

MINUTES March 25, 2015

Present: Kerry Artman, Michael Bettmann, Sarah Blum, Margaret Drye, Martha Graber, Kay Litten, John Rosenquest, Susan Sanzone Fauver (left at 9:05 p.m.), Wynne Washburn Balkcom

Absent: Zeb Mushlin

Staff: Terry Appleby (left at 9:38 p.m.), Tony Alongi (left at 9:05 p.m.). The following staff left at the start of the Executive Session: Eugenia Braasch, Amanda Charland, Rosemary Fifield, Lori Hildbrand, Paul Lambe, Tony White

Members: Harrison Drinkwater, Antoinette Jacobson, Nora Jacobson (left at 6:45 p.m.), Brett Tofel (left at 8:20 p.m.)

Guest: Jim Kenyon, *Valley News* Columnist

Welcome

Margaret called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. She noted that the Co-op Board meeting is not public and requested that no filming or recording take place.

Agenda Review & Changes

Co-op Stories

Margaret noted a reference to the Coop's multi-cultural product line in a recent *Eating Well* article. Martha described a recent trip to Rowanda, where she visited a furniture cooperative and a women's sewing cooperative. She noted that the cooperative model is thriving in there, despite poverty and poor infrastructure.

Kay, John, and Susan expressed enthusiasm about the construction progress at the Hanover Store, where it is now possible to get a sense of the final renovated space.

February 25, 2015, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Kay moved to approve the February 25, 2015, minutes as amended.

Martha seconded the motion.

VOTED: To approve the February 25, 2015, minutes as amended.

8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained, 1 absent.

The motion passed.

The 2014 Patronage Refund description was modified to read:

“The patronage refund will be distributed in the ratio of 80% Class **A and B** stock and 20% cash.”

The meeting broke for dinner at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 6:40 p.m.

Update

General Manager Update

The Hanover store remodel is currently in Phase 3, with construction is progressing rapidly; the staff are giving great service despite the disruption.

Members of the Management team are presenting the employee survey results to staff at all locations during the next two weeks.

Sales have been down this year thus far, but the trend has reversed this month, with positive sales anticipated for March, due in part to the Easter holiday.

Connie Wheelock, longtime employee at the Hanover store cheese department, died last week.

Policy Monitoring

Ends Global

MOTION: John moved to accept the Ends Global monitoring report as in compliance.

Martha seconded the motion.

VOTED: To accept the Ends Global monitoring report as in compliance.

9 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 1 absent.

The motion passed.

Tony White presented the results as a 'scorecard', with metrics that summarize the Co-op's investments, actions, and outcomes in five activity areas: Food Access and Education, Economic Value returned to the Community, Cooperative Partnerships, Environmental Stewardship, and Employment and Job Quality. Board members responded positively to the report format and to the 2014 organizational results, noting that the scorecard encapsulates a lot of information, highlights the value Co-op's impacts, and is visually engaging. Tony described the method for compiling the metrics and responded to questions about the environmental, employment, and local economy results. There was consensus to use this report method for 2015 and to continue to emphasize the triple bottom line (financial, environmental, social) in organizational decision-making.

B-GM 4 Monitoring GM Performance

MOTION: Martha moved to accept the B-GM 4 monitoring report as in compliance.

Susan seconded the motion.

VOTED: To accept the B-GM 4 monitoring report as in compliance.

9 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 1 absent.

The motion passed.

There was a brief discussion about B-GM 4.2, the methods used to acquire monitoring data. It was noted that internal reports (General Manager monitoring reports) and external, third party reports (the annual audit, member survey, and employee satisfaction survey) are routinely part of the Co-op monitoring practice, while 'direct Board inspection' (i.e., store renovation project tour) occurs less frequently.

Employee Survey Results

HR Director Lori Hildbrand presented the objectives, method, and results of the employee survey which was conducted during January, 2015. The CDS Consulting Co-op designed the survey and analyzed the results, which have been shared with staff at all Co-op locations. 91% of eligible employees participated in the survey. Of 69 opinion questions, 40% scored high satisfaction, 56% scored relatively satisfied, and 4% scored satisfied. The results overall trend in a positive direction relative to the last organization-wide employee survey, conducted in 2012.

The findings indicate that employees especially appreciate the benefits offered at the Co-op and believe that they are fairly compensated, while the lowest scoring questions relate to the level of understanding about how pay raises are decided, the use of regular department huddles, and the prompt addressing of performance problems at the department level.

When compared to other food cooperatives nationally, the five highest scoring questions were about fair and consistent corrective action, regular evaluation, the value of the retirement plan, adequate notice of

job changes, and access to job-related information. The three lowest scoring questions related to pay increase criteria, information to knowledgably speak with customers about cooperatives, and the utility of the employee handbook.

Terry noted that the survey results guide management decisions. Based on the 2012 survey results, management hired a full-time HR training professional, established and requires accountability to a manager's code of conduct, and increased investment in staff development.

Discussion moved to the turnover rate of employees, opportunities for advancement, merit guidelines, and plans to address systems issues. Objections were expressed about the CDS recommendations, noting that advice is beyond the scope of the consultants, based on this data set.

Member Comments

Members asked whether there were significant differences by location (yes), concern about the linking of names with coding numbers and survey results (a double-blind process was used), and whether benefits differ between managers and workers (no).

March 28, 2015, Annual Member Meeting

The board reviewed the plans for the annual meeting, noting that the schedule is tight, advising that there needs to be adequate time for member questions. There were several questions about the logistics of the cooperative café activity and some suggested revisions to the discussion questions.

Share Redemption

MOTION: Michael moved to authorize the redemption of the shares, as presented, in the Share Redemption Request dated March 18, 2015.

Kay seconded the motion.

VOTED: To authorize the redemption of the shares, as presented, in the Share Redemption Request dated March 18, 2015.

9 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 1 absent.

The motion passed.

Executive Session (to discuss a personnel matter)

MOTION: Margaret moved to enter into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

Michael seconded the motion.

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 2 absent.

The motion passed.

Susan Sanzone Fauver, Anthony Alongi, and Terry Appleby were invited to participate in the Executive Session.

Executive Session (to discuss a personnel matter)

MOTION: John moved to end the Executive Session at 10:03 p.m.

Sarah seconded the motion.

VOTED: To end the Executive Session at 10:03 p.m.

8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 2 absent.

The motion passed.

Adjournment

MOTION: John moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 p.m.

Sarah seconded the motion.

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 10:04 p.m.

7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained, 3 absent.

The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugenia F. Braasch
Board Administrator

Wynne Washburn Balkcom
Secretary