



Approved
Council Meeting Minutes-
May 2, 2016
Time: 5:30 – 9:04pm
Facilitator: Tyler Strange
Note Taker: Michael Dougherty

ATTENDEES:

Council Members: Alex Brown, Steven Farnham, Scott Hess, Rita Ricketson, Martha Wales, Carl Etnier, Tyler Strange, Marci Young, Ashley Hill

Staff: Kari Bradley, Michal Duffy (Staff Rep.), Phoebe Townshend, Stephani Kononan

Guest: Alec Hill

1. Tyler calls the meeting to order at 5:36. Carl reports that the Rules Committee is looking at how minutes are kept. Their idea is to record and share audio of each meeting. Minutes would be a summary of the background behind decisions made.

Scott moves to allow a recording of today's meeting but still keep minutes as usual. Ashley seconds. Approved.

2. Agenda Review- No discussion.

3. Community Comments- None.

4. Consent Agenda - The group looks at the revised February, March, and April minutes. Steven notes portions of the February minutes that did not result in clear action steps. Alex says that action items are meant to be discussed in the wrap-up section of each meeting. Michal suggests keeping a list of action items at the end of each set of minutes, suggesting the Rules Committee discuss whether to implement this.

Marci references the April minutes, noting that the group dynamics discussion was passed over due to time constraints. The group discusses inconsistencies from April's meeting in how committees are asked to report. Alex says the general intention was for committees to report when they could, but they are not required to submit a written report when other constraints don't allow. Steven says groups will make a report when they have some progress to report. Carl notes it is difficult to determine when there is "something to report" and would like to hear reports any time a committee meets. Michal suggests that the Rules Committee draft a sentence for the

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group's approval. Marci clarifies from the April minutes that the EV charging station is nearby, but HMC is not pursuing one.

Rita moves to accept minutes and entire consent agenda as amended, Ashley seconds. Approved.

5. Operations Report- Kari, Phoebe, and Tom Leahey conducted an employee survey using the same format as last year, but with more poignant statements to evaluate. Management was pleased with the results on fundamental satisfaction questions. Carl and Steven request the comments from the survey.

Trust was identified as an issue - Kari plans to implement interviews or small group discussions. Staffing levels were also an issue. The staff needs to talk through this as since productivity is a key aspect of next year's business plan. Union leadership can play a role on both topics and will be included in a follow-up meeting.

Steven notes the trust question could be interpreted broadly - as a customer rather than just as a staff person. Alex finds the overall results positive. Kari notes that the wording changes make these results difficult to compare to past years. Phoebe interprets these results as roughly the same as prior years; Kari found it slightly more positive.

Carl asks why the response rate for this was better than for the GM evaluation. Kari suggested possible "survey fatigue," which this time of year can include the shopper survey and often a union survey as well. This survey had a gift card raffle incentive. Michal notes that this survey is more personal, about staff rather than about the GM, who some staff don't interact with as much.

Tyler says this response rate is low and wonders what opportunities staff were given to fill it out. Kari notes that 2014 had the highest response rate, but would like to see higher than a third. Management doesn't have a way to communicate electronically with every employee, so an electronic survey is not a good option.

Michal thinks managers could be clearer about staff filling out the form and provide time within shifts, and the Council agreed. Phoebe notes that action planning with the union will follow the survey. Marci and Steven agree that a higher response rate is important, and that management should take care to get surveys to employees who may be off work when the forms were distributed. Phoebe notes that part of the employee guidelines is to participate in meetings and provide feedback.

6. Monitoring Report- Kari discusses L2, treatment of staff. There is a noncompliance on p3 on safety performance. Kari is trying to improve awareness and safety compliance. Kari confirms that all performance evaluations are up to date.

Alex refers to p2, asking what level of routine internal inspections take place. Phoebe says the safety committee inspects the store inside and outside monthly, and managers do less formal safety check-ins with staff about any concerns they have. Alex would like to see these represented in the L2 monitoring report.

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Steven refers to p3 - are there surprise inspections separate from voluntary ones? Kari notes a surprise inspection from 2014 that caught a noncompliant extension cord. Regarding the number of injuries, Kari believes employees are erring on the side of reporting issues that might become injuries, which is good. Steven asks if this would inflate our mod factor - Kari notes that most injuries from last year had very few dollars attached.

Marci refers to p5, wondering if there is anything in the policies around bullying. Phoebe says there is nothing in employment policies specifically about bullying but the anti-harassment policy covers the issue. Ashley advocates inserting language about bullying into the existing policy rather than creating a separate one.

