Cascade Co-ops (CC) Board MeetingMinutes, Virtual and In-person Meeting
Meeting Location: 4202 Meridian St, Suite 105 (Cascadia Deaf Nation Office)

Date: 3.20.2023, 1:20-2:40p

Facilitator: Ashanti Monts-Treviska

Notes: Kris Buettner   **Interpreters:** Natali Kahm, Lindsay Gerken

Meeting Agenda:

- Brief Checks Ins
- Marketing Committee Updates
- 5 min Pause
- Search for 3rd Board Member Updates
- Open Floor Discussion
    - Board meeting note taker role
    - Community Concerns- Housing
    - The right of tenants to purchase property
    - Cascade co-ops email system
    - Workshop opportunity: Co-op Housing
    - Schedule for CC Board Meetings
    - Upcoming Co-op Conference

Attending:

Michael Marques   Board Member, CC
                                  Representative for Skagit Food Cooperative
Ashanti Monts-Treviska, Board Chair, CC
                                  Rep for Cascadia Deaf Nation
Rei Ga-Wun Leung   Cascadia Deaf Nation
Deborah Craig   Consultant, Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC)
Kris Buettner   CC Steering Committee, CC Administrative Support
Natali Kahm   Interpreter
Lindsay Gerken   Interpreter

Brief Checks Ins: Everyone

Marketing Committee Updates: Michael
Considerations:
- Michael set up a meeting with Ryan (Community Food Co-op-CFC) on March 27 at 2pm.
- CC would benefit from more participation on the marketing committee.
- He is also meeting with Laura Steiger (CC Steering Committee) as soon as possible before the 3/27 meeting.
    - He is hoping to hear more about current and past marketing efforts.
Action Items:
- Michael will report back to the group after the first marketing meeting.

Search for 3rd Board Member Updates

Deborah

Considerations:
- Deborah hasn't found someone to join the CC Board.
- The group is doing well, we are having regular and documented meetings.

Action Items:
- We should all continue efforts to encourage another Board member to step forward (Everyone)

Open Floor Discussion

Board meeting notetaker/ Admin Support roles: Ashanti, Kris

Considerations:
- Kris may not be available for future Monday note taking for Board meetings during the day.
- Currently there are two people volunteering for the administrative support role for CC.
  - Kris is helping with financial tracking, note taking, and CC gmail communications with support from Laura and Deborah.
    - Kris can continue to volunteer, but will only be available during evenings soon.
  - Laura is still managing and sending out the CC Newsletter and working on the CC website.
  - Laura and Deborah have done an amazing amount of Administrative work for CC.
  - Recently Laura and Kris took part in a Wordpress website training with the web developer that was hired by the CC Steering Committee in 2021-2022.
    - Board minutes will be available on the website, as requested by the CC Board at the February 2023 Board meeting.

Suggestions:
- We could change the date/time of the CC Board meetings,
- The group could ask someone else to take notes for the CC Board meetings.
- It is important that the meeting date/time/place work well for our CC Board members.

Schedule for CC Board Meetings: The group discussed changing the Board meetings to an evening format.

Suggestions:
- Make sure past meeting minutes and agendas are available at least a week prior to the next Board meeting.

Proposal: Change the regular Board meetings to the 3rd Wed of the month.

Decision: Next Meeting (Virtual): April 19, 5pm
                    Approved by consensus.

Action Items (CC Board Meetings):
- Complete draft meeting minutes and send to Board Directors for approval asap after meetings   Kris
- Assure meeting agendas are sent out for review to the Board a week prior to the Board meetings. Send out an agenda for review by 2nd Monday of the month.
                                                                                          Ashanti

Cascade co-ops email system
Considerations:
- CC currently has a personal google email address which does not allow for adding additional email addresses.
- In order to add CC gmail addresses we would need to add and pay for Google Workspace.
- CC could explore changing domain name to a .coop email address.
- CC has already had three different email addresses and the latest one has been consistent and is used by the CC co-ops.

Suggestions:
- CC could explore changing their email system to a free platform, such as Sciff ?

Action Items:
- Continue to consider email situation and explore free option to meet email needs
                                                                                          Kris

Community Concerns- Housing   Ashanti
Considerations:
- Deaf/Blind/Disabled renters face safety issues. Fire alarms don't have strobe lights to alert persons of emergency or fire.
  - Would it be possible for CC to be involved in advocacy?
- Deaf Nation will be looking to advocate for National safety standards to assure rental units have this type of safety.
- Ashanti met with a representative from the Bellingham rental union, which is a group that advocates for tenant rights.
- They were hoping that CC would work with them on initiatives that would provide protections such as rent limits and deposit standards.
  - It was noted that some initiatives were already developed by the Community First Whatcom group and the initiatives are available for review on their website.
- It is important that the CC Board stay focused on co-op related issues.

Action Item:
- Produce a short video highlighting information from the Bellingham tenants union.
                                                                                          Ashanti

Workshop opportunity: Co-op Housing

Considerations:

- Madrona Community Development, Paul Schlisser's group, has approached CC to see if we are interested in collaborating with them to offer a co-op housing workshop.
  - They are interested in creating housing co-ops that would explore including supported living on the bottom floor.

Suggestions:

- CC could consider co-sponsoring a co-op housing event with MCD, NWCDC, and perhaps other groups.
  - CC could use this for the fall event in October?
  - We could invite speakers from the housing co-op on Lopez Island to speak.
  - It would also be a great opportunity for the CC co-ops to table at the event, if there was a big enough space.
- CC could include information about the Bellingham Rental Union in an upcoming newsletter?
- CC has two contractor/builder co-ops, perhaps they would want to be involved in the local co-op housing advocacy.

Proposal: CC to move forward on collaborative efforts to host an co-op housing event with MCD, NWCDC, and perhaps other groups.

Decision: Approved by consensus.

Action Items:

- CC Board to continue to discuss possible fall event. Add to April agenda- Ashanti

  Contact Paul Schlisser to discuss the possibility of a joint sponsored co-op housing event in October.   Ashanti/ Deborah
- Michael to engage the marketing committee in the discussion and report back to the CC Board in April.   Michael

The right of tenants to purchase property

Considerations:

- Deborah reported that recently WA state passed regulations that require owners of mobile home parks to give residents first option to buy.
  - The NWCDC is working across the State in their ROC program to support tenants in mobile home parks to become co-ops.

Upcoming Co-op Conference: Deborah let Ashanti know about the upcoming co-op conference in Las Vegas.

Add-On Agenda Items

CC Steering Committee Engagement:
Considerations:
- The CC Board could explore ways to engage with the CC steering committee.
- CC will consider how to engage, including a strategic planning process later in 2023 or 2024.

Suggestions:
- It would be beneficial to engage the committee after we have additional Board members.

CC Financial Update: Deborah asked Kris to update the Board on CC's bank account.
Considerations:
- CC has approximately $850 in the WECU account.
  - Kris has recently paid some annual fees for the domain name.
  - CC 2022 taxes are due soon.
  - Kris and Deborah are exploring potential free financial tracking programs.
- This could change considerably if CC receives potential grant money via NWCDC. There could be up to $7000 available.

Action Items:
- Prepare a financial report for the CC Board prior to the meetings. Start CC Board packets.   Kris