



CONCORD FOOD COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 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 5:32 PM.

Attending: Cathy Menard, Jim McConaha, Tracie Sponenberg, Peter Engel, Finis Williams, Chuck Gilboy, and Krista Helmboldt. Staff: Chris Gilbert (General Manager), and Melanie Waldvogel (Board Administrator).

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE GROCER LETTER

The Co-op received a letter of congratulations from National Cooperative Grocer (NCG) due to our improved financial status.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Chris Gilbert reported that April sales growth, combined for both stores, was 5% over last year. For Concord, customer counts increased 10% over last year. New London basket size is also trending upward. Current outreach efforts include customer building with a younger demographic and analysis of results from the customer satisfaction survey.

Chris also reported on his NCG national meeting. NCG introduced a new CEO and outlined programs in the works to support member co-ops. Increased competition in the industry has some co-ops struggling, as natural foods are no longer a specialty product.

CO-OP'S BOARD BUDGET for FY2020

The governance section of the Co-op's annual operating budget covers board expenses, which consist primarily of the annual meeting and election, the staff survey and board training, including a retreat for strategic planning. Starting in FY2019, we increased our investment in the staff survey by expanding the number of questions and contracting for an analysis of compliance with our policy on staff treatment and compensation (B6).

Cathy Menard proposed that we re-enroll in the Cooperative Board Leadership Development (CBLD) program offered by CDS in FY2020. Board members acknowledged the importance of continuing to support board training. It was decided that Cathy would speak with Michael Healy to obtain a full picture of the support services available and how they might be structured to meet our needs. We'll return to this item when the board addresses the full FY2020 operating budget.

POLICY GOVERNANCE

The Board applauded Melanie Waldvogel, Board Administrator, for her professionalism, dedication and responsiveness as she provides logistical support to the board. Melanie demonstrates a deep understanding of the cooperative movement because of her long experience with our Co-op. We are truly lucky to have the benefit of her 14 years of service!

BOARD VOTE: Approve B8: Board Logistical Support, as submitted.

(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Tracie Sponenberg, all in favor).

Nick Schneider is designated as the emergency Interim General Manager. Training opportunities for Nick and other members of the staff will be provided as they become available.

BOARD VOTE: Approve B9: Emergency General Manager Succession, as submitted.

(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Krista Helmboldt, all in favor).

PLASTIC BAGS

The Hanover Co-op plans to phase out its plastic bags over the next year. A bill is currently in the NH State House banning plastic bags, and the Co-op would like to move in this direction. Alternatives, such as soy bags, biodegradable and compostable bags and environmentally friendly packaging were discussed.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Handout: CFC Nominating Committee Report

Jim McConaha distributed his report before having to leave. Three seats will be available at the next election, and current Board members up for re-election will let Jim McConaha know of their intent to run by the May meeting. A contested election is a high possibility, with three interested members filling out applications. The application to run for the board is available on the Co-op's website.

CUSTOMER SURVEY

Pete Engel reported that customers really liked being thanked for their business when he was helping with the customer survey. Customers told him that they loved to shop at the co-op. The offered bag was a popular draw for the survey. These conversations can also help with board recruitment. The Board discussed the possibility of helping with bagging (during a busy time such as Thanksgiving) as a good way to continue engaging with members and customers.

LEARNING FROM OTHER SUCCESSFUL CO-OPS

Pete Engel reported on the large, three-store Madison, WI Willy Street Co-op. Take-away ideas included:

- Their annual report was very professional and highly visual
- They have an active and engaged board and membership
- They serve breakfast sandwiches
- They have a dedicated staff for deli meats
- They have a large bank of recipes on their website

BOARD VOTE: Approve the March 20, 2019 minutes as submitted.

(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Pete Engel; approved unanimously).

The Board held a discussion on the Step 3 Process for Setting the General Managers compensation, with handouts.

BOARD VOTE: Motion to Adjourn at 7:30PM.

(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Krista Helmboldt; approved unanimously).

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM. The next meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2019, 5:30PM at New England College in Concord.