Steven refers to L2.1, noting the operational interpretation does not match the policy written above regarding "substantial input and participation from staff." Alex clarifies the substantial input from staff refers to the development of personnel policies, not the evaluating of the achievement of those policies' goals.

Alex moves to accept the Monitoring Report concerning L2. Carl seconds. Approved.

7. GM Report- Stephani says ORCA will livestream the Annual Meeting. The Coop can publicize the link ahead of time, and if staff can work a computer, someone watching from home could submit a question. ORCA also has a year's worth of Coop workshop videos. ORCA would also help create a 5-10 minute branding video. Kari is working on an RFP exploring putting solar panels on the strip of green where the trees keep dying. The soil in that area can't be fixed because of high sodium levels. The Coop is starting to plan a GMO labeling event with Rural Vermont at the Statehouse on July 1. Last week was 11% over sales growth. Ethan Hubbard's photos of Vermonters in the cafe are worth seeing.

Alex asks about the renewable bid for health insurance - Kari says they are budgeting for it now. Michal asks, with the centralized payment system referenced in this report, will jobs be lost? Kari says they don't know yet. The group agrees the attached Sustainability Case Study should be shared more widely. Marci asks how the e-receipts work. Ashley saw the instructions by email. Kari says there will be many reminders.

8. Staff Rep Report -Michal says the arbitration process is proceeding with the kitchen case. The union has been trying to collect more examples of bullying with documentation. Whether or not it is legally bullying, there is a perception of bullying. The union was involved in analyzing the staff survey. Tax dependents can get a staff's discount. The 5k Corporate Cup is next Thursday. The green team submitted some budget items, including a consultant for bike delivery to a targeted audience. Michal will attend a meeting of the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council to represent the Coop's stance against the railroad spraying herbicides nearby.

9. Rules Committee Report

Carl reads back the Rules Committee's charge as written. Steven moves to accept. Rita seconds.

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Scott thinks it's great to record meetings, but streamlining the minutes is detrimental to archiving and future reference. Carl clarifies that this motion is just to approve the charge.

7 yes, 1 no. Approved.

Carl discusses using moderators or facilitators at meetings. Susan Clark is interested in possibly being involved in meetings and notes that facilitators who are Coop members, like Larry Mandel, might also be good candidates. Ashley feels that we should be able to set clear expectations for meetings without bringing an outside person in. Scott is not in favor - council members know the material and may choose to go over schedule if they decide to. Marci would not want to spend Coop funds on paying a moderator, but could see using the local time bank to trade services.

Tyler asks what problem has been identified that a facilitator would solve. Steven says he is often the only dissenting vote. He observed a Burlington meeting where the moderator was effective in preparing the group for votes. He recalls an instance where the facilitator of an HMC council meeting asked, "are you going to block consensus?" Steven wants these meetings to be free of aggression or ridicule. Carl recalls that recently departed members have left the council citing too much tension in meetings. Members have turned down ideas before a proposal was allowed to come to the table.

Ashley reiterates that this is an expectation-setting issue on how to conduct meetings and deal with conflict. If the group sets expectations and can't deal with them, maybe that is an ideal time to bring up this issue. Marci believes there is a lack of tolerance for differences. Rita does not support outside facilitation, but thinks the group could try it so that all are judging from the same experience. Michal thinks discussing group dynamics would help, but trying facilitation could also help.

Alex asks how the group would define success after a trial period. Carl believes the group can discuss it. Rita notes it would allow the current meeting facilitator to participate more. Steven facilitated the 8/31 meeting with the 5-4 vote on bylaw changes and found it challenging to communicate his views. Steven would prefer to err on the side of having facilitators when they are needed, even if that means sometimes having them when they aren't needed. Alex questions that the current meeting facilitator can't participate. That person would have to be judicious, but does not have to leave the discussion. Scott does not find it a handicap to facilitate and participate. Carl notes that a moderator calls on people and keeps time, but a facilitator has a more sophisticated set of skills like asking to rephrase or summarize some comments - when needed, those skills could be crucial.

Alex is concerned about an 11-person meeting being prepared for animosity. Michal notes that keeping meetings on schedule to accommodate roundtable discussions is also a major benefit. Ashley wonders whether a facilitator would change the group's ability to stick to the agenda. Carl says each council member is enthusiastic about the Coop and asks detailed questions; an outside facilitator would make it safer for both presenters and listeners to move on when necessary. Steven reiterates the challenge of facilitating and adding to the conversation at the same time. Marci suggests an opt-out from the facilitating component; Scott agrees. Carl

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proposes bringing an outside facilitator for 3 meetings on a trial basis if volunteers can be secured.

