

**Blue Hill Co-op Board Meeting**  
March 24, 25, 2020, Conference Calls

Board Members Attending: Aaron Dority, Deborah Evans, Diane Bianco, Edie Dunham, Jennifer Traub, Jerome Lawther, Jim Picariello, Martha Shepherd (Staff Position), Susan Snider, Tim Tunney

Absent Board Member(s): Paul McNulty

Others Attending: Julia Klein (Minute Taker), Kevin Gadsby (General Manager)

Julia Klein, minute taker

Diane Bianco, meeting facilitator, timekeeper

Aaron Dority, tasks and decisions

Open Owner Time: No owners were present.

Round of Sharing: Diane opened the meeting asking each attendee to share their concern and gratitude in light of the COVID-19 chaos. Kevin shared that while the stress is enormous, he is thinking of ways that the Co-op may be an example in the community.

Approval of Minutes: **Tim moved to approve the February 25, 2020 minutes as submitted. Aaron seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.**

GM Monitoring: **Tim suggested emergency approval of the GM report as submitted with allowance of 30 days for board review. Concerns may be raised, and amendments made at the next meeting as needed. The board agreed to the procedure.**

Finance Committee Charter: **Tim moved to accept the Finance Committee Charter as presented with allowance to amend next meeting if needed.**

Diane opened the floor to Kevin and Martha to share concerns and difficulties from the storefront in the current crisis. The board expressed appreciation for the idea and echoed concern for the needs of the Co-op and safety of the employees. **The call quality deteriorated and the board agreed to abandon the meeting for the following evening.**

**March 25, 2020 – Conference Call**

Discounts: Diane opened the meeting and directed discussion to board discounts. Susan questioned whether the 25% board discount is reasonable, fair, and equitable compared with other Maine co-ops and with recommendations from Columinante. She suggested dropping the discount by 5 or 10% to better support the Co-op as it stabilizes. Discussion ensued and Jerome identified two issues; the desire to use resources to support Co-op staff during the COVID crisis, and the need to evaluate the equitability of the current

discount. The board agreed that Kevin should determine reward for working staff while the board discount should be considered separately.

Discussion turned to the current 25% board discount. Jerome suggested lowering the discount to 20% as a gesture to match staff. Susan reminisced that the discount was raised in light of the extra work required during relocation, but the focus should now be on strengthening the store in light of debt. Jim reminded the board that the discount had been raised because the board foresaw an increase in board and committee work with the larger store. The former 15% was insufficient compensation. 25% percent allowed the board to be compensated in food rather than money, supporting the Co-op, and would help attract and retain a high level of skill on the board. Jerome raised concern that lowering the discount would result in a decrease in board purchases, negating the benefit. He suggested raising the staff discount. Susan will send an article on board discounts from Columinate to the board. Kevin assured the board that he is doing all he can to compensate staff during the crisis, making adjustments weekly as appropriate and checking in with other Co-ops to find how they are supporting staff. He does not feel that raising discounts for all staff is feasible at this time. **Diane moved that the board table the discounts discussion for consideration and decision at the April meeting. Deborah seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.**

GM Update: Kevin reported that he will be launching remote baskets tomorrow. Work to launch an online platform and offer delivery service is underway. The center isle has been eliminated at the registers. The membership has expressed tremendous support and appreciation for the changes. Some members have volunteered to make deliveries. Staff is supportive and determined to ride this out. Aaron questioned whether other Co-ops have written on ways they've addressed current pitfalls. Kevin responded that all Co-ops are in crisis mode and are carefully and conscientiously responding to changes daily. Jen asked about protocol for deliveries. Kevin responded that none are established as yet.

The Co-op will limit customers to 10 at a time starting Saturday and may eventually close for instore sales. The board expressed support for this measure as people from other states are expected to flood area in the next weeks. Jim asked about solar. Kevin reported excellent performance! He is still waiting on the grant and 30% tax rate reduction. The Co-op may be eligible for an incentive removing property taxes for the year. Kevin mentioned that the Co-op has constant circulation of fresh air through the store unlike most grocery stores. The board expressed thanks for all!

Agenda:

March GM Report – Discussion and Concerns  
Finance Committee Charter – Amend if needed  
Discounts

Meeting Evaluation: No evaluation was given.

Due Date for the Board Packet: Items for the Board Packet will be due on Saturday, May 9, 2020.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 6:30-9:00 PM, Blue Hill Co-op, Cafe.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Julia Klein