

MINUTES

Board Members in Attendance: Wendy, Resse, Collin, Karen, Debbie, Belles, Vince

Absent Board Members: Alex, Rhiannon

Others in Attendance: Rachel, Paula, Scott, Sara

Note Taker: Rēsse

Facilitator: Collin

Time Keeper: Wendy

- **WC UPDATES**

- **Update from Columinate Consulting (15 minutes)**

- { See Abby's attached report from August 5th meeting }
- Paula: This past phone conference, we focused more on the explanation of the financial reports and the store strategies. It was mentioned that we don't have much debt, so now would be a good time to apply for a loan if we want, in a few months there's the possibility of no one accepting our application due to our financial standing. We need to identify why we have lost customers. Reviewing the survey could help with this. We need to put together a team of people to work on a strategic sales/marketing plan to target specific customers, to increase transactions and basket size. We also discussed changing how we do our pricing/margins. The idea of promoting lower markups on basic products has been discussed. We have to let our customers know our story, tell them what makes us unique, such as our social values and then also remind them that we can be competitive too.
- Debbie: Are there timeframes/goals?
- Paula: Right now we can focus on the "low hanging fruits". This includes things like the Grab n' Go options in the store that will help boost cafe sales. We need to come up with a plan for a longer strategic goals, including looking at how we do pricing.
- Debbie: How much more time do we have with Brittany?
- Paula: I'm not totally sure, but I'd guess we've used about 6 of the 12 hours we get with her so far.
- Wendy: We can look into our collected data to compare now to times we were doing better. This could help us with a marketing plan. The idea of Co-op Basics goes back to our foundations.
- Paula: Also, restate some of our values to members and the community.

- Vince: There are customers in the store and customers who aren't coming to the store anymore. It's important to note that appealing to those two types is necessary.
 - Rachel: There has been some start to restructuring the management style within the WC
 - Sara: We need to form a committee dedicated to this important task and start doing the actual work.
 - Debbie: Perhaps, we could have an initial board meeting to get down on paper our thoughts/voices and then for a committee and move forward that way.
 - Karen: I feel like we should be sharing more with membership?
 - Collin: I think we need a plan first. So we can present the problem and then also present the plan to address the problem.
 - Belles: I think doing this gracefully is important. The words we use are important. We want to encourage support and help not just say we are failing.
 - Wendy: Being transparent is important. We could start an in store campagne.
 - Debbie: Membership feedback (like those at the GMM) are valuable and could really help.
 - Rachel: People probably won't be surprised. But we can structure it in a gentle way. example: "Local businesses aren't doing well ...if you spent \$X a week at the co-op we could ensure it's here for years to come..."
 - Wendy: Small, scheduled focus groups could really be productive and give us new information.
 - Sara: We have another meeting with Brittany in two Fridays.
 - Paula: We are implementing small changes already. For longer term changes, the Board's comments and concerns are valuable. We will be receiving a recap of our discussions from Brittany. Things will become more clear, the W.C. will continue to implement these changes and ask the board for help if needed.
- **Store** (5 minutes)
 - { See attached Store Report }
 - Sara: We had successful RW24, Clarke Street Fest + Center Street Daze
 - **Café** (10 minutes)
 - { See attached Cafe Report }
 - Wendy: How are we going to deal with Abby's absence?
 - Karen: Gretchen is stepping up. A thank you from the board might mean a lot.
 - Collin: I'd request a coverage plan.

- Debbie: She could focus on administrative work from home.
- Rachel: There are some things in the works that can't be discussed at this moment
- Rēsse: Abby is working to get all the shifts covered and many employees are stepping up to help her do this.

- **Volunteer Coordinator** (5 minutes)

- { See attached Volunteer Coordinator Report }
- Annica was invited but couldn't make this meeting. She officially begins full-time September 1st.
- Karen: Annica should be reminded that she needs to be on a committee.

