

BELFAST CO-OP BOARD MEETING April 26, 2012

PRESENT: Mark Dittrick, Jeanne Gail, Betsy Garrold, Chris Groden, Wayne Kraeger, Debbi Laski, Paul Nyren, Bindy Pendleton, Kip Penney, Meg Peterson, Phil Prince, Jerry Savitz, Tony Swebillius, Zafra Whitcomb

GMs: Joe Jordan

ABSENT: Janis Stone, Chris Grigsby, Mylisa Vowles

FACILITATOR: Kip, Scribe: Jeanne, Co-Scribe: Phil, Timekeeper: Jerry, Vibe: Paul N

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Belfast Area Transition Initiative and the Belfast Co-housing and Eco-Village are sponsoring a workshop this weekend on
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ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Belfast Area Transition Initiative and the Belfast Co-housing and Eco-Village are sponsoring a workshop this weekend on "Sociocracy and Dynamic Governance," with an introductory talk by John Buck, author of "We the People," on Friday evening.
FEDCO will have their tree sale pick-up for pre-orders this Friday and Saturday from 9 -3, and their tree sale to the general public next weekend, same days and times.
Board president, Bindy, will be in Scotland most of next month.
The "Alternative Radio" interview of Gar Aperowitz was aired on MPBN radio, and can be heard online in their archives.
The Co-op Maine Conference held in Augusta [date?] was an outstanding opportunity to meet with our colleagues. It would be good if we could follow up by sending representatives to future meetings, one GM, one Education staff, and one Board Member.

SPECIAL BOARD BUSINESS: Phil Prince did not stand for election to continue as staff rep, since there were other qualified people running. It was moved and seconded that we appoint Phil as interim Board member until the next election. In favor 12, opposed 0, Abstain 0. According to our By-laws, Phil will not be able to vote for his first 3 months as interim appointed BOD member.

MINUTES: Accepted as amended. In favor 6, opposed 0, abstain 6. Note that new Directors abstained since they were not sitting Members at the last meeting.
Web content: in the Finance Committee report, redact the % interest rate for the loan.
A member inquired if we have a formal policy on what should be redacted for web publication: we do not. Our usual procedure is to strike out sensitive financial details, such as NCGA contracts, agreements and discounts with vendors, private personnel issues, among others.

MEMBER COMMENTS: Hearsay: grumbling heard about lack of Patronage Dividend.
Speaking as a member, a BOD member suggested that we purchase I-Pads or I-Books for Board

Directors to save paper used for the monthly packets.

A complaint about plastic containers used by the Deli. Note: triple cost of comparable biodegradable containers.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM: Written report received.

Late breaking news: We were accepted by the NCGA. Sales programs, discounts, orders will begin in August. Belfast Co-op sits in the mid-to-large group of Co-ops, those grossing \$5 to 10 million, out of a total of 128 Co-ops and about 165 stores. We ordered \$1.5 million from United Natural Foods, which will now be discounted. Our NCGA dues will be \$6700, or 0.1% of gross sales, or about \$1000 a year equity commitment. In addition, we will receive discounts on credit card swipe fees, merchandising programs and supplies. An invaluable benefit will be all expense paid attendance by a GM at 2 conferences yearly, and partial reimbursement for department heads to attend special conferences.

Monthly report: GMs are filling spots for summer hires to start mid-May, planning for over 2 dozen cruise ships and visitors to the Front Street Shipyard. Summer hours for weekend brunch will end 2 hours earlier to accommodate heavier lunch crowds. Sales from local vendors are up 18% over last year; we will begin to track Maine-made products and products made exclusively from Maine ingredients. Plans for this year's Customer Appreciation Day have begun: it will be August 18th.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Written and chart reports received. At the end of the 2nd fiscal quarter, sales are up, and costs are slightly down, placing us at a lower deficit than the prior year, or about \$2000 better than budgeted. The refinancing of our debt is a boon to the bottom line, amounting to savings of about \$3000 a month. Expenses that rose the most in this period were supplies and services. For example, waste removal has risen 160%, due to Pinetree doubling their rate, and additional pick-ups needed for the new recycling and composting programs.

