

BELFAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, February 28, 2013

PRESENT: Jeanne Gail, Betsy Garrold, Chris Groden, Debbi Lasky, Kip Penney, Meg Peterson, Phil Prince, Jerry Savitz, Janis Stone, Tony Swebilus, Zafra Whitcomb

GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) MEMBERS: Joe Jordan, Mylisa Vowles

MEMBERS: Ron Braybrook, Cindy Conavan, Gail Clark, Jean Lenderking

ABSENT: Chris Grigsby (GMT), Paul Nyren, Bindy Pendleton

FACILITATOR: Kip; TIME-KEEPER: Zafra; VIBE-WATCHER: Debbi

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

There is a bill in the Legislature on genetically modified food (GMO) labeling, L.D. 756. It is moderate in scope. It can be found on the Maine State.gov <<http://state.gov>> website. Betsy is going to the first meeting of Food Democracy Now, and will keep us informed.

Tony is resigning from the Board effective today due to multiple other obligations.

Paul Nyren's wife passed away this past week.

CONSENT AGENDA: Accepted as amended. Vote: 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. Three items were selected for further discussion.

**MEMBER COMMENTS:**

The Purchasing Policy Committee: the existing policy cannot be found, and the prior policy needs work. This policy should be reviewed annually. It is hoped that new directors will join this committee, and that members will also participate.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT TEAM:**

From the consent agenda: GMS should not be conveners of Board committees. Aside from the labor expense, their work could be construed as a conflict of interest, as when GMS on committees set policy, thus "writing their own job description." This item is referred to Board Development Committee.

On the issue of reciprocal discounts to members of other Co-ops: the Good Tern Co-op in Rockland is the only Maine co-op still honoring mutual discounts. Members have complained about giving these discounts at check-out. We will refer this to committees, Finance and Membership.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

From the consent agenda: The loss carry-over from last year is applicable and we will distribute 30% of the allocated Patronage Dividend. The distribution will be in the form of store credit on a Co-op Card, either the member's existing card, or a new one, or in cash if they prefer.

On low-income discount. It would seem that the WIC nutrition program is a natural, but we cannot stock the food items on their state-mandated list. We do accept EBT cards, the current version of Food Stamps. No resolution of the discussion.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

1. Retreat de-briefing and action: On group note-taking/summarizing. Opinions ranged from April meeting when Deb Burwell will attend.

2. Ditto: On Board decision-making/modified consensus. Address this at next meeting.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:**

1. WI-FI is not working consistently, due partly to interference. Zafra considers it too costly to keep trouble-shooting. Whether this is worthwhile remains unresolved.

2. Quarterly gatherings. Membership Committee expects the other committees to volunteer for dates, submit to the Membership Committee, and plan their events.

3. "Tabling", meaning Directors sitting in front of the store and talking to members: no volunteers yet. Alternatively, Directors can come to the store on their own and talk to members a couple hours per month.

4. On questions for a member survey: the Committee has not received any from the Committees, and again requests that these be submitted.

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE: Sign-up sheets for set-up and clean-up. Final child-care arrangements. The film will be shortened.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION COMMITTEE: A mailing will be going out tomorrow, staff has received ballots, and ballots handed out personally have been successful. So Directors are requested to come to the store and hand out ballots to members who are shopping, especially tomorrow on Super-Sale Day.

AGENDA ITEM: Staff salaries and cost-of-living raises not reaching the living wage level. It was noted that the only salary that the Board controls is the GM's: the GM team manages staff salaries. Although the Co-op's average salary is above industry standard, new hires fall below that figure. The only way we can raise pay, and still stay in business, is to sell more product, raise prices, or have fewer staff working. No action tonight. Directors requested more concrete facts, rather than generalizations, and especially concrete suggestions.

#### MEETING REVIEW

#### HOMEWORK:

- \* Finance Committee: proposal on co-op reciprocal discounts; more research and proposals on staff salaries;
- \* GM Team: take up political action policy on the GMO bill;
- \* Board Development: group note-taking; Board decision-making/modified consensus;
- \* All committees: put quarterly gathering plans on agenda, and propose questions for membership survey: send these to Membership Committee;
- \* All Directors: spend time, especially tomorrow, handing out ballots.

Next meeting: March 28th. Facilitator: Kip; Snacker: Chris Groden; Boxer: Phil

END OF MINUTES. Submitted by Jeanne Gail, Scribe