

BELFAST COOP BOARD MEETING – February 26, 2009

PRESENT: Allen Ginsberg, Scott Giroux, Wayne Kraeger, Debbi Lasky, Susan Lauchlan, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penney, Jerry Savitz, Paul Sheridan. Absent: Richard Brown, Peri Tobin, Zafra Whitcomb. Staff: Erica Buswell, Pepper Bush, Goldy Goldstein. Members: Russell Barber, Jeanne Gail, Tony Swebilus.

FACILITATOR: Kip. Scribe: Paul. Timekeeper: Debbi. Vibewatcher: Scott.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: "Healthy Hearts" panel discussion was cancelled by snow, rescheduled for later in March. The Deli committee has suspended meetings for now, is available to meet at the manager's request.

MINUTES: of January 22, 2009 were accepted (7 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abs) with these corrections: under Announcements: "...a panel discussion sponsored by the Co-op and the Belfast Free Library to take place on February 19th, 4-6 PM titled 'Healthy Hearts' will be presenting an array of modalities for prevention and healing of cardiovascular diseases;" under Elections Committee: "...March 15 as a snow date..." under Monitoring for Theft: "...a modest amount for quipment..." These were also approved for web posting (9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abs).

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT: written report was received.

- Question: any special meaning to "only staff requested cash option for refund" of patronage dividend? Though committed to a living wage goal, we are still at the low end of wages in Waldo County. Were the employees invested in the health of the store? The above quote may have no real meaning, may simply be that employees were first to be in store after release of the patronage letters.
- Whoopie (sic) pies are reported as good.
- Barowsky's breads: whole wheat content is very low on the list of ingredients, seems basically a white bread, with a quality barely equal to supermarket brands.
- Compliments on the article in the Republican Journal about co-op not being included in their price comparison.
- New phones are reliable. Voice mail was not purchased/installed at this time, but can be added. We do not have an evening answering machine with outgoing message, but hope to soon.

MEMBER COMMENTS: three of the four new board candidates were present. Noted that an e-mail was sent to members re: Annual Meeting which listed the date correctly (Mar. 8) but not the day: Thursday, should be Sunday. The list on the bread rack of when deliveries are due may not be complete and up-to-date. Quantities of baked goods seemed low lately? Could be due to power outages, snow days, or scheduled holidays at the various bakers, or the fact that we are keeping inventory low to prevent spoilage. Little Notch bakery of Southwest Harbor may have even less whole wheat content than Barowsky's—these seem a matter of incorrect labeling; managers to note this with the vendors.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: this is the mid-winter slump for sales, which are flat; but expenses are rising; labor percentage is reasonable, accomplished by not replacing employees who call-in sick—the rest of staff gets by that day. Attempting to avoid situation of last April where we were caught by labor costs. The reduced Sunday hours have resulted in no complaints and no loss in sales. The installation of the phone system did not require touching any cash, but was paid for by member fees.

Question: can we use any future unredeemed patronage dividends as charitable donations? We can, but we would have to pay taxes on it as income.

Question: can we, on future patronage dividend letter to members, state that unclaimed dividends would go to the co-op's capital reserve fund? Couldn't it say: "simply do not claim your dividend and

you will be donating it to the co-op.” No, it cannot.

**BOARD POLICY-MAKING DISCUSSION:** from several months’ worth of homework—only one additional reply was received by Debbi. Zafra had sent a suggestion that when board is passing policy re: staff, the staff rep should be there; noted was the lack of a second staff rep. Still undistributed to staff was the November reaffirmation of our organizational structure. Expectation is that staff board reps will communicate both ways—to staff, and to board. A proposal was made and seconded: To ask the GMT to remind the staff: 1. they are missing one staff rep; 2. they are missing communication from the existing staff rep; 3. the staff always has the avenue to come to the board during member comments. The proposal was discussed and then tabled. Jerry and Allen will be speaking with Zafra. On a different tack: what is role of this board now that it is not a crisis-management board? Should we bring in a trainer for these issues? Carollee Coulter or Marilyn Scholl? Debbi will research this.

**ELECTIONS COMMITTEE and ANNUAL MEETING:** Elections to start March 8 at Annual Meeting, photos for poster being taken tonight. Planned for the Meeting are discussions with members at tables during meal. Dessert is potluck. The four new candidates will be presented to members. GMT and Finance Committee will give short verbal reports, accompanied by written reports. All other committees will give short written reports. Susan announced that although she is not running for reelection, she will stay on the recycling committee.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** to assist in orientation of new board members, our website contains three years of GMT reports, minutes. Board handbook will be distributed to successful candidates before their formal orientation, and their first official meeting, planned for April. We are considering the Thursdays before and after the April board meeting, Bindy has offered her home, with orientation to be followed by a potluck dinner with as many board members as are able to attend. Also suggested was an informal system of “board buddies,” whereby a new member could turn to an experienced member for advice, clarifications, etc.

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE:** work continues (but has been delayed by storms and vacations) on the bread racks, customer service, new register, member education, children’s area. Current time frame is end of March.

**MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE:** is in the midst of GMT evaluations.

Question: when will we be able to get recyclable deli containers?

**HOMEWORK:** think about what potluck dessert you will bring to the Annual Meeting; and prepare to evaluate the Meeting at our next board meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** all non-board members were excused, for a personnel discussion.

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, March. 26, 2009, 6:30 PM at Waterfall Arts, Susan facilitating.