Adding to the discussion about Patronage Dividends, one view is that the MAP, or Member Advantage Program of shelf discounts, potentially contributes toward inequity in Patronage Dividends, since not all members take advantage of these discounts.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT: Written report received, which covered the "job description" of the scribe. Board Development was very active this month. They are in process of revising the BOD Handbook, and setting it in loose-leaf form for easy future revisions. Orientations and tours of the Co-op facility are in progress for our new BOD members. All will sign and return BOD Code of Conduct. One new member, who objects to one of the statements therein for being "syntactically lacking," will have the option of crossing out that part. His issue will be referred to the BD committee. BOD contact list info was updated. A "buddy" system will be offered to new members, so a sign-up sheet was circulated. Besides the election of officers, including co-scribe, which was tabled until next month, BD will need to recruit BODers to be on the BD committee, write or delegate monthly pieces for the newsletter, attend the Customer Appreciation Day planning committee, and represent the Co-op at Co-op Maine events.

It was moved and agreed by a show of hands to continue with our present officers for a month.

ANNUAL MEETING (REVIEW): Several sets of notes received by email; written report from Annual Meeting Review ad hoc committee received. Although AM planning was the best ever, it could still improve. Having an outside facilitator is good to allow our leaders to focus on meeting communication. Some would have wished that the facilitator be involved earlier in planning; that s/he be more "outgoing"; not spend time on "ice-breaking" activities. As usual, too much food, or, one BOD turned it around to "not enough members (and staff) attended." One good result of the meeting was the discussion of "gift" cards, generating a drive to increase their use in the store. Finally, having a follow-up critique of the AM should be built in to the BD schedule.

MEMBERSHIP: Mylisa and Peri were present at a meeting and discussed Peri's notes on the annual meeting.

ELECTION COMMITTEE: Written report received. This BOD election was remarkable for having 5

new candidates, and for reaching a quorum of ballots during the 6-week voting period without needing an extension, with the help of social media, the website, check-out screens, emailing, and online printable ballots. Mailing ballots with the president's letter and, if possible, patronage dividend is a good idea, while sending these via email saved money and labor this year. We need to formalize the "chain of custody" of ballots and the member verification process. We don't have the in-house ability to provide secure online voting. Another problem to address is who in a household is a member eligible to vote. With all 7 candidates receiving >25% of total ballots, the difficulty of assigning term lengths arose. This was decided in order of number of votes tallied as follows:
M. Peterson, M. Ditrrick, J. Stone, C. Groden, and T. Swebilius terms until 2015, and J. Gail and W. Kraeger terms until 2014. B. Garrold, the new staff rep, will sit until 2015, and P. Prince, newly appointed, will have to run for election in 2013.

LONG RANGE PLANNING: Written report received. The committee and guests discussed the results of the LRP section of the Annual Meeting. Physical growth ideas, raised in the past, included a front bump-out including energy efficient double entry and windows, possibly even with a 2nd story, and a side addition. None of these are feasible financially. What we need to work on is increasing sales and foot traffic in the off-seasons, perhaps marketing to young families with kids, retirees new to the area, handicapped. It was proposed as an action item that this committee consider spearheading a market study prior to proposing any project of physical growth.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS: Verbal report. The proposal from Sun Dog Solar from Danny Piper for solar water heater on the roof is an estimate of about \$10,000, or \$6500-6700 after rebates. This results in a payback of about 5 years. Chris Grigsby also looked at the possibility of expanding at the Tarrantine Building. He concluded that it would be too costly to justify considering that we are overcrowded in high summer only.

MEETING REVIEW: It was stated during the meeting by some members that they cannot stay over the appointed time. If time extensions are voted, time must be subtracted from the agenda elsewhere.

Next meeting: May 24. Facilitator _____ Snacker _____ Boxer _____

Homework:

Board Development:

look up in Roberts Rules: do abstain votes "count?"

buddy system

committee sign-ups

newsletter articles: someone to manage writing and delegation of writing

election of officers: secretary, co-scribe, snacker manager?

BOD volunteer to be on CAD planning committee

Co-op Maine rep

All committee conveners: look over Annual Meeting notes and plan relevant actions

Building and Grounds: solar hot water system

all members: sign Code of Conduct form and hand in

Finance Committee: look at MAP shelf discount and decide if it is inequitable if not all members buy such items

Parking lot: Policy needed on deciding what to redact from the minutes for the web.

Policy needed on voting eligibility for household members of member families or groups

Submitted by Jeanne Gail, scribe