- **Human Resources** (5 minutes)

- { See attached Human Resources Report }
- Rachel: (shared presentation with us) We should seek out balance and sustainability. We often don't focus on the organization of the co-op. We often just rely on strong individuals and this is not sustainable. We should make sure we are involving all people in conversations that should be. We can start to work on setting better boundaries as a co-op and holding ourselves accountable.
- Vince: It's good to have a philosophy. This sounds pretty good and like it could work. We had principles but things change. Having a form like this is more defined and less abstract. I like it.
- Rachel: Some things that stick out: How to depend on others you can't control. We can have fun rebuilding our structure. Holding one another accountable and utilizing productive criticism. Reviews have been enlightening. How to specialize but understand all roles. This is a nice form to check in with ourselves through.
- Rachel: Do we want board input with annual manager reviews?
- Wiggle fingers. Rachel will draft up some questions and send out for us to ok.
- Karen: It would be nice to know a few good things discussed at a manager's review.

- **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Finance** (15 minutes)

- { See attached Financial Report }

- Collin: Labor is high but sales are doing better compared to the last couple years at this time. The store made a decent profit. It's our first month of not losing money this year. It's still not sustainable and we are addressing that. I checked over some of the Columinate reports. Looking at pricing in the cafe with help from Diego, Abby and Rhiannon.
- Wendy: Does Abby have a spreadsheet or something to jump off from? I could share what I have.
- Collin: Abby wasn't sure where to start
- Paula: Brittany is also going to help her with this.
- We went on to discuss how most of the board is not educated in reading our specific financial reports and that it may be a great idea to spend time educating the board in that way. Vince suggested having a professional come in. Rësse felt that Brittany did a really great job explaining it to the W.C. And as a whole, we need to be also reading the reports prior to the meetings.

- **Building Maintenance** (5 minutes)
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- **Communications** (5 minutes)
 - { See attached Communications Report }

- **Membership** (5 minutes)
 - { See attached Membership Report }

- **Sustainability Committee** (5 minutes)
 - { See attached Sustainability Report }

- **Volunteer Liaisons** (5 minutes)
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- **OTHER**
 - **Board Meeting Structure**
 - Debbie: There has been talk about sending out the reports and agenda as usual, but not taking time to regurgitate the reports at the actual meeting to help save time.

- Wendy: We could have an agreed upon agenda, leaving room for questions or updates pertaining to the reports if necessary.
- **2018 Board Retreat & 2019 GMM Recap** (10 minutes)
 - Tabled for next meeting
- **Plan Date & Location for 2019 Board Retreat** (5 minutes)
 - Wellspring, or any location that isn't biking distance from Riverwest might not be the best idea. Last year none of the WC could make it.
 - Possibly have it at the Hostel, an AirBnB, the Vibe, the UEC, the River Rev. Center.
 - Karen: October or early November
 - Vince: October seems too soon, I suggest November if we need to book a location.
 - Suggest sleeping over if available.
 - Debbie: I'll be planning but would greatly appreciate others' ideas and opinions. Still need to pick a date.
 - The tentative date chosen for the board retreat is November 15th - 17th.
- **Board, WC, & Staff Social Gatherings** (5 minutes)
 - Jessica has offered to have it in her yard.
 - Tentatively planned for a Friday evening. Approximately 6pm - midnight so that closers can join. Going to share this date with the rest of the staff and go from there.

Date still TBD.
- **September & October Board Meetings** (5 minutes)
 - Scheduled next Board Meeting: **Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30** at the River Rev. Center.
 - Scheduled October Board Meeting: **Tuesday, October 29th at 6:30** at the River Rev. Center.

Reports

Store Reports:

Sara: Summer is in full swing! It's good to see more customers coming through our doors. I am staying busy juggling all the new available local produce, keeping everyone's summer favorites in stock, and stocking customer requests.

Belles has coordinated 2 Sidewalk Sessions since our last meeting. They were both beautiful events! The first was sparsely attended due to rain and the fact that it was during Summerfest, but we're learning! A big thank you to Belles for all her effort and creativity in planning these events.

We are looking forward to the 24 this weekend. As usual, we will be open all 24 hours of this event thanks to the dedication of so many volunteers!

Inventory is coming up on August 4th.

Rësse has been working on a spreadsheet to track our labor hours in the store and café. This will be helpful to communicate with the FC, should help Abby keep the café labor hours on track, and will hopefully make things a little easier for Shelly when she does payroll. Thanks Rësse!

Paula: I have begun conversations with Brittany Baird with Columinate. She is looking at our financial reports, labor schedule, sales trends as well as how we price items and recipe costing. Abby will participate in these conversations and help provide information to Brittany.

