

Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Held Remotely via Cisco WebEx
October 18, 2021

In attendance:

Board Members: Sam Applefield, President; Ariel Barlow, Vice President; Laura Valentine, Secretary; Eva Barinas; Trevor Ring; Marty Seltman

Management: Tyler Kulp, Produce

Member-Owners: Brian Alderman, Amy (last name not listed)

Board Clerk: MaCall Scott

Absent: Jenise Brown; Tom Pandaleon

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

Introduction

Sam called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Eva read the Ends statement aloud.

Check-In

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

Amend/Approve Agenda

Decision: Motion to approve the agenda by Laura. Second by Marty.

Vote: 5.0.1

Member-Owners Open Session

Members were thanked for being in attendance. Amy thanked the Board for having the meeting and having it open to members.

GM Update

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: 15,294

New member-owners: August – 45 net (7 refunds)

Total member equity: June - \$1,542,944

Register Round Up Total:

September recipient: Book' Em – <http://bookempa.org/>

October recipient: Co-op Community Fund – <http://community.coop/ccf>

Operations Update:

- YTD sales growth for FY22, through 10/10/2021 = 3%

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- We are participating in a non-perishable food drive this month in partnership with The Food Bank. The bin is located at the front entrance.
- NCG hosted their GM fall conference virtually this year. It was going to be in person, but with COVID-19 cases rising in California (where it was going to be hosted), it switched to virtual. NCG has contracted with veteran diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practitioners at TMI Consulting to send cohorts of NCG food co-op leaders through best-in-class, self-paced, online DEI 101 Foundations courses. NCG is partnering with TMI Consulting, Inc. and will be offering new online DEI training opportunities, provided free of charge for up to twelve of your co-op's staff members.
- Our new HRIS platform, Paylocity, rolled out on 9/27. We had our first payroll run on that system just this week. It has been bumpy as we get used to a new system, and we are learning about it as we go. This platform will consolidate four systems, possibly five.
- October is National Co-op Month – we are using this as a month-long member drive. In the first ten days, we have added thirty-three new members! MMS is tabling and featuring co-op information and community partners all month long.

Updates/Questions/Comments:

- Maura added that she attended TMI Consulting's two-day Manifest Equity Conference last week.
- Next month's Register Round-Up is the Co-op Community Fund; do we already have a balance in that?
 - Response: Yes, we invested with them several years ago; we accrue interest on our original investment with them, and we can do different things with those funds, like contribute to scholarships.
- This is the first month that both basket size and customer count went down. Do we know why?
 - Response: It's strange – maybe because Meade Street was closed and being repaved. It makes the store inaccessible for anyone with mobility issues.
- How does this year's Week 15 compare to Week 15 of 2019?
 - Response: In 2019, transactions were still down considerably compared to pre-COVID "normal" numbers. We have not seen as much gain as expected because 3M, who is moving across the street, has delayed moving until 2022.
- Is there a plan to have another hiring event?
 - Response: We are talking about it; Front End and Café are in the most need right now. Those managers are deciding whether they want to do an event or not – we did end up hiring six of the eight people who attended the last event, so it was successful!

Management Report

The Board is asking Co-op managers who attend board meetings to spend a few minutes introducing themselves and reporting on current department events. Tyler, the Co-op's Produce Manager, said that they are bringing in many fall and winter floral items: wreaths, garland, and swags. The local season is still going strong, but the quantity of items is dwindling – lots of hard squash, onions, and potatoes, but not a lot of salad or tomatoes. Staffing is pretty good; one staff member is on leave, but they will return. We have been maintaining pandemic level sales; we are at -3.5% over last year, but last year we were up 14%.

Questions/Comments:

- Are local vendors talking about supply shortages?
 - Response: Not so much supply shortages, but labor shortages. Wildfires and drought have been affecting crops – citrus took a big hit this year.
- Besides Four Seasons, who are your top vendors?

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- Response: Clarion River, Central PA Produce Co-op, and Smith's Organic Farm. This year, we lost a few vendors; one stopped doing wholesale, and the other had a labor shortage and stopped delivery to independent grocery stores.
- Where do you source mushrooms?
 - Response: The Co-op sells more mushrooms now than ever, and almost all of them come from Pennsylvania. Most come from Four Seasons, but we also get them from Wild Purveyors and Real Fungi, who supply more specialty varieties like morels.

Postcard Mailer Discussion

This conversation is a continuation of one that began in the September board meeting. Article 3.4 of the Bylaws states, "...Individual notification for governance issues will be primarily by email, but members will be given the option of choosing to be notified by postal mail when they become new members, and current members can opt-in to paper mailings at any time." The plan was to send out a one-time paper mailing notifying them of the change in policy and letting them 1) sign up for all member-only emails, 2) sign up for a new governance-only email list, 3) continue to receive notification of meetings and elections by paper mail. Anyone who chooses not to respond will be considered to have been given "reasonable notice." The question is how many members does the Board want to send postcards to; it would cost about \$6,000 to send it to all 15,000+ members, or about \$2,400 to send it to our active members.

Thoughts from Directors:

- If we have their email address, they should get an email – if we don't have an email address, we should send them a postcard.
- If we can afford it, it would be a real advantage to send the postcard to everyone.
- Maura and Elly will dig deeper into data from previous mailings and report back to the Board via Fleep.

Committee Updates:

Finance

No updates.

Board Perpetuation and Elections (BP&E)

There are three available seats and three candidates for this upcoming election; the Bylaws allow for candidates to be appointed by the Board as long as the number of candidates does not exceed the number of open seats.

Decision: Motion to appoint Mia Sorada, Brian Alderman, and Debi Johnson to the Board, effective December 20, 2021, by Laura. Second from Eva.

Vote: 6.0.0

Decision: Motion to appoint Megan Moffit to the one-year staff seat, effective December 20, 2021, by Ariel. Second from Eva.

Vote: 6.0.0

Member-Owner Participation (MOP)

Inspired by the Resilience Committee's in-person gathering, the MOP Committee will hold an outdoor, in-person meeting this week.

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Annual Meeting

Due to scheduling challenges, this year's Annual Meeting will be held remotely on Saturday, November 13. It will be "short and sweet" with some fun at the end of the meeting. Eva connected with Weaver's Way Co-op and has some ideas for future meetings.

Bylaws

Laura has been working on process documentation. A recommendation was made to change the name from Bylaws to Governance Committee. Laura thought that process documentation could live with the Resilience Committee since institutional knowledge is a part of Resilience. There could be a benefit in having a Governance Committee, though, with a nine-person Board, it has already been a challenge to fill spots in the seven existing committees. Another idea is to change BP&E to a Board Operations and Elections Committee. The Board will revisit this idea at the retreat in January.

Expansion

The Committee canceled their meeting last week because Expansion will be discussed in Executive Session this evening. They have been continuing to plan for a capital campaign and negotiate on a Letter of Intent.

Resilience

The Committee met in person; it was exciting and productive. They will try to do it again next Thursday; all are welcome, either in-person or virtual.

Action Items

#	Description	Who is Responsible?	Status
174	Discuss opportunities to revitalize the Co-operator	Tom	Ongoing

Sam and Ariel talked about changing the Action Items list into a living document that all Directors can add to and edit.

Closings

Next Meeting: Monday, November 15, 2021

Packet submission due: Monday, November 8, 2021

Decision: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. by Trevor. Second by Marty.

Vote: 6.0.0

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. to discuss Expansion developments and adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by MaCall Scott, Board Clerk.