Steven moves to accept the proposal to bring an outside facilitator for three meetings on a trial basis, Carl seconds. 3 yes, 5 no. Denied.

7:13 - 7:28 BREAK.

10. Governance Budget- Scott presents draft changes from governance line items. This includes a meeting facilitator, CCMA, and additional council retreats. Marci asks for the offsite meeting facilitator line to be clarified and for the 3 facilitators for council meetings to be removed per the discussion in #9 and adjusted to \$1,000. Marci asks to clarify the CCMA line - Kari explains that if three members can go, each 3-year council member will get to attend at least once. Scott clarifies the audit line - this year we need to do a full audit rather than a review.

Alex moves to accept the proposed governance budget with the change that the meeting facilitator line be changed to \$1,000. Marci seconds. Approved.

11. Communications Committee Report- Alex reports that the committee will be planning a second member meeting. Rita believes affordability and access is a big topic - something like household memberships might be a topic that could be discussed more concretely. Scott believes it's important that these meetings include enough Q&A time, potentially not having a topic at all. Steven agrees, but thinks an assigned topic will help turnout. Kari notes that household membership might not have the support for the Coop to act on the discussion. The topic was meant to include a panel of speakers, which could help frame the discussion. Ashley asks whether card readers not taking WIC/EBT cards will figure into this conversation.

Alex wants to know generally whether the council should pursue this topic and plan this meeting, but says suggestions on content can be shared with Kari or Alex. Marci notes that this would be a third meeting in June. Michal would like to frame this around the results that will follow the meeting. The group discusses scheduling the meeting for June 22 or later to avoid the solstice. Rita suggests bringing in someone from another coop to discuss the topic - Kari suggests City Market, whose discount program is more widely used.

Alex presents the communications calendar, including a tentative schedule for videos. There are no Full Scoop article topics or authors listed yet. Articles are 6-10 sentences, up to 750 words, with a strong headline. Carl suggests having Full Scoop articles that cover the same topics as the videos. Alex notes the two have different schedules, so they would not appear at the same time. Alex notes that this is just the proposed schedule so far, but additional videos could be added. Steven edited the first video and thanks Tyler and Kari for great content.

13. Other Committees

Coop as Business Model: Martha asks for any questions or comments by email. The group meets the fourth Monday at 5.

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Environmental Ends: Marci reports that Kari presented the Co+efficient Program. Member Catherine Lowther has done a carbon footprint study for Goddard and will be helping here. LED lights in the parking lot and refrigeration improvements are being worked on. The committee still wants to pursue a solar CSA if the opportunity arises. The group discussed using the roof to sequester carbon, as in some kind of living roof. Michal notes it could save on electricity costs. The staff green team is working with management on a second 401k option of more sustainable investments.

Ballot Committee: Kari reports the committee saw no need to change ballot procedures from last year. The committee is proposing not to count the ballots at the meeting, but to count them later and announce results after the meeting, likely the next day.

2nd Retreat: Ashley reports a discussion of the 2nd retreat. The main topic would be group dynamics - likely 3 hours of activity and a meal. Scott can host at his house and Ashley will send a Doodle poll with some weekday and weekend dates.

14. Roundtable Discussion- The group discusses whether Member-Owners should be required to do more for the Coop. Ashley is concerned that people who are struggling will not have time to attend additional member meetings. Requiring participation may alienate people. Scott notes that with more participation, there wouldn't be enough jobs for the members to do. Martha suggests finding more work. Marci believes there are activities other than storekeeping - such as counting ballots - that members can do. Michal suggests bike delivery or delivery to adjacent towns, activities where members help members. Martha wonders if other coops could provide info on jobs their members do.

Carl recalls Green Star Coop in Ithaca, where he was required to stock shelves and enjoyed it. The union contract puts a cap on volunteers bagging. Carl suggests members doing community engagement work, but worries about workers comp issues with volunteers. Alex notes that the word "require" was deliberate - how, other than work, can we make someone realize they own the store? Rita notes that other companies encourage workers to do outside charitable work, like Green Up. Carl suggests getting member-owners on the Coop team of the Corporate Cup. Michal suggests that rather than giving a discount, give recognition in newsletters.

15. Wrap Up- Discussion of whether to break out action items in minutes - Rules Committee will make a recommendation.

Motion to go into executive session at 8:26pm made by Scott with a second by Alex. **Approved.**

Steven apologizes if he offended anyone earlier in the meeting when discussing outside facilitation.

Tyler recuses himself from the executive session.

Motion to leave executive session at 9:03pm by Rita and a second by Martha. Approved/

Motion to adjourn at 9:04 made by Rita and 2nd by Alex. Meeting adjourned.