
Karma Co-operative Board of Directors

Minutes of the meeting held on February 1st, 2007
St. Alban's Boys' and Girls' Club

Directors present: Deborah Cherry(minute taker), Rolf Struthers (chair), Micki Honkanen, Mohsen Ahmed, Jonathan Tracey, John Viktorin

Regrets: Margaret Knittl, Charles Danzker, Diane Saibil (minute-taker)

Absent: John Richmond, Anil Reddi

Staff present: Graeme Hussey

Guests: Joerg Wittenbrink

The meeting was chaired by Rolf and those present agreed to loosely base procedure upon Robert's Rules as Committee of the Whole. This is reflected in the format of the Minutes.

The Agenda was accepted with the following additions 1)-receipt of the Communications Committee document from Suzanne and 2)-Options for Payment of the new \$18 fee) No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes of January 4th, 2007:

These had been circulated; changes were called for, none were noted, and these minutes were approved as accepted.

The minutes of December 7th, 2006:

These had been circulated. Several questions arising essentially from Item #4, para 2, were raised by DC and MH; discussion of these produced a number of corrections and clarifications:

line 1; "A question was raised by John Viktorin about..."

lines 1, 2, and 3; "Graeme noted he has not planned to provide all of previously agreed-to payment options during this first year". He has given the following explanations; "there has been no demand to date for the smaller payment options, and they are more difficult to administer; it is easier to be flexible at the year-end, as opposed to mid-year; payment can be made more flexible in future".

line 5; "Banked hours can be used";Some discussion followed, re: the use of banked hours in lieu of working 2 new hours. No resolution was reached. Also there is confusion as to whether banked hours can be used in lieu of new capital membership fee. This was not agreed to by the board, it is not in the motion, and is contrary to the spirit of the New Fee motion. This statement will be struck from the minutes lines 6, 7, and 8; it was agreed that the following sentence be struck from the minutes in its entirety: "It was agreed that the Labour Committee to the next meeting". Jonathan Tracey added that this initiative may be open for discussion in the future, however, it did not occur as per the Report.

The minutes as amended were passed.

Shrinkage:

Mohsen asked whether it would be addressed through an increase in the markup or in the gross margin. Graeme referred us to his Report in the February Chronicle, Pricing our

Products. He added that a list of strategies for addressing 'shrink' had been presented to the Finance Committee.

GMOs:

Mohsen asked about the status of GMOs in Karma's product mix. Graeme reported that the Food Issues Committee wants to address this issue, but the food policy hasn't yet been fully implemented. They will now begin to do this in conjunction with staff. According to our policy, there should be no GMOs at Karma.

POS (Point of Sale) Systems:

Interest in this issue has been expressed by the board. Micki said that we should 'concretize' this interest by investigating "Open Source" software. The board needs to clarify what it expects on this issue. Our clerk Philip Haderer has background in this. This Report will be circulated to the board in 2 weeks' time.

Graeme, and a member, will provide a Report looking at its usefulness, its flexibility, its cost-effectiveness, and how it would be serviced. Other questions to be looked at include; where the membership secretary would fit into the picture, how it might impact Operations, and member labour, particularly the cashiers, whose job would become more difficult, and whether it would help with shrink. It was noted that Open Source is more co-operative; hence input will be sought from the Member Labour Committee.

It was noted that staff buy at cost. Lowering the staff discount is being looked into. Unpaid staff shopping lists are now deducted from paycheques in keeping with the procedure used for member shopping lists. Graeme undertook to add this change to the Employee Handbook; it will be sent to the board, and discussed at the Sup/Com since it constitutes a change to working conditions. Micki suggested that staff discounts could be graduated in relation to length of employment. Mohsen said that it's the Sup/Com that decides upon the issues concerning staff that needs to be brought to its attention.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer was absent, thus no Report.

President's Report:

re: the Grants; Rolf says that the Grantors have been contacted. He will email the board to discuss options for use of the funds as soon as he receives their replies. He and Micki, as delegates from the board, have visited all committees, as per the Committee of Committees.

