



# CONCORD FOOD COOPERATIVE

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING MINUTES,

Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 4:30PM

### Remote meeting

Jaran Blessing, President, called the meeting of the Concord Food Cooperative Board of Directors to order at 4:39 PM. **Attending remotely:** Jaran Blessing, Katherine Leswing, Pete Engel, Finis Williams, Tracie Sponenberg. Cathy Menard, Chuck Gilboy, Krista Helmboldt, Chris Gilbert (General Manager), Vicki Bennett (Finance Manager) and Melanie Waldvogel (Board administrator). Board quorum is met (8 out of 9 present).

### GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The elimination of plastic bags in the store has been introduced with great success, with a very positive response from members and the public! Reusable bag sales have been strong, and the paper bag purchase alternative is being offered to our customers. Chris reported that snowstorms affected January's sales. A Covid outbreak amongst staff affected the store in early February, and luckily the majority of staff are recovering or recovered. The Jury Box is aiming to provide three meals a day to students, which will increase sales for the co-op. The stores are also seeing transportation and restocking issues from UNFI, which will hopefully improve. Interviews are scheduled for the Human Resources position, and the possibility of contracting with HR consulting or outsourcing services will also be explored. The new rotisserie oven is set to be installed. Department Managers met with Chris to discuss livable wage, with great ideas generated. Chris appeared on the What's Up Concord tv show. Membership continues to grow.

### POLICY GOVERNANCE: B1 (FINANCIAL CONDITION)

The Board split into three separate groups to discuss the following and report back to the Board:

- **1. Gross Margin decline from 39.8% to 35.3% due to late inventory.** Gross margin can be improved by increasing product margins or increasing overall store sales.
- 2. Margin Minus Labor - Lower labor only partially offsetting lower margins**
  - Katherine reported that the co-op's gross margin is at 15%, while a typical coop performer's is at 18.4%.
- 3. Sales per labor hour are stronger trend than typical performer. What is helping productivity?**
  - Finis reported that sales have increased, and while a typical performer is currently -14%, the co-op is up by 4%. Our staff are productive and efficient.

### RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

The Board read Carolee Coulter's article "Responding to Workplace Conflicts and Employee Concerns" in preparation for the Board meeting. Jaran Blessing noted that the article divided employee concerns into three separate categories, which are:

1. Specific management decisions that one or more employees believe unfair
2. Allegations of misconduct
3. General complaints regarding leadership or communications style

The board can agree that the majority of employee concerns can be addressed within the current framework of referring the employee back to the proper management channels in place. The history of the co-op's Human Resources (HR) Department was discussed. Tracie Sponenberg noted the challenges with retaining reliable full-time HR, and recommended looking at how HR is structured. Utilizing an outside source, such as an outsourced firm like HR ROI, or HR consultants, may be a better fit. Krista suggested a committee to review better communication systems for the staff. Finis Williams volunteered to help draft a Board directive

regarding Board response to employee conflict resolution communication for discussion next month.

### **SETTING GENERAL MANAGER COMPENSATION**

Cathy reiterated the importance of the Board and General Manager relationship, and felt that early discussion regarding General Manager compensation would have some clear benefits, including:

- Identifying strategic values (such as Chris's proactive work towards achieving a livable wage for all employees),
- Researching the scale at which comparable GM's are compensated, and
- Greater possibility for a multi-year agreement.

Chris is in support of this process.

### **BOARD COMMITTEES 2022**

The Committee charters drafted by Jaran will be discussed at the next meeting.

**BOARD VOTE: Approve the January 19, 2022 minutes as submitted.**

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

**BOARD VOTE: Enter Executive session at 6:06pm.**

*(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Cathy Menard; approved unanimously).*

**BOARD VOTE: Approve the January 19, 2022 Executive minutes as submitted.**

*(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Cathy Menard; approved unanimously).*

**BOARD VOTE: Exit Executive session at 6:07pm.**

*(Motion by Finis Williams, seconded by Cathy Menard; approved unanimously).*

The Board adjourned at 6:08PM. The next meeting will be a virtual Board meeting Wednesday, March 16, 4:30pm.