

October, 2024

Fellow CPC Members,

Fall is finally in the air and isn't it a beautiful one! I am so excited to see everyone this weekend, and hope if you aren't here you will add it to your calendar for next year!

Memorial Day and Membership weekend we had a committee meet and greet which produced some interesting conversations. The group who met on the followup to our last bylaw change (on items that didn't get addressed) have come up with a comprehensive list of things we need to relook at. Hence this year I will be calling another special committee to address these issues. If you would like to participate then please let me (chair@) or Heather Turner know (vc@).

Since May, the CPC Board transitioned and onboarded new members. This is an amazing group and really great to work with. We are still trying to finish a perpetual governance calendar, get committees functioning rhythmically, and as always work on our strategic priorities.\* We will be updating these priorities in tandem with Eddie DeGraw doing hers. Much of the ones we have are ongoing, but this year I hope we will be carving out time for anti-bias training as a group, as well as really focus on communication and marketing.

One of our strategic priorities was to work on employee, volunteer and work trade policies and a handbook. The Volunteer and Work Trade Policy has taken us quite a bit of time to pass, as we attempted to balance the ideals of CPC with the practicality and legality of how we operate. We had some outside legal counsel review and answer questions about our new policy (see below), and have come up with something that will meet wage and hour requirements, as well as define the difference between a work-trade volunteer and staff. I want to point out that our policy should maintain the ability of people to engage in work-trade and volunteering for short periods as we have before. ***We will not however have long term work-trade/volunteering in exchange for living on property for the primary reasons that:***

- Distinct roles between staff and volunteers (or any circle, group, constituency, area of authority) help prevent confusion about tasks and accountability.
- Differentiating between volunteers and staff reinforces the professional nature of the workplace. (Yes this is corporate speak, but to rent externally and run a summer camp we have to have certain things in place that only staff should be handling.)
- Maintaining boundaries ensures volunteers receive appropriate support without overwhelming them with expectations or worse, not knowing what their expectations and boundaries are.
- Clear distinctions help organizations navigate legal responsibilities. Staff have different obligations, including compliance with labor laws that don't apply to volunteers.
- If issues arise, it's easier to address them when roles are clearly defined.
- Maintaining boundaries contributes to a healthy organizational culture. It fosters respect and collaboration while allowing each group to thrive in its capacity.

By keeping these distinctions clear, we hope to create a more effective and harmonious working and living environment for both volunteers, members and staff.

One impact of this policy and the upcoming FLSA exempt employee minimum salary change is an increase to our staffing budget. We also recognize that increasing the wages of summer camp staff will be necessary to retain high quality staff. This past summer was very short staffed in part due to the low wages we continue to offer.

I will leave the financial discussion to that report, but as prices continue to rise, buildings continue to age, we are going to have to keep working on how we run events and our membership numbers and fees. I will be asking the board to consider proposing another membership dues increase in the spring.

Over the years since covid we have broadened who is managing event registrations, and setting event policies. Two years ago we decided to more formally evaluate each event with a mission, purpose, values, goals and contributions lense as well as its impacts and budget now called the Program Outcome and Evaluation tool. Additionally we will include the goal of covering associated overhead costs and not just the direct costs. The first draft (thanks to all who worked hard on this!) will be considered during the membership meeting. *This ever evolving tool welcomes input and discussion.* In fact the **discussion is key to our improvement.** In working through this process our active voting members have expressed differing opinions on how programs meet our needs, or are viewed. When determining where to put resources or areas we need to focus on supporting it is helpful for us to have a common understanding of our starting place from our differing perspectives.

On the financial side, we have a hill to climb and we have to make up some of the loss of last year. Laying this foundation of understanding of program value, limitations, costs benefits and participation will help when the board or Eddie have to request changes to how we function. Last year we canceled an event due to low registration - we may have to do that again.

What you can help with this year - register early for events and get others registered etc. We are still working on getting events up for registration several months in advance, so that is on us, but once we do please help us put butts in seats. Also find one new person and introduce them to CPC. Our membership is aging, and we have been hovering around 230 active members for several years. Of that, less than a fourth vote and even less attend membership meetings.

On the upside, staff and members worked really hard on several things this year - Eddie and others will highlight them in their reports, but there was quite a bit of building improvement, relationship building and culture development happening. I will leave those celebrations to others but know that while focusing on the concerns we have for CPC does not outweigh the wonderful summer we had.

yours in service,

Romy Fitschen, Board Chair 2024-2025

**CPC Board 2024 - 2025 List, position & committee representative assignment:**

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Aidan Albano-Bachtell*, Secretary - Membership/Outreach            | <a href="#">Secretary@</a> |
| Nelson Brown - Program & Education                                 |                            |
| Caleb Carpenter, Treasurer - Finance, Endowment                    | <a href="#">treasurer@</a> |
| Aaron Carlson  |                            |
| Romy Fitschen, Chair - Executive Committee,                        | <a href="#">chair@</a>     |
| Meia Freidheim*  |                            |
| Isabella Friedheim Perez*  |                            |
| Linda Gellasch - Finance   |                            |
| Maya Gomberg** - Summer Camp                                       |                            |
| Deborah Olson - Buttermilk, Fundraising                            |                            |
| Josh Olson, Vice Chair 2 - Personnel, Bylaws, Endowment            | <a href="#">personnel@</a> |
| Erika Tellez** - Buttermilk  |                            |
| Heather Turner, Vice Chair - Nominating, Election, Committee Coord | <a href="#">vc@</a>        |
| Steve Walsh*   |                            |

