

Westwood Unidos Leadership meeting  
8/28/13

Introductions:

Enrique: Misses playing games with friends as a child, wants to learn English well.

Jose: My neighbor is Reyna, and if she could study anything she would be a flight attendant. The moment her life changed was when she had her children.

Reyna: My neighbor is Jose, and if he studied anything else he would study law. From his childhood he remembers his friends who were very “pesty.”

Rachel: This is my neighbor Indira and she misses playing in the mud when she was a child.

Indira: My neighbor is Rachel, and what she misses most from her childhood was living in Panama, and nature, and her life changed for the better when she moved from Chicago to Austin to live with hippies.

Mike: I only talked to myself, but from childhood I miss my grandmother, who always said I was a good boy, even when I was a bad boy, and I miss that unconditional love.

Norma: I miss my childhood because of being in the river and the beach. If I could study anything I would study agriculture. My life changed when I came to the U.S.

Gonzalo: If I could study anything I would study—well right now I’m studying—business. My life changed when I had my daughter, who’s now 4. Today’s her first day of school.

Attendance:

Ana Claudia Magalhaes

Eric Kornacki

Joseph Teipel

Patty Grado

Christy Longsdorf

Angela Bomgaars

Watkins Fulk-Gray

Enrique

Socorro Cosain

Rachel Cleaves

Jose Esparza

Reyna Zarate

Norma Brambila

Indira, translator

Gonzalo, translator

Fiscal agent issue:

We have flexibility over how we spend this grant money, but it has to increase physical activity. We're going to review today the two final proposals we have and make a decision.

At the top part of the handout I've summarized the two proposals, which I'll run over right now.

Annual costs for Revision is \$20k, and for Bucu would be \$14k. Both offer office space, and would keep the funds within Westwood Unidos, and support a local company. Revision offers training to JVC Consultants, a benefit network for employees, nonprofit training possibilities, office supplies in bulk, an annual risk management assessment, and more insurance that they offer; they offer to draft grant reports and progress reports. Bucu has a lower cost. Each of the applicants also broke the cost out by the different costs; Revision's management cost was much higher, but the admin support was lower than Bucu. Professional development, Bucu does not charge for that, but Revision charges \$1,000; they both offer email addresses and office supplies; Revision's was much lower for this. Some people have asked if we could share this task to get advantages for both. I've broken each cost out line by line; it seems that we could pay JV Associates directly, which would lower the cost. I want to turn it over to Revision and Bucu to make their last pitches, then they will leave the room and we will decide.

Christy: Have we talked about capacity, and how much time it takes to be a fiscal agent? Do you want to address that now?

Eric: Yes, I was going to talk about that. To me, the capacity to serve as a financial fiduciary is the biggest factor; one of the biggest between cost and scope between the two is financial management. We do competitive audits for firms that have good reputations for financial audits. I don't think we should go with the cheapest option for financial management, which is what this is all about.

Rachel: If the audit costs \$3,500, why would we pay for all of it instead of just part of it that concerns the grant?

Eric: No, this would be a special audit.

Jose: Wouldn't this require a special audit from the IRS?

Eric: No, only if it's over \$5k. Also, when we talk about financial management, it wouldn't be me or Joseph, we would hire part-time an accountant to independently manage this.

Mike: What would be the check and balance about that person? Is that person a part of an accounting firm, a CPA, how do you assure that that person is careful and honest?

Eric: As far as the checks and balances, we do have internal policies, so that accountant will be only bookkeeping and not signing checks. We have a treasurer, a board, that

would help with the system and the job criteria. As far as if they work for a firm, we don't know yet. Our current bookkeeper is independent, not currently a CPA though she was previously. She might be a candidate for this but we haven't spoken about it. This management is a new direction for Revision, and we've been trying to develop our capacity to be able to support businesses in Westwood. Anything else Joseph?

Joseph: The professional development line item might not include a few things within that cost, so I don't want to seem like we're marking up that cost; we're also offering financial classes, professional development for employees so that we can all understand how to read financial statements. From our perspective we would respectfully not want to participate in splitting up the duties; I feel from our perspective that whoever is the fiscal agent should be in charge of everything; splitting up anything like financial from legal, creates a conflict of interest —

Eric: And creates exposure to risk. Fiscal agents usually have complete control and complete liability. It's not a responsibility to be taken lightly, and we absolutely wouldn't do it if we didn't think we could do it well.

