

BELFAST FOOD COOP BOARD MEETING – August 28, 2008

PRESENT: Richard Brown, Scott Giroux, Wayne Kraeger, Susan Lauchlan, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penney, Jerry Savitz, Paul Sheridan, Peri Tobin, Zafra Whitcomb. Staff: Erica Bertram, Erica Buswell, Pepper Bush. Member: Rob Struba.

Absent: Allen Ginsberg, Kate Harris, Debbi Lasky, Mike Marino.

FACILITATOR: Richard. Scribe: Paul. Timekeeper: Bindy. Vibewatcher: Peri

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Reminder that the holiday this Monday is to celebrate workers: Labor Day. Susan announced changes to the board list: Paul's 322-3961 # is his cell, his home is 338-0350. There is a Pay-for-Performance workshop in Portland; board members, esp. those on Management Oversight Committee urged to attend, see General Managers.

MINUTES: of July 24, 2008 were accepted (9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abs) with correction in spelling: CO-OPERATIVE Grocers Information Network. Minutes were also accepted for web content.

GM TEAM REPORT: written report was received. For Customer Appreciation Day labor costs were well above the costs on a regular Sat or Sun; sales were up somewhat that day. Labor costs before and after the Day were also up somewhat. This was comparable to last year. This event is a possible use for member labor. We signed up 2 or 3 new members. Consideration of condensing the day to 4 or 5 hours with only 3 bands. Amplification volume of later bands made conversation difficult, esp. at areas such as membership table. Book sales and money raised for charity was up. The "Ten Question about Co-operation" quiz was well received. September might be a better time for this event, after Labor Day? Recombine it with September Members' Super Sale Day? Will try for better organization with Committee oversight: vendors, books, grill, etc. Too much was improvised. Board members are again asked to consider "Ends Policy" as a possibility for a training event. Question re: discounts for vendors? Discounts only for members—we will be happy to have vendors as members! Staff party was small, about 20 people; some dissatisfaction/boycotting—some staff felt staff should not have to work to make this event happen. Hire someone, or use member or board labor? Re: our presence at farmer's market—has not fulfilled our expectations, have reduced the inventory we take to the market.

While not financially rewarding, people love our recipes. Maybe it is just that we are new at the Market? Can we carry local/Maine beverages there? These sell well at the Camden Farmers Market. But at the Belfast Market rules are that we must produce the product being sold. Consider herbal teas, cider. Two items managers asked the Board Development Committee to consider as possible discussion topics: "Who are we here to serve?" Also: a facilitated "visioning of ends policies" discussion.

MEMBER COMMENTS: Erica Bertram, deli staff, commented on the seeming division in the store between grocery shelves filled with quality, healthful food, along with the numerous pamphlets, books, magazines on healthy eating, and the lack of quality ingredients in the deli offerings, e.g. SYSCO-supplied bacon, chicken, mayonnaise (w/high fructose sweetener), along with issues of there being no recyclable takeout containers, and the use of Ruffles potato chips. Suggestion was that we focus on a smaller, quality menu. These points will be taken up by the Deli Committee and the Food Policy Committee, at their next meetings. There is the possibility of a worker co-operative opening in Belfast, operating a vegan comedy/café, in part due to perceived need for more vegetarian choices. Paul is advising the current organizer. The co-op will be represented at the Common Ground Fair at the Co-operative Maine/Co-operative Development Institute table there. Please stop by.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: In the fourth quarter statement we can see a large amount for interest,

maintenance, and depreciation under unallocated expenses. Need is to distribute these over the year. Finance Committee was asked to make a proposal to spread these out, as possible. Possibility of putting the summer profits into staff bonuses; however, we do have those high September expenses. If we do offer bonuses, perhaps limit to those who stayed on the whole summer, as an incentive for retention? Re: tiling the floors, can we pre-pay or buy tiles in advance?

BUDGET: draft was distributed. Is there a line item for board expenses? Yes. Zafra will be putting some financial documents into a password-protected website for board use. How much of patronage dividend is unclaimed? About \$20K, accumulated. There is a potential for a higher wage-to-sales ratio; we are aiming for 23% ratio. Budget document will be refined and re-presented in September. Attempt to hold lower margins for staple items and have higher markups for "luxury" goods. Our margin remains fairly slim.

BUSINESS PLAN DRAFT: Some departments were slow in getting feedback to the GMT and/or were at a loss to find more energy/waste reduction possibilities. No priorities have been set on the goals presented.

Ideas: put sensors on basement/stair lights. Do we know amounts for theft in each department, esp. HABA? Theft is difficult to track, wide demographic in the perpetrators. Plastic waste, esp. in deli is a difficult problem. Energy: our front plate glass is single pane, need a plan for low-E glass; also we lack an air lock at the front entrance. Vendors such as candy and flax oil offer us display racks and coolers, but if these do not work for our needs we should remove them for safety, energy savings and place products elsewhere. Board's long-range planning committee is dormant; need for 1-3-5 year plans. Follow up next month.

ELECTION TIME LINE: discussion as to need to start so early (Sept.). Consensus was that it is never too early to identify potential candidates; please invite them to attend meetings. Timeline accepted as written.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: looking for 100% replies on short questionnaire, so committee can report results in September, and do planning for a November training.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: has not met, will meet to assist Richard Grey's work in co-op. Adding the problems with the deli kitchen floor to their agenda. The floor in General Merchandise area detracts from the look, possibly paint it? Parking lot: patching does help; the fence bordering Laundromat looks rickety, attention to be paid.

RECYCLING COMMITTEE: Susan reported that Roger Lee of Belfast City Council has not replied; seemingly City not wanting to be involved. Choice is working locally or having materials shipped via Portland company.

MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: met once since last board meeting. Asked managers to prepare for yearly evaluations: what they wanted to do; what they did accomplish; where are wheels spinning. Idea is to see one item through to completion—pursuit of excellence; professionalism is paramount.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: not met this month.

HOMEWORK: Recycling Committee to set date to meet; revisit Business Plan and Budget Draft; members to begin thinking of potential candidates; Finance to report on unclaimed patronage dividends, and Pay for Performance; staff to elect replacement for Kate Harris.

NEXT MEETING: Thurs. September 25, 6:30 pm at Waterfall Arts, Bindy facilitating.

