**CHEA Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 8:45 p.m.

Sasona Coop, 2604 Paramount Ave., Austin, TX 78704

Board members present: Clayton Matthews, Treasurer, Hannah Wright, Secretary, Corey Williams, Board Member at Large, of La Reunion.

Also present: Andy Goolsby, Member of La Reunion, Ryan Nill, Member of La Reunion, Meg Seidel, of La Reunion, NP Board Representative, Phil Wilson, of Sasona, Sam Bean, of Sasona, Joe and Marina, visitors.

Clayton called the meeting to order at 8:56 p.m.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda** | **Action** | **Comment** |
| Review of previous meeting’s minutes. | Tabled until next meeting. | Will have to double-down on minutes review next meeting, due to lack of printer access. |
| Treasurer update. | Discussion. | Talked about maintenance this evening: decided that La Re will submit $1500 in minor maintenance, and CHEA will collect from NASCO, then figure out what to do with it. Sasona still has about $2800 allocated. One possibility would be to pay for a CPA with that money...  A lot of major maintenance money will be spent at La Re, for gutters (about $6000).  All major maintenance money rolls over.  Meg: proposes that there is transparency in both budgets, so that NASCO rep and all members can know about what is happening in budgets, specifically because NP meetings have a lot of budget talk. Every budget tells a story. Possibility for CHEA coops to know budgets of both houses.  Clayton: Andi Shively will help train CHEA BKs and treasurers, to keep track of what has been spent. Now is the time of year for setting a budget, at the house level. Will hopefully help us be more accountable and transparent.  Meg: learned about Santa Cruz Coops, who just ran into a lot of trouble, had a lot of different accounts, not much transparency in budgets.  Corey: admin position could help with reporting and transparency.  Andy: Andi Shively was also talking about a quarterly report, right?  Clayton: right, we were talking about having Andi reconcile books and give a quarterly report, with house treasurers or BKs doing data entry.  Ryan will see Andi in two days, will get an update from her.   Clayton still needs to secure a CPA. By the next time we meet, will have a CPA (however, most CPAs will not want to start working until after April 15).  How will we pay for that expense? We now have enough to pay a BK, could temporarily shuffle around things.  Need to take a good look at next year’s budget, to set things correctly. |
| Co-op tour update. | Tabled. |  |
| New co-ops? Marjorie Daw, Avalon, etc. | Tabled. | Ryan was in touch with Don Jon a month ago, and he is still trying to get things in order. Part of CHEA being able to help Marjorie Daw would be having a dedicated person with the bandwidth to do so (i.e. a part-time admin or development person).  Corey: someone from the Avalon crew is trying to move into La Re. Otherwise, no word from them. |
| Part-Time CHEA administrator position--short version and long version for GMM. | Discussion. | Meg talked to Daniel Miller about this position: he and another person at NASCO have experience working with city councils to start coop learning programs. He will be in Austin this Friday, will be around this weekend. NASCO is having a meeting in Austin this week. Daniel advises CHEA that we don’t have enough people to warrant such a position. Would like to know about city council component (advocacy).  NASCO people will be having a meeting on Saturday--can still invite them to GMM.  We will talk about this at GMM. Will decide whether or not to move forward with it.  Ryan: emailed Daniel last week, to ask about money stuff. And he said, there are probably some NASCO policies that would help fund a staff position. Ryan sent Daniel the draft of the business plan today.  What do we want to say at the GMM?  Explain from the board perspective why we might need this, articulating how this would help at board level, house level. Get feedback, questions.  So, do we need this position? If so, how should we find this person?  Hopefully, Andi Shively will be able to help out on the education and financial solvency sides.  Andy: if we hire Andi Shively, do we need a financial person on CHEA payroll?  Clayton: probably not…  Ryan: she would do a lot of the financial stuff that is currently in the job description, so there is overlap right now, if we decide to do both.  Clayton: need to let everyone know about that overlap, of having a CPA, plus CHEA part-time administrator.  Phil: is the idea to hire a current member of the house, or someone outside the house?  Clayton: either, same interview process.  Sam: Ryan and I have expressed interest.  Ryan: could pay a house member in the form of a rent break. Sidestep employee-employer relationship. What we could pay for now, could cover someone’s rent, that’s about it.  Corey: there are benefits to hiring someone outside the system, too.  Phil: concerned about the phrase in the business plan that said “handling legal matters,” would that include evictions?  Ryan: as a volunteer, he has had to go to courthouse several times this year, for evictions, thinks it would be good to have a point person for the legal stuff.  Phil: concerned about behavioral evictions.  Clayton: it will still go through the house.  Corey: will be enforcing house policy and decisions.  Ryan: the person would be an expert on the stickier legal issues.  Sam: Sasona has come to an understanding of what is acceptable behavior. Takes a tremendous amount of energy to kick someone out. Can see the benefit of having a paid professional to help with the eviction process.  Ryan: the how and who of hiring: Andi has talked to Ryan about starting a business back-end, to have co-op doing management services. So, there are wide options right now. Could do whatever we wanted.  Phil: concerned about power dynamics of one person posting an eviction notice.  Clayton: they would be accountable for us! We could fire them!  Ryan: would just be following policy.  Meg: would they work from home? How much would they be paid?  See draft business plan (~$12/hour, depending on the variables).  Ryan: there are both admin and developer positions, and the developer position could help grow cooperative housing in Austin.  Meg: is it sustainable for CHEA’s budget to pay for a part-time position?  Clayton: vacancy reserve fund is almost full, and once it is full, some of that money can come back to us. So, the position is potentially already budgeted for.  Ryan: that puts a ceiling on what we could do without raising rents. Looked at growth rate of vacancy fund. Have grown vacancy fund by $800/month, so that money could be budgeted. The board would be their boss.  Meg: would there be a review of the person’s job, by the board, doing a check in?  Ryan: would require them to go to one board meeting per month, give a quarterly report. There is a section of the plan dedicated to accountability.  Phil: likes the idea of a temporary position, based on funding and performance.  Corey: we should document all questions and concerns at the GMM.  Ryan will talk about the overview of the position. Corey will talk about the CHEA perspective.  WIll need timekeeper, keeping stack. Depending on the number, could also do breakout groups.  Ryan will send out a final copy tomorrow. |
| GMM planning, agenda, etc. | Discussion. | Meg: thinks we should go through a co-op structure and history. So that people understand relationships between houses, CHEA, and NASCO. Also, Roschdale principles that inform co-op living.  Also need to help co-ops feel like there’s a developed relationship among them, sense of camaraderie.  Reminder to La Reunionistas: bring T-shirts! Think of games for field day! Please don’t bring any dogs! Please carpool, plan to have a designated driver if planning on drinking, and park in the surrounding neighborhood, not in the cul-de-sac. Please bring food to share, potluck style!  Agenda is set, including discussion about a part-time CHEA administrator position, income polling, and election of community board representative.  Would Donny be facilitating? Need to have some sort of facilitator... |
| Income polling finalized. | Discussion. | Clayton: looked over form, is confidential, unobtrusive.  Corey: we should try to keep an idea of who all we gave one to. Sign off sheet.  Can poll about incomes at GMM, and for those who can’t make it to the GMM, could ask them to fill out forms at a later time. The main thing is, we need a push to get this information, to prove that CHEA, as a non-profit, provides affordable housing. |