\*Term Ending 2025      \*\*Alternate

**Future Meetings (Sundays 4-6 pm) (Still working on easy virtual access for members)**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| October 27, 2024  | Membership Meeting - Memorial Wknd May 2025 |
| November 17, 2024 | June 22, 2025                               |
| January 26, 2025  | July 27, 2025 - Board Onboarding training   |
| February 23, 2025 | August 24, 2025                             |
| March 23, 2025    | September 28, 2025                          |
| April 27, 2025    | October 26, 2025                            |
| May 18, 2025      | November 23, 2025                           |

**Committees Open to Membership (email [vc@circlepinescenter.net](mailto:vc@circlepinescenter.net) Heather Turner )**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Program/Education - need members to help with each program/event | *Finance                            |
| Membership/Outreach  | Buttermilk Program                  |
| Facilities   | Summer Camp Program                 |
| Land Use   | *Personnel                          |
| *Nominating  | *Special Committee - Archives       |
| *Election  | *Special Committee - Bylaws         |
| Fundraising  | *with approval/appointment/election |
|  | **Programs                          |

**Board Approved: 9/22/2024**

**Definitions:**

- **Work-trade Volunteer:** A work-trade arrangement is an arrangement where an individual may temporarily volunteer at Circle Pines Center .
- **Long-term Work-Trade Volunteer:** A work-trade arrangement that is 14 days or longer is considered a long-term work trade arrangement.
- **Residential Work-Trade Volunteer:** A work-trade arrangement where the volunteer is provided with complimentary food, housing, and or utilities while living at Circle Pines Center (CPC).

**Long-Term Volunteer Policies:**

- **Long-Term Volunteer agreement:** All work-trade arrangements must have a written volunteer agreement signed by both the volunteer and the Executive Director before the start date of the work-trade arrangement. The volunteer agreement will include at a minimum the following terms:
  - Volunteer Services
  - Start and End dates (for Residential Work-Trade Volunteers)
- **Duration for long-term residential work-trade:** The maximum duration for a long-term residential work-trade arrangement is 4 months starting from the day the individual arrives at Circle Pines Center.
- **Seasonal start and end date for long-term residential work-trade:** No long-term residential work-trade arrangement may start before May 1 nor extend past November 1 on any given year.

**Volunteer and Work-Trade Policies (applies to Long-Term Volunteers):**

- **Community participation guidelines:** All members of the Circle Pines Center community must agree to the community participation guidelines. Repeated or severe violations of the community participation guidelines may result in a permanent or temporary suspension of the long-term work-trade arrangement, depending on the severity of the violation the volunteer may be asked to leave immediately.
- **Housing Assignments:** All volunteers are expected to accept housing assignments from available housing, as assigned by the Executive Director (or a designated employee).
- **Termination:** A volunteer agreement may be terminated by the Executive Director at any time, and the volunteer may be asked to leave Circle Pines Center.

## **Strategic Priorities 2023-2024 Continued**

### **Communications**

- Event procedure and communication policies (Staff, Committee Support) - in process
  - Timely communications and website information - this year we are behind again
  - Deadlines for all information from event organizers - not complete
  - Including on facilities, finances and progress on strategic goals - reporting happening
  - Including onsite information for members/visitors about current facilities priorities and known facilities needs - done
- Marketing & Communications plan (Staff)

### **Financial Goals**

- Formalized written financial policies (Finance Committee) - in process
- Budget/financial reporting within 45 days quarter end (ED, Finance Committee) - in process
- Program Cost/Benefit Analysis & Program Values - Now called Program Outcome and Evaluation Mapping (Staff, Committees and Board)

### **Facilities Goals**

- High-level building and infrastructure priorities presented to the board (Facilities Committee, Staff) - not yet presented but complete (?)
- Prioritized list of Facilities maintenance needs (Facilities Committee) - No yet presented to members but completed (?)
- Mechanism to report individual housing and facilities issues by attendees (Staff) - complete

### **Membership/Participant Culture**

- Committee chair training (Board) - complete
- Committee calendars (Committee Chairs, Staff) - in process
- Communication followup with event attendees and new members to encourage broader participation at CPC (Membership/Outreach Committee? Event Committee?)
- Script for the what it means to be a member and membership responsibilities, and frequent place where it is spoken (Membership/Outreach Committee, Staff)
- Re-engage people in work bees and committees (All) - step 1 - promotion
- CPC Culture Improvement (All) - in process

### **Employee/Residential Work Trade Goals**

- Formalized written residential work trade policies (Personnel Committee) - complete
- Formalized written work trade policies/procedures (Personnel Committee, Staff) - policy complete, working on operational documents and then handbook
- Written job descriptions for employees and residential work trade (Executive Director) - complete (no residential) - need to be presented to board
- Mediation/Restorative justice for ongoing workplace issues (Personnel Committee, Staff) - completed - the are working on other prof dev now