

## **Belfast Community Co-op Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**May 22, 2024.** Public in-person and Zoom meeting commenced at 6:05 p.m.

**Directors Present:** Ernie Cooper (Vice President), Susan Cutting (President), Rio Greeley, John Krueger (Treasurer), Valerie Tate (Secretary), Todd Bluhm, Charles Sterbach, Corinne Burr, and Babette Cohen-Solal

**Directors Absent:** Jim Miller, Collin Thompson

**Staff:** Doug Johnson (GM), Jamie Cermak, Michael Walter, and Gina Ferendo

**Owners:** Annie Bussiere, Edward Sheridan, Ashleigh Russell

### **Preliminaries**

#### **Welcome**

Susan welcomed everyone, declared a quorum, and referred attendees to the Agenda, Ends, and Ground Rules/Working Agreements in the chat.

#### **Agenda Review**

Changes/updates – Moved the Ad Hoc Committee on Product Boycotts to the first on the list of Board Action Items. Later, the NCG Statement Regarding Israel/Palestine was moved to immediately follow the Ad Hoc Committee discussion.

Consent Agenda Items – approved

#### **Announcements**

Board members will be able to attend certain CCMA sessions by zoom and/or listening via audio recording.

Board members are encouraged to attend the grand re-opening of our Co-op on June 21 at 11am. OEC will check with Marketing about what it can do to support the re-opening celebration.

#### **Owner Comments**

None

#### **Homework updates**

Reviewed homework and updated items.

#### **Handouts (not included in packet)**

Project Summary Sheet

Grand Re-Opening 3-pager from Marketing with plans and talking points

NCG Annual Report

### **GM Reporting**

#### **GM Update Report**

In response to a question, Doug explained that the change in numbers of members in good standing and those fully vested are likely due to the billing cycle.

Doug encourages the Board to attend the conversation with author Jon Steinman on

Thursday, June 6th at 5:30 PM in the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library. Steinman will also have a special session with Co-op workers. Doug pointed out that Steinman is a well-respected expert we are very fortunate that he is coming to Maine to meet with us.

Doug will follow up on concerns about safety related to proximity of parking spaces to the Café window and possible need for a barrier.

### **Board Action Items**

#### **Ad Hoc Committee on Product Boycotts**

The Board referred the entire Ad Hoc Committee recommendation to the Board Development Committee.

#### **NCG Statement Regarding Israel/Palestine**

The Board decided to publicly acknowledge its alignment with the NCG statement. The Co-op will share this information with owners in consultation with the Marketing Department regarding platforms, such as the Co-op's website, on social media, and in an email from the Board.

#### **B3 – Asset Protection**

The Board accepted B3 – Asset Protection as in partial compliance. Partial compliance was evidenced by two stories in local news media outlets in the spring of 2023 that could be interpreted as negative or partially negative.

#### **Consent Agenda**

Accepted

- Last month's minutes
- D2 – Accountability of the GM – reported in compliance

### **Board Committee Updates**

#### **Finance Committee**

John referred members to the detailed Finance Committee report. He recommended and the Board accepted the recast of the budget.

Information and explanations were provided in response to questions about the contingency and how to explore the pro forma and payments to trades on the google drive.

There was a reminder that the Board can help the bottom line by getting the word out among our circles on the success of the renovation and its benefits.

#### **Owner Engagement Committee**

Babette reported on the OEC Tea & Talk on May 8 at Rockweed and the plan for monthly Board meet and greets in the new Café.

#### **Board Development Committee**

Ernie asked that Board members offer suggestions for the annual Board retreat in September. Rio has an idea he will share with the Committee on a location for the retreat.

### **Strategic Work Committee**

Valerie shared background on how the Committee came to choose environmental sustainability and climate change as our first strategic initiative; including the Board's 2023 spring retreat, its December 2023 visioning exercise, and the information Susan brought back from the March 2024 NCFA meeting; where most of the other co-ops represented had environmental impact commitment in their Ends or policies.

Susan reported on the invitation from the Neighboring Food Co-op Association and New England Farmers Union members to participate in its multistate advocacy network. Their goal is to create a small, committed group representing producers and consumers from each state in New England and New York State that can work together to engage in education and advocacy on federal farm and food policy. Participants would join 3-4 online policy briefings this year and be prepared to reach out to legislators on key issues. Let Susan know if you would be interested in representing the Co-op in this network.

### **Closings**

#### **Homework Items**

##### Full Board

1. Attend the Grand Re-opening of our Co-op on June 21 at 11am.
2. Review, learn, share Marketing's Grand Re-opening talking points
3. Post and distribute Grand Re-opening flyers.
4. Let Susan know if you are interested in representing the Co-op as part of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association and New England Farmers Union multistate advocacy network.
5. Sign up on google doc for events and add them to our own calendars
6. Take policy poll
7. Keep experimenting with Beekeeper. Last call! Board Development will make a decision soon.
8. Send ideas for Debrief time to Board Development
9. Send ideas for retreat topics, timing, facilitation, and location to Board Development

##### Owner Engagement Committee

1. Check with Marketing about what OEC can do to support the re-opening celebration. Ask about "pin the leaf on the apple" and/or other activities for kids.
2. Learn about the intersection of Marketing and OEC roles and responsibilities
3. Ask Doug about surveying Owners for Owner Forum topics
4. Develop process for Board member calls to new Owners who express interest in serving on the Board and/or committees

##### Board Development

1. Draft policy on owner requests for boycott.
2. Plan September Board retreat

3. Provide annual review/expiration dates for Committees
4. Review Board ideas for Debrief time

#### Strategic Workgroup

1. Elect chair.
2. Stay on track with environmental sustainability and climate change as our first strategic initiative; review statements and policies from other Co-ops; consider recommending a clear commitment within our Ends and/or our policy register.
3. Discuss Todd's points about promoting strategic thinking among the Board v. looking at a particular vision
4. Discuss whether or not the Board needs a multi-year plan

Finance – none

Ad Hoc Committee on Boycotts – none

#### Valerie

1. Work with Doug on next month's Board Packet
2. Provide capital campaign debrief
3. Work with admin to organize Board Google Drive folders and files

#### Rio

1. Send retreat suggestion to Board Development

#### Doug

1. Follow up on concerns about safety related to proximity of parking spaces to the Café window and possible need for a barrier.
2. Share NCG Statement on Israel-Gaza with owners via website, social media, and email – platforms as recommended by Marketing
3. Ensure monitoring summaries are continually compiled into a spreadsheet
4. Work with Valerie on Board Packet until new admin is hired

#### Susan

1. Send NCFA email to Doug
2. Check Board accessibility of google doc for sign up
3. Talk to Thane about organizing a local training

#### **Owner Comments**

None

#### **Debrief / Evaluate Meeting**

Doug acknowledged that this is the last BOD meeting before the Grand Re-opening. He said that, as someone who has worked on the renovation since he started as General Manager, he is grateful for the support of the Board. He is proud of all of us for this momentous accomplishment. He thanked all of us.

Several members spoke up with their thanks to Doug. Susan said we're looking forward to celebrating!

**Public Meeting Adjourned at 7:55pm**