

Belfast Co-op Board of Directors Meeting Minutes July 30, 2015

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Doug Johnson, Ron Braybrook, Debbi Laski, Judith O'Donovan, Kip Penny, Phil Prince, Jerry Savitz, Zafra Whitcomb, Betsy Garrold

GMs: Mylisa Vowles

INTERIM GM: Brittany Baird

ABSENT: Alessandra Martinelli, Bindy Pendleton

MEMBERS: Eric Buch, (GM Search Committee), Pat Gladding, Jim LeClair, Patty LeClair, Lance Whitney, Jeanne Gail, Scribe

STAFF: Tom Winslow, Emily Berry

FACILITATOR: Ron **TIME-KEEPER:** Debbi **VIBE-WATCHER:** Debbi

CHECK-IN: Alessandra is absent caring for her daughter who is in the hospital in Boston.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Introductions all around for Interim GM Brittany Baird.

Ron sent a note on behalf of the BOD to Charlotte Martinelli, daughter of director Alessandra Martinelli expressing our best wishes.

MINUTES: Approved by consensus

MEMBER COMMENTS:

A member asked if there is a wheelchair or motorized wheelchair in the store for customers' use.

A staff member found it disconcerting that her car's tire was chalked by a staff member while she was sitting in her car in the parking lot.

A staff member commented that this GM transition process appears to have been too rapid, poorly timed, as it is the busy summer season, incompletely explained to the staff, and unsure of the wisdom of the direction towards only one GM.

A member agreed, and added that there has been inadequate communication to the membership about the GM transition.

Two other members were reported to have made the same communication comment.

A member was reported to have said that he loves seeing young farmers delivering their local produce each morning, suggested a Co-op Staff Appreciation day, and decided to retain his longtime Co-op membership despite being upset over a former Co-op employee's dismissal.

RESPONSE TO MEMBER COMMENTS: Note that we engaged Brittany as a consultant, not hired her as Interim GM. To improve communication, we will have Kate (who, contrary to the Search Committee's report in this meeting packet, is still employed at the Co-op) send a press release to the Free Press and other media outlets. Brittany will be posting an article on the Co-op website.

GM REPORT: Two clarifications: 1) research about committing to the PelletCo's furnace is worthwhile because, despite spending money on upgrades to our current furnace, fumes are still detectable in the store, and burning wood pellets rather than oil would improve our ecological footprint. 2) Note that Mylisa's employment status is still the same, as neither she nor the Co-op have given their 30 days' notice.

Brittany, now on her 4th day here, has begun action on two goals, cost-cutting, and "open-book management." For cost-cutting, she plans to start bi-weekly payroll, which will save several thousand dollars. To ease the stress of change on staff, notices will go out now, but it will take five weeks for the

change in the payroll schedule. She has posted notices for hiring a single grocery manager, which follows Melanie's suggestion. The transition to "open-book management" will empower staff and improve work culture, as staff will have clearer financial information and less hierarchy. Finally, Jerry reported that the Finance Committee is working on a more conservative, realistic budget for next year. They predict that we will have a loss for this year. Our sales have risen, but not up to the current budget.

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Per Co-op Bylaws, Article 7, Executive Committee— the full board ratified by consensus the Executive Committee's decision to hire Brittany Baird as Interim General Manager by the terms of the contract negotiated.

On Joe Jordan's resignation: this was a surprise. One director reported that there was a sense on the part of some staff that Joe was not well treated leading up to his exit. Bottom lines: we need to communicate better with staff; and we need to "make it right" with all the GMs, absent and present. [Secretary note: One director expressed the need to present another viewpoint of the above entry which will be included in the August 2015 minutes.]

On the Interim GM Contract: It is for 3 months with 30-day notice. Whether the current GM will stay on to orient the new GM is not specified in the contract.

GM Search Committee: Melanie Reed is our contract consultant to assist with the GM search. She is conducting the initial screening of applicants. We have received 8 applications to date. The present round of applications is open until August 30.

C6 Board Monitoring Report: Officers' Roles. We amended this policy at our retreat last April. The Board determined itself to be out of the compliance with its own policy C6 – Officers' Roles, but has a plan to achieve compliance.

Board Development Committee is working on the Board calendar

Phil said that, in Chris Grigsby's absence, he doesn't know where the Articles of Incorporation, or the Deed, are located. Chris scanned many of the Co-op's documents. Phil will ask him about these.

Communication chain: Now send information to Brittany.

Betsy was tasked with writing a newsletter article on the recent GM transitions.

MEETING REVIEW: Excellent meeting, from all present, old and new participants.

NEXT MEETING: August 27. Facilitator: Ron Braybrook

HOMEWORK: [Homework was neglected to be listed though all tasks are accounted for in these minutes]

NEXT MEETING AGENDA:

Board calendar, to include an education topic each month

C7 Board Process: Board Committee Principles. Committee charters.

Note: Judith and Bindy are now the only remaining member on the Membership Committee, which is now tasked with planning the Annual Meeting

The board adjourned to Executive Session. No decisions to record.

End of minutes. Submitted by Jeanne Gail, scribe