

Potsdam Food Cooperative Board Meeting
March 21, 2023 Tuesday 6:06 PM
second floor of Carriage House Bakery

Present: Karen Bage, Jessie LaRose, Megan Lane, Kim Jukic, Aviva Gold, Marshall Issen, David Bradford, Lauren Prentice, Kristen Avery, Natalie Warner

via Google meet link: Rob Forrester and Brian Reece

Guests: Lynzie Schulte, Doug Welch, Ginger Story-Welch

All Committee Reports were shared with the board via email and were not reported in-person due to other urgent matters that needed to be addressed.

Reminder to all in attendance to allow person reporting out the opportunity to finish their report fully before interjecting, asking questions, or opening discussion.

February 2023 Minutes are already approved via email and posted on the Co-op website.

Interim GM Report:

- Staffing Update
 - Labor costs were lower during the week of 3/12-18
 - Hitting a target of about 20-25% of our expenditure cost
 - Previously approximately 37% of our expenditure cost
 - 4 employee departures during the month of March
 - Currently 13 staff members on payroll: Jessie, Mike, Janice, Natalie, Ryan, Dan, Grace, Carly, Laurie, Lynn, Jordan, Chris, Nancy (about half of these employees are full time) compared to 19 about a month ago
 - Reduction in labor costs by changing store hours
 - Suggestion of having a per diem front-end person(s) who do not receive additional benefits but who works when a regular employee needs time off
- Brick Oven is offline currently as it is in need of repair
 - There have been reach outs volunteering to repair the brick oven
 - Labor costs of maintaining use of the brick oven are high
- Numbers
 - Sales up from 3/5-3/11
 - Sales down from 3/12-18 by approximately \$6k
 - Members have loaded over \$20K on member accounts since 3/5/2023
 - Utilized to restock vitamins and seeds
 - NCSB debit card has been issued to minimize credit card use/balance
 - Working on a cost/retail spreadsheet that is provided by NCH to ensure our deli sales are hitting target retail goals for profit margins
 - Wholesale accounts

- Considering wholesale price raises to increase profit margin, they are not currently very profitable
- Wholesale Accounts: Saint Lawrence University (2 accounts), Foster the Plant, Nature's Storehouse
- We do not charge a delivery fee for wholesale accounts
 - Suggestion to put out a call out for volunteers to deliver the wholesale account
- Amending 2020 and 2021 tax returns for the Employee Retention Tax Credit which will potentially result in a refund
- Discussion around how to increase inventory in the store
 - Suggestion around “round up for staying open” so that people can contribute some money when paying their bill
 - Can create a new button in the register for this effort

Motion by Aviva Gold to approve Jessie LaRose for full authorization of the Key Bank Credit Card. Seconded by Megan Lane. All in favor, motion passes without dissent.

Governance Committee:

- Camille Frazier has resigned from her remaining 1-year seat on the board
 - Lynzie Schulte will be taking her term for one-year
- General Manager Job Description needs to be reviewed and updated by the GM search committee, to be changed in the Board Policy Manual
 - Addition of the requirement of providing an accounts payable report and outstanding member commitments (loans, round up funds, etc.)
 - Looking for recommendations from the board of how to change the job description
 - GM Search committee will write the job description and then the board will vote for approval of that description
 - Need to write language around holding an Interim General Manager accountable in the Board Policy Manual. A draft is written and will be presented with the other job description edits for vote via email.

Motion by Megan Lane for Lynzie Schulte to be appointed on the board to finish out Camille Frazier's 1-year appointment on the board. Seconded by Aviva Gold. All in favor, motion passes without dissent.

Natalie Warner is the new Class-E board member as appointed by the Co-op Staff.

Outreach Committee:

- Multiple events coming up throughout the spring and semester
 - Board will be notified of events in advance for signup and assistance with setup and working

- o Strutt Your Mutt – May 6
- o Summer Fest – July 13-15
- o Local Food Festival – September 8-10
- o Open House and 50th Anniversary Celebration – September 17
 - Goal to get more vendors at the event
- Student card advertising
 - o Flyers and social media posts up for Clarkson
- Suggestion of reviving the annual summer picnic at the Co-op as a way for members to gather in addition to the February meeting
- Members needing connection back to the Co-op and wanting more communication from the board and other members
 - o Small tent and tables
- Bring back get togethers with the board and staff of the Co-op and keeping that relationship healthy
 - o Picnics, happy hours, or other opportunities to get to know one another
 - o Invite staff member to board meetings quarterly or monthly to share their achievements and what they're working on regularly
- Erica Leonard has offered to volunteer her time to assist with the website design and Kim will be meeting with her to see how she can assist.

