

Blue Hill Co-op Annual Meeting and Board Meeting
September 22, 2022, Blue Hill Co-op Cafe

Board Members Attending: Jo Barrett, Diane Bianco, Jenny Brillhart, Aaron Dority, Anne Gilchrist, Jerome Lawther, Jennifer Traub, Tim Tunney.

Absent Board Member(s): Deborah Evans

Others Attending: Kevin Gadsby (General Manager), Frank Bianco, Sr, Sandy Buxton, Jan Carpenter, Juni Charlton, Leslie Cummins, Olenka Folda, Peter Gilchrist, Anita Kimball, Deb Kimball, Dean Nasson, Chris Ramsay, Bob Salesi, Peter Saurugger, Tim Seabrook, June Sendrowski, Annie Silver, Rebecca Wentworth (Owners).

Jennifer Traub, minute-taker; tasks and decisions

The Annual Meeting began as an informal gathering with light fare and background piano playing by Edie Dunham from 5:00-6:00PM. Jerome called the meeting to order at 6:05PM. A list was circulated to record owner attendance.

Approval of Agenda: **Jo moved to approve the agenda. Anne seconded. The motion unanimously carries.**

Approval of Minutes: **Jen moved to approve the August 25, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes with a date correction noted. Jenny seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.**

Open Owner Time: Becky Wentworth expressed a desire for staff to be paid more and have space to be creative. Tim Seabrook added a concern about retaining valuable staff members.

Dean Nasson shared that the Co-op was a factor in choosing to move to Blue Hill. Tim Seabrook concurred that community is what the Co-op is about. He questioned the cost of the Annual Report brochure, while Frank Bianco, Sr commended the Annual Report publication, calling it a “fantastic testament to how far the Co-op has come.” GM Kevin Gadsby clarified that, because the Co-op Marketing Manager designs the report, it isn’t as expensive as it may seem.

Tim Seabrook mentioned implementation of a Landscape Crew to initiate and maintain pollinator plantings. Jen suggested that as a topic for the Co-op newsletter. Olenka Folda shared she hasn’t backed into any cars as happened twice at the old Co-op. Kevin remarked that nonetheless the parking lot has been full some days, with cars parked up and down South St.

Board member Tim Tunney invited owners to attend monthly Board meetings, noting there is dedicated time at the beginning of each meeting for owner feedback.

Words from the Board: Jerome Lawther, a Board member for 10 years, referred to his write-up in the Annual Report, noting his role as President is largely about facilitating meetings. He praised the Board’s efforts to improve its functioning by strengthening its committee structure, with regular work being done by the Finance Committee, Board Development Committee, and the newly formed Strategic Leadership Committee. He thanked the ad hoc Events Committee for planning the social portion of the Annual Meeting. Lastly, he affirmed the Board’s ability to

focus on its work thanks to Kevin's consistency in management and his style of empowering managers, which helps the store run like a "well-oiled machine."

Treasurer Tim Tunney referred to the Annual Report operations summary for 2021. Considering the absence of federal funding in 2021, he said it was an astounding year, and he attributed high sales figures to people finding value in special qualities of the store, such as the staff, community, and services like Webcart. Much of the Finance Committee's work through 2021 revolved around the RFP process for refinancing the Co-op's debt, with a 10-year fixed rate secured by the end of 2021 that allowed the Co-op to lower its substantial monthly interest payments starting in 2022. Tim affirmed that the goal of this work has been to put the Co-op in a better position to address topics such as staff wage increases.

Words from the GM: Kevin reflected that 2021 was "off the charts" in many ways that propelled the Co-op forward. He referred to exponential sales growth figures shown in the Annual Report. In spite of tremendous growth, the Co-op has confronted challenges such as the pandemic, which forced the store to adopt new strategies, and the significant debt the store carries, which we were fortunate to refinance at a lower rate in 2022. Kevin spoke to concerns about wages and the current labor crisis, noting that he has been working with a consultant to create a wage plan that is being implemented in stages. This year, minimum wage was raised to \$14/hr, with a goal of \$15/hr in 2023. Kevin is an advocate for wage/benefit increases in tandem with business growth, which takes into consideration liabilities such as owner principal invested in the store, \$56,000 of which has been redeemed so far this year: "We are not yet where we want to be but are taking steps to get there." He urged owners who support these initiatives to "keep shopping" at the Co-op to promote a positive growth trend.

Board member Aaron Dority added that we all care about labor, equity, and community impact, and that, as a bigger store, the Co-op will need to balance growth in employment and growth of wages.

GM Monitoring: Kevin will report on B2 Planning and Budgeting together with his B1 Quarterly Report in October.

Board Monitoring: C8 – Governance Investment—Jerome assessed that the Co-op is in compliance with C8. He suggested the Board consider professional support to review our Google Drive set-up and provide feedback. **Jenny moved to accept Jerome's review of Policy C8 as in compliance, and Tim seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carries.**

Election Committee Update: Jo stated voting closed as of the start of the Board Meeting at 6PM. The committee will wait one week for paper ballots postmarked by 9/22 to arrive before tallying votes. The committee needs to obtain e-voting results from the software company.

Closing: Aaron recognized outgoing Board member Diane Bianco for her service on the Board, noting she has been with us through a lot of change. Diane commented: "It has been a gift to see this dream [of the new store] come true, and we were fortunate to have found Kevin." Annie Silver was recognized among attendees as a Board candidate on the ballot this year.

Agenda:

GM Report

Finance Committee

D1 Unity of Control—Jen

Board Budget

Election Results

Election of Officers

Conflict of Interest—new forms/disclosures

RFP to GM

Meeting Evaluation: Short.

Meeting adjourned: 6:53PM.

Due Date for the Board Packet: Items for the Board Packet are due Thursday, October 20, 2022.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, October 27, 2022, 6:00-7:30 PM, Blue Hill Co-op, Café.

Minutes submitted by Jennifer Traub