

RIVERWEST COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 12.19.23 5:30pm

Board Members in Attendance: Tommasina, Jill, Quinn, Ned, Karen, Wendy

Others in Attendance: Juniper, Mimi

Note Taker: Tommasina

Facilitator: Jill

Timekeeper:

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89571192043?pwd=U21BS2hNVDZQRHRvblpzV0JmdUVGQT09>

**NOTE: WE WILL START CHECK INS AT 5:30 SHARP**

1. Communications Check-in:
  - a. Spectrum News is now Thursday? - follow up on co-op specialized program
  - b. Karen sent an email about her capacity. Offline we'll have a smaller conversation about what would feel good for Karen to contribute. -Wendy tasked
2. Emergency Membership Meeting (15 minutes): Wednesday January 17th. Meet ahead of time with small group
  - a. Subcommittee: Mimi, Tommasina, Jill
  - b. Goal: informing the membership what we're going to do, vs. asking for their input and incorporating that into our plan? We need to have a draft of our ideas because we have been listening. Because we have X dollars, this is what we can do with it. These are our asks: we need these people to help. Come ready to plug yourselves in. We need to give them room to vent. We need people to come to our board meetings and run in the spring.
  - c. Sharing out the feasibility study - ACTION ITEM: put it up on our website. Alcohol, produce, etc. it'll be clearer that we're working on those things.
  - d. Time: 6-8pm, at Falcon Bowl.
  - e. Flyer: Ask Maggie Buckley to do the branding. (Add Hayley to the communications on this.)- Tommasina tasked
  - f. Cafe: SELL soup and bread - Email Shannon-tommasina tasked
  - g. Have our December financials and year-end by then if we can for the sake of transparency
  - h. We won't be able to have a draft budget to review by then
  - i. On every email we send to membership via Mailchimp, volunteer emails, in Social Media
  - j. Facilitator: Rachel??
  - k. Agenda: messaging around what we're doing with the money
    - i. Adjustments to hours
    - ii. Adjustments to Proforma
    - iii. If this, then that? If we have this \$, we'll invest here.
  - l. Also oxygen mask - we've only raised \$20k. What details do we feel are reasonable to explain by then?
    - i. Improvements to margins
    - ii. Improvements to Cogs
    - iii. Recruitment to board and committees

- m. Juniper: we are dipping below our lowest level to meet payroll this week. Even if we keep doing \$3k, we're still having a cash flow problem.
- n. Debbie: if we only have 20k of GoFundMe, we probably need 10-15k minimum to keep our operations going. If we can get to 50k, and can invest, we don't really have the luxury to set goals.
- o. Wendy: we can refund people from GoFundMe before we take out the money
- 3. Schedule February board meeting (5 minutes)
  - a. Monday February 19th 5:30-7:30pm
- 4. Board meeting announcements: ACTION ITEMS: Karen: make sure dates are given to comm comm, and on the newsletter and social media. Debbie by the next board meeting will post a board meeting minutes board.
- 5. Coordinator work:
  - a. Proposal to cut labor / hours of operation (40 minutes):
  - b. Wendy: 3 options with the Goal: Cut Current Payroll Cost 35% labor cost on 60K in Revenue at avg 20,000 payroll (high est)
    - i. In order to achieve a 25% labor cost on 60K in Revenue we need to hit 15,000 for payroll
    - ii. Wynston gave us advice that we can brand our closing days as "new hours" - look at our hours where we had the least amount of sales. Stay open later or that if we need to close early, we don't always do that, and instead open later on weekdays. Make the hours easy to understand.
    - iii. Mimi thinks there are some days we should close early like Saturday
    - iv. Karen thinks consistency is the best re the time we open and close everyday to reduce confusion in which days open later and close earlier, like customers going somewhere else cuz they're not sure. Wants us to go the volunteer-covering-the-store route first before we cut hours.
    - v. Juniper- in COPOS - 8-9am is like 2% of sales as an average. I wouldn't close earlier than 7pm because the COlluminate people said we need to be open after people get off work. I agree to cutting morning hours first, like if we open every day at 9 instead.
    - vi. Wendy: I don't think any of this should start until January. Posting it as "Winter Hours so that we can improve services". If we have more than one change it should be weekday and weekend hours so that it's easy to remember. Even if we don't decide these hours this meeting, can we appoint a subcommittee at this meeting so it doesn't get lost?
    - vii. Jill: I agree with Wendy and want to make sure we advertise the new hours. I'm concerned that people might take away from our news coverage that we're closed so we need to counteract that by advertising any changes "our new seasonal hours".
    - viii. Mimi: I think 7pm is a great closing time and would support our staff taking the bus home. When it's springtime we can celebrate having longer hours again.
    - ix. Debbie: I agree with starting in January and communicating it is incredibly important. New sign on the door is really eye-catching. Little stuff like that

goes a long way. Example of cutting the last hour 9-7pm on weekdays and 8-7pm on weekends would cut 12 open hours so we'd only have to fill 4-8 hours of volunteer labor and keep staffing pretty similar.

