

BELFAST CO-OP BOARD MEETING - July 28, 2011 – FINAL, approved

PRESENT: Russ Barber, Jeanne Gail, Wayne Kraeger, Paul Nyren, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penney, Phil Prince, Jerry Savitz, Paul Sheridan, Zafra Whitcomb

ABSENT: Debbi Lasky.

STAFF: Chris Grigsby, Joe Jordan, Mylisa Vowles.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Kip is having a barn sale in Knox. Fedco Bulbs has an 8/26 deadline for discounts. Save the date: Customer Appreciation Day, Sat., Aug. 20, rain or shine, 10-6.

MINUTES: from June 23, 2011 were accepted, for print and web versions, 6 Yes, 0 No, 3 Abstain, with no changes.

MEMBER COMMENTS: Does the Co-op accept plastics for recycling? Yes, but only plastic containers that are clean and originated at the Co-op. Please do not dump into the café can, but alert a floor manager that you have items to recycle. Also all Belfast residents are requested to urge the city to accept more plastics for recycling. A letter was read, addressed to the GMT and board members, and received by many but not all, on the BoD, from a member that was withdrawing his membership because he was not able to immediately place donation cans at checkout counters, but had to adhere to the "Charity of the Day" policy.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM: written report received. Questions, comments:
- short bios needed from board members for the website. Also photos; Paul S. will take Kip and Jerry's tonight.
- labor help needed for C. A. D., Aug 20: two grillers, raffle and membership table (combined). Badges that ID us as 'board' would be useful for this. Also Harbor Festival is same date, leave time to find parking, and leave the Co-op's half-lot for customers. Also: need loan of a gas grill.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: working towards posting a list of standardized meeting times for committees and adding same to Co-op calendar, along with key issues that committees are working upon, to stir up member interest in working on a committee. Get the times, dates, issues to Mylisa. Remember this is one important way we will get new board members. Comments on the passing of an era, that is, our ability to have worker-members, which we lost in our changeover to a patronage dividend organization. If we had a non-profit arm, we could do this in the future.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: a straw vote was taken to see if there was interest in canceling the July meeting next year: 4 Yes, 4 No, 0 Abstain. Sent to committee to discuss, report. Is the draft Board Evaluation Tool package, as distributed last month, an agreeable and useful tool? Send comments pro/con to Bindy and Zafra by August 15. Discussed possible retreat dates: early November, or January? Possible

topics: growth, and how? Committee will bring a proposal to August meeting. It will also be meeting with Long-Range Planning, August 5th.

Ad Hoc “Ballot Mailing/Fiscal Year/Annual Meeting” alignments: discussions in attempt to be able to increase elections participation and member engagement, by mailing out notice of Patronage Dividend along with ballots, if the conflicting events can be aligned. Possibility of changing the fiscal year to end on March 31, and sync with CoCoFiSt. Or, a change in date of notice of the Dividends? It seems that this may take two years, the first with a change of the Annual Meeting date, by way of a bylaw change next March-April? Finance Committee will add to its agenda and report next month.

MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (MOC): board reviewed a draft set of questions towards a “Political Action” policy, as guidance for the GMT. Examples of the issues include: signing onto a Bangor Daily News op-ed re: BPA in food containers; Poland Spring water extraction; joining the New England Farmer's Union. The sense of the meeting seemed to be positive around issues involving sustainability, local foods, and those supported by science. Please get any comments to the MOC, which will be meeting with the Long-Range Planning committee to discuss and bringing back the draft policy to the board.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: report received. Some questions on net income (profit) re: the timing of expenses, and breaking these out over the course of the year so these would not, as in past (Septembers), show a very large deficit. Compensation (labor + benefits) are up, \$150+ K over last year. Numerous projects around the store are the cause of rise in the labor costs. We are currently down to 67, from 73, employees, but up to 38, from 34, full-time employees. We have not used cash, but rather savings, for recent capital expenses, and have paid down some of our principles due.

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE: A correction to the written report received: the cost to set up a 501(c)3 organization (listed as \$1000) could be one half to 3x of that figure, depending on circumstances. Also another sentence should read: “if we had retained 80% (instead of 20%).” The choice to set up a 501 org could be a good retreat topic; would this “solve” the political action questions, or at least clarify them? Issue needs revisiting.

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE: since we have no funding available, no big projects are planned, so no new proposals are needed. Finance committee needs to work up some numbers for a retreat “growth” discussion. But the board needs the will to invest in an engineer and architect in order to get reasonable estimates. Our store is too small during the three months of summer and during holiday season, otherwise it is not too small. We may want to budget for an investment of \$6-8K for a market feasibility study; can we “market” ourselves in a way to increase our slow months? Noted also was that back office and receiving areas are in need of additional desk and computer space.

REVIEW AND HOMEWORK: Paul s. volunteered to bring some food and organize others for the August social pre-meeting time. We should think about adding a budget line for food next year. Comments on the meeting: we ran late, to 8:55 PM, scheduled to 8:30. If we vote to extend time in one area, we should be subtracting an equal time in another area. Reminder that reports are due to Zafra by 5 PM on the Thursday BEFORE the board meetings. Please tell facilitator/agenda writer which are your committee's action item(s), and/or highlight in your written report.

Homework Items:

1. Finance: work up numbers for a retreat/growth discussion.
2. L-R Planning: to revisit 501 org status, esp re: political action question.
3. Finance: to discuss moving of fiscal year and/or payout date of patronage dividends.
4. MOC: to return with a revised "Political Action" policy draft.
5. ALL: review sample board evaluation sheets, comments to Bindy & Zafra by Aug. 15.
6. ALL: get committee info to Mylisa: regular meeting schedule, convener contact, issues.
7. Bd Dev: discuss cancellation of next July board meeting.
8. ALL: get bios in short format and photo of self to hans@belfast.coop for website.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, August 25, 2011, at Waterfall Arts. Zafra to facilitate.