

PEPartnership Board of Director Minutes: December 12, 2015

Present: Christine, Pete, Mike, Faith, John at meeting start; Carol was able to join the meeting at 10:30, giving a quorum for the meeting.

Board of Directors Transitions

This year we lost Cassie, Karen and Ginny; Pete will be transitioning off as soon as we can fill the 4 empty seats.

From the October discussion session (since no quorum was available), we received an email from Lorraine Braithwaite, coordinator of the Grace Episcopal Food Pantry and PEP. At this meeting, Lorraine's nomination was approved unanimously.

Pete and Christine discussed three other people to invite to join the Board (one from Plymouth, one from one from Zion, one from St. Andrews.

Lois had sent out letters to about a dozen local churches, asking for an opportunity to speak to their congregation (which could also include an opportunity to recruit Board members), but got no response from those letters. She suggested recruiting from the staff (clergy or lay ministry) of those local to consider joining the . Lake Edge Lutheran and Lake Edge UCC would be likely candidates for recruitment, as they already have ties and links to PEPartnership and PEP Atwood.

Transition in Mobile Communication & Funding Service

Christine reported on an offer from MobileCause to contract with them for marketing/ funding/ communication services. They're a five-year-old company with an impressive list of clients, from very small agencies to very small to very large, but they work only with not-for-profit companies. They are considerably more expensive, even at our (non-publicized) initial rate (~\$200/month, rather than the \$15-20/month) than the service we've been using (Constant Contact), but they offer much better support, much better training, an extensive list of on-line training/information videos, and a much better integrated set of tools.

Based on e-mail and phone conversations with Board members in late November, Christine did contract with MobileCause as of December 1; the contract runs through December 31, 2016. (Assuming we did renew - which is our option, not an automatic process - the rate for 2017 would be \$3,500; the larger the organization, the larger the annual fee, but we would need to grow quite dramatically before we jumped into the next fee category.)

Among the more appealing tools that MobileCause offers is one that allows individual supporters of PEPartnership or PEP Atwood to conduct their own individual drives with their friends, family, colleague, neighbors - which would provide some of the volunteers and guests who can't afford to support us financially themselves to support us via their enthusiasm for our ministry. In addition, they have integrated tools for vent announcements, funding campaigns, tickets (partial donations), receipting, tax reporting and exportable (CSV) admin reporting. They charge no fee on the first \$5K raised;

after that, it's a then flat 2.5% on further donations. (By comparison, PayPal, our current on-line pay mechanism, charges is a flat fee of \$0.30 per donation, plus 2.9% of the amount of the donation.)

PEPartnership 10th Anniversary

This coming June marks the tenth anniversary of what grew into PEPartnership, Inc., and the PEPartnership Alliance. (PEP Zion, then a program of Zion Church ELCA registered its first two households on June 8, 2006.) Christine emphasized the need to make this a major celebration for the ministry, growing as it has from one small program in one fairly small congregation to a separate non-profit agency that networks to support six other agencies (five in Wisconsin and one in New York).

The focal celebration for the anniversary is a fund-raising dinner. Initial plans looked at holding the dinner at Goodman Community Center on Saturday, June 4, 2016. Unfortunately, that date (along with Friday, June 3) is not available; the earliest Saturday availability would be June 18, although Friday, June 10, is available. As a result, and at the recommendation of Linda Newman, who has been involved with planning similar events for Madison-area Urban Ministry (MUM) and with the dinners that Grace Episcopal Food Pantry has held, Christine is now checking with Lake Edge Lutheran Church, which offers good flexibility, a lower rental fee, easier parking, and easier-to-find location. (An open bar is probably not available, though Christine will explore this.)

Ticket prices will be determined as soon as we can lock down reasonable estimates for facility rental, catering charges, etc. We will be making a few tickets complimentary for the various PEPartnership Alliance agencies (for use by their boards and/or staff/volunteers).

Christine will work with Linda Newman and others to determine what sub-committees should be established (set-up responsibilities, clean-up responsibilities, entertainment, door prize solicitation, etc.)

We will also be working intensely to get media coverage for the fund-raising dinner, and for the need our ministry helps address, since it is so little known in the general community.

