

Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meeting - April 28, 2011 - FINAL, and for web

PRESENT: Russ Barber, Jeanne Gail, Wayne Kraeger, Debbi Laski, Paul Nyren, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penny, Phil Prince, Jerry Savitz, Paul Sheridan, Zafra Whitcomb. STAFF: Joe Jordan, Mylisa Vowles. MEMBERS: John Bednarik, Alexandra Chaplin, Jeremiah Muzzy-Chaplin, Frederick Cowles, Dawn M. Clark, Mark Dittrick, Christopher Groden.

FACILITATOR: Kip SCRIBE: Jeanne TIMEKEEPER: Bindy VIBE: Debbi.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: A sheet was passed around to sign up for committees. FEDCO's tree sale is May 6-7 9am to 3pm, best to arrive after noon to avoid crowds. All of the Co-op scheduled events for May were announced. These are listed on the website. In addition, the Co-op will participate in the Good Life Festival at the Armory May 21st, and Goldy will appreciate help from volunteers. On May 14th, the Belfast Transition will build a Permablitz, which is a custom-designed vegetable garden, for the winner of the drawing, Corliss Davis.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: Minutes were accepted as amended, 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. Under Member Comments, add: "...doing canning, freezing, storage and value-added work." Also add there: "Allen will still be active, working on various Co-op projects." Under Finance Committee add: "...this may be because the average daily balance varies widely." Under GMT report add: "Some expressed concern over urgency in selecting a new logo, so it can be included in the design of the new website, although others wondered whether this can be changed in the future." No changes for the website, also approved.

MEMBER COMMENTS: • Several (5) members were here to request that we consider having Wi-Fi in the cafe. They suggested that we consider a limited time trial, as it would only take a "router and a couple of plugs." Board members responded that this has been raised in the past, but some people objected on the grounds of radiation exposure and abuse of our limited table space by those who operate their laptops for long periods of time. The members countered that this trial could be for slack times such as early morning. The WiFi issue was to be addressed by GMs and IT depts. They thought it was probably doable.

• Member Christopher Groden requested that we stop selling tobacco, specifically "Native Spirit" cigarettes. He based his argument on the sound science that finds nicotine in tobacco a toxic, deadly, and addictive substance; and that its sale is counter to the Co-op's mission statement. He further objected to the prominent display of the cigarette packages at the registers where minors could see them. The sale of tobacco has come up before. The Purchasing Policy Committee will arrange a meeting with Chris to discuss further.

• A board member, Jeanne Gail, speaking as a member, wished to volunteer to design and plant a garden in place of the row of rugosa roses in front of the parking lot. This would best be postponed until after the parking lot paving is complete, and should be referred to Building and Grounds committee. • A board member, Jerry Savitz, urged us to "support" Waterfall Arts [in the form of a larger financial contribution.] • A member has asked if we have a plan in the event that someone comes in with a weapon. We have plans posted for building evacuation only.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT: Written report received. Spring is here in terms of increased sales, customers, and lower cost of goods. Patronage dividends are ready for store distribution for 2 weeks, then mail out, to decrease postage. Our electricity bill is down \$900, about half of this due to the new freezer. The floor managers attended State alcohol sales training. Front end staff hours are re-organized for fewer staff, working longer shifts. Mary Lou Kenner, a marketing specialist, has volunteered to help with several projects, such as the FairTrade Coffee Demo on May 3rd, and the logo design issue. She prefers something like the new designs, as opposed to the old one since it should not be necessary to read the words to recognize "Belfast Co-op." She advised us to hire a marketing professional as needed. In answer to a question about the results of the Inventory count; results were typical. We had more inventory on hand than we thought. We have

about \$250K in inventory, and an adjustment of \$8K was needed.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:** Written report received. There are some new key financial indicators. The “average daily balance” combines all cash accounts, showing liquidity in terms of number of days worth of cash, thus minimizing daily swings related to day of payroll, bill disbursements, etc. Note that the income for the month is artificially high, \$21,000, because it includes tax refund. The net income would be about \$15,000. The finance committee will address a policy on how much detail of the Nickerson report will go up on the website.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** Committee did not meet. Next on their schedule are the topics of accountability and evaluation of BOD members.

**ELECTION COMMITTEE:** Kudos to Paul S. for doing most of the work on the election. There were a few comments written on the ballots. A member opined that all Board members should shop at the Co-op. Another wanted BOD folks to sign in if they attend meetings. At this meeting, it was suggested that we create more ways for members to vote, such as voting online, enabling to print their ballots from the web, and bring or mail them in—useful for those living from away. Debbi and Kip will put the official text of the By-law changes in the handbook, and on the website.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Slate: President – Bindy; Vice-president – Debbi; Secty – Phil. Clerk – doesn't have to be elected. Moved, seconded, and voted. For: 10; opposed: 0. Abstain: 1. As to Treasurer, it is urgent that we select someone, since Allen is resigning and the store credit cards need a working signature. Jerry Savitz was nominated, seconded, and voted in with 10 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstaining.

**LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Written report received, with attendance. This month LRP met with the membership committee. They discussed increasing member involvement and worker-member program. The purpose of having more worker-members is not to get more work done, or to compensate needy members, but to widen member involvement in the Co-op and engagement in the Co-op business model. Workers need to do jobs that staff does not already do, that do not need much supervision. Suggestions were assisting at outside events, clean-up outside the store, demos and customer appreciation day. The membership committee will work on issues involving Workers' comp, and solicit more ideas for worker-member tasks. Suggestion that Membership committee setting up specific deadlines for this work will ensure that it is broken down into discrete and do-able parts.

**ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW:** BoD members wished we had to reports back to the whole group from the small group discussions, as well as the written reports. Conveners will get write-ups to Phil, to put on the Website and in the July newsletter. Remainder of AM review tabled to next meeting.

**BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:** The next active project is the parking lot. Our paving expert, Paul Nyren, is seeing that the bids are comparable. Choices are: overlay only, regrade the base and top it, or regrade the base, let it settle for 2 years then overlay. Input into the decision will be the City's tentative plans to repave surrounding streets and better manage water run-off. The committee also started to conceptualize an addition to the deli on the laundromat side of the building. Voted: funding for parking lot work: not to exceed \$30K, with Finance and B&G to work out the details, Approved 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

**PURCHASING POLICY REPORT:** No written report. We are awaiting cost estimates on joining NCGA before considering practical details. Also still on hold is a decision on Odwalla and/or Columbia Gorge beverages. And, as of tonight, we have a new topic, whether to stop selling tobacco products; will meet with Chris Groden.

**MEETING REVIEW, HOMEWORK, NEXT MEETING:** Several agenda items went overtime, likely

because more is on the list. Complaints about the noisy room that we were given, so Bindy will contact Waterfall Arts about this. Homework: Annual membership meeting small group conveners send summaries to Phil. Wi-Fi: Mark and Zafra will look into the prior survey, and current considerations. More AM meeting feedback, next month.

Next meeting: May 26, Facilitator: Bindy