She has a few questions about why we split equally some expenses between the cafe and store and not a percentage of the expenses based on sales. Because, we missed the target date for the second quarter inventory, due at the end of June, not the end of July, she will wait until we can provide the financial statement that includes the inventory figures to analyze that quarter. In the meantime, she will look at our schedule, Abby will share a link with her, and we will send her the spreadsheet we are using for labor tracking. She suggested we project sales in that spreadsheet.

Gretchen's store status has changed due to staffing needs in the Cafe. She will need to work full time in the Cafe which means the store will need more coverage, to cover the shifts left open by Paula's reduced hours. The immediate plan is for Sara and Paula to work half a day on Sundays to fill the gap left by Gretchen.

Setting sales goals has been discussed at the WC meetings, nothing concrete has been talked about, just the need to set goals for planning for future growth. This will be an ongoing topic.

Café Report:

Abby: **Labor**

New Hires/Training

We have two new hires for the month of July- one part time and one full time. The positions have been filled to 1) lessen the amount of time the Cafe Manager has to spend in the Cafe itself and 2) to fill the labor gaps that were left after a cafe employee was let go at the beginning of the month. Both individuals have solid kitchen experience and have positive work ethics. The Cafe Manager has strategies for bringing out the strengths of each new individual while also making sure that training is well-rounded.

An ongoing project is the collecting, editing, and revamping of training procedures for Cafe staff.

We are still struggling with a serious lack of volunteer coverage in the Cafe, and with the fact that Volunteer Coordinating for the cafe is an unrealistic expectation of the Cafe Manager at this time. The Cafe Manager has been doing what they can to recruit/train/schedule volunteers in addition to the myriad of other responsibilities and challenges involved in managing/addressing the concerning condition of the Cafe.

The lack of volunteer coverage is a huge labor issue.

OT

This is the busiest month of the year. In the past it has been expected that cafe employees make themselves available during the RW24, and that time off is highly moderated. One challenge this year has been the number of requests for time off and the lack of availability of senior staff members. Some employees have gone into overtime out of necessity. While it is advantageous that we prepare heavily special events, there needs to be equilibrium between the cost of labor leading up to events and the actual profits of said events.

The necessary loss of a cafe staff member in tandem with a management transition during the most challenging time of the year while the cafe is still in a financial crisis has been a lot for the Cafe manager to step into. The cafe manager has gone into overtime.

It is of utmost importance that we get the labor situation under control. The Co-op cannot afford labor costs as it is.

Restructuring

One strategy for dealing with the labor crisis is to create more accountability in the Cafe. We need to have clear expectations and we need to hold staff accountable to those standards. Since the role of the Cafe Manager is such that they need to spend a large portion of their time doing administrative work outside the kitchen (which has been a tremendous challenge in lieu of the lack of training of staff/lack of staff availability/labor gaps), it has become clear that we need strong leadership in the cafe every day. In order to create and uphold stricter quality, efficiency, and performance standards in the Cafe, we've agreed that it would behoove us to promote a full-time, senior staff member to an official leadership position. This would come with a raise.

Another aspect of labor restructuring would be to establish a minimum weekly work-load that is considered acceptable for any cafe employee. We have several employees who have extremely inconsistent and/or limited availability. It is not feasible that we continue to employ individuals who work less than 10 hours a week.

1. Quality control becomes an issue. When staff members are not present for changes in cafe protocol, they often repeat mistakes and/or simply work in a way that does not make sense anymore.
2. A lack of availability in conjunction with a claim to specific cafe shifts makes it harder to train other employees. Employees who work more often ought to have more claim to shifts.
3. A lack of availability means that certain employees will never be able to fill in for their peers. The same few individuals pull the majority of the weight of labor in the cafe. This damages morale and puts certain people into OT. It simply does not make sense that we have a staff of 10 employees and we still have labor gaps.

Raises and Reviews

There are some employees who continue to receive raises but whom have also made themselves relatively unavailable and/or they have not been performing at an adequate level. The Cafe Manager plans to improve accountability by scheduling regular reviews with all staff.

The FC, WC, and HR have begun to discuss the topic of adjusting the way we do raises at the RW Co-op.

