

Production Brainstorming Minutes

October 30, 2018

10:30am – 12:00pm

Attending: Nancy B., Carrie P., Beth S., Ann K., Karla M. and Steve H.

A. Follow-up from last meeting:

- i. Ann reached out to CentrCare and found they had a vendor vetting process. She followed the format outlined by the process but has not heard back yet. Karla mentioned that she has a contact with CentraCare's clinic, David Tilstra. Karla will ask David for a contact person with whom Ann could possibly speak.
- ii. Ann reported that Charlie Clour responded to our inquiry about gaining his assistance to help with our Electrolux/West Rock losses by sending us his proposal to work with us. His costs are significant, about 10K a month. We will continue to stay in contact with Charlie. He has continued to provide some good ideas and help along the way at no charge.
- iii. Discussion was held related to the idea of having a broader spectrum of clients engaged/paid to work on ThriftWorks work across WACOSA. The idea is still worthy of consideration, though there remains some concern on how to pay clients to do the work since minimum wage or above would not be realistic or possible with most clients. The main hurdle is significant decision-making hurdles that many clients would have trouble with. We will continue to pursue this possibility since the value of leveraging our store makes good sense, as long as we can work out the associated challenges. Steve will revisit the idea again next month to see what progress we have made in this direction. Ann has agreed to pursue the idea on behalf of this committee.
- iv. Nancy and Steve met with Mike K. and Dan R. of Accessibility, Inc. They toured and had lunch with WACOSA staff. We continue to stay in contact with them regarding the possibilities we might accomplish together collaborating on some project or product.
- v. Nancy and Steve met with Gail C. and Patti G. of GSCDC to talk about strategy for helping WACOSA handle potential future work losses. WACOSA is now investing in this group and WACOSA staff will begin participating in groups they have in the future. Ann mentioned that the CMMA was asked to tour WACOSA. CMMA representatives declined to tour but will host a meeting in 2019 that will highlight the value of hiring people with disabilities. Ann will be asked to present and will subtly share WACOSA at this time, as well.
- vi. Career Solutions representatives got in contact with Ann regarding information on intern possibilities in collaboration with SCSU and SCTC. Through this contact, Ann attended the recent job fair and felt she got some great leads in this venue.
- vii. Ann and Nancy researched the possibility of pursuing state contracts. Both felt the pursuit of such work is incredibly time-consuming since every possible opportunity on the web site has an RFI attached to it. At this time, this possibility will remain something we will consider but not as a priority, given the challenges and time associated with this process.
- viii. Ann presented on possibilities with Fields Manufacturing. The existing possibilities mentioned last month are all still in place. Additional possibilities expressed by Fields Management included the possibility of WACOSA running a machine to do ribbon cutting/foil printing and a machine for brochure printing. These opportunities are very exciting and appear to be real possibilities. This venture would require Fields to move equipment from Michigan to MN. We

are currently in discussion with them about possibilities, logistics, pricing etc. Ann will report back on this next meeting.

- ix. Steve explained that we will not be responding to the SourceAmerica RFI to take over the shred formerly done by Accessibility. Significant discussions both internally and externally led WACOSA to pass on this work right now since it did not seem to fit our logistical abilities or interests right now.

B. Action Plan for next time:

The following list of duties that will be explored by next meeting to replace work/revenue with the loss of Electrolux/West Rock work:

- i. Ann will reach out to CentraCare again as Karla helps her with a possible contact.
- ii. Ann and Beth will stay in contact with Charlie C.
- iii. Ann and Beth will continue to explore the work potential of having clients throughout WACOSA sort and price goods, when they are not working on contract work. There are logistical/payment hurdles that must be addressed but the concept would help to keep clients busy and could produce greater revenue for the thrift store.
- iv. Beth and Jenna met with representatives from Bayer Built regarding some work for Sauk Centre. It looks like this work will be occurring, though not in the large quantities we need to replace Electrolux/West Rock. We are also waiting on Artic Cold Storage to respond on our interest to their work.
- v. Motivated by the continued rise in ASD related needs and equipment, Ann will continue to look into any ideas she can think of to supply the ASD industry with supplies or equipment to serve this population. Nancy shared that we could possibly partner with Stang Manufacturing since ASD product development would be met using plastic extrusion/molding and this is Stang's main area of ability. Also, the owner has a daughter with disabilities. Ann will chat with Bruce at Stang regarding what they might think of a collaboration.
- vi. Ann and Nancy will be attending the Made in MN Expo on Saturday, November 17, 2018 at the River's Edge Convention Center to pass out cards and chat with inventors who may be able to use WACOSA's services.
- vii. Karla suggested focus groups with teachers be held to further explore the ASD needs of students and parents. Ann and Nancy will look in to this.
- viii. Steve and Nancy will be meeting with Aaron S. of the Sauk Rapids School District, along with the Principal of the school and

- one teacher knowledgeable in this area to see what plans could be pursued for a future store.
- ix. Karla suggested we make contact with Julie Lunning of the St. Cloud Visitors Bureau and Convention Center about what we could do to help with any collating needs they might have or the possibility of our clients helping to set up or break down for conventions. Ann will follow up with Julie on this idea.
 - x. Karla mentioned the possibility of WACOSA collaborating with a local coffee roaster to sell our own blend of coffee in our store. There is an organization in Walker, MN that has done this successfully. It may pay for WACOSA to visit this operation and see how it was done. Ann will check with the Cop House on the possibility of such a collaboration for next meeting.
 - xi. Karla mentioned that there may be some value in buying candy that is already packaged and putting our name on it. The branding would be good, though the profits from something like this would be smaller.
 - xii. Karla mentioned that a man named Leo Lewis of Lewis Industries, has been inquiring regarding WACOSA's involvement at Stang Manufacturing in Paynesville, MN. He has apparently been noticing WACOSA's vehicles there every day. His business is right next door. At this time, Karla will develop this relationship more before WACOSA staff become involved.
 - xiii. Karla suggested making contacts with the fulfillment industry. Ann said that she has done so locally but not broader than that. Ann will look into this on a wider scale in the next month or so.
 - xiv. Karla plans to follow up with a contact she has at CentraCare.
 - xv. Karla suggested WACOSA look into providing food service of some form that could provide a forum for the public to come into WACOSA and learn more about who we are. It might also provide a bit of revenue. All in attendance agreed this may be worth pursuing, acknowledging that there would be health department issues to address should this idea be pursued in earnest.

Next meeting – November 30, 2018, 11:30am – 1:00pm – 310 Front Conference Room