

## BELFAST CO-OP BOARD MEETING - February 25, 2010

PRESENT: Russ Barber, Jeanne Gail, Allen Ginsberg, Wayne Kraeger, Debbi Lasky, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penney, Phil Prince, Paul Sheridan, Peri Tobin, Zafra Whitcomb. ABSENT: Jerry Savitz, Jerome Weiner. STAFF: Chris Grigsby, Joe Jordan, Mylisa Vowles.

FACILITATOR: Allen Scribe: Jeanne Timekeeper and Vibewatcher: Peri.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING, 1/28/10, Accepted 7, No 0, Abstain 3, with these changes: under 2009 Financial Report: after Rosemarie's name add: Accounts Receivable; after Our Ratio Analysis add: Liquidity; under GMT Report add: an official letter is forthcoming from Revision Energy; also: We LEASE a color copier; and: gratis audits are available. Five dollar numbers in the report from the Finance Committee are deleted in the web version.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT: a written report was received. Questions, etc:

- Generally the Co-op is weathering the slow season well, with sales up in some depts.
- A multi-camera security system capable of zooming, rotating, and storing data, at a cost of \$4125 plus 8 hours of labor by Joe and Zafra, is planned for March. There was the question of how a camera could nail a culprit: it is hoped that despite the wiles of clever thieves, the system could help prevent the loss of hundreds of dollars per week as has occurred in wine and HABA departments.
- A new website master, David Clarke, has been in charge since Feb. 1, replacing Paul Eagle. The GMT solicits new ideas for the website from the BOD.
- A revised the return policy, simpler and similar across all departments, will ease the process for customers, floor managers, and cashiers.
- Patronage dividends will be distributed by mail in early April. This decision culminated long discussions; ideas for next year include debit cards or charge accounts.
- New adjustable grocery shelving, to permit flexible stocking of product sizes, is set to start installation Sunday 2/28 after closing time at 6 p.m.
- Plans for moving the door to the back offices from the current entrance through the human resources office to the existing wall next to the customer bathroom are at the stage of accepting bids. We are seeking professional help for this project because the breakthrough will compromise a load-bearing wall.
- Finally, a new staff Safety Committee headed by Stan Belch, will take on compliance issues with the State Dept. of Labor. The first agenda items are a safety audit, installing smoke detectors, and obtaining "lockout/tagout" devices for equipment such as the slicers in the deli, and the forklift. These are commercially available switches that decommission dangerous equipment if it fails to operate properly.

MEMBER COMMENTS: A board member recounted hearing complaints from local farmers/producers of difficulties selling products in the recent past. It was suggested that dept. managers develop methods to inform potential local vendors of our new managers and our new local product emphasis, to facilitate purchase of local goods. A board member asked if anyone was aware of the "Green Fair" sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce in May. Goldy and Fran are already planning our booth. Bindy asked if anyone had contacted Patty Pendergast, member who spoke up at our last BOD meeting, to encourage her to run for the Board.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Joe gave a summary for the first 4 months of the current fiscal year, from October 1 to January 31. Revenues were up. Cost of goods sold were up. Labor was up 4.5%, year over year, which is within target range, 3 to 6%. Expenses were up. This apparent increase in expenses is due to our new, more accurate accounting procedure to post expenses through the

year, instead of in September only. Capital expenditures were for adjustable grocery dept. shelving, for new Café chairs, for a new cooler for the deli, and for the security camera system. Calculated ratios show labor/sales 20.8% and total compensation/sales 24.8%. We have a funds in 3 separate savings accounts. These are annual membership fees delegated for improvements capital purchases; member joining deposits. A member suggested that we inform members that their dues pay for store improvements, and asked if this was in the newsletter. Today was the deadline for the newsletter: this could be added next issue.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND ELECTIONS:** A reminder that Deb Burwell will lead us in a debriefing and planning session to prioritize and actualize the results of our Board Retreat/ Workshop, scheduled on March 4th 6 to 8 p.m. at Darby's. Most of the discussion centered on the upcoming Annual Meeting scheduled for March 21, likely at St. Margaret's church. Snow date the week following. Goldy will manage catering 2 soups, sandwich platters, and members will provide desserts. Questions were aired and discussed about whether GMT, or Dept. Managers, or staff would be attending, and if so, compensated. After years of experimentation with various permutations, it was decided that GMT would be paid, but dept. managers and staff would be merely encouraged to attend as "members." Suggestions of sending invitations to all members, or vendors, were rejected because of costs. It would be helpful if the announcement of the Annual Meeting could be combined with mailing of Patronage Dividends, but this year timing of the dividend distribution for April precludes this. Instead, the Annual Meeting will be advertised with store signage, website, Facebook, Village Soup ads, and the newsletter. Election plans are sparse. No one knew if anybody had entered applications to run for the Board. Board had approved an election cycle schedule in August 2008, which is not being followed. Elections and Annual Meetings should not come as surprises to the board. Sign ups needed for people to bring election materials to the Annual Meeting.

**LONG-RANGE PLANNING:** No meeting held, duplicated by Annual Retreat.

**BUILDING AND GROUNDS:** Several small projects are in the works: downstairs bathrooms removed, insulation and sealing of air leaks in the back of the building, moving some beer/brewing supplies downstairs. A member asked when the front windows will be replaced. Actually, making a double-door air-lock entrance would save more energy per dollar invested, and front windows will better fit into plans for facade renovation, if and when this happens.

**RECYCLING:** Gradual progress weekly: Josh Oxley of Rolling Acres Farm (in Monroe) has expressed interest in taking our post-plate refuse for his industrial compost operation, all, including paper, except disposable cutlery. A member volunteer makes a recycle run to the Belfast Transfer Station each week. Masses of plastic stuff is sorted by numbers in the basement, and will go to Unity Area Recycling Center in Thorndike.

**PURCHASING POLICY:** the Committee's article on: "How can members influence purchasing policy?" will be in next newsletter. A request was made for the committee to consider what it might entail for Co-op to become a medical marijuana distributor. Recycling Committee will shortly be making a formal request to Purchasing Policy to consider waste issues.

**HOMEWORK:** Read Workshop/Retreat notes, and be prepared for another intense planning meeting with Deb Burwell on March 4th. Continue to seek persons willing to run for Board Elections.

**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday March 25th, 2010, at Waterfall Arts. Kip will facilitate.