Riverwest Co-op Board Meeting

May 21, 2019

In attendance: Vince, Paula, Sara, Belles, Collin, Scott, Debbie, Wendy, Ousia, Alex, Resse, Rhiannon, and Sebasteon.

Agenda:

1). Bylaws Committee
2). Election of Officers
3). Code of Conduct
4). Internal Communications
5). HR position
6). Cafe Manager position update
7). Worker Social
8). Finance Committee

Bylaws:

Debbie urges all to attend the special bylaws meeting, which will be next Wednesday the 29th, at 6pm at the Jazz Gallery. Agenda is to go over each proposed change, discussing, and voting. Please take a look at the proposed changes before the meeting.

Absentee voting has been requested, which is not something that has happened historically. however, since this meeting will be held at an unusual time, we are considering it. An idea is to have a sign up in store for a week before the meeting that invites those interested in the potential for absentee voting, to email the board. Are there large concerns?

Vince: Yes, this goes way beyond what we have done in the past, which has been, if it’s important enough to you to vote, you must be there.

Wendy: the bylaws state that members must be present to vote.

Vince and Ousia: If the bylaws state you have to be present to vote, that’s how it has to be.
Debbie: okay, we will not do absentee ballots, so encourage people to be there, and come to vote.

Collin: as a clarification, there will be no ability to further change the proposals at this meeting.

Election of Officers of the Board of Directors

President: Debbie  
Vice President: Vince  
Treasurer: Collin  
Secretary: Resse  
Snack Master: Belles

A wiggled consensus was reached among all present board members.

Code of Conduct

We had to skip this portion because Karen, who was not in attendance, and hope that it can be covered at the orientation this Friday.

Internal Communications

Karen not present at this meeting, but Resse passed along some of her intentions. We will need to revisit this with Karen at the next meeting.

Everyone needs to be on the same page when it comes to norms for collective messaging and external messages, and follow agreed-upon guidelines. This includes knowledge of and adherence to the co-op’s social media policy.

There was talk of creating a board google doc to consolidate, which has forgotten for a bit, and should be revisited.

Emails: Please keep email threads about the subject that was originally started.

HOWEVER please do not start new threads when there is not a new topic.

Resse has volunteered to standardize communication guidelines for internal emails.
Discussion and hiring of Rachael as HR part time staff person  10 minutes

Vince: I personally don’t like making decisions online, so thought that this decision should be verified at this meeting. Therefore, it is on the agenda.

First focus: orientation for new board members, which will happen on Friday.

Clarification: Is this a volunteer position, or will this be included in her HR duties? Answer: this needs to be clarified, because of the grey areas due to her very recent involvement with the board.

Collin has sent her an offer letter, and once she signs it and returns it, she will officially have started in her position.

Wendy: Rachel was planning on doing the orientation before she was hired, so I assume she is doing it as a volunteer. If otherwise, I’d love to know. To clarify, she is reporting to the board. What does that look like?

Collin: Monthly report to board. Weekly reports, and weekly or daily reports to the WC. We should all tighten up what reports look like, and hers will be particularly important since it is a new role.

Let it be noted that the 8 present board members approve Rachel’s hire.

Collin: there are good comments from our online discussion to read further, and they will be added in these minutes

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO THE HR COORDINATOR POSITION

Wendy:

My thoughts are that for this particular person (Hopefully) there is not a major difference in outcome in contract vs staff but that in hiring somebody who is “part of the family” we are possibly setting yourselves up for some of the same accountability issues. And that if they are a staff person then our policies are three write ups right and then a firing if behavior hasn’t changed. (Correct?)

For me it is more of us this position getting us to the goals we need it to, and how to we keep flexibility within that jobs requirements.

I think this needs to be very clear in whatever document that is created around the pin trading of this position that the board maintains hiring and firing power over this position. And that we are
revisiting the need for this position in whatever capacity we hire it quarterly until it’s a permanent position.

And what the permanent positions job description, responsibilities and payroll liability is.

At the public house we created a position for someone who was doing work of the board and then when they needed to be paid to have those Hours available in their life we created it and when that position was passed onto someone who didn’t come at it with the same passion it became ineffective. My point being we need to create a position that is best for the coop not a specific person- especially when they kick ass at what they do!

That said we need some major HR overhaul and I think with caveats I mentioned here, and Debbie’s that we should hire Rachel.

**Debbie:**

This just seems like an odd role to be as a staffed employee. I believe that most hr functions are either done by full time staff or contracted employees. Having a staffed employee over a contacted one increases costs like our FICA liability and workers comp insurance. Also, it does make things slightly more complicated for hiring and firing.

Like I said, it's not a huge deal and I'm happy to move forward if everyone else is cool with this job description, I just felt like there was enough conversation around that piece at the meeting to think about changing it to a contracted position.

Follow up email: Sorry it took so long to get back, and I am aware that I missed the deadline. I am fully in favor of the job description, but still would have liked to see this as a contracted position. If everyone else is on board with this being an employee role, then that's fine.

