

Resignation from the Board of Directors of The WP Community Collective

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to formally resign from my position as President of the Board of Directors of The WP Community Collective, effective December 31, 2025.

I joined The WPCC because I believe deeply in its mission: to build a more humane, equitable, and sustainable model for open source contribution, one that recognizes labor, centers care, and makes power visible and accountable. I continue to believe that this vision is both necessary and compelling, and I remain grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to an earnest attempt to bring it into being.

My decision to resign was not made lightly, or as the result of any single incident. It reflects fundamental differences between myself and the existing Board regarding how I understand the issues, what the work requires, and how it can be responsibly pursued. The issues associated with our work at The WPCC, as I see them, stem from three interrelated ecosystem-wide realities.

Power and authority is imbalanced and invisible: Power and authority within the open source and WordPress ecosystem function largely through informal influence and selective enforcement, rather than transparent and accountable governance structures. Decision-making power is unbalanced or invisible, accountability is applied inconsistently, and the costs of disruption or dissent are absorbed by those with the least institutional protection.

Contribution operates as extractive labor: Contribution is labor. Yet, contribution is expected to be offered out of loyalty, while providing contributors with little meaningful power over decisions that shape the project or conditions of their work. At the same time, the labor of supporting contributor wellbeing and community and workforce health (i.e. relational, emotional, organizational, and governance) is significantly undervalued.

Conformity as ecosystem culture: A dominant culture of avoidance, conformity, and self-sacrifice constrains the ecosystem's ability to adapt and change by discouraging honest feedback, narrowing the range of acceptable behavior, and delaying or preventing meaningful repair. In such an environment, harm is absorbed disproportionately by individuals willing to voice dissent. This is undemocratic, and beyond that, it's corrosive to collective reasoning and institutional learning.

I deeply and unequivocally believe that creating the kind of change we envision requires a willingness to name and directly confront the conditions through which the ecosystem

perpetuates harm to individuals and at scale. I believe that we cannot build a sustainable model for contribution within a fundamentally extractive system; we must reimagine the system first. The Board, as constituted during my tenure as President, did not demonstrate the tolerance for risk and discomfort required to confront ecosystem-level harms directly. This translated to a lack of clarity about the organization's position and purpose, which I found increasingly difficult to reconcile internally.

Perhaps more significantly, the Board's inability to successfully shift how these dynamics manifested within our *own* organizational culture resulted in sustained internal disagreement and obstructed our organizational progress. The role of President requires a posture of procedural neutrality, but behavior I perceived as harmful to the organization and its CEO created an irreconcilable conflict between my governance responsibilities and my ethical judgement. The Board's time and energy was increasingly consumed by conflicting perspectives, and we were unable to develop sufficient accountability and conflict resolution infrastructure. The interim practices I attempted to put in place were not successfully adopted, leaving me with no tools and a growing distaste for exercising a neutrality I did not feel.

Further structural imbalances manifested in practice that produced, for me, an irreconcilable misalignment with the work. Board roles are appropriately unpaid, and I did not accept this role with any expectation of compensation. However, during my tenure, the scope of responsibility and risk exposure expanded beyond what the role of President would generally require. Combined with unexpected logistical and emotional labor, an expectation of procedural neutrality, and the absence of commensurate organizational support, this required me to compromise my limits repeatedly. By continuing under these circumstances, I would be normalizing the very extractive dynamics the organization was created to resist.

As such, I had to acknowledge a hard truth: The work I believe is necessary to fulfill the mission of the organization isn't possible for me under these circumstances. Stepping away is not an act of disengagement or repudiation: I continue to believe in the mission of The WPCC and its visionary CEO, and I will remain an active member of the organization. With this resignation, I am acting in line with what I believe to be the fundamental values of the organization: valuing the human being behind the contribution.

I sincerely hope that those who continue this work will do so with sincerity, courage, and care for one another. As new Board leadership takes shape, I hope it will be resourced and supported. This work matters.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and for the lessons this work has offered.

Respectfully,

Katie Adams Farrell