Friend's House has been reserved for the AGM, on October 22nd, 2007.

Building Committee Progress Report and 'Charrette': The Workshop will take place on February 4th at St. Alban's. The morning session will be devoted to discussing how Karma's Philosophy will be manifested in the new design. The afternoon session will generate information leading to the creation of a Master Plan, to be presented to the board at its March 1st meeting. The Committee will meet on February 11th, to create its Report to the board on March 1st. It is hoping for a decision from the board at the March

meeting. Bruce will take responsibility for the Design; Russell and James will do the same for Materials.

Joerg reports that the repairs will go forward in the Summer. They are seeking preliminary quotes for 2 options for removing coolers and repairing walls. Tendering is scheduled for May, with the work to be done in June, July, and August. Russell and James want direction as to when is the best time to do the work. The property lines need to be confirmed. Environmentally friendly materials will be used, such as paint, siding, insulation. Micki asked if member labour had been considered.

The process has changed somewhat, to maximize input from members. There will be no competition for Master Designer, as it has been deemed too intimidating. On the one hand they say they want more input from members, but on the other hand, this input will be limited, because there will be no competition for the Master Designer. Mohsen will moderate. Could we call this exercise a Focus Group? Could it be part of the process the grants were intended for? We'd need to have receipts for things like food and drink.

James and Russell are checking their contacts for 1-3 major contractors who may then bid for the work, and who can do a quality job, quickly. The use of minor contractors could create delays, as they have less experience. Major contractors would not bid against minor contractors, so we need to be cautious.

Committee of Committees:

Micki reported; there were some questions about the concentration of responsibilities in one person. She feels it gave her a good perspective. This committee, Micki, and Rolf will meet bi-monthly, i.e: every two months. We will have a Progress Report from Howard by March 1st.

Communications Committee:

Suzanne was not present. We had received her document on January 4th. Micki has suggested edits from all board members, which will then be sent to the committee. Johnathan suggested the committee be asked to create structures/templates that other committees and persons will use. Jonathan said that we should make this policy a priority.

It was noted that work credits could be very hard to track. Micki said that we need to examine the work credit issue separately. She added that there would not be any auto-credit; credit could be claimed ad hoc, as needs for the work arise.

Mohsen said that all of our publications lack consistency in terms of their release times, style, spelling, grammar, and editing. We now have a mandate, but is there also a need for a gatekeeper/committee to co-ordinate all of this? How much authority would this committee have? Would any committee that wants to publish something have to go through this committee? Are we creating unnecessary layers of Bureaucracy?

John V. asked that Suzanne and the Committee be required to create the policy. Jonathan agreed with this. Rolf suggested expanding the Chronicle rather than creating a whole new committee. The discussion was tabled; it is to be sent to an ad hoc committee (Micki

and John V.) for revisions, with the intent of combining the discussion from this board meeting into final recommendations, which will be brought to the board meeting on March 1st.

The issue of a Policy Creation Committee was raised.

Options for Payment of Building Fee:

At present, only about 1/4 of working members are opting to work rather than pay the new fee, i.e. out of 400 working members so far, 100 have chosen to work.

The discussion of which Protocol to use for our meetings was tabled to March 1st. Deborah handed out one method, developed by the Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform, and provided by Margaret. Howard Kaplan has also given Micki his book by Welty, the author of a third possibility for consideration.

There was no in-camera session.

Action Items:

- 1) Agenda item – Roberts rules or another Board decision making methodology
- 2) Shrinkage Project - ongoing reporting from the GM
- 3) GMO elimination project – staff and Food Issues
- 4) POS report will be ready for the March meeting – Graeme and Philip Haderer (Feb 14/15th)
- 5) Sup Comm will discuss staff discount with GM at next Sup Comm meeting
- 6) rolf will contact Treasurer re absence and report
- 7) rolf will update the Board on the Grants at the March meeting
- 8) The Physical Planning Committee will report to the Board in March regarding the outcome of the Charrette. And they will have a budget for the upcoming summer work proposal.
- 9) Micki and Jonathan will report back to the Board with revisions to the Communications Committee document.