Tracking Hours

The new labor spreadsheet is super awesome (thanks Rësse!!). The Cafe Manager has begun to play with scheduling apps which can help break down labor cost by day. This will help the Cafe Manager to strategically schedule employees in a way that will keep labor cost in a healthy zone. The WC discussed adding more to the spreadsheet. It would be helpful to track profits/sales and to create projections and goals for these figures. The conflict between labor and sales continues and we will have to make decisions about how to stay afloat.

Columinate

The Consultant has asked to see labor, scheduling, and wage breakdown in the cafe. She has also requested access to the way previous managers have costed out recipes. Cost analysis for recipes has not been done in several years.

Inventory is due Aug 4. The consultant has asked to see the accountant's inventory report.

Abby is excited about this.

Events

The RW24 is currently underway and we can discuss the recap at the Board Meeting. The Cafe followed a prep list that was based off of what was done last year. The amount of prep needed and the lack of available/trained staff meant that certain staff members went into OT to accommodate the need. The Cafe Manager has ideas about how to do things differently and more cost- effectively next year, in terms of Cafe prep.

Meal prep went very smoothly and we should be well under budget.

The third Sidewalk Sessions went well. It was the most profitable day of the month, but the Cafe Manager wants to look at the breakdown of sales for that day. It seemed that brunch was very busy that day but that the cafe was not as busy as expected during the event itself. A balance needs to be struck between the amount of prep/labor that goes toward the event and the profitability of the event itself. It is agreed that the Sessions are positive for the Co-op and the community, and the Cafe is in full support of the event. Communication and support between the event planner and Cafe staff has been strengthened. To be continued....

Ongoing Projects/Ideas

Expansion

Remodel the building to facilitate more seating/business/generate mood?

Menu Changes

Eliminate items that don't sell and create a more cost-effective/ competitive menu

Retaining

A manual
Clearer guidelines for quality control

Hour Changes

Close the Cafe one day per week??
Schedule people when the cafe is closed to do baking/prep???

Volunteer Coordinator:

Ousia: This past month I have been focusing on maintaining volunteer coverage in the store, assisting with cafe coverage, working on special events, creating training materials for my successor, and participating in the hiring committee for the next VC.

Store coverage has been fairly good, with no huge regular gaps. Some gaps have appeared on a week-to-week basis, but we've been able to handle it fairly well, even with Paula on vacation last week.

Cafe coverage has been lacking, partially due to the very low number of on-call cafe volunteers. I have had some discussions with Abby about this issue, and she has revisited the idea of hiring dishwashers for the cafe. I think that one thing that should be a top priority of the next VC is to work with the cafe manager and staff to improve cafe volunteer training and support, to help with overall retention and morale.

I have been working to staff the store all night and weekend for the 24, and I believe that we will have everything under control. We have a great group of current and veteran volunteers holding it down, and I think it will be a lot of fun.

Inventory is scheduled for August 4th, so as soon as this weekend is over, I will need to recruit volunteers quickly for that (if any board members are available at all that day, please let me know!).

I've been working to create training materials for the next VC, and to consolidate information that I have personally saved into shared files, as well as participating on the hiring committee for that position.

Human Resources:

Rachel: Here is the HR Committee report for July. Sorry for the long task list. Something important I want to highlight is that we are on schedule with the Volunteer Coordinator hiring process. Currently, we have candidates selected to move on to the phone screening, which Ousia will conduct by July 29. Details on the timeline, including next steps, are found [here](#).

Completed

- Responded to emails.
- Met with HR Committee (Collin).
- Created and sent a VC Hiring Process and Timeline proposal to the WC. Revised and finalized.
- Sent an email following up to Rësse's webmaster job proposal to the WC. Waiting on a response from WC to proceed setting up a meeting with her since she has already started this role but this was not communicated to HR--need to establish accountability practices and how to split time between responsibilities.
- Reviewed and provided suggestions for the VC job description. Finalized and posted on job sites.
- Met with Ousia for her review, discussed next steps in VC hiring process. Provided WC with meeting notes.
- Sent email to board about VC hiring process + requested hiring committee members.
- Created hiring committee schedules, assigned tasks.
- Accepted applications from candidates, created a folder, shared with hiring committee.
- Facilitated the selection of the first round of candidates to go on to the phone screening.
- Put together phone interview questions. Finalized.
- Talked to Abby about cafe staff onboarding responsibilities--to be discussed further in August.

