

BELFAST CO-OP BOARD MEETING - March 25, 2010

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

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

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING, 2/25/10 were accepted: Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 1, with these changes: under Present, correct spelling Kip Penney; also: Zafra Whitcomb was absent; under Building: downstairs bathrooms removed; under Recycling: "...disposable cutlery...will go to Unity Area Recycling Center." For web publication of minutes, eight dollar amounts were removed; accepted: Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 1.

ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW: Comments received from members and other board: There was no printed financial statement available, seemed to be desired by members. Some were unhappy with drawn-out discussion of "process"--we need to outline what we plan to do, and then stick to it. It would be useful to have agenda and all reports available in advance (in store, on paper, and on web), to be read beforehand. These also might generate interest in attending the Meeting. Could have spent less time on the reports and had more time for discussions. Pre-label the discussion rooms. It was a good space for meeting; set-up and take down went smoothly. The discussion groups were productive. The Committee and President's reports needed proofreading. Members' sign-up sheet for committee work was distributed to the committee convenors. We should consider doing discussion groups with members again next year. Fran Clementson could help us to plan the Annual Meeting as an event, but needs six month lead time to be done properly. Having three vs. six groups kept us from the layers involved—did not get time to get to resolutions.

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

- new thermostats cost \$2300 for all five walk-in coolers/freezers; payback within 9 months.
- website feedback: "member services area" is a category needed there, with a calendar, membership renewal dates (password protected), benefits of membership, Mission Statement, short history of
- Co-op, board minutes, nutritional library, etc.
- coordination of our wine-tasting with First Friday Art Walks is a great idea.
- questioning of plastic/reusable card for patronage dividend disbursement vs. recyclable card with barcode on paper without lamination.
- patronage dividends available in May on a gift card/pre-loaded card is easier to accomplish
- somewhat depressed sales in week prior to March's Member Day, but sales were up \$14K over previous year. Some departments such as bulk and grocery were down, then up on 3/1.

MEMBER COMMENTS: the Eat Local potluck dinner was well attended, with a show by "the Hipsters." Next year we could have similar entertainment at the Annual Meeting, as it is our 35th Anniversary. On average we sell \$5500 in local goods per week. The Eat Maine Foods website lists the number of pounds of local produce one could grow. Averaging 70+ people at these events and films. Possibly the Sunday afternoon time is the problem for Annual Meeting attendance?

FINANCE COMMITTEE: we are doing well, both year over year, and within our budget. Sales are up, and both the Wage-to-Sales ratio and the Compensation-to-Sales ratio are better than budgeted. Electricity and heating fuel costs are down, due in part to the cost of a kilowatt hour, but our usage is similar. Maintenance is down \$5000 on the coolers. Snow removal costs are down, being a light winter.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: the ballot box is up, ballots are out.

Cashiers are pushing voting with member customers. Discussed closing nominations at the Annual Meeting? However, if a candidate is serious, we want them to be attending several board/committee meetings in advance, we don't really want people who decide at the last minute to be on the board. Perhaps we need a Nominations Committee, to work at recruiting/vetting candidates; can we have better marketing about the job? We want candidates to "want to want" the position, make it seem prestigious. We could have write-in's possible for nominations from the floor? Should we not always have spaces for Write-ins on every ballot? There is a full description of the benefits and responsibilities of board members on the reverse of the nominating form. Brief discussion of board cash compensation (and tax liability issues?) vs. purchasing discounts and problem of percentages. We should be looking for more business members on the board, like from the local chamber of commerce, who the GMTs recently hosted. One co-op that was mentioned starts their process in March for a September Annual Meeting. Should bylaws be revisited? Debbi and Kip to look at that. If the election is completed, we will have a review of the committees at next meeting. Board self-evaluation forms were received by e-mail, please print out, fill out and return to Zafra, by April 10th.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE: we had the first discussion of a possible revised Mission Statement; single change was from being a "...membership owned and controlled retail outlet..." to "...membership owned and controlled organization that operates a retail outlet..." This was done so we are not limited to only having a retail store, if we want to get into distribution. On the Vision Statement, we added the words "sustainable, local, healthy" to the "products" (vs. foods) we offer. Committee was asked to bring back changes with a printed sheet for reference.

MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE: met once, worked on Annual Meeting.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE: several small projects are in the works: security cameras, kitchen floor, inside back stairs. The knock out of the wall to make new doorway into main office is scheduled for Mon 4/12. Committee will also be considering suggestions received at the Annual Meeting.

PURCHASING POLICY COMMITTEE: interim report on becoming a Medical Marijuana distributor was distributed. Committee will keep abreast of the regulations and make further recommendations if situation changes.

HOMEWORK: add to agenda: time for Long-Range Planning: discuss Mission/Vision Statements; Elections: discuss Nominating Committee idea and committee allocations. Other homework: add Financial report, President's Report, and Committee Reports to Co-op website; Bindy to get a President's' letter to Zafra for distribution with Patronage Dividends. Those leading Annual Meeting discussion groups please get your notes to Debbi for Newsletter article. Return board self-evaluation forms to Zafra.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday April 22nd, 2010, at Waterfall Arts. Kip will facilitate.