Finance Committee:

- Update on loan and grant applications
 - o *Massive thank you to David Katz for dedicating his time and energy to ensure we have a pro forma and financial model to apply for loans.*
 - o Working with an organization called the Co-operative Fund of the Northeast to get a bridge loan or line of credit.
 - Need the funding to get back to normal operations with a health cash flow and operating model.
 - Bridge needed between financing operating costs and construction/renovation plan expenditures.

Renovation/Expansion Committee:

- Required documents submitted on Sunday, 3/19/2023, to NYS Homes & Community Renewal for transfer of DRI award to 24 Elm St. renovation project.
 - o Project will take 18 months or longer, envisioning the store being closed for approximately 10 months
 - o Need a plan on how/when we are developing a plan on the budget during the renovation
 - o Suggestion at looking at a temporary location elsewhere.
 - o Anticipating to hear back from NYS within a month on the decision of the DRI award.
- Project budget details out costs such as electricity, GM costs, etc.

Fundraising Committee:

- On hold
- Round up funds: \$

Crisis Management Committee:

- Intro CMC members (Brian, Lauren, Megan)
 - *Thank you to Arden Haynes who dedicated time early on in this transition process to institute a plan with Jessie.*
 - CMC members have been spending several hours a day working on this committee.
- Review role of CMC
 - Working with NCG on organizing an orientation for board members for about 40-45 minutes during the board retreat
 - Increasing members and outreach efforts
 - Oversight of financials
 - Helping manage information and daily and weekly reports (daily sales, cash available, accounts payable)
 - Reporting numbers to the board as necessary
- Proposal for Data Analysis and IT temp committee (Brian, David, Robin)
 - Purpose would be to identify and analyze data related to our various sales, reasons for decline or increase of sales, etc. within the Catapult system.
 - Example of measuring labor to sales by hour to determine recommended course of action.
 - General support from the board to have this committee. David Bradford is willing to take the lead on contacting Catapult to get more data from our current tool.

Motion by Lauren Prentice to continue the Crisis Management Committee through the end of April. Seconded by Aviva Gold.

GM Search Committee:

- Committee Members Include: Kim, Jim, David, Lauren, Megan, Karen
 - Community Members: Sharon Williams, Bob Jessop, Sharon Rose
- Task list
 - Review/revisit job description
 - Assembling committee members
 - Seeking an individual to chair the committee
- Currently working on getting meetings scheduled with committee members
- Able to identify resources from NCG to assist with the search
 - Typically takes about 6 months to fill the position

New Business:

- Tour of the Co-op for new board members in the works
- NCG Orientation planned during the annual board retreat in May.
- Double up food bucks on Jessie's radar and in the works.

Member Communication:

- Monthly e-news assignments
 - NCG perks

- Update from the board to uplift the vibe.
- E-news that is going out is largely negative and we need more positive press.
- Phishing messages coming out from board members names but non-affiliated accounts.
- Suggestion to have a string of advertisements throughout the year about it being our 50th year
 - First week of April we will have advertisements created and distributed to membership and in the store.
 - Interviewing “old timers” and getting them in the newsletter (People of the Co-op)
 - Interviewing members in general as features in newsletters or Instagram
 - Could do printed features that are posted in the co-op and then also in the Potsdam museum or library
 - Megan will start the effort of interviewing people for the

Member Comments:

Next board meeting will be April 18th above the Carriage House Bakery at 6:00pm

Kristen will be working on reorganizing, archiving, and determining a new naming convention for the Co-op shared google drive. Chairs, please file meeting minutes in your committee folder for archiving and please stick to the new naming convention once it is shared.

Looking to get magnetic nametags for staff, board members and worker owner names. Kristen will compile information.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM by Lauren Prentice & Seconded by Megan Lane. All in favor. Motion passed without dissent.

On April 5, 2023, with a quorum being present, the March 2023 board meeting minutes were brought to a motion for approval by Megan Lane, seconded by Karen Bage, all in favor, one abstention from Jim Fryer, who was not present at the March Board meeting. The motion passes.