Rachel: Could you talk about the benefits network for employees/

Joseph: The specifics of this I would need to take back to our payroll company, but basically Eric and I are able to enroll in something and Revision can cover a percentage of that costs, which we would be able to extend to Westwood Unidos. That doesn't mean there wouldn't be additional costs; we would set it up and administer it. They could get a match for their 401k. The compensation needs to be set outside of this, but our capacity is to provide something. Currently on our health benefit plan, we don't have an insurance plan, and offer a stipend for their own plans. We're looking at one group policy in particular.

Joseph: We're looking at something that offers 403b plans and hope that we might be able to have this in place for Westwood Unidos.

Rachel: Any other questions? I have one – why do you guys want to do this?

Eric: Our vision is to help create self-sufficient communities, build capacity within the neighborhoods we work in. We're starting this co-op model for residents to serve their own needs. We're moving toward becoming fiscal sponsors for other organizations. This seems like a good way to build this capacity, and do it for a cause we truly believe in. We believe that this is the right time, we believe we have this capacity, and we believe in Westwood Unidos's cause.

Rachel: What role would your board play? I know that often the board is liable for funding and has a little opportunity to make decisions.

Joseph: What we would propose, and we would get to detail later with MOU between Revision and WU, but generally our board is responsible for finances for Revision, so

they would want to see that this money is made in accordance with our procedures, but WU is a decision making body, so it would have its own policy and full decision making capacity, and we want to preserve that autonomy, the board would just want to see that the money's getting managed in accordance with how we manage funds.

Rachel: What kind of ability does Revision have for legal review?

Eric: We're bringing on a new board member who is a business attorney, and can review anything that we subcontract out or even MOUs. The other way is that we have a relationship with DU's law school who can pair up lawyers with our organizations for no charge.

Rachel: Both of those are volunteering...

Joseph: Our board member would not be, and he would confer with his associates if they were a contract.

Rachel: So you have plenty of legal capacity?

Joseph: Yes

Jose: One thing we didn't put in is an end of year audit, but even if we gave \$5k for it, it would bring proposals to a similar level. We offer very similar benefits; one of the biggest benefits we can offer is that we have legal counsel at the negotiations, which is something you guys could look into too, but in terms of what we've negotiated already, they wouldn't just review the contracts, they would be there with us participating. That's one difference with how we're approaching the legal side. Another thing is our capacity, to Christy's point, we already have a CPA that works with us and we meet monthly, speak bi-monthly, with Bucu West and the COHF money would be very organized and transparent. We've talked a lot with our bank to work out a cash management program, and we would be able to monitor any transactions happening without actually changing anything or putting account info in jeopardy. We could all monitor this and keep track of it. A bigger point we've been speaking with Denver Foundation and Social Venture Problems, and they offer assistance with accounting, legal, marketing, the technical assistance that our organization would need to grow. One thing that they've voiced to us is that this possibility looks good for us as we go forward; we're diversifying our funding, like OED wants us to do. Unfortunately right now we're only funded by one grant, which is a dangerous position; we need to diversify our funding, and in this way it would be a big benefit, and this would benefit WU, because we're a team and what brings in the most money to Westwood? WU and, and of course Revision. It helps us to accomplish our mission, diversify our funding, and in the end bring more money into the neighborhood.

Eric: We currently work with Social Venture Partners, I'm glad you're working with them, because they really help you fill in the gaps. I would hate to see Bucu go away if they didn't serve as the fiscal sponsor for this, we obviously need to find a way for Bucu

to exist; we however have diversified funding and guaranteed funding for several years. If we don't get this, this won't make or break our organization. I'm not trying to throw you guys under the bus though.

Jose: One rebuttal is that we have a verbal agreement from Denver Foundation to help us out if we really need it. We could do what the Denver Foundation wants us to do and supply resources for the community; what we want to do is grow.

Rachel: Any questions for Jose? No? Well if it's ok I'm going to ask you guys to step outside while we discuss it.

Rachel: I'm on the board of Bucu, so Christy and I were talking about if this is a conflict, but really what I work on is this grant. I'm happy to step out if I need though.

Mike: Both groups talked about Social venture Partners, and there's no requirement to back up either of their claims, but all Bucu has is an agreement that it would be a good opportunity for them, and haven't been working with them. With Revision, they actually made an assessment, and decided that yes, they could do this.

Rachel: Let's just go around and talk about it.

