

Potsdam Food Cooperative Board Meeting
October 17, 2023 Tuesday 6:02 PM
Potsdam Civic Center Community Room

Present: Megan Lane, Kristen Avery, Jim Fryer, Kim Jukic, Marshall Issen, Brian Reece (via Zoom), David Bradford, Jessie LaRose, Mark Rengi, Lynzie Schulte, Karen Bage, Aviva Gold

Excused:

Guests: Elijah Schecter, Laurie Greenleaf

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

**Motion by Kristen Avery to Approve the September 2023 board meeting minutes.
Seconded by Marshall Issen. 6 in favor. 2 abstentions. Motion Passes.**

GM Report:

- Numbers down compared to previous years, about 5% down from last year.
- Sales have stabilized over the past 3-4 weeks
 - Sales are down overall but so are staffing dollars (labor is about 22% of costs)
 - Carriage house labor is about 50% of their sales
 - Production output versus keeping up with what we have on the shelves has been difficult. Talked with main suppliers for purchasing premade salads to decrease labor/production numbers.
 - Expecting an upward trend over the past few weeks
 - Deli/Bakery is about 6-8% of our total store sales
 - Considering bake off options to purchase through Sysco
 - Considering options for supplementing what is made by our Carriage House staff
 - Deli/bakery department should produce 2-3 times that percentage of sales
 - Dry groceries and bulk sections are driving the sales within the store, about 40% of sales
 - Exploring opportunities in the wellness department (vitamins, body care, etc.), about 3% of sales.
- Considering the pricing of different items, daily commodities to help our margins fall within an appropriate range. This is a current project that will be taking priority.
- Revisiting marketing as a priority, including weekly emails, flash sales communicated on social media, scheduled posts, and a comprehensive marketing plan is on the priority list to be addressed. Goal for the marketing plan to be in place and starting in January 2024.
- Down approximately 93 customers a week compared to last year. This will be the #1 goal in the development and execution of a marketing plan.
 - Recommendation to have a website overhaul as part of the marketing plan.

- New products are being introduced to the store (about 100 new products), Co-op deals are impacting our overall basket size because the value of the deals is being recognized by customers and taken advantage of.
- Request to have average basket size added back into the GM report.
- Jessie LaRose has been invaluable to the co-op and has been promoted to the position of the Director of Operations. Thank you Jessie for your tireless work and dedication to the co-op.

Executive Committee (formerly CMC):

- Meeting bi-weekly with Ben Sandel (our consultant) as the Executive Committee.
 - Getting feedback on questions and he helps give us some direction on how to more effectively govern as a board.
- Reduced attendance with guests invited as needed.
- We are supposed to have an Executive Committee meeting once per month, we are meeting twice a month with Ben situationally when he is available.
- Need to revisit how long we have Ben as a consultant, potential to continue working together in the future, especially with a focus on fundraising.

Governance Committee:

- Policy governance board plans to move us to an oversight role, rather than a working role.
- Ben is writing a little bit of the manual and then governance will be working through the rest of the board policy manual.
- Board calendar that is referenced in the manual will be updated.
 - Recommendation for the calendar to be built into the agenda every month so that we as a board can continually reference the calendar.
- Revise it to reflect what we actually do and how we do those things.
- Planning to set a recommended date for the annual meeting, including a slate of candidates to run for open board seats at the next meeting.
 - Start encouraging potential board candidates to learn about the board's role as well as express interest in serving.
- Can we make a bylaws change via email vote or does it have to be at the annual meeting?
 - At an annual meeting or at a special meeting

Finance Committee:

- Report in folder - Monthly meeting focused on welcoming/introducing Mark to the committee and building his understanding and starting to discuss roles/expectations GM and the committee.
- Revisiting the roles of the finance committee as defined in the board policy meeting.
 - Who is creating reports, who is reporting out, who owns the agenda?
 - Who is voting for motions, what are those motions, etc?
 - Goal of working together to ensure we are meeting expectations in the BPM as well as assisting in a beneficial way.
- Did not focus on review of financial, but sales are down 5% over last year
- We need an update from Jessie on the status of the working capital loan (Mark was not aware of the loan and therefore could not update status).

- o Jessie LaRose signed the paperwork for the loan. Paperwork has been sent in via mail and should be in the works.
- o She is on a different email now so she is not sure if anything has been communicated to her on that loan.
- o We have not yet received the money from the loan yet.
- We need to begin working on a draft '24 budget as soon as Mark feels comfortable with Q3 results.
 - o Should we be looking at board meeting dates to better sync with when the quarter closes so that we have those numbers at hand during the board meeting and have the opportunity to review them prior to the board meeting?
 - o Q3 results are in the current meeting folder for board review.
 - Accounts payable is all caught off
 - We have money in savings
- Discussion on member loan interest payments, yearly.

Outreach Committee:

- We look forward to what is to come since the outreach committee falls under the General Manager's jurisdiction.
- Mark intends to include the outreach committee as the marketing committee.

Renovation/Expansion Committee:

- Met with GM to discuss project to date
- GM to set meeting date with NCG Store Development Services re: Feasibility Services Agreement (agreement has been signed and returned to NCG)
- We do not have a contract with an architect currently.
- Received information about the NYS Ag and Markets Food Access Expansion Grant; Letter of Interest due October 30, Karen will ensure a LOI is submitted

DEI Committee:

- Drafted a letter that was sent out today regarding our DEI plans and action items
- Jessie has info from a recent NCG meeting that she will be sharing in the near future
- Inclusive trade program will be rolling out and including vendor profiles, why vendors are included in the inclusive trade program, what their products are, etc.
 - o Social media, emails, potentially samples, shelf runners, posters, etc.
 - o Reaching out to vendors to find out if they'd like to be included in the marketing as an inclusive trade vendor.

Old Business:

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New Business:

- November board meeting date change due to the holiday. Changing it to 11/28/2023 at the Potsdam Civic Center Community Room.
- Appreciation gesture (Thank You card) to working member owners once per month as a surprise to show our gratitude for their time and dedication to the store.

Member Communication:

- DEI letter was sent out today.
- Next letter should be an update about Mark's arrival as our new GM. Mark would be willing to write an introduction to the membership.
- Discussion around using the college cards at the store.
 - Many students use the cards for "college kid" food like pizza.
 - Student Discounts will help them engage with the co-op
 - Students with dietary needs will shop at the co-op if they know what the co-op has

Member Comments:

- Conflict of interest reminder to board members.

Next board meeting will be November 28th, at the Potsdam Civic Center Community Room at 6:00pm.

Motion by David Bradford to adjourn the board meeting at 8:00 PM. Seconded by Megan Lane. All in favor. Motion passed without dissent.