Refining our product life span definitions

Faith recently raised the issue of the accuracy of our product lifespan definitions. Those calculations are founded on Sue Marks' experience at the start of the pantry, but, as Faith noted, that's only one household. To provide more accurate information, Faith proposed a study to expand the sampling, by asking our guest households to assist us with data collection. She suggested that this be done by providing any households willing to assist in this regard with products labelled with a form that would include the household ID (only), and asking the guest household to write in the date they started to use the product and the date that the product ran out, and then return the product to whichever PEP they visited once the product was gone. PEPartnership would then collect that information in a log would that data. The information would allow analysis by household size and number of

users for the particular product being surveyed, which would allow us to gain an idea of averages and ranges. PEP Atwood will certainly conduct this research; all other pantries could also participate, which would allow for wider sampling.

Only one product would be picked per research period (one month? one quarter?), so as not to overload the guests with multiple data requests.

This study will not be scientifically rigorous, but we will be able to report the constraints in accurately that are implied with the methodology, so that others referring to our interim and final reports are aware of those constraints and their implications. (Also, because this is likely to be a multi-year project, we will be able to examine our methodology for possible refinement at the end of each research period.)

Labels (for all PEPs participating in the study) will all be prepared by PEP Partnership itself. Information on each label will include (at least):

Distributed by [_____] PEP *(each PEP will receive its own set of labels)*

Household ID [_____] (filled in by picker/filler from shopping list)

First used on (date) [_____] *(filled in by household)*

Ended on [_____] *(filled in by household)*

Please return to whatever PEP Alliance Pantry you next visit; they will relay the information to our research team.

An FAQ about why we are conducting this research, what this information will mean to PEP guests, how it might be used to help address this need more generally, outlining the procedures and emphasizing the fact that no personally identifiable information will be reported as part of any and all reports that result from this research, and assuring them that they are more than welcome to request interim research results, will be presented as part of the invitation to participate. A hard copy will also be given to each household for their general reference.

The suggested procedure is that the Coordinator and/or Host and/or Research Outreach volunteer will invite each household to participate as the guest receives their shopping list. Either at that point (probably preferable) or when the shopping list is returned, the shopping list will be marked with some distinctive and easy-to-see symbol, to prompt the picker-filler to attach the research label to the product specified for that research period.

We welcome input from any and all PEP volunteers on refinements to this proposed procedure. To help ensure data reliability, it is suggested that all PEPs agree on a single procedure.

Change to PEP Reports

Lois' coverage during Christine's absence last winter/spring exposed the need for better documentation on the average number of each product needing to be ordered each week. After a glitch in the ordering process late summer, Christine developed a report that looked at the average number of products that households would be eligible each week, and the probable percentage of products eligible that were likely to be requested. Christine felt that this would be a valuable chart for each individual pantry within the Partnership (a

conclusion that was strengthened by a request from one of the Coordinators at the Good Neighbors PEP); at her request, Mike added a report based on Christine's calculations to the Consumption tab under REPORTS on PEPbase.

Votes once quorum achieved

10:40 – Approved (retroactively) the contract with MobileCause.

10:44 – Unanimous approval of Lorraine Brathwaite as new board member.

10:45 – Unanimous approval for preliminary plans/structure for June fund-raising dinner (at Goodman if available).

Other issues and notes

Pat Brestar, the former Coordinator at PEP Stoughton, has stepped away from that role and involvement with PEP Stoughton. As a result, there is new management at the Pantry, who did not receive adequate background information and training. In particular, product definitions and their relationship to allowed visit frequency hadn't made it to staff; Christine sent an email explaining that relationship. It will serve as an excellent first draft of a standard web resource for both current and future cooperating agencies.

John will put Sue Cotten and Christine in touch in case Nehemiah locates volunteers/agencies who might be interested in starting another PEP.

One of our guests, who has also served as a volunteer, had expressed interest in starting a PEP at her church out on Commercial Avenue; Lois suggested instead that Gwen suggest inviting her church to become a congregational sponsor in helping to fund PEP Atwood, a strategy that should be considered as we look at coverage around Madison and Dane County.

A university student acquaintance of Arlen spent a couple hours at Atwood last week learning (and helping to fill guest orders). She may be in touch with Christine in the future for more information and background.

StreetPulse, a local newspaper staffed and sold by individuals who are homeless (who have to meet certain criteria and standards) ran an article in their December issue on areaPEPs and the need for our ministry. Christine sent a thank-you note via email, and was contacted very shortly thereafter by the newspaper's editor (the author of the article) for a much more extensive article on PEP Partnership, Inc., in January, and an invitation to feature each of the area PEPs in future issues. Christine will be in contact with PEP Coordinators about logistics for these articles.

Because of conflict with Lorraine Braithwaite's schedule, we need to look at rescheduling Board meetings; Thursday or Saturday afternoons were mentioned as possibilities.

qNext Meeting: Sometime in February. Christine will poll Board members about availability.