

Potsdam Food Co-op Annual Meeting

March 26, 2024 6:00pm, Trinity Church Community Room

Board Attendance:

- Megan Lane
- Jim Fryer
- Kristen Avery
- Brian Reece
- David Bradford
- Karen Bage
- Aviva Gold
- Marshall Issen
- Kim Jukic
- Lynzie Schulte

Other Members (in person): Jessie LaRose, Laurie Greenleaf, Will Siegfried, Jan Dewaters, Lori Metke, Alex Koberda, John Metke, Stefan Grimberg, Doug Welch, Ginger Storey-Welch, Larry Reece, Linda Reece, Sandy McCloy, Andre Comandon, Arthur Freeheart, Susan Dillon, David Trithart, Rose Rivezzi, Jesse Diamond-Brown, Steve Greco, Art Johnson, Anne Johnson, Bob Penski, Dwight Tunstra, Jody Tosti, Eli Schechter, Ryan Meashaw, Stephanie Fansler, Lisa Lazenby, David Sommerstein, Madeline Donaldson, Lynn Clark, Celena Haase, Siew-Hwee Lee, Lynda Bage, Hanneke Lafountain, Roger Lafountain, Tom Yugartis, Erica Lafountain, Tzintzun Agular-Izzo, Blake Deway, Susan Godreau

Other Members (online): Michael Greer, Vanessa Bittner, Holly Chambers, Laura Cordts, Shawn Seymour, Jane LaVigne, Annie McLaughlin, Heather Sullivan-Catlin, Beau Bushor, Ninon Hutchinson

ITEM	DISCUSSION POINTS
Approval of Minutes	Minutes Annual Meeting 2023 Motion: Dave Bradford Second Arthur Freehart Carried with no dissent
Governance	Presented by Jim Fryer <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduced board candidates.● The Co-op is moving toward a policy governance model where the board sets policy and● Revising the onboarding procedures for board members● Next year we are working toward a revision of the bylaws to create a smaller Board of Directors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a Code of Conduct for our Co-op to protect employees, members and shoppers.
Outreach	<p>Presented by Jessie LaRose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We went to fewer events than usual, but still did have a presence in the community. Celebrated our 50th anniversary Introduced the Double Up Food Bucks to augment the value of SNAP dollars for fresh produce Committee is now led by the general manager at least until a marketing / outreach manager is hired.
Treasurer	<p>Presented by Brian Reece</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been a wild year starting with around a 100K in debt and 3k in the bank account. Thank you to Jessie for stepping up during challenging times to turn things around. Brian also recognized the contribution of Marc Regni who was with us for a brief time. Traffic is down 40 percent since 2016. This is our number one problem. We lost around 30K last year, sustained by loans, tax refunds, and government assistance We need to do \$2 million in sales per year and we are only at 1.6 We are at our lowest sales in the past decade. Again, it is customers in the door. Ginger S-W wondered what happened between 2013 and 2014 to cause sales to jump from a number close to where we are now to higher sales and Jessie believes that that may have been when Eric Jesner came on board, who did some great management. Alex K. wondered about ways we can save money and improve quality. Jessie mentioned that over the last year, we did cut quite a bit and cannot compete solely on cost. Sandy McCloy wondered if membership numbers have changed. Jessie mentioned that we did lose around 150 members. We did gain around 200 the year before, so we are back where we were. Lynda Bage commented that bulk is one of the few niches that the Co-op and reimagining niche is an important factor for moving forward. Also, improved deli. Additional comments would be appreciated after the meeting either to the board and/or management. Finance committee meets each month; everyone is welcome
General Manager	<p>Presented by Jessie LaRose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales are down Things were dark in March; 90k in past due bills Marketing was virtually nonexistent Labor costs were out of control, so were cut. Ended the year at 32 percent average. When you cut labor, you cut sales, so striking that balance will be key to rebuilding Net income last year was due to a tax refund which also went to some deferred maintenance and paying the overdue bills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Q4 loss of 25k was due to higher labor costs, which could be explained by the new manager ● Fewer member-owners and member-owner sales are down ● Staff managed a tremendous amount of upheaval. ● NCG consulting will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ restructuring deli to improve offerings and costs ○ margin maintenance review process ● Marketing manager will be key to turning sales around ● HR structures will be restructured including onboarding, grievance, training possibly including using third party resources. ● Education and training will also be a focus for next year. ● Expansion is necessary to build a successful business ● Tzintzun, as a long-time volunteer, wondered about how turnover affects profitability, and Jessie explained that one of her many priorities is to build succession plans for every employee. ● Anne Johnson wanted to know about the status of the oven in the Carriage House and Jessie replied that it is currently offline for the foreseeable future because of the labor intensiveness of running it.
DEI Committee	<p>Presented by Laurie Greenleaf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New committee of owners, staff and board ● Workplace, shoppers, and vendors need to be more welcoming ● Short term goals; HR policies, broaden vendor scope and educate people about where our food comes from; make the Co-op more financially accessible--as in the DoubleUp Food Bucks; make Co-op shopping easier for newcomers; educational events around DEI issues for the community ● Our charter includes all of the above and working on the part of our Ends statement that reads that customers have a welcoming place to shop, and participate at many levels. ● The 8th Cooperative Principle has been recently adopted that is all around DEI support
Expansion/New Store	<p>Presented by Karen Bage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reminded folks that the Co-op was awarded 1.659 million in DRI funding ● We are in a conceptual planning phase with National Cooperative Grocers Design Team and Aubertine and Currier Architects who are offering site plan options and preliminary store design options as well as financial documents that will show costs and ability to repay funding. This is expected to be completed by the end of May. ● Other lenders will require owner contribution in Roundup and a loan drive
Outgoing Board President Comments	<p>Megan Lane read a touching remembrance of our short time general manager Mark Regni, and thanked everyone for their support.</p> <p>The Class C election will continue until the quorum has been reached, as will Class E elections.</p>
Adjournment	<p>Motion: Erica Lafountain Second: Arthur Freeheart Meeting adjourned with no dissent.</p>