- x. Ned: I don't think we should wait to change the hours since we've already told everyone and we need to show that we're being responsive.
- xi. Wendy: I'm worried that people need to know ahead of time about this.
- xii. We want to make sure people on staff know their hours ahead of time.
- xiii. Jill: I'm worried about coordinators cutting hours because their work is vitally important to sustaining the co-op. Can we look at cutting staff hours instead?
- xiv. Juniper: we're not close to our goal by just cutting hours but we also need to cut coordinator hours to get to 25% cut.
- xv. Jill: any progress to get towards our goal is good. If using November's numbers as a goal, if we only would have lost \$2k instead of \$4k, that would be impactful.
- xvi. Wendy: your example is only cutting \$923, so we still need to cut staff
- xvii. Karen: we need to make sure the coordinators aren't in the store (minimizing working the register)
- xviii. Quinn: we can say we're doing this starting January 1.
- xix. Wendy: we need a subcommittee to decide this
- xx. Tommasina: can we take into account staff preference? Wendy: yes
- xxi. Karen: Antoine is great at communications, and we'd love to keep up that energy
- xxii. Ned: Let's establish a direction and group to decide this.
- xxiii. Mimi: I want to be on the subcommittee because my Monday and Tuesday opening hours would be impacted. Volunteers to receive the Thursday orders would be helpful.
- xxiv. Jill: is there an opportunity to vote on letting the subcommittee make the decision?
- xxv. Debbie: I want to see the hours first. But I want to make sure the work is done outside of the board meeting.
- xxvi. **Subcommittee members: Ned, Wendy, Mimi, Juniper, Jill?, Shannon**  
(assuming)
  - 1. How many options?
  - 2. Criteria? Correct labor hours, account for Thursday orders and produce deliveries, how many coordinator hours? Cut coordinator hours to do the office side and not the store labor (32-40 hours?)
  - 3. First meeting on December 27, decision by the 30th?
  - 4. Implementation date: January 2?
  - 5. Communication with Staff: opening time might be flexible for their next schedule
  - 6. Get to the board by December 28, and decide by December 29 and get the hours out to staff and community ASAP

6. Break (5 minutes)

7.

- a. PRODUCE *[we didn't fully discuss this]*- Board request (5 minutes): by next board meeting, we need one person to take the lead on this to ensure that the produce looks amazing all the time.
  - i. Need a plan from the Coordinators for how this is going to happen. This is a critical component and was called out in the Columinate summary from Wynston. - COORDINATORS TASKED
    1. We want the coordinators to provide details on who is the "Produce Czar" and what changes have been put in place to ensure all staff is trained, along with write up's to ensure everyone is staying on task.
    2. Besides a new Produce Cooler, what other tools do we need to ensure this happens, any new equipment or training?
    3. Can we make everyone watch some videos or training about produce (I noticed we have some unusual products that not everyone might know when they are bad)
- b. **Budget for COGS** Board request (5 minutes)- Jill and Juniper to take the lead with others to create a plan here. Staying within a budget for COGS and making critical decisions about what products to carry and when we really need to reorder. This is a delicate balance that we can get help with - Need a plan from the Coordinators on how they want to tackle this.
- c. *[SKIP because Shannon's not here]* Cafe - This is on Shannon and we need to get a budget from Shannon on updating the Grab and Go product. This was another big item that Wynston highlighted- Get the Cafe open more than one day a week.

8. Fundraising check in (15 minutes)

- a. **Alternative Funding Sources:**
  - i. We need to form a sub committee to tackle this right away
  - ii. Need to reach out to our current banks Educators and Brewery (They already donated to us \$2000)
  - iii. Work with others to secure more lending & grant options.
    1. We were contacted by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation
  - iv. Grant and Loan subcommittee members:
    1. Ned
    2. Debbie is meeting with Willie
    3. Mark
    4. Wendy
    5. Meeting date?
- b. **Spaghetti Dinner:** *[we didn't fully discuss this]*
  - i. needs to also be a fundraiser event to invite all the folks who gave us \$\$\$ to see what we are doing.
  - ii. Silent auction getting items from local businesses that can be bid on. ?  
Can we get someone outside the board to agree to take the lead on this

- iii. We cannot have Coordinators (Wendy) responsible for this event, she needs to be focused on volunteering and helping the other Coordinators in the store.

**9. Board TODO(20 minutes)**

- a. Board Buddies - It is critically important that the board provide support and guidance to the 4 Coordinators. Confirm we can continue to do this and have to move forward with meeting with them every 2 weeks AND commitment to get SMART goals created the first Quarter, in prep for doing a end of March review with each coordinator.
  - i. Meeting date: Thursday Dec 21 at 3pm
  - ii. Agenda: Clarification on roles, accountability, goals

**Next RIVERWEST COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:  
January 22, 2024 from 5:30pm - 7:30pm on Zoom and (usually) at Daily Bird  
Email [info@riverwestcoop.org](mailto:info@riverwestcoop.org) for Zoom link**