

Committee Best practices Work Group Meeting – Draft 2

When: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 @ 6 p.m.

Location: Online via Zoom

Work Group Members present: Anthony “A” Jackson, Sandra Bauer, Carolyn Gsell (scribe), Aaron Kenton, Jon Pincus, Arna Shaw (facilitator), Allain Van Laan,

Work Group members absent: Sue Theolass

Others Present: Aaron Kenton (accepted into workgroup during this meeting)

Work Group Members absent: Sue

Others Present: Paxton Hoag, Aaron Kenton

6 of 7 members present establish a quorum at the opening of the meeting. Later in the meeting, there were 7 of 8 members present.

Agenda

Announcements

Agenda Review

Approve May & Oct. minutes.

Approve May minutes:

Carolyn made a motion to approve the May workgroup minutes and Sandra seconded. The motion passed 5 – 0 with Jon P. abstaining.

Approve October minutes:

Sandra made a motion to approve the October minutes. Lainy seconded. The motion passed 5 – 0 with Jon P. abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Possibly change our meeting day to 3rd Tuesday of the month - Arna
2. Add new members to our work group - Arna
3. Updating the manual - Arna
4. Do we want to become a committee? Arna
5. Closed meetings revisit - Arna
6. Appointing new members to committees, continuing discussion.

Change CPBWG meeting day:

There was a discussion about changing our meeting day to 3rd Tuesday of the month. Arna to make sure that the Fair’s Zoom account is not used on that particular day. The group will make a final decision at the December 6 meeting.

Add new members to our work group - Arna

The working group discussed bringing Aaron Kenton, Dani Derrick, and Colleen Bauman into the group.

Sandra made a motion to bring Aaron, Danni, and Colleen into the working group. Arna seconded. The motion passed unanimously 6 – 0.

Updating the manual ref. Board Liaisons – Arna

Arna would like to move the information about Board Liaisons that appears in the appendix of the manual, to the section under Liaisons. The group determined that this isn't changing the content of the manual, it is simply improving the format. Arna will edit the document as discussed here.

At the upcoming Board retreat, Arna will distribute the information about board liaison responsibilities. It's also time to notify committees that they will need to complete their annual report.

Should CBPWG become a committee?

There were some differences of opinion about the need for the manual to be continually updated. Constant updating makes it difficult for membership to follow. If the working group wants to become a committee, then the board needs to approve this change. That also means that the board will need to approve committee members. Working Groups don't require permission from the board to bring in new members.

Becoming a committee allows the group to be more supportive of the membership. The work on some level is ongoing. It takes time to work through the various portions of the manual that need some attention.

Work Groups have a beginning and an end. This work appears to be a work in progress. Periodically, the manual needs real updating. Continuity helps.

Aaron made a motion that we put a motion to the board to convert the CBP workgroup to a committee. Sandra seconded the motion.

There was concern voiced about adding future members, and what we give up. What we give up is the ability to add people to our group without asking for approval.

Experience from working on other committees appears to be same as with workgroups, as far as deciding on the work to be done.

Committees must be prepared not to have their recommendations accepted.

If this group is voted on by the board to become a committee, then the board also needs to vote on a mission document for the committee. This is something this group could generate in advance. Write a mission statement that compels the board to vote to make this group a committee. When the first work group formed, the idea was that the group would write the manual and then be done.

We need to bring a mission statement along with the request for a motion. IF we pass the motion today, Arna would like someone to volunteer to draft a mission statement that can be taken to the board.

The group expressed the desire to review the mission statement before it goes to the board.

Back to the motion:

The motion passed unanimously 7 – 0 (this vote included Aaron Kenton, who became a member of the work group earlier in the meeting.

Aaron and Lainy agreed to work on the statement.

Revisiting the topic of closed meetings:

This group agreed to bring a re-write for Closed Meetings back to the board. At the last meeting we received the suggestion to poll other committees about their use of closed meetings.

Arna would like to rewrite the previous motion to make it clearer. Aaron suggested bullet-point format. Many in this group still have a concern about the category “sensitive” subject. The concern was misuse of the term. Who decides what is sensitive and what is not?

The group was reminded that any request still must be approved by the Board President and the Board liaison to that committee. Additionally, the whole board needs to be notified.

Paxton explained his NO vote at the last board meeting. He finds It is too restrictive. He has been watching committee work for decades and sees closed meetings rarely being requested. He feels that there is a reaction to one committee and that is a poor reason to make this choice.

There was a strong opinion concerning the use of “sensitive subjects”. One work group member stated they have seen this option terribly abused. The manual, as it currently reads, already says you can only have closed meetings for legal, personnel, and real estate issues. Folks violating Guidelines should be addressed by staff (operational), Cedar (conflict resolution), or the board (bylaws). Committees are for advisory topics that should always be open to Fair membership to participate in. The board is full of political comings and goings over the years. Committees are the one place where we can be free of that.

We should poll committees to ask them under what circumstances they would need to request a closed meeting.

Back when the original manual was made, there was an extensive discussion around the topic of closed meetings. If a committee can identify under what circumstances they would need to request a closed meeting, then we could provide reasonable accommodation. Perhaps we need to redefine some of the original wording. Do we need to expand the definition of “personnel”? We need to put more thought into this. We also need to think about what’s going to get passed by the board.

Some feel it is important to have exceptions to closed meetings, given what the food and crafts committees deal with.

Board members should have a right to go to any meeting, open or closed, because board members are responsible for policy and what is in the best interest of the organization. Sometimes we must put up guardrails when we see behavior that is harmful to the membership and the organization.

We should be focused on finding win-win solutions.

NEXT MEETING:

Weds. Dec 6, at 6 p.m.

MEETING EVALUATION:

General agreement that we had a good meeting. Folks were reminded to be mindful of how much time they have on the floor so that other voices have time to speak. We must strive to keep our meetings to no longer than two hours.

The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS PASSED:

- May meeting minutes approved 5 – 0, with 1 abstention.
- October meeting minutes approved 5 – 0, with 1 abstention.
- Accept Colleen Bauman, Dani Derrick, and Aaron Kenton into the group. Approved 6 – 0
- Bring a motion to the Board to make Committee Best Practices Working Group a committee – Approved 7 - 0

HOMEWORK

- Mission statement – Aaron and Lainy
- Edit manual – reformat section on Board liaisons - Arna
- Send letter to committees about annual report - Arna
- Reach out to Danni and Colleen about workgroup membership – Arna
- Reach out to Dani re. scribe duties – Carolyn
- Create bullet point style of the original motion for the closed Committee Meetings board motion, and distribute to the group for review - Aaron

PARKING LOT

1. Board liaison roles and responsibilities. Can they delegate that role? Can meetings take place in their absence.
2. How much member input is reasonable.
3. Web conference- Hybrid meetings
4. Policies and practices regarding the recording of committee meetings and the approved ownership, dissemination, and uses of recordings
5. Are committees still active and meeting essential and recommended practices? Does the annual report answer the question?

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Gsell, scribe.