I support Rachel being hired for this role completely! Again, I wish we would've gotten quotes from elsewhere just for comparison sake, but I do feel strongly that we would be incapable of finding this good of a deal and this fitting of a candidate. Let's continue to keep in mind though that Rachel will not be able to fulfill this role forever and that we will probably need to pay someone much more in the future or put this back into a volunteer role (remembering the difficulties we have faced with the latter option).

**Rhiannon:**

I'm on board with Rachel being paid in whatever capacity to function as our temporary HR person. Besides what others have said, I'm not well versed in distinguishing contracted work vs direct employment, but I agree what we need immediately will change with time. I think it'd be worth discussing later on whether a future HR position would be contracted, but I believe now just moving forward with hiring Rachel will benefit us.
Resse:

I don't think the position should be contracted at this point. I understand the argument to have it contracted, but I feel that with our unique situation + our relationship with Rachel, an hourly position would work best right now. Also, speaking as someone who has done a good share of contract work, it's usually more work for the contacted party. And I don't think it's necessary to put that weight on Rachel at this time. I am open to this position changing in the future and possibly becoming contacted or full time as our needs change.

Status of Café Manager position 5 minutes

The job description has been posted, but we have not received any resumes so far.

The full-time position has been filled, and Sebasteon is waiting to find the right candidates for the part time positions.

The original deadline for hiring was the 25th, but Sebasteon thinks we should extend that for a few days, since approval of the description took a while.

Collin: Have you put in notice for your last day?

Sebasteon: I will want to be done the Sunday before the 25th, but can do some ordering after that. We are moving the deadline for submitting applications to the 31st.

As a reminder, in addition to the WC committee of Sebasteon and Debbie and Collin would like to be involved in the hiring committee.

Debbie suggests MilwaukeeJobs.com, and reminds that it’s important to broaden our scope of candidates. She offers to be the one to post there, if money is allocated for it.

Collin: we need to follow processes

8). Social Get Together for Board and Staff to build trust and improve relationships. 5 minutes

This was Karen’s idea, but she’s not here. Vince proposes going canoeing at the next board meeting.

We should plan a social with all staff and board, or multiples.

9). Finance Committee report:

Summary of the numbers, by Collin:
-The Cafe lost ~1700 and the store made ~1800, resulting in a $23 profit.

Sebasteon gives context: after Victor’s absence, many shifts had to be filled, along with prep for GMM and the follies, which all resulted in overtime hours.

Collin: We will continue to look at numbers, and look at May once all the numbers are in. I hope that continual monitoring of labor hours and overall costs is happening.

Wendy: are the requests that the Finance Committee made of the WC in place and working?

Send projected labor costs, follow weekly, and if they will exceed the budget, a request must be submitted to the finance committee. I haven’t received anything so far, so I assume it is all on track.

Sebasteon: I am tracking the schedule with staff hours scheduled and hours actually worked, and a third category for administrative work and training. Once this is complete, I will send it in.

Resse has been adding that information to the virtual spreadsheet that tracks labor costs overall.

Collin: since this is the first month, we will continue to feel it out going forward. Going forward, the Finance committee will come up with written expectations for sharing budgetary information.

Discussion of cafe hours:

Sebasteon had proposed extension of cafe hours on Fri/Sat/Sun one hour later than we have been closing. This would carry us through the summer, and then be reviewed for the next year.

Debbie clarified that cafe hours are not under board purview. However, a volunteer recently mentioned to her that they were told “the board will be voting at the upcoming board meeting on whether or not to extend the hours”. She is concerned about confusions like this and possible avenues of miscommunication around board and w/c roles.

Resse shared sales numbers hour-by-hour for the cafe, which can be looked at more carefully by all.

Wendy: It’s true that this isn’t officially a board decision, but it’s nice for the board to have input.

We often hear from the cafe that it’s hard to track info, or hard to know certain statistics, but it will be very important to be able to do this for the next manager. So, if the WC decides to extend the hours, there should be more careful tracking of sales moving forward.

Vince: we have a new manager coming in, and I would rather that these decisions be made by the new manager.

It was mentioned that this could be difficult, because the new manager will be coming in during summer, the busiest time of the year.
Sebasteon: the new manager coming in without knowledge of access to numbers, etc, will be very difficult. A basic structure to build off of will be helpful for any incoming manager.

Wendy: Yes, but that structure isn’t there now (it is starting to be built), but it would be nice if part of the probationary period for the new manager includes creation of the kind of reports they will use to report to the WC and the board.

Debbie: Reminder that the job description proposed and being used for the manager role only includes a maximum of 20 hours allotted per week for administrative duties. Previously, this was 20 hours per week for each of the two cafe managers. These concerns were raised when discussing the job description.

Sebasteon: 20 hours is more than enough to complete all administrative duties as long as other staff is helping with tasks like ordering.

Debbie: We are looking for more administrative work to be getting done on a weekly basis than has been happening. We should review this time allocation moving forward to make sure there is enough time to get all of the reporting and office work done that is needed from the manager.

WM: Additionally, it would be a good idea to go over Profit and Loss sheets every month, so we’re gonna go over them now.

Those present went over the cafes costs this past month, and it was decided to do that each month.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 18th at 6:30 at the RRF.

Note: in the agenda, there should be something fun.

PS: Come out to the Philly’s game this Thursday at 6:15!