In progress

- Will respond to candidates not selected for the phone screening.
- Will send the hiring committee the updated list of in-person interview time slots. Designate who will call and schedule in-person interviews once selected.
- Will respond to candidates not selected for the in-person interviews.

- Employee handbook updates/research current labor laws to ensure co-op is compliant

To do

- Once the WC comes up with a proposal for how to reshape the cafe management/staff structure, I will review and provide recommendations from an HR standpoint.
- Send request to attend August board meeting to discuss progress in HR role and make recommendations going forward.
- Come up with a confidential system to log complaints, grievances, write ups for WC managers and staff.

List of other projects, not on current priority list

- Work with WC to come up with training processes that establish necessary hard and soft skills.
- Review current procedure for how personnel documents are maintained and kept safe/confidential. Revise and update procedure as necessary.
- Conduct regular reviews (annual, probationary) -- the WC mentioned they might want to stop giving automatic raises and instead make sure there is a positive review first. This would mean that the reviews would need to be completed in a much timelier manner or the WC would have to accept that this may result in delays and back-pay.
- Develop a process and documentation for handling performance issues and complaints.
- Review how overtime requests are managed. Should HR be notified for an added level of accountability and record-keeping purposes?
- Work with café to develop best practices going forward with management practices, staff training, staff scheduling, etc. Review recent exit interviews, current staff/manager feedback.

Please let me know of any questions, project suggestions, or if you have anything you need to talk about.

Finance Committee:

Collin: Attached are the Profit and Loss and Balance Sheets for June.

The cafe sales were up, but labor costs were high due to turnover. The store made a profit. The WC is working on improving efficiency and the FC will help. Overall, everyone is working to get us back to being profitable.

Building Maintenance Committee:

Vince: No Report

Communications Committee:

Rÿsse: Here's the most recent Communication Committee Report. It highlights our upcoming events. In addition to this information, we are still working on solidifying a scheduled, bi-weekly meeting time to create consistency within the committee.

I am also hoping to create some signage and social media posts that inform folks about this committee and

also gives them an opportunity to join us, as we are often overloaded with events and tasks pertaining to those events.

RIVERWEST 24 STREET SANCTUARY *Friday, July 26th 2019:*

- The sound permit has been approved.
- Belles created a flier for this event + had copies printed.
 - She had Clarke Graphics bill the Co-op and has the receipt. We will pay for this using the Comm. Comm. budget.
 - We can still use help hanging fliers locally.
- Belles has musicians booked for 7:30pm-12:30am (permit permitting).
 - Musicians' compensation is still being discussed. Ideally, we would like to use part of the Comm. Comm. Budget to pay the performers.
 - Although we will not be providing alcohol to the neighborhood during this block party, we would like to provide free beer to the performers via a private cooler/keg (again, using the Comm. Comm. Budget).
- Belles created a small invitational package that explains in detail the co-op's upcoming outdoor events. She will go door to door, handing these out and talking with those she can. This will not only invite + include our neighbors but also give them a heads-up.
 - Belles has collected all necessary signatures for the upcoming Clarke Street Daze.
- Sara has ordered specific/extra items for the store (extra beverages, snacks, etc.) in prep for the RW24
 - We will need volunteers to help set up (7pm - 8pm), monitor, and clean up (1am).
 - Wendy has mentioned she can help by sending us, volunteers
 - We should coordinate with Ousia to help recruit as many (reliable) volunteers as possible.
- A giving "tree" (or table/shelf) would be a fun additive, in which neighbors could give/take small items.
- We can all help Belle's out by lending, donating, grabbing from the side of the road, the following things:
 - Soft lounging furniture (chairs, couches, ottomans, etc.)
 - sidewalk chalk
 - rugs + carpets
 - pillows + bean bags
 - string lights, preferably white (we need 350 feet total)
 - tea lights
 - projector
 - kiddie pool(s)
 - shelving + coffee tables
 - canopies (in case of rain)
- Belles also met with Abby and discussed a special menu + the possibility of extending the cafe hours.
- We need to come up with a projected cost for the above items (compensation, fliers, etc.) so that we can have a better understanding of what is needed from the Comm. Comm. Budget.

