based on distance from the co-op rather than based on specific memberships.
K: Is it possible to send out a thank you to Amelia for all her help with this?

D: I can compile a list of all the committee members for this kind of general thank you, especially prior to having a volunteer coordinator.

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- Next Steps For Restructuring (5 minutes)

Jeannie: The meeting on Saturday (03/27 1pm-3pm) will provide more clarification on the different options, because people seem to be confused. That might be on us based on how we presented the info, but Rachel is going to make a more simplified flow-chart to see what proposed restructuring ideas there are, as opposed to a color-coded wall of text. At the very end of that meeting is when we're going to strive for concrete next steps so we can move forward with the actual restructuring.

D: The new, updated info from Rachel should come out on Wednesday, & I'm going to attend the WC meeting to help clarify for some staff what they can expect for the Sat meeting. The real thing to compare is the current roles versus what the proposed structure is - this is not about volunteerism specifically. Along with what Rachel provides it should be a simplified explanation in short terms. If you haven't already filled out the volunteer ideas please do so since it should help us generate a better conversation.

 - Familiarize yourself with the spreadsheet of proposed roles
 - Clarification of two options – the two proposed options should be seen as a unit, not choosing between them
 - Follow up items that will need to be dealt with / discussed after the restructuring meeting will include hiring committees, volunteer structure, pay structure...
 - Add your ideas and thoughts to the Google Spreadsheet about volunteers!
- Ubuntu / Equity & Inclusivity Work (10 minutes)

Debbie: Minutes shared from this meeting were very much shorthand, not highly detailed

W: We need to move forward with finding funding - we're going to quickly exhaust where we're already finding it, & so we should make a plan to commit at least X amount of money, & spend at least a certain amount. The range was even a compromise, with a minimum of 2,400 & maximum of 12,500 from our own spending. We also don't want to start this work until we have our

D: To be clear this is not a certification training, this would involve a long-term training to look in-depth at a) our history of being a very white managed organization, b) why we want to do this now. Though there's opportunities for fiscal partnerships or sponsorships (such as with Riverworks) we want to make sure we aren't trying to do this with a different, separate organization that has a different structure from us. I've also been contacted by other orgs that are hoping to donate & sponsor this for us. I personally think we have a lot of potential to get more funding if we network; if we can't, we can still do a training either with a separate organization, or scale back the level of training we do

S: This could be a round-up

D: Members could also buy into us doing this kind of work through special donations.

W: Are we able to vote on this, whether to make an ad hoc committee for funding this training, commit to spending between the above \$2,400 & \$12,500? I think this is very important work that we need to do as an org, regardless of what our finances look like if we keep losing money. If we don't think this particular training is worth it, then we should still look into doing a very serious commitment like this. It's not just a typical "diversity training," & by doing it we acknowledge that this kind of work in organizations often gets pushed down by organizations like ours - predominantly white, & predominantly white in a diverse neighborhood.

K: I'm not sure what the range means

D: I think that we could easily surpass our goal, but the range means if we CAN'T find all the money we need (25,000) for the full training, then we're just saying we won't pay out of pocket past this range. The reason we have a range is, if we happen to get more money than we need through fundraising, we're still committing to put some of our own money in.

K: I'm not comfortable making a decision today just based on

W: The other part of us paying a large chunk is to set an example for other businesses which is something we said we wanted to do; it indicates that this needs to be part of a business' budget & plans.

V: The arguments made don't seem totally rational to me, so I'm not willing to make any decisions tonight. We're a member owned, member run org - if membership would be making commitment by donating to make this happen, that makes more sense to me than to take money out of our own operating funds to make this training happen

W: I would like to know what doesn't seem rational about the argument

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V: The statement that it doesn't matter even if we go out of business doesn't make sense to me - we're a community-run organization,

W: Let's say we agree to spend, just saying, 10000 on the training. What I'm saying is, if we get down to our last 10k in the bank, we would have already decided to close before that point because we would have financial obligations ahead of time - spending this money won't break us.

V: That's just what you think.

D: I was going to write up a more formal request for Ubuntu so that we can have a more thorough discussion of this on our next agenda.

- Schedule April Board Meeting (5 minutes)
April 26th 7pm-9pm
 - Break (10 minutes) (end at 8:23??)
 - Follow Up on Action Items (10 minutes)
 - Update Website (Jeannie) - All done!
Rhiannon: In the future send minutes out to Liz once they've been approved to get put on the website
 - Community Contacts List (Wendy, Debbie) - In the works & will be sent out hopefully mostly completed by the next board meeting
 - Set Up Columinate Meeting Including Board Member(s) (Alex) - Alex will respond to her email by next board meeting; send out email to all board/staff about what we want to accomplish
 - Logging board member volunteer hours (ALL BOARD MEMBERS!) - Everyone bookmark the form link; Debbie maybe re-attach this link to list of reports at for board meetings; future volun <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehDGQUuV2MVwtQEVLKqNmsEVaRfFJDWUBt1CZmwy-u9FB47g/viewform>
 - Help with content for social media posts if possible; like/comment/share! (ALL BOARD!) - Keep it up!
 - Turn in Board commitment forms ALL Board members turn in a hard copy by end of March (give to Sara or whoever's at the register
 - Monthly Equity Education - Wendy will send out link - come prepared to discuss at next Board Meeting
 - Re-Review of Exit Interview Feedback (as discussed at the board retreat) (20 minutes)
 - Issue under "safety" - without employee request to show board the exit interviews, HR & Board might not have continuity between concerns. There's a code of conduct for board members so this incident is concerning.
 - Historically, the Board doesn't have access to full exit interviews, & there isn't a clear path for incidence reports between staff & board specifically (HR works to resolve issues among staff members).
 - Ideas for moving forward with grievances:
 - >NOT going to the full board (we agreed on this because it could be very intimidating to ask staff to be that vulnerable; it could result in people not reporting incidents)
 - >have written documentation of incident from involved parties
 - >have HR committee support
 - >have 1 person from the board who works with the HR committee and holds the board members accountable when there are issues with conduct. This person does not need to be the president, and maybe shouldn't be
 - Break (5 minutes)
 - The question has been raised of how to compensate Shannon for the amount of extra work that she's taken on, ostensibly fulfilling cafe manager roles since Morgan left. Moving forward, we intend to have manager roles publicly listed, but that we also would converse with Shannon to see how she feels about being offered the position, & whether we think she's a good fit for the role. Wendy has offered to be part of a conversation with Shannon about how she wants to move forward.
- W: We should at the very least offer her more than what she's making

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D: Rachel gave us some input - An alternative plan to a bonus or a raise that goes to her specifically is to offer her a management position that might not mean as much time on her feet.
A follow up convo about what to offer her will likely have to come after the restructuring meeting.

We've run out of time at this point but we all approve the budget as is with revisions to come with the first quarter.

- Discuss (& Approve???) 2021 Budget (20 minutes)
APPROVED
 - With the understanding that the Finance Committee will look at the budget and the financials for the first quarter before the April board meeting, and an adjusted budget will be brought to the board then.
- Follow Up on Retreat Garden Plot Items (25 minutes)
Everyone! Look at the garden plot; Wendy will send out a casual zoom link
 - Also, we need to discuss compensation for Rebecca

Next meeting: April 26th 7pm-9pm

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