Christy: Revision, I think they have more capacity and experience in researching what it takes to be a fiscal agent and setting up this type of relationship and I believe they have a more thorough experience in managing the things that need to be managed.

Angela: Based on the proposals, I agree with that, but the thing I like about bucu is the mission match between Bucu and this grant.

Norma: Bucu; I know that Jose's doing the first year of his job, but I think he's capable and can find sufficient resources.

Rachel: What does Jose have that Revision doesn't have?

Norma: WU's confidence, and the local office.

Reyna: I think they're both equal, both good options, I think having the space here is very important.

Rachel: I would vote for Revision because I feel like they offer more, their mission is to become a fiscal agent for WU orgs, and they see this as establishing them to help others; they've started a nonprofit in the past, and Jose and AC haven't done that; Jose and AC should be focusing on growing Bucu and this wouldn't help them that much. All Bucu would be getting out of this would be \$4k. We could rent this space from them. This is a big deal, this is a million dollars,

Christy: This isn't just our mission and we want to do great things for the community, this is about audits, this is the foundation that protects us all from risk.

Rachel: Also the board of Revision is more diverse, they have legal, and Bucu's board is very weak, there's only a handful of people. They didn't really care one way or another about it! But Norma, to your point, we could still rent this office space and we could give that money to support Jose. Whether or not we want them running our books is another story. I want to see if Norma and Reyna would be comfortable with voting for Revision.

Norma: No. I've always seen that they aren't really united with WU and haven't participated as much, not as much strong participation. And Bucu West from the beginning has always supported us. They have funds because they are a strong organization, they offer strong insurance, they have different projects so they have experience.

Reyna: For me both have been, but if we want to do Revision that's fine.

Mike: Revision. For the reasons that've been said, and I would underline the capacity on Revision side, and the risk of being distracted on the Bucu side for their need to survive and thrive.

Rachel: Norma, I appreciate your passion for Bucu, but do you understand that they can still receive money for projects,

Christy: There are a lot of little things that will be required, that aren't related to our mission at all, but they will be required in the next 3 years and will require significant capacity.

Rachel: I would love it if we could have some kind of consensus where if you would be ok with Revision, is there anything else that you have against Revision doing this or anything else you would want to bring up. They pay you each month, Livewell pays them who pays you... do you get your checks on time each month and is it well organized?

Norma: No comment

Reyna: Sometimes the checks have been late, but let's focus on what's happening right now.

Rachel: How late?

Reyna: 2 or 3 days late. Things that can be fixed.

Rachel: Any last comments? Should we go forward with the vote? If you want to vote for Bucu raise your hand, if you vote for Revision raise your hand?

Revision wins.

Are you guys ok with paying Bucu so that we can use their space?

Christy: Yes, I think we should use them for these things and take the little details away from them.

Revision and Bucu come back in.

Rachel: I want to clarify that this is not about project funding, it's about writing checks and little details. There will still be funding to still do streetscape works at Munroe, or whatever, we're just talking about fiscal agency. We felt Revision would be more capable of understanding the in and outs, and it's a lot of time and headache, and we feel their experience is great. At the same time, it was unanimous that Bucu is important, but that we would want to use their office space.

Mike: and I believe that would be the near equivalent of what they would make if they got the grant.

Rachel: You guys should be worrying about growing your funding, and this wouldn't give you very much money. Is this ok with everyone?

Eric: I want to thank everyone, our commitment to the community, and we know the community's commitment to Bucu is very important. We know that this is a huge responsibility, and we want to thank you for putting your trust in us, and we will do this well.

Rachel: Thank you guys again for putting the time in again, and being our partners. We certainly want to continue to partner with you, and we will.

Jose: Thanks for putting the break-downs in the analysis in.

Rachel: Reyna, do you have any updates from last month about the radio?

Reyna: We still haven't talked about this enough, but we have a date, so let me know (Revision) your availability and we can meet. Send me an email or something to confirm the date next week.

Jose: We're working on a new logo in house, and it's mostly the owner of the Black Vulture tattoo gallery as a consultant, but we want to go to each committee with the designs to get feedback, give them a lot of options, figure out what people like out of each, and combine that for one WU logo at the end.

Christy: Jose I'm willing to help with that if you need an extra set of eyes.

Joseph: Is there a timeline?

Jose: I know everyone's anxious to get a new logo. I think the best way is if you're doodling something, scan it and send it in.

Joseph: Will you bring this to the food access committee, the second week of the month.

Rachel: New business: as you all know we're now a registered neighborhood organization. It's important that Maricruz forward all information that comes into the group, and I want to make sure we take advantage of this now.

AC: WU's gmail address also gets this info.

Rachel: This should get forwarded to the leadership team. Also, do you want to elect officers for the leadership team? The process to elect Maricruz to be the contact person was not very official, it was just that there was a deadline looming, but so can we talk about this next meeting?

Eric: Do we need to elect a representative to INC inter neighborhood cooperative.

Mike: Yes.

Rachel: I think it's time to talk about all this stuff, in some committees it's not clear who are the co-chairs, so we need to talk about this. Some people in the Learning Center are nervous that they live outside the neighborhood, can we talk about this?

Reyna: The majority live outside Westwood, so we want to see your opinions because the women nervous because people are telling them they live outside Westwood, so they want to know what's going to happen, for example if they live 2 blocks outside the neighborhood. Are they going to take us out of WU?

Rachel: To clarify, for the learning center, we have gotten residents to teach classes, lots of them, but not all of them live in Westwood although they are in SW Denver. They are nervous that someone will grab the money out of their hands.

Christy: the LC is supported by Westwood, so whoever is teaching a class, it's serving Westwood, and the surrounding neighborhood, so I don't think there should be any boundaries for who educates and participate in it.

Jose: Our classes vary in location, but they're all in Westwood.

Joseph: The work is happening in Westwood, so WW residents are benefiting. If someone from outside is teaching a class, it's in our interest to find them, especially if we don't have an ability in WW.

Rachel: The issue is that it's being led by non-WW residents, and from my perspective, who cares that someone lives 2 blocks away?



Christy: Maybe we should make a policy that the LC is led by WU,

Eric: Didn't we officially adopt this policy, that you don't have to live in Westwood

Jose: What if we put something in that it doesn't matter where someone lives, as long as they're involved in the committee.

Patty: I don't live in WW, so it bothers me when people say I don't live here, because everything I do is for people who live here. I feel like these comments alienate people.

Gloria: I'd like to say that I like to volunteer, and it doesn't matter to me where. I like to help do good things with any families, it's annoying for someone to point out that someone's not a resident here. But where are the residents then? We're not from here, but we are here, supporting this community so that it progresses, for the residents here.

Rachel: The definition should be does it benefit WW, so obviously we should want people like that here. We don't want to be prejudiced!

Mike: We could focus on resident development, and invite people to participate rather than exclude people.

Rachel: I'll read our by-laws here. Members are classified in one of 2 categories: a resident, or community-based organization. Residents are people who live in Westwood, and or people who identify as being in Westwood, and have strong long term ties to the community, but no longer live in the community because they've been displaced. A community based organization is any org that works with us. The leadership time strives to have at least 51% residents at all times.

Mike: The leadership group could drop the has been displaced, and just anybody who has a strong relationship to the area; there are a lot of ways to be committed to a place. Business people may not live here but they still can be committed.

Jose: Do we define them as residents? People who have a local connection?

Rachel: Maybe we could say instead of a person who lives in Westwood, but someone who lives in Westwood or nearby places. So that no one says things about Reyna, who lives 2 blocks outside but her kids go to school here.

Eric: Should we talk about Westwood and contiguous neighborhoods then?

Angela: Maybe something like the primary activities that take place in WW, but contiguous neighborhoods can participate if they want to participate and have things to offer.

Mike: The committees have a lot of participation from residents right? The goal could be to build more participation here, in the leadership committee.

Rachel: Can we just try to be more inclusive, and not exclude anybody regardless of where you're from?

Mike: Westwood is a geographic boundary created by the city, and doesn't reflect any cultural or common sense boundaries.

Rachel: So we'll add this, ----- Do we want to add to the definition of residents people who live here and in contiguous areas?

Joseph: The geographic definition fits less with WU than the cultural and other definitions. I wouldn't want to exclude cultural, familial, other ties. I'm hesitant to even put contiguous neighborhoods.

Angela: Unless you put surrounding communities, which is broad and general.

Rachel: No one in this room actually technically lives in WW, so I'm a little uncomfortable with this, let's table it for now.

Jose: What WU wants to accomplish or include, isn't limited to a resident or to a community.

Christy: Residents are residents, but instead of community organizations, we could say community stakeholders, which can be anybody.

Mike: Instead of changing resident, just expand the circle of who's welcome and valuable.

