

Belfast Community Co-op Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2024. Public in-person and Zoom meeting commenced at approximately 6:05pm

Directors Present: Ernie Cooper (Vice President), Susan Cutting (President), Rio Greeley, John Krueger (Treasurer), Charles Sterbach (Homework Recorder), Corinne Burr, and Collin Thompson

Directors Absent: Jim Miller, Todd Bluhm, Babette Cohen-Solal, and Valerie Tate

Staff: Michael Walter

Owners: Zafra Whitcomb in-person and others on Zoom

Preliminaries

Welcome

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

Agenda Review

Changes/updates – none

Consent Agenda Items – approved

Announcements

Ernie announced that General Manager Doug Johnson was recognized as recipient of this year's Cooperative Service Award, with a standing ovation, at the 2024 national conference of the Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA), held last month in Portland, Maine. See details and photos in the packet.

Susan added that CCMA conference session videos will be available online. She noted that there were inspirational topics, including a session from BCC staff on making the store more welcoming called "Who are we anyway"; and the session "Navigating unity, vision and values across members, board, and management". John pointed to PowerPoint presentations from the conference that are also available, especially a session on conventional foods and hybrid stores and how we do business differently.

Owner Comments

Zafra Whitcomb commented on being awestruck by renovation; the incredible ribbon cutting; and how great it was that Peter (owner number one) was there; his history with the Co-op back to 1975; the progress that has been made by the Board over the years; and his concern that policy governance means that Operations would make any decisions about a call for a boycott. He asked a question and it was confirmed that each member gets their own number even though previously some people share numbers but each member has paid for a share and can vote.

Homework updates

Reviewed homework and updated items.

GM Reporting

Alignment

Michael Walter reported that Doug is talking with Revision Energy about solar panels on the roof of the Co-op. It's been an action packed month, with CCMA, a successful Welcome Back Party with thanks to the Board for its participation.

GM Update Report

Daily sales have spiked since the grand re-opening.

John commented that the financial indicators are good for looking at the current month's activity, but compared to the budget, it may be that this is using the old algorithm prior to recasting the budget. We have new systems, new software, and new staff working so it will be integrated imminently. Michael pointed out that the new fiscal quarter is coming up.

In answer to a question, Michael reported on what's coming up so that more groceries can be ordered and shelves will be filled hopefully by the end of July.

Hot food to-go from the café will be coming by the end of July, to build up customer loyalty with satisfied expectations. Next summer the program will evolve and expand.

Board Action Items

B1 - Financial Condition & Activities – The current comparison is to co-ops in full operation. Changes are coming. We'll be in a new peer group. The Board accepted the report as in non-compliance with the Global B1 and B1.1-B1.4, and full compliance with B1.5 – B1.13.

D3 - Delegation to the GM -- The Board accepted the report as in compliance.

Consideration of Changes to Policy D3 -- The Board directed the Board Development Committee to continue its evaluation of D-3 and return with proposed changes for discussion by the Board.

Consideration of Changes to Policy B5 – The Board directed the Board Development Committee to continue its evaluation of B-5 and draft a revised policy, incorporating GM feedback, considering monitoring issues, and defining terms like “significant number of member/owners.”

Consideration of Changes to Policy C7 -- The Board adopted two additional provisions as recommended by the Board Development Committee to Board Policy C7 - Board Committee Principles.

Consent Agenda

Accepted

- Last month's minutes
- D4 – Monitoring GM Performance as in compliance.

Board Discussion Items & Committee Updates

Finance Committee

Will meet in the coming month.

Owner Engagement Committee

Planning for monthly Tea & Talks with the Board in the café. Board members expressed interest. The next Tea and Talk will be Tuesday, July 16th at 5:30pm.

Board Development Committee

Annual retreat may take place at Limina Renewal Center again this year. The Committee will discuss possible retreat topics at its next meeting and will bring recommendations to the next Board meeting.

Virtual CBL 101 is on July 20. Sign up online. It's free for the Board.

Strategic Work Committee

We are looking at a process for engaging owners and community on incorporating vision and values for environmental sustainability into our policies. Will bring recommendations for next steps to the Board.

It was suggested that the Committee take this work as an opportunity to provide owners with clarity, communication, and information for about the role of the Board in decision-making.

Closings

Homework Items

Full Board

1. Policy Polls: strive for responses from all 11 directors
2. Continue experimentation with and training for Beekeeper. BDC will make a decision soon.
3. Continue to send ideas for retreat topics, timing and facilitation to BDC.

All Committees

1. Submit a budget

Owner Engagement Committee

1. Learn about intersection of Marketing and OEC roles and responsibilities
2. Ask Doug about surveying Owners for Owner Forum Topics
3. Develop process for Board member calls to new Owners who express interest in serving on the Board and/or committees.
4. Although the BCC Ends Statement may be necessary for policy governance, OEC needs to evaluate how Owners and broader community view the current Ends Statement

Board Development Committee

1. Plan September Board retreat
2. Continue evaluation and drafting of a revised D-3 policy, especially as it relates to monitoring GM's compliance with proposed revised policy
3. Continue evaluation and drafting of a revised B-5 policy, incorporating GM feedback, evaluating monitoring issues, and defining terms like "significant number of member/owners"

Strategic Committee

1. Stay on track with environmental sustainability and climate change as or first strategic initiative; review statements and policies from other Co-ops; consider recommending a clear commitment within our Ends and/or our policy register
2. Discuss Todd's points about promoting strategic thinking among the Board v. looking at a particular vision
3. Discuss whether or not Board needs multi year plan
4. Evaluate and implement greater use of Beekeeper in the Committee's work
5. Define potential Vision and Value terms for possible incorporation in Ends and/or our policy register

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

Doug

1. Follow up on concerns about safety and related proximity of parking spaces to Café window and possible need for 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 a new admin is hired

Susan

1. Talk to Thane about organizing local training
2. Follow-up with CCMA regarding availability of recordings from recent annual conference
3. Send a link to all Board members regarding sign up for biweekly Friday tabling at the Café.

Charles

1. Sign up for NFCA training and report to BDC on legislative/lobbying efforts

Owner Comments

None

Debrief / Evaluate Meeting

Came in under the wire on time!

Good meeting!

Public Meeting Adjourned at approximately 8:00pm.