

CONCORD FOOD COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 19, 2017, 5:30 PM, New England College, Concord, NH



Cathy Menard, President, called the meeting of the Concord Food Cooperative Board of Directors to order at 5:33 PM. A quorum was present.

Attending: Cathy Menard, Derek Owen, Tracie Sponenberg, Jim McConaha, Tedd Evans, David Marshall, and Krista Helmboldt. Staff: Chris Gilbert (General Manager), Nick Schneider (Director of Operations), Paige Charland, Donna Love, Kim Cote, Doris McGurrin, Vincent Ardizzone, Pat Gale, Lynn Chamberlin, Jaimie Jusczyk and Melanie Waldvogel (Board Administrator).

Via teleconference: Sarah Dahl of CDS Consulting Co-op, specialists in consulting for food co-ops

CDS STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Sarah Dahl explained that the purpose of the survey was to find accurate, non-anecdotal information regarding the work environment at the co-op, and to provide a benchmark for upcoming years. There was a 91% participation rate (out of 64 eligible employees, 58 took the survey) and the data included comparison to staff survey results at other cooperatives. The top-rated responses were for the questions:

- My department produces high quality work.
- I am proud to work for the Concord Food Co-op.

The lowest scoring responses were for the question:

- My pay increases reflect the quality of my job performance.

While there is room for improvement, there is also great opportunity. Staff comments indicated an encouraging improvement in the work environment in the past year and a half. Common themes identified were:

1. Love for co-workers
2. Inconsistencies in management
3. Request for more direct communication
4. Low pay
5. Feeling of being short-staffed
6. Late evaluations
7. Connection to mission

Sarah Dahl's recommendations based on survey results were:

- Plan for a full survey in 2018
- Consistent accountability for managers
- Schedule all staff and departmental meetings
- Review turnover
- Compensation study
- Evaluations on time
- Update job descriptions

Teleconference ended at 6:33pm.

Issues with the survey included a duplicate question and an initial problem with online links. We inquired whether CDS could completely control the distribution of access key codes. CDS designed all the questions because we chose an engagement survey rather than a full survey with a considerably higher cost.

The Board felt that there was great value in the narrative feedback, and that we now have good data to work with to achieve continued improvements. Chris suggested that it would be ideal to have an opportunity for comments with each question (instead of a single comment box at the end). The Co-op staff was thanked for their participation and input. Co-op staff participants left at 6:43pm.

As Chris has responsibility for staff management by virtue of his role as GM, he will take the next steps to respond and follow up with concerns raised in the staff survey.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election structure (and By-laws Article 5, Section 4) was reviewed by the Board, and the process for filling vacancies and determining terms was clarified.

Committee Chair Jim McConaha noted that three individuals have expressed interest in becoming board members and possibly running for election this Fall. Four current Board members: Tracie Sponenberg, Cathy Menard, Finis Williams and Derek Owen are up for re-election this year and all have agreed to run again.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Sales for March compared to last year were affected by Easter falling in March in 2016 (vs. April in 2017) and snowstorm closings in 2017. We are experiencing a positive trend in two important metrics: Daily Cash on Hand and Average Daily Sales are both increasing. Monthly membership growth exceeded the prior year even though last March we held a member drive and there was no drive this March.

E-shopping is live as of this month, and promotion will begin soon. After a quarterly inventory count is completed, full financial results for the third quarter ending March 31, 2017 will be available at our May meeting. A draft of the FY18 budget will also be presented to the Board in May.

C-8 GOVERNANCE INVESTMENT – BOARD FY18 BUDGET

Board discussion about the FY18 Governance budget focused on the annual staff survey. Several board members mentioned that conducting the same survey again next year would allow us to measure improvements clearly. There is value in keeping the survey within the context of co-ops. We also have time to explore options and other vendors.

- **BOARD VOTE: Budget \$2,500 for next year's confidential staff survey.**
(Motion by Tedd Evans, seconded by David Marshall; approved unanimously).

MESSAGE TO MEMBERS

Krista Helmboldt offered to draft a message to the membership to provide an update since our last communication. Potential topics are: the recent staff survey, the end of the construction project, price reductions, the co-op's emphasis on local foods and Spring Into Healthy Giving (upcoming community event).

MINUTES APPROVAL

- **BOARD VOTE: Approve the March 15, 2017 minutes as submitted.**
(Motion by Jim McConaha, seconded by Tedd Evans; approved unanimously).

NEW BUSINESS

- David will be stepping down as Treasurer. Remaining Board members of the Finance Committee are Cathy and Finis. Betsy Black and Jim Marshall, who are members of the Co-op but not Board members, also volunteer on the Committee. A Board member who can serve as Treasurer is needed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tracie Sponenberg left the meeting at 7:41pm and Chris Gilbert and Nick Schneider at 7:42pm.

- **BOARD VOTE: Enter Executive session at 7:43pm to discuss legal and personnel matters.**
(Motion by Jim McConaha, seconded by David Marshall; approved unanimously).
- **BOARD VOTE: Exit Executive session at 8:25pm.**
(Motion by David Marshall, seconded by Krista Helmboldt; approved unanimously).

ADJOURNMENT

- **BOARD VOTE: Motion to Adjourn at 8:25pm.**
(Motion by Derek Owen, seconded by Krista Helmboldt; approved unanimously).

The meeting adjourned at 8:25pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 5:30pm at New England College in Concord.

TO DO:

- Nominating Committee to finalize Board candidate application package / when application is due
- Schedule candidates to attend a Board meeting
- Let Cathy know if you can serve as Treasurer, or know of a volunteer for the Finance Committee