

Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Held Remotely via Cisco WebEx
February 20, 2023

In attendance:

Board Members: Ariel Barlow, President; Debi Johnson, Vice President; Laura Valentine, Secretary; Mia Sorada, Treasurer; Liz Geist, Marty Seltman, Carlos Gasca Yanez, Brian Alderman, Tom Pandaleon, Caoimhe Quach

Management: Maura Holliday, General Manager; Elly Helgen, Marketing & Member Services; Tyler Kulp, Produce; Ian Ryan, Grocery

Member-Owners: Mark Bowers, Mat, Pat Downey, Josh Trapp, Emily

Board Clerk: Jessie Ryan

Introduction

The Board President called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and read the Ends Statement aloud.

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

Check-In

Those in attendance checked in to express their feelings and any needs.

Amend/Approve Agenda

Decision: The meeting agenda was amended to add the topic of the expansion forum/survey after GM updates. Compensation and Team Relations and Expansion were added to the Committees list. The amended agenda was approved without objection.

Amend/Approve Minutes

Decision: The January meeting minutes were approved without objection.

Member-Owners Open Session

A few member-owners took a moment to say hello and ask questions.

February Working Meeting Report

On February 6th, 2023, 8 of the 10 Board Members met for their monthly meeting from 7:00-9:00 pm to discuss the prep for February's board meeting, committee working group proposal accepted at the Board January Retreat, a Board Discord communication proposal, the current fiscal year's Board budget actuals, and Board to Shareholders communication.

GM Update

Maura provided the following update to the Directors before the meeting:

This report is in addition to monthly monitoring reports. This update expects 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.'

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Membership:

Current total member-owners: 16,067
New member-owners: 53 (4 refunds)
Total member equity: \$1,616,190

Register Round-Up Total:

January-March Recipient: POWER
Art in the Garden
Total - \$796

Operations Update:

- The entryway door company has come in and gotten second measurements so that they can place the order for the new doors. We should hear from them in the coming weeks with an ETA for arrival.
- We have drawings for what the produce reset will look like and are currently looking at what fixtures we want to look like. We are consulting with Four Seasons to help with selection and merchandising
- PASA Sustainable Agriculture's winter conference was the week of February 6th.
- Annual report is complete and available online. Printed version will be available shortly in the store.
- 2023 Farm Tour planning has begun!
- Our 2023 wage increase was ratified on Tuesday, February 7th, 2023. Our new starting wage is \$15/hour for level 2 positions and \$15.25/hour for level 3 positions. The wage increase was implemented on March 13, 2023, with retroactive payout for all hours worked from January 2, 2023 through March 12, 2023.

Questions & Clarifications:

- Would the group find it helpful to include a stat for the number of members in good standing? Is it easy to get that number?
 - It should be easy to pull the number of fully paid members from the database.
 - It would be helpful to know the number of members who are shopping per month as well as how many customers walk through the door per month.
 - Several Directors were interested in this data, especially for Capital Campaign purposes
- Is it correct that only once a year we get the figures on how many people shop every three months, every twelve months?
 - Yes, there is a lot of effort that goes into getting those figures and we have found it doesn't change significantly
- At some point we need to budget to get more customer geographic demographic information such as zip code, zip code density, etc., which is important from a marketing, membership building, and Capital Campaign perspective
 - We are looking at a different membership database system so that it will fit in the budget for future years
- Do we have access to the data from the Customer Satisfaction Survey printed on receipts?
 - We do have access to those results; the GM Update report includes Product Availability and Overall Satisfaction
 - More detailed information from this survey will be included in the Customer Service and Value report coming out in May
- Congratulations to all involved in the wage increase ratification

Expansion Forum/Survey

- Should we do a survey among members or have member forums regarding the current expansion process?

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- Send an email to members summarizing what we can from the past year, our current efforts, and other near-term information that we would like members to know. The email could also announce a few member forums at which members can come and hear from the Board and Management, make suggestions, etc.
- There is concern about doing another survey as it is a lot of effort and it could be too much for members
- Establish a future vision with input from member-owners through community engagement
 - This may need to be a separate effort
- The Board consents to create a working group chaired by Tom, housed under MOP, with the goal of at least one member outreach forum by the end of March

Management Report

- Elly shared that she attended the PASA conference. Candace has started in the department which is great because she is excited, motivated, and has great ideas. They are looking forward to planning events in the near future. The Annual Report has been completed and sent out, and hard copies are available in the store.
- Ian shared that the department has a new part-time employee working in the stock room. He is still hiring for a full-time Grocery Coordinator and a full-time Stocker position. The department is preparing for Passover and Easter with some nice displays coming soon.

