**BC Co-op Developers Community of Practice**

Meeting Minutes

November 24th, 2021

12-1:30 PT via Zoom

**Facilitator:** Zoe Creighton

**In Attendance:** Stephen Elliot-Buckley, Marty Frost, Elvy del Bianco, Melanie Conn, Joy Emmanuel, Danielle Soucie. Paul Cabaj, Marla Gagnier, Seth Leon, Sarah Abdullah, Ken Kapenda, Catherine Fisher, James Grieve, Tara Williams

1. **Welcome and Overview of Meeting**

* Territorial Acknowledgments.
* There were no previous minutes to review.
* All participants introduced themselves to the group, including new members Kevin and Sarah from Solid State.

1. **Updates from BCCA (Paul)**

* BCCA continues to pursue GR issues on behalf of the sector, and it’s individual members with the firm FHR. ACCA is hiring a GR employee.
* Submissions made to the parliamentary budgetary committee have been recommended for funding by the minister of finance. BCCA has requested specific support for co-op developments in this ask.
* Strategic connections have been made with with start.coop, an organization out of the US that supports co-ops growing to scale. A/BCCA and Vancity have agreed to provide financial support for Canadian co-ops to take part in start.coop.
* Working on the Launch of an investment co-op federation, which will support investment co-ops and provide shared back-end services for them.
* Staff meetings in BC have occurred, and look at our co-op development process. Marla, Elvy, Seth, Zoe and Paul took part.
* Co-operate Now is taking place right now, and is going well. The present group has two incorporations, and can potentially be referred on for more co-op development.
* BCCA is hosting an Agriculture Conference in February; this represents a good learning opportunity for any co-op agriculture groups, etc.

**3. Updates from Vancity (postponed)**

* Elvy informed the group that he is no longer with Vancity, and the group was advised that another Vancity Representative might join shortly.
* It was mentioned that this does not reflect Vancity’s ability to fund co-operatives; the Credit Union will continue to provide funding.
* Elvy was thanked for his work in the sector, and his many years in co-op development. The group looks forward to continuing its work with Elvy.

**4. Updates from Developers on Projects**

* Succession Planning, James: for a co-op conversion of an organic farm. James invited participants to reach out if they want any information on the project
* Blue Cabin, Elvy: 3 arts organizations looking to make a co-op to jointly mange an asset. Exploring the co-op model, opportunity to spread knowledge in this sector.
* Creative Exchange Co-op, James, Zoe, + Danielle: shared arts space looking to incorporate shortly. Future co-op development needed.
* Golden Radio and Gold River Food Co-op: groups from Co-operate Now, both incorporated. They will be referred on for more co-op development support shortly.
* Land Co-operatives: Increasing need for support on land co-ops, Zoe called for developers who are interested in land co-ops, and want to provide support.
* Lavender Farm, Marty and Danielle: worked through the Early Development program with Workers Co-op Federation. Well-organized group.
* Federal Funding Streams, Elliot: increasing grants from feds focus on employee training, marginalized people, and helping them develop economic plans. Looking for co-op developers interested in this area.
* Flower Growing Co-op, Joy: 2 successful years as a co-op, now the group is growing and needs support systems, expectations, staffing contributions, etc.
* Co-op Zone, Melanie + Zoe: co-instructing a course together, the group is mixed, and the content is well received.

**5. Sharing Practices and Discussion**

* If there is increased funding for co-op development, how can we build out and streamline co-op development offerings to people.
* What are the pathways from someone first inquiring? The process could be intake and assessment, then a case manager (co-op developer) could be assigned to help them through the process as they hit key mile stones that are tracked.
* How can this process be automatized, or improved with technology, similar to start.coop.
* **ACTION ITEM:** Zoe, Elvy and Seth to continue discussions, and present options for this process at January meeting.

**6. Mentoring Items:**

* **Mentorship process and tools**:
* Mentorship pilot program is still a work in progress. A document was created to guide the process, and has become a checklist/guide.
* What areas of the mentorship should be paid or unpaid for mentees. Several developers expressed that this is a pain point, as most groups do not have budget for mentee expenses. Payment may come from a pool to be developed with A/BCCA + Vancity.
* Identifying what should be paid, or what is educational from the mentee and mentor perspective is important.
* There will be a meeting in the spring to review the pilot program, and developers are invited to join.
* **Mentorship opportunities:**
* Joy expressed confusion around the mentorship program and how to onboard a mentee. However, she has two possible projects, an urban agriculture group and possibly Circle Craft Co-op.
* She was advised to keep the group up to date, an send out an email inviting mentees to see if any have an interest in the two projects. From there, it is the developer’s discretion of whom they would like to work with.
* At this point, every mentorship is still case-by-case. This situation could work as a test case.

**7. New Items**

* **Shared resources:**
* Danielle updated the group on the landing page, and invited more co-op developers to share their resources which can ultimately be categorized based on the needs of groups: ie: incorporation, agreements, templates, handbooks.
* **ACTION ITEM:** developers to upload documents to the shared platform, Danielle will be sending out an email shortly.
* **Standard Rate for Services Discussion**
* A list has been created pricing out the work that co-ops might need from developers. The list still needs to be validated and shared on the landing page.
* ACTION ITEM: Kevin and James to meet before the next meeting, and put together a draft document, and upload it to the shared platform so it can be revised + commented on by January meeting.

**8. Next Meeting**

* January 19th and March 16th at Noon
* Facilitator for Jan: Elvy
* **Standing item for next meeting:** discuss when and how often to meet if co-op development work begins to accelerate.

**9. Meeting adjourned: 1:25PM PT**