Media Co-op AGM 2024

December 8, 2024

Our first attempt to hold the 2024 annual general meeting in September failed to reach quorum. We decided at that point to postpone and try again.

Attendees: Dave Gray-Donald, Scott Neigh, Fernando Arce, Andrew Oliphant, Jeff Shantz, Fred Williams, Valerie Barnes-Connell, Tarek Tahan, Tofunmi Odugbemi

1. Designate Facilitator: Dave Gray-Donald

2. Designate Secretary: Scott Neigh

3. Land acknowledgement and Introductions
Dave Gray-Donald did a land acknowledgement and connected the colonial realities of so-called Canada to the work of *The Media Co-op*. Then we did a round of introductions.

4. Approval of the Agenda
Approval of the agenda was moved by Dave Gray-Donald and seconded by Valerie Barnes-Connell. Carried.

5. Approval of the 2022-2023 AGM Minutes
Dave Gray-Donald noted last year's AGM did not reach quorum, so the decisions were understood as provisional and later adopted by the board. He moved that we approve the minutes and Valerie Barnes-Connell seconded. Carried.

6. Guest speaker.

Jeff Shantz is a criminologist and an organizer from Surrey, BC, which is in the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Katzie, Kwantlen and Semiahmoo. He is also a regular contributor to *The Media Co-op*. He spoke about policing and grassroots organizing in response to its harms, and the role that infrastructures of resistance – including grassroots media – play in that work. He also drew attention to a number of ongoing struggles, including Justice for Jared, which is organizing in response to the police killing of Wet'suwet'en man Jared Lowndes, as well as efforts to stop the proposed Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline. There was a brief Q&A.

7. Year in Review
Scott Neigh spoke about *The Media Co-op*'s publishing since the last AGM. He noted that there was a gradual increase in the amount that we were publishing in the late months of 2023, as a result of efforts by the board to solicit more pitches. This reached a peak in spring 2024. At that point, we realized that our publishing was outpacing our financial capacity, and since then we have pulled back and been accepting fewer pitches.

Since the last AGM, we've regularly published Jeff Shantz's coverage of police-involved deaths in Canada as well as related analysis pieces; Scott's occasional "Learning from Organizers" interview series; a number of articles and op/eds on Palestine solidarity organizing, especially in late 2023 and early 2024; a cross-section of open letters and statement from various movement organizations; and

lots of other articles on things like the nefarious deeds of Canadian corporations in Guatemala and Brazil, colonial archaeology in Toronto, misogyny and AI, access to Abortion, Keffiyeh bans, tip theft, migrant justice, queer struggles, tenant and housing issues, as well as a mix of other kinds of interview-based pieces.

Jeff volunteered to be available to support new writers working on pieces in his areas of expertise.

Dave Gray-Donald gave an overview of the organizational trajectory of *The Media Co-op*. This included a brief history of the organization, and a look at some of our current challenges. He talked about how, over the life of the organization, movement groups and participants have changed how they relate to grassroots media – many now use social media to circulate things that would, in earlier years, have been published on *The Media Co-op*, and journalists and other media-makers often set up their own individual sites. All of this means that there is less focus on collective projects like *The Media Co-op*, though we still think that we offer something important to movement organizations/participants and to independent journalists.

A more recent problem has been the loss of recurring donors due to changes at our credit union. We have started a new campaign to get ten new monthly donors using PayPal instead, which we need to push in the next month or two. He encouraged people attending the meeting to join the board – there are one open position in each of the reader, contributor, and editor categories.

There was a brief Q&A.

8. Election of Representative to the Board of Directors

8.1 Dave Gray-Donald volunteered to be the chief returning officer for the board elections. Fernando Arce seconded. He was acclaimed.

Fernando, Scott, Dave, and Valerie all said they were willing to continue as board members.

Dave called for new board members. He gave a brief overview of what it means to belong to board.

Jeff Shantz volunteered to be a contributor representative on the board.

As none of the spots on the board were contested, Dave suggested that we follow the process used in past years and acclaim those who had put their names forward. Fred Williams moved to acclaim those who had put their names forward. Andrew Oliphant seconded. Carried.

8. Presentation of the Financial Review
Dave Gray-Donald went through Income Statement Financial Year 2023-24 (Apr 1 2023 - March 31 2024) line by line. He noted that there was a discrepancy of about $80 that will likely be resolved when the statements are reviewed by an accountant.

Dave moved to adopt the statement, pending review by a chartered accountant (which has cost about $400 in recent years). Scott Neigh seconded. Carried.

9. Discussion of what's ahead for The Media Co-op
There was a little bit more open discussion about the organization and the path ahead.

11. Other business
There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned.