

Subject: [freegeek-board-discuss] Communications Committee Bulletin, 1/20/13
From: Mark Kille <mkille@freegeek.org>
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COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE BULLETIN
January 20, 2013

To recap...At their meeting on December 19, the Board approved the proposed consolidation of Free Geek's organizational structure into three departments: Operations, Production and Public Services. Each department will have a senior manager. The three senior managers will also form a Senior Management Team that shares leadership responsibilities for Free Geek as a whole.

At their meeting on January 16, the Board approved the job descriptions for the three senior managers: Director of Operations, Director of Production, and Director of Public Services. These descriptions will be presented "publicly" first at the all-staff meeting already scheduled for Thursday, January 24 and then generally released.

On January 16, the Board heard from consultant Paul Lipscomb about his recent conversations with management consultant Cliff Jones and communication facilitator Tasha Harmon, who both worked with Free Geek in 2012. Paul reported that they are encouraged by and enthusiastic about the direction Free Geek is taking with our re-structuring.

A large part of that enthusiasm is recognition of the incredible accomplishments Free Geek has continued to achieve even during a time of many challenges. By any measure--number of volunteers, number of systems disbursed, amount of waste diverted from landfills--we are a successful organization. Of course we always want to do better--but our desire to do better is in itself an example of how committed to our mission and hard-working we already are.

That record of success is one reason the Board has decided to limit applications for the Director positions to internal candidates at first. The timeline and process for accepting applications from current managers and other internal candidates will also be introduced first at the January 24 all-staff meeting. The search process for any Director position will be opened to external candidates only if and when it becomes clear that there is no qualified, interested internal candidate.

The Board will be meeting on Thursday, January 31 at 6:15 PM and has reserved each Wednesday evening in February for meetings related to the re-structuring, along with the "regular" meeting on February 13. Some of the topics will include finalizing the Director search timeline in all possible contingencies, approving middle manager job descriptions, and determining how decisions of different kinds will be made at all levels of the organization following the re-structuring. It may be necessary to go into executive session to discuss specific individuals or questions of law, but otherwise, the intention of the Board is to have these conversations in open meetings that anyone can attend.

In other news...One concern that has reached the Communication Committee is that all employees should receive the necessary training to operate effectively in the new structure. It could be a new person, new duties or new workflow--in whatever case, when change happens, the time and space for adapting to that change has to happen as well. This principle is an important part of Free Geek's established practices. For example, new hires are already not supposed to be approved without an accompanying comprehensive training plan. Our commitment to this principle will not change as a result of the re-structuring.

Sincerely,
Your Communications Committee

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