SIDEWALK SESSIONS:

- Our last Sidewalk Session was Sunday, July 21st. The weather was nice + there was a good turnout.
- I'm planning on printing off some sales reports to look at numbers and compare them with labor costs during those specific hours.
- Abby has communicated with Belles in hopes of smoother operations + a better sense of moral from the café. There are still some disconnects between the café's needs/abilities + these events.
- Sidewalk Sessions to come:

RIVERWEST COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 08.20.19 6:30pm

- Sunday, August 4th 4:00-7:00pm
- Saturday, August 24th 4:00-7:00pm
- Sunday, September 1st 4:00-7:00pm

CENTER STREET DAZE *Saturday, August 10th 2019:*

- I have printed off and filled out and turned in the application at Truly Spoken.
 - We will need volunteers for set-up (including drivers), throughout the festival + then from clean up (including drivers).
 - The festival is from 11am - 7pm. We can begin setting up at 8:30am and can break down at any time.
 - Understanding which staff members will be working the booth that day will help us to know what type of volunteer coverage we need.
- Abby is beginning to think about the food we will be serving.
 - A vegan dog bar may be a good idea as it wouldn't be too much stress on the café.
 - We will continue to discuss this at the next W.C. meeting.
- I will also ask Sara (at the W.C. meeting) about what she thinks we should sell from the store (what sold/didn't sold at Locust St. Festival).
 - We want to nourish our community + have a variety of items that cover a range of prices so there are options available to everyone.
- We would like to contact Jess to see if she would be willing to create a flier for this event.
 - We would need to come up with content to provide her.
- As we get closer to this event, we can begin to discuss decorating our booth in a fun + inviting way.
- We need to do some research on the legality of having a raffle or drawing.

- I believe we need to email them directly to inquire about the ART Cart Race.
 - Tommasina has volunteered to be the point person for the ART Cart Race.

CLARKE STREET DAZE (working title) *Saturday, August 17th 2019:*

one block, coop could have a booth. figure out number of vendors. do we want other food vegan vendors. chatting with abby. kinda late but we are gonna slam it together. ambitions but fine.

D: other food vendors, we have good connections.

do we want other food vendors. open to what coop wants.

O: maybe not other vegan vendors. other events do that. maybe we could have place that do things very different.

B: open to that

A: highlight our own food, and create a multi faceted events. music, tarot, art, etc. clothing swaps, really really free market.

- Belles would like to have a block party from 10am-8pm
 - Possibly an after-party at the Polish Falcon
- This would include a stage with bands performing +local vendors (art, crafts, food, etc.)
 - Possibly a vendor fee
- Advertising + Sponsorship would be necessary to fund this event most likely.
- Belles is working on getting signatures for the permit required to do this.

LABOR DAY POTLUCK *Monday, September 2nd 2019:*

- Ousia will be coordinating this as her last project here at the co-op.
 - We can be ready to help her in any ways she needs.

DANCING IN THE STREET (working title) *Saturday, September 28th 2019:*

- This would be our last outdoors event of the season
- Possibly Equinox themed
- Possibly tied into a final Sidewalk Session

Membership Committee:

Karen: One volunteer didn't work out. The other may not have availability.

Alex will be training with Katie, yay!

Courtney's last week and she trained me on flagging and concern form tips.

Committee is working on finding at least one more volunteer.

The usual data entry, welcome letters and renewal emails are generally covered by two people.

Need to train someone more thoroughly to help with concern forms and other tasks.

Anything beyond that like outreach will need volunteers interested in that.

We want to meet with the new volunteer coordinator so they thoroughly understand aspects that are complicated or common mistakes for volunteers and ways to reduce the need for concern forms.

Sustainability Committee:

Hannah: I have little to report for the SusCom, just a couple of things

- We have created a bulk survey that we want people to complete, it will be going in the next newsletter (it's very short) [Survey](#)

- We have made our first zine; a number of copies will be in store in the next couple of weeks.

- Plastic Free MKE has created a lake friendly business certification program that the cafe may be interested in (it's free). They would be very close to getting it (a decal would go on our door and the cafe would be heavily promoted). I haven't sent it to Abby yet, seeing as she is so busy getting up and running as the new manager.