Rachel: But if we have the learning center, we can't exactly say that it's a resident-led organization.

Mike: One idea is that this new wording could be taken to each of the committees who have residents,

Rachel: What matters most is the spirit of what's been said, and the wording will get played with.

Mike: It's consistent with the spirit of community organization, you don't want to exclude people.

Rachel: It's almost time to end, so any announcements?

Christy: Sept 19 is ULC's 10 year anniversary party. We're showcasing a video that includes 2 of our very own, Reyna and Norma. It's in the video and it's great, you two

steal the whole show. It'll be at the Curtis Park Community Center, in the evening, dinner drinks, fun, you're all invited. I still need to make an invitation. Don't put it in the newsletter, we can't fit thousands of people!

Mike: Community Wealth Building Conference, its' \$25 but there are scholarships, 40 available. There's translation, childcare, but it's about local economy building. Eric and Joseph are talking about food systems as building the local economy. The Resident Leadership Institute, which is a response to growing resident leadership here, and three groups are participating, Bucu, Revision, and WU, and each will have a team of residents.

Eric; the food action committee has hired a new connector, Michelle Mendez, we'll send out info on how to contact her.

Joseph: I think her and Patty are going to try to get together with Reyna and Norma. Speaking of residents, she's a resident, and she's going to Metro State working on her degree.

Rachel: Would it be possible for her to come to this meeting if we change the day?

AC: Chile Fest is looking very exciting this year, events, DJs, capoeira presentation, pow wow presentation, masquerade wrestling fights, car shows, vendors. We're looking for vendor spots to get filled out. We're looking for retail, arts and crafts vendors, something local. We're also inviting any businesses outside of WW to participate as well. Still plenty of spaces available.

Jose: Edgar Campos is a long term volunteer soccer coach here, has entered into a contract for the property next to Stone, 5 buildings and huge property, he wants to do a soccer/sports facility. There's a lot of opportunities for us to support and work with him. He has 18 months to show that this could be successful and to get funding. Right now it's automotive and storage, and the owner wants to sell us, and luckily he's been giving us favorable options for it. Right now Stone is using it as a dumping ground, so there's opportunity to develop it for daytime use. He's pushing to get the property ready. The current owner has a lot of stuff and those buildings are full, but he wants to clear out another building for them which would create several more units for artists or whatever, but we need to show that this could be successful.

Rachel: Any opportunities for the learning center?

Jose: Yeah there are definitely possibilities. In Lakewood there's a facility that's underutilized. Edgar wants it to be open all day, even though he wouldn't be able to charge people very much.

Eric: Harvest Festival at Kepner Farm. Free, open to everybody (not WW only...), we'll be providing some of the main courses. Last year we did a pig roasts and this year we

might have some goat as well. We'll out information. They're going to roast a goat, not us (the Somali Bantus). We'll get Watkins info for newsletter.

Rachel: Americorp could give us 10 college kids full time for 6 to 8 weeks. We could put in an application to share these people to do graffiti removal, garden activities. Raise your hand if you would be willing to help host these people? Revision, newsletter, Socorro...

Any other announcements? Next meeting is September 25<sup>th</sup>, Wed. Will somebody volunteer to chair the next meeting? (Socorro volunteers).

Everyone says one thing about the person sitting next to you.

Rachel: Mike is dedicated to everything and everyone.

Mike: Socorro, because she volunteered to chair the next meeting.

Socorro: Jose, because he's always willing to help.

Jose: Reyna, because she's incredibly structured and keeps us all on our toes.

Reyna: AC, because she has a lot of potential and has a big heart.

AC: I appreciate Eric because he's very sharp.

Eric: I work with Joseph everyday, and we have a great relationship as good friends and as business partners, I appreciate his heart for others and for service.

Joseph: Hard to choose one thing that I appreciate about Patty, but I always appreciate that she's asking what else can she do, how can I help. Not just Revision but Westwood. Her heart is in Westwood.

Patty: Christy, she is very direct and very attractive.

Christy: Angela, because she always has a huge smile and always brightens my day with her great outlook on the community and work that needs to be done. And I appreciate her rice crispy treats.

Angela: Watkins, ...

Watkins: Gloria, her outlook on life and her experiences is positive, and inspires me and I think everybody else.

Gloria: Enrique is young and already interested in the community, thank you for being with us.

Enrique: Rachel because she's very smart and very patient.

Rachel: Indira because she's always on time, always says yes, and speaks English and Spanish perfectly.