

Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Remote Meeting via Cisco Webex Meetings
May 18, 2020

In attendance:

Present Board Members: Sam Applefield, President; Charlie Orr, Vice President; Laura Valentine, Secretary; Larry Meadows, Treasurer; Eva Barinas; Karen Bernard; Tom Pandaleon; O.E. Zelmanovich (Zoë).

Absent Board Members: Melanie Frank.

General Manager: Maura Holliday.

Management Team: Kate Safin, MMS.

Member-Owners: Member-owners were able to view the live meeting and speak during the open-session. Sections of the meeting when members were speaking were not recorded.

This meeting was held remotely, via Cisco Webex Meetings.

Sam called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and read aloud the Ends statement. Those in attendance checked in to express how they were feeling coming into the meeting.

Amend/Approve Agenda

It was noted that the meeting started thirty minutes earlier than reflected on the agenda.

Decision: Charlie moved to accept the agenda. Laura seconded the motion.

Vote: 8.0.0

Amend/Approve April Meeting Minutes

Decision: Laura motioned to approve the April minutes as amended. Charlie seconded.

Vote: 8.0.0

General Manager Updates

- Maura reported that sales have continued to be strong, comparatively speaking (over last year), and that everyone is adapting to the new normal.
- The Co-op was approved for the Paycheck Protection Program; next steps are to figure out how to use it and look into the forgiveness aspects of it.
- Mercato and curbside service have remained very steady; we are trying to curb Mercato a little bit, in favor of curbside, which is done all in-house. Maura noted that getting information to members about open curbside spots is a challenge that is still being figured out. She gave kudos to Kate for all of her hard work.
- The next project is to determine what the future of the Bulk and Café departments will look like. NCG sent out information on what some other co-ops are doing, and noted the following trends: people are getting tired of cooking at home and are looking for take-and-bake items. We should see a different approach to the Bulk department in the next few weeks. Labor in café can be redistributed to support what the café will look like in the future.
- Despite being in the yellow phase, no changes have been made to store hours; they will not be changing for the foreseeable future.

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Questions/Comments:

- In the last meeting, there was mention of customers being rude to staff; has that increased or decreased? Maura answered that it's about the same; customers are still struggling, and anxiety levels can be high going to the store. The customer count has crept up a bit going into the yellow phase, so it may happen more. She spoke with the Task Force about putting up a kindness board to display all of the positive and thankful letters that are received from customers. The increase in security guard presence has mainly been to help with metering the customer flow.
- Is the push back from customers of one kind or another? Maura responded that there is confusion during the reserved first hour of the store being open (mainly from seniors) – they aren't realizing that the reserved time is also for the immune compromised and that it is a self-identifying process.
- Regarding the Payroll Protection Program: what is it for and is the goal to have it forgiven? Maura answered that the purpose is to make sure the Co-op doesn't have to furlough staff if there is an interruption in business; 75% has to go to payroll and 25% can go towards things like rent and utilities. There is an eight-week span of time the business has to use those funds, and whatever is spent in that timeframe is forgivable.
- What are the customer service issues with Mercato? Maura responded that they had a surge in business, just as we did, and they didn't have the customer service people to deal with extra calls. Most of the frustration and confusion is about hold charges on people's credit cards, and knowing when out of stock items will be available again.
- Is there any concern that Mercato may come back and say that we've taken business from them by instituting curbside service? Kate said that there's nothing in the contract that prohibits us from having curbside pickup.
- Has the issue been that Mercato can't handle the volume or we can't handle the volume? Do we know if we've missed out on any revenue as a result? Kate responded that customers couldn't get through to Mercato, so they'd call the Co-op to handle issues, adding that it has gotten better in the past week. Maura reported that this will be the first week that Mercato sales may be down, and that we should be able to recuperate any missed revenue.

B5 – Customer Service and Value

Questions/Comments:

- Part of the operation definition of policy B (The General Manager shall not be unresponsive to customer needs) is that Customer Count will grow from year to year; why is that necessary? Maura responded that it's a suggested definition that was used in the past, and she wasn't comfortable changing it this time. At this time, customers are listening to guidelines and doing less frequent, bigger shopping trips. She added that she's open to removing that definition.
- Is customer count equal to the total number of transactions? Maura answered in the affirmative.
- What is the difference between overall satisfaction and the Co-op meeting customer needs? Laura clarified that items being out of stock is an example of not meeting needs; one can still be satisfied with what is available, the community, etc.
- When there is no response to a comment card, is that because we don't have contact information for the customer? Kate answered that it usually means the comment card didn't make its way back to the Marketing department to be logged.

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- Do directors have access to the log of comment cards? They are kept on an internal drive. The current log was an attachment to the B5 report.
- Disappointment was expressed that the report didn't contain anything about the Co-op's COVID response. Maura said she hadn't thought of adding that information this time.
- Last year we discussed scheduling active shooter training for staff members; did that happen? Maura responded that the Co-op didn't do active shooter training, but chose to do an empowerment-based self-defense training. She added that active shooter training is usually provided by gun ranges, and can be a traumatic experience. Some suggestions were that the training could be optional or taken only by managers/supervisory staff. Karen expressed that, as a staff member, she would really appreciate training. Sam asked that Maura revisit the topic when time allows.

