

**Adopted Minutes**  
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting  
Remote Meeting via Cisco WebEx Meetings  
May 17, 2021

**In attendance:**

Present Board Members: Sam Applefield, President; Ariel Barlow, Vice President; Laura Valentine, Secretary; Charlie Orr, Treasurer; Eva Barinas; Jenise Brown; Tom Pandaleon; Trevor Ring; Marty Seltman

General Manager: Maura Holliday

Management Team: Elly Helgen, Marketing and Member Services

Member-Owners: Carl Fertman, Faith Schantz

Board Clerk: MaCall Scott

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Sam called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Marty read aloud the Ends statement:

The East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community.

To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
2. An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
3. A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
4. A creative vision to transform the future

Those in attendance checked in to express how they were feeling and any needs they had.

**Amend/Approve Agenda**

There were no updates to the agenda.

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

Vote: 7.0.0

**Amend/Approve March Meeting Minutes**

There were no edits to the minutes.

Decision: Motion to accept the April minutes by Tom; seconded by Marty.

Vote: 7.0.0

**Member-Owners' Open Session**

Carl Fertman said hello and introduced himself as a long-time member of the Co-op.

*Ariel joined the meeting at 7:18 p.m.*

**General Manager Updates**

Maura provided the following update to Directors before the meeting:

This report is in addition to monthly monitoring reports. The expectation of this update is to give additional information to the Board of Directors that may not be included in the month's monitoring report. This report aligns with parts of sub-policy B7: Communication to the Board...' The General Manager shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.'

**Membership:**

Current total member-owners: 15,056

New Member Owners: April – 47 net (8 refunds)

Total Member Equity: April - \$1,520,593

**Register Round Up Total:**

April's recipient: Penn Future - \$1,548 was raised

May's recipient: Jeremiah's Place – <https://jeremiahsplace.org>

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**Operations Update:**

- YTD sales growth through 5/9/2021 was -0.7%
- Customer count and basket size are zig-zagging a bit depending on the week; however, the customer count is increasing, which means that more folks are coming in or making more frequent trips. This causes the basket size to reduce more towards pre-pandemic levels.
- DEI – we are working to get trainings scheduled for leadership and the Board of Directors; this is still underway.
- At the end of April, we held eight All Staff Meetings where we discussed ARPA’s expansion of COVID-19 sick leave, expansion updates, and forming our Diversity and Inclusion Committee. We are looking to get a survey out to staff to see how many are interested in participating on the Committee and begin meetings this summer.
- Seating in the Front End should be completed this week. We extended the platforms on two of our check stands to accommodate a stool for folks to use during cashier shifts. We also demolished some of the shelving below to increase legroom when seated. We are purchasing two more matching stools now that we have found one that everyone likes and is safe.
- Extra Storage space: we have fully exited our storage units; remediation and demo of the building are currently underway. We do not have an updated timeline on when the full demo and construction will begin, but they have ensured us they will keep us in the loop as things progress.
- The FY21-22 annual budget is underway for submission to the Board in July 2021.
- Seedlings are in full swing and doing very well. Local items in produce are starting to increase and will slowly increase as the growing season continues.
- 3M is moving across the street this month; they will start with somewhere around 25+ employees, and the remainder is moving in at the end of summer.

Updates, Questions, Comments

- There were three updates from Maura:
  - 73% of staff members have reported being fully vaccinated; the Co-op gives a \$75 gift card as an incentive.
  - The discussion has begun regarding opening the hot bar and salad bar in a limited capacity.
  - The annual staff survey starts on May 17<sup>th</sup> and runs through May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Anything on the horizon as far as returning to self-serve lettuces and mushrooms in produce?
  - No discussion at this time
- How did the All-Staff Meetings go?
  - There were eight meetings, and most of them had 6-10 staff members. We discussed expansion updates, COVID sick-leave updates, and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
- Any updates on the Extra Space Storage building demo?
  - Our equipment has been attached to our walls. They are supposed to start demolishing the building later this week or next week.

**B5 – Customer Service and Value**

Updates, Questions, Comments

- Can you explain more about the NCG customer survey?
  - It’s a random survey that prints on the receipt. It asks about satisfaction with departments and product mix; we’ll get demographic information. It will be nice to hear from non-members and determine why they aren’t becoming members and what barriers we aren’t seeing.
- Regarding incidents in the calendar year, is twenty complaints against employees a high number?
  - It’s consistent with last year. Tom pointed out that it’s a minuscule number compared with the number of shoppers.
- Hopefully, we’re in transition between COVID and whatever our new “normal” is. Do you have any data from NCG or elsewhere regarding basket size, member counts, restriction lifting?

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- We are about in the middle. Some co-ops haven't bounced back, some that have seen a significant uptick and have minimal disruption. Most co-op cafés have been the hardest hit and are still trying to bounce back. It'll be interesting to see how shopping patterns change once the hot bar and salad bar re-open.
- Are we at all constrained by Health Department regulations? Are those impacting our ability to allow the membership to use their containers?
  - We are doing it based on wisdom and are trying to do more than is recommended out of an abundance of caution. We don't want to rush back to anything.

**Decision:** Motion to accept the B5 report as compliant by Ariel; seconded by Charlie.

**Vote:** 8.0.0

*Eva joined the meeting at 7:59 p.m.*

**B10 – Environment**

Despite COVID, I felt like we had strong numbers. I was disappointed that we couldn't make progress on our waste diversion this past year, but we are looking toward making improvements. We could do another waste audit through PRC if they still offer that service or go forward with their recommendations from our 2019 audit.

Updates, Questions, Comments

- Are there any new goals that you have for the upcoming year?
  - We are looking to re-engage with PRC to see what is possible. That will be a big part of expansion – if we can build things from scratch, what should we do to optimize waste diversion?
- What do we do with our glass recycling?
  - Zero Waste Wrangler takes it to a drop-off center for us.
- Regarding alternative energy sources, it may be worth running by ICON. It can be cheaper to go with renewable energy, which was not the case even five years ago.
- What kinds of things are we thinking about doing to reduce single-use plastics?
  - Sadly, single-use plastic usage was up during this last year due to COVID. So again, we want to re-engage with PRC to see what recommendations they have.
  - Amber is looking into a type of wrap explicitly made for cheese that could drastically reduce the amount of plastic wrap we use.
- Have we worked with any of Pittsburgh's universities to see about having research done into how we can move toward zero-waste?
  - Our waste audit with PRC was one of our more significant initiatives. Kate would have been able to speak more to this. Tom added that the Co-op had tried various things over time, but it's difficult as a "lone wolf" to try to take these actions; however, we may gain clout by linking with other institutions and making demands.
- Could you provide more context regarding ICON not providing waste and recycling billing information?
  - We have asked many times, but they have not responded to our request.
- Tom commented that it might make sense to make a specific commitment to environmental values and goals in our presentation to the public.
  - It will be interesting to see how the Resilience Committee and the Co-op's Green Team will paint that narrative more clearly.

**Decision:** Motion to accept the B10 report as compliant by Laura; seconded by Charlie.

**Vote:** 9.0.0

The Board completed the GM Monitoring Matrix for the above reports, highlighting strengths and opportunities.

**Finance Committee Update**

Charlie met today with Shawn and Maura to have a general finance discussion. The full Committee will meet on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Following that, Charlie hopes they will onboard lay members. The proposed board budget and request form to use board funds will be forthcoming.

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**Decision:** Motion to accept the Finance Committee charter by Trevor; seconded by Charlie.

**Vote:** 8.0.1

**Board Perpetuation and Elections (BPE) Committee Update**

Tom reported that the Committee plans to take on the election schedule and the protocol for the employee sub-election starting in the next month.

**Member-Owner Participation (MOP) Committee Update**

Marty had five items to report:

- Two lay members have joined the Committee – one of which he thinks will be very active
- The survey subcommittee will soon have some concrete proposals for the Board regarding response to the survey
- Subcommittee to look at the website and onboarding materials
- A procedure manual for the Board is being developed; the Committee wants to include language regarding members joining committees and specifically include best practices on charter review by lay members.
- Marty has been meeting Elly virtually and is hoping to talk about the relationship between MOP and the Marketing and Member Services department. Elly intends to attend the next MOP meeting.

**Annual Meeting Committee Update**

Eva had no updates; planning for the next Annual Meeting will start in the next month or two.

**Bylaws Committee Update**

Laura had no new updates.

**Expansion Committee Update**

The Committee met last Thursday. A memorandum from the lawyers revealed no changes needed to the bylaws or article of incorporation to offer shares. There is no update on the LOI. Fran Carter, the Co-op's Project Manager, presented slides to the Expansion Committee about member loans vs. preferred shares. Sam added that it would be good to get input from members on which option they might prefer and encouraged Directors to solicit feedback from contacts they know who are passionate about the Co-op.

**Resilience Committee Update**

Trevor reported that the Committee met about three weeks ago. Some of the topics discussed:

- |                     |                        |  |
|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| • Outreach programs | • Transportation       | • Buying                                   |
| • Power outages     | • Packaging            | • Can the Co-op create an added sugar tax? |
| • Climate           | • Net-zero commitments |  |

**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 21, 2021. Reports, agendas, and packet submissions are due to the Board Clerk via email on Monday, June 14, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

**Adjournment**

**Decision:** Charlie moved to adjourn the meeting; Jenise seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 9.0.0

Minutes respectfully submitted by MaCall Scott, Board Clerk.