Questions & Comments:

- Has the train derailment affected any shipments?
 - It has not affected Grocery or Produce at this time
- What were the key takeaways from the PASA conference?
 - Tyler met some people from new Co-ops in the area and it was interesting to see how they are getting started. A few of those Co-ops include a tree start-up outside of Philadelphia and Allegheny Grass Fed Beef here in Western PA. It was interesting to hear about how the Food Hub serves farmers, wholesalers, and retailers, and their impact on our grocery shelves. He also met with Who Cooks for You, which used to be one of our biggest local suppliers before they discontinued wholesale. We still purchase plants from them as well as the Grow Pittsburgh plants that we buy every Spring.
 - Elly stated that it was nice to see what others are doing in our food system, some of the sustainable agricultural trends, and to just stay in the know through a Co-op lens.
- Do you have any resources from the PASA conference that you can share?
 - No, materials were not distributed; attendees just took personal notes

B7 – Communication to the Board

The Policy Register states, “The General Manager shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.”

Questions & Comments:

- An addition was made to this report from last year under B7.2: “Any non-compliance issues have been reported in the specific report and remedies to non-compliance have been provided in the applicable report.”
- There was a discussion among the Board and the GM regarding the relationship between increased wages and the Time and Attendance Policy
 - The Time and Attendance Policy was created to set limitations on how many times in a rolling 12-month calendar one can be late, leave early (beyond certain thresholds on either side of those), and be absent
 - The Board requested the meeting minutes from the Union regarding this discussion

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- Is there an update on the direction of the Café?
 - A call is scheduled with NCG this week to talk through their recommendations
- Has opening the Café counter been put on the back burner?
 - The Café counter will reopen when we are fully hired and are able to offer consistent hours.
- What are the NCG consultations and how do they play into this situation?
 - The Co-op pays for their travel; they provide consultations and recommendations
 - We are currently consulting with them for the Produce department reset as well
- How many times has NCG been in consultation with the Co-op this year?
 - Outside of expansion, the Café consultation is the most recent; this upcoming call will be a follow-up from the October conversation
- Closing the Café is considered an internal change. We need to be kept in the know of the plans.
 - Maura has been providing updates regarding the efforts being made to reopen the Café in the monthly GM Update report
- B7.3 states: “Monthly Capital Campaign Committee Meetings, Executive Sessions, and GM Executive Meetings have been held to allow the GM to keep the Board up to date on our expansion efforts.” I thought we were all working together, not just the GM informing the Board of expansion efforts.
 - The GM is reporting on the past 12 months. The Capital Campaign Committee was renamed from Expansion Committee to intentionally delineate those two tasks and expansion conversations were happening during Executive Sessions. The preponderance of the expansion work has been driven by Operations with the Board weighing in during decision-making scenarios.
 - Part of the reason many of those discussions were held in Executive Session was because of the confidential nature of the real estate negotiations; this is not public information.
- The Board discussed in detail whether or not the B7 report is compliant and came to the conclusion to accept the B7 with consequences.
 - Some Directors expressed their desire to have more information and a clear strategy for the future of the Café.
 - Some Directors stated that this report is compliant as written, but there should be a conversation between the Board and the GM on the interpretation of this policy.

Decision: The Board accepts the B7 with consequences.

B8 – Board Logistical Support

The Policy Register states, “The General Manager shall not allow the Board to have inadequate logistical support.”

Questions & Comments:

- One of the only changes made to this report was the recent Board Clerk transition from MaCall to Jessie
- Also added clarity as to what data such as signage, email, and social media pertain to

Decision: The Board accepts the B8 as compliant.

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

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Committee Updates:

Resilience

There were no updates from the Committee this month.

Finance

The next meeting is scheduled for March 8th. There was a follow-up conversation with Shawn regarding the Postcard Campaign to see if it will come out of the Board budget.

Board Perpetuation and Elections (BP&E)

The Committee met on February 15th to discuss what went right, what went wrong, and areas of improvement for the Annual Meeting and Board Elections.

Member-Owner Participation (MOP)

The Committee met on February 15th and the detailed minutes from this meeting are available on the Google Drive. The Committee would like to do some outreach in the local community to try to understand what barriers there might be for people coming to the Co-op. This might be out of the scope of the Committee. There was a general sense that there is enough going on all ready to take on this task. Marty purposed to create a working group outside of this Committee at a later time. The Committee also reviewed and approved its Committee Charter.

Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign Committee is currently on hold.

Compensation and Team Relations

The Committee is in the process of drafting its Charter for the next board meeting.

Expansion

Carlos is working to create a future vision plan to share with the Board. He is looking for more member-owners to join the Committee, especially those who have experience with real estate development, finance, retail marketing, etc.

Action Items

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

Appreciations

Those in attendance took a moment to share their thanks.

Closing

Next Meeting: Monday, March 20, 2023

Packet submission due: Monday, March 13, 2023

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm without objection.

The Board and General Manager entered closed session at 9:10 pm, in order to discuss Expansion. During closed session, the B6 Report from January 2023 was updated to Accepted, as it was brought into compliance by the attendance of Grocery Manager at the public meeting. Closed session adjourned at 9:55 pm.