Decision: Zoë motioned to accept the report as compliant. Tom seconded the motion.

Vote: 8.0.0

B10 – Environment

Questions/Comments:

- In sub-policy B10.2 (Fail to reasonably minimize the creation of waste through reduction, reuse, and recycling), one of the operational definitions states, "...New goals will be set annually in an effort to continually work to reduce and eliminate waste produced by the co-op." Who sets those goals? Answer: it may be our "Green Team." Kate explained that part of the waste audit by PRC was to increase training; the Green Team (similar to our Task Force) engages staff members from different departments, who could do things like perform an in-house waste audit.
- Will there be a waste audit this year? Kate answered that it should be done annually to see if significant improvements have been made. It should be done in June this year, but that is unlikely because of COVID safety concerns about going through the store's trash. She added that she's confident an audit could be done in-house at this point.
- Sam noted that last year there was data about the amount of produce donated to 412 Food Rescue. Those numbers were kept by the former produce manager, and that task didn't carry over to the current manager; however, 412 Food Rescue does send an annual report of that information.
- Could we look into sourcing energy that is not coal-based? Maura said she could ask the landlord if they would be willing to change energy companies. She added that they did do an energy audit in response to not being able to sub-meter the building.
- Would we consider putting lights on timers? Maura reported that only the emergency lights are left on after hours. She added that in a space where the Co-op is billed accurately for energy used, yes, it would probably be worthwhile to install timers.

Decision: Laura motioned to accept the report as compliant. Charlie seconded the motion.

Vote: 8.0.0

Calendar Planning

As we are approaching the end of the fiscal year, it's time to look at the governance calendar and see if there are any changes to be made to the reporting schedule, committee meeting schedule, etc. Laura reported that there have been no changes made to the working copy of the FY20-21 calendar. Directors discussed timelines for vote counting, board budget approval, and bylaws. Also discussed was the

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possibility of looking at other, more capable, platforms to use for voting. Maura asked if the Ends should still be reported on twice per year; it was said that once per year would probably be fine, and it will be discussed further during the Ends reporting at the June board meeting.

Finance Committee Update

Larry reported no new updates. The Committee will meet with Shawn very soon.

BPE Committee Update

Karen reported that there is a draft policy regarding board member inactivity on the Board's Google Drive; it will be discussed further at the June working meeting. Zoë and Karen plan to meet to discuss the timeline for bylaws voting and elections. Work on the board candidate packet will need to begin soon. The May/June Cooperator didn't happen, but the Board Corner piece can go out to the membership via email.

Member-Owner Participation Committee Update

In Melanie's absence, Faith reported the Committee updates.

MOP Charter Review

Decision: Tom motioned to approve the Charter. Charlie seconded.

Vote: 8.0.0

Survey Discussion

A Chatham Food Studies class was consulted in summarizing the results of the governance survey. Faith said that the Committee is waiting until they meet before handing out summary documents, and are unsure of what to share with the membership. She added that there were many ideas and interesting things shared in the survey – some have been pulled into the summary. Faith encouraged directors to read them all.

Laura asked that directors really think about what correlations they want to see, and to think very carefully about what data would be really valuable to know for a specific purpose, as to avoid data dredging. Further discussion will occur at the June working meeting. Laura gave kudos to the MOP Committee for getting the survey completed.

Annual Meeting Committee Update

Eva reported that there isn't much happening at this time; she has information on who to contact to set up the venue and food for the meeting, but is focused on thinking of alternative ways to hold the meeting in case it can't happen in person. She encouraged anyone to reach out to her with ideas. Tom suggested that there should be a deadline for making a decision, the challenge being that the ability to gather depends on local mandates. It would also be a good idea to contact the venue and food vendor to see what their backup plan looks like. The point was made that even if we are technically allowed to gather, we as a Co-op may not want to. Zoë noted that the Co-op will already be making decisions about other

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community events, and the Annual Meeting decision can fall in line with what the Co-op is doing at the time.

Bylaws Committee Update

Zoë reported that a survey was sent out, encouraging members to read over proposed bylaw changes; so far, almost all responses have been favorable. He added that the Committee is interested in staff input. The deadline to complete the survey is June 15th. The next step will be for the Committee to meet to see if any changes need to be made based on comments from the survey, and then take those proposed changes to the Board. It came to light that there is uncertainty about who is checking the Board's email account; Sam will follow up with relevant parties, and the account credentials can be reset if needed.

Expansion Committee Update

Tom reported that the Committee had their first meeting on Thursday, May 14. Further discussion will take place in closed session.

Resilience Committee Update

Charlie reported no updates. In lieu of a charter, the Committee is drafting a Questions and Considerations document, which Charlie committed to sharing with Directors on Fleep, with follow-up happening in June.

Action Item Follow-up & Discussion

Directors and managers reviewed progress or lack thereof on action items from previous meetings.

Closings

The next board meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 15th. Reports, agendas, and packet submissions are due to the Board Clerk via email on Monday, June 8th at 9:00 a.m.

Member Open Session

There were no members remaining on the call at this time.

Adjournment

Decision: Charlie moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Larry seconded the motion.

Vote: 8.0.0

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. to discuss matters pertaining to expansion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by MaCall Scott, Board Clerk.