

Blue Hill Co-op Board Meeting

September 17, 2019, Blue Hill Co-op Cafe

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

Absent Board Member(s):

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

Julia Klein, minute taker

Mia Strong, meeting facilitator, time keeper

Jerome Lawther, tasks and decisions

Approval of Minutes: **Susan moved to approve the July 30, and August 20, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes with no changes. Diane seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.**

Open Owner Time: No owners were present.

GM Monitoring: Kevin reported that the final requisition is under review. Cooler issues are being addressed but periodic failures still occur. Completion of punch-list items is under discussion. Lenders are deciding whether to release landscaping funds. Landscaping total cost is \$47,000. \$25,000 was offered in donation from a member. Work on landscaping has started and will finish in spring. Jim shared feedback from members saying the café is sterile and uninviting. He suggested bringing in a designer to create a homey feel. He also inquired about progress correcting pricing throughout the store. Kevin responded that progress is made daily but pricing for each product must be adjusted manually. Discussion ensued. Hiring extra help for price adjustments was recommended. The board emphasized that corrections must be made ASAP! Kevin responded that it is the highest priority daily but it takes time to work through thousands of items in an inventory that has doubled. Kevin shared his strategy to bring down pricing across the store to compete in the local market. Jim urged Kevin to place signage around the store and at registers encouraging customers to bring overpriced items to staff for updates. Kevin reported that the Co-op's cost plus contract has been reduced to 11 ½% due to higher ordering volume and is reviewed quarterly.

Kevin reported that the Co-op has out-performed expectations for opening months with first month's sales up 10% above projections 35% above last year with a significant increase in customers. Mia asked about tracking geographical sales data. 120 new members have joined since opening. Many are reactivating old accounts. (The registers are currently unable to reinstate membership and Jennifer at customer service must do it.) Kevin and Tim will analyze the pro forma to decide what to payoff and what to keep open. With plenty available in capital good decisions can be made. The project finished under budget on the GMP by a significant amount. In addition to solar and tree grants unexpected funds of \$16,000 came in donations. Kevin will play with the café arrangement, remove a few tables, and add couches. Hiring is nearly complete.

Belfast Co-op Request – The Belfast Co-op is researching relocation and reached out to learn about the process. Mia will invite Belfast board members to meet with Blue Hill board members. Tim, Susan and Aaron volunteered.

Board Calendar – Mia updated the calendar and reviewed changes with the board. Discussion followed. Board training in March was suggested. Mia contacted Jade and learned that financial training is available through Columinate and costs may be split with other co-ops. The board discussed options. Mia will inquire about a la carte options, specifically the scope and availability of financial training. She will look for reading material on policy governance reading. Training would occur in March.

C-8 Governance Investment – Edie read the policy. Discussion regarding compliance with the policy and function and purpose of policy governance ensued. Mia stated protocol for policy review and noted that the policies are no longer under revision. A suggestion was made to begin having directors volunteer to review policy each month to determine whether the board is in compliance and formulate a plan to reinstate compliance if needed. A report will be written and presented to the board. The board decided to proceed as suggested.

The board determined that they are not in compliance with policy C-8 but the plan for compliance is as follows. Tim will prepare a budget for the October meetings and Mia will contact Columinate regarding plans for training in March. Decisions will be made at the November meeting.

D Global Board Management Connection – The Board is in compliance with policy D.

Board Development Update – Edie will recruit the ballot counting team. Martha, Jerome, and Edie volunteered and a working owner is needed. Mia will contact Eileen Mielenhausen for availability to help. Mia will update the orientation packet and print needed documents. Edie will inquire whether new directors prefer an electronic or a printed packet. Susan will send packets to Aaron and Tim and a policy register to Tim.

Jennifer will compile a list of active members for accurate vote counts. Discussion regarding the definition of active membership ensued. **Susan move to clarify membership status bylaws stating that members must have made a purchase at the Co-op within the last 12 months and \$20 must be applied to outstanding equity annually until fully paid. Edie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.** Members will be notified with a postcard on their joining date of impending inactive status. Membership may be renewed within 30 days. The website and membership brochure will be updated to explain active membership.

Annual Meeting – The Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 10, 2019 from 5:30-6:30 with a board meeting to follow at 6:30. The meeting will be held at the Co-op café with hors d'oeuvres provided. Kevin will compile a 2018 financial summary of relocation for the meeting. October policy governance tasks will be rescheduled for the November meeting.

Café Issues – Diane shared some complaints she's encountered about café food quality and service. The hot table has been found to have cold food and several accounts of rudeness from staff have been mentioned. She expressed sadness that this potentially great space is being underutilized. Kevin echoed the complaints and reported that he has scheduled a conference call with the architect and designers to understand the full intentions of the design scheme. Adjustments will be made accordingly. Kevin is actively seeking the right person to make the café amazing. The idea of hosting guest chefs for dinners in the winter was suggested. Financially the café is far behind the rest of the store. Edie suggested visiting

other Co-ops for inspiration. The board suggested that Kevin look nationally for experienced management and offer higher pay. A scale is critical at the Café register. Kevin will address customer service issues.

Agenda:

Meeting Evaluation: Jam-packed and back on track. Much needed reflection on the new store!

Due Date for the Board Packet: Items for the Board Packet will be due on Monday, September 30, 2019.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 10, 2019 5:30-9:00 PM, Blue Hill Co-op, Cafe.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Julia Klein