**New Business**

Meg: went to NASCO meeting in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, met with other people who hold her position as NP rep. Met at the Couch Co-ops. Voted on where NASCO should buy their next houses: two in Chicago, one in Athens, OH, one in Lawrence, KS. Voted for Lawrence and Athens (were furthest along, had already located properties) (cost of those two properties is less that La Re, around $800,000). There are two co-ops in Buffalo, NY, three in Chicago, Coombia (none of them own their houses in Chicago), Lawrence, KS has three, Athens, OH has one currently… Also, learned there is a co-op in Santa Cruz, called Zami, that is in very bad condition. Has not paid rent in full since 2007. NASCO is trying to figure out what to do--sell it? rehab it?--it started as a radical feminist house. They have a radio station non-profit… Anyway, shady dealins there. Squatters… Other house problems, like someone spending the night, then just staying there… He was violent, then there was some legal business that NASCO had to wade through. NASCO wants to kick everyone out, besides the three residents who still who want to live in a co-op… So, anyone who wants to move to Santa Cruz, they are starting from the ground up! Probably an opportunity coming up, for someone to jumpstart the coop. Especially someone with maintenance experience… If it doesn’t work out, by the next NASCO meeting, they will probably sell the property.

Also, Meg was reminded, and reminds us, that the system of co-op culture is to ensure that the house is being a co-op. So don’t be afraid to lean on that system, to make the house act like a co-op!

Finally, Rek Kwawer, of NASCO, will fly out to co-ops, to give educational presentations on an array of topics, so we could potentially get together an event for people interested in writing co-op proposals, starting co-ops, etc.

At this meeting, we had Joe and Maria, visitors interested in filmmaking coop! Have visited Sasona before. Are very curious about how co-ops work, how they get started, etc.

Next meeting will be held at La Reunion, on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, @ 8:45 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Hannah Wright, Board Secretary

**Agenda for CHEA Board of Directors Meeting**

Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 8:45 p.m.

La Reunion Co-op, 7910 Gault St., Austin, TX 78757

1. GMM Recap/Debriefing.
2. Treasurer update.
3. Co-op tour update.
4. Development of new co-ops? Avalon, Marjorie Daw, etc.
5. CHEA part-time administrator position.