



CONCORD FOOD COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5PM

Hotel Concord, Concord NH and Zoom

Katherine Leswing, Vice-President, called the meeting of the Concord Food Cooperative Board of Directors to order at 5:00 PM. **Attending in person:** Katherine Leswing, Pete Engel, Alisa Barnard, Cathy Menard, James Stever, Krista Helmboldt, Chris Gilbert (General Manager) and Melanie Waldvogel (Board Administrator). **Attending remotely:** Michael Healy (Columinate), Tracie Sponenberg, Chuck Gilboy. Board quorum is met (8 out of 9 present).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Michael Healy, longtime cooperative consultant for Columinate, reviewed strategic planning with the Board using the Strategic Planning points he presented at the NCG conference last fall. It is important for the Board to think of the future, and process and prioritize goals. Strategic Planning begins with the Ends policy. Michael reviewed Strategic Planning key components.

Ends Policy -> Analyze -> Collaborate -> Plan -> Cycle

The strategic planning cycle is continuous and cyclical in nature:

->	CHECK	->
	PLAN	DO
->	ADJUST	->

Good strategic plans are usually just ONE PAGE. Focus on priorities (no more than 3-5) for a certain timeline (3-5 years). Use metrics and benchmarks for goals: "How will we know we are successful?"

Roles and responsibilities of the Board (Ends Owner and Plan Evaluator), General Manager (Leader and Owner of the Strategic process), the Management team and Member-owners (participators and contributors) were reviewed. Some pitfalls, such as unrealistic plans and stagnations, were briefly covered.

Tools for Strategic Planning included: SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), PEST(LE) (what's happening around us), Environmental scan and Scenario planning.

Michael emphasized that strategic planning is an ongoing process. Responses to board member questions included:

- The General Manager and Board should either have a hands-off approach where the General Manager can interpret the Ends as he/she/they see fit, or agree upon a definition in advance (such as: What is a living wage?)
- Success metrics should be built into the Ends
- Strategic planning should be monitored on a regular basis (or at every Board meeting), and not just during the appropriate policy monitoring report
- The last time the Concord Food Cooperative's Ends were amended was 2016

Chris presented his thoughts on Strategic Planning. While many plans he's seen can range from 2-20 pages, in his opinion, the more concise plans are better. We need a strategic plan, and now is a great time to develop one with changes in the economy and city. The co-op's strategic plan would serve as a living document, reviewed and amended as needed. Strategic planning will be a focus at this year's board retreat.

The Board agreed intentionality, focus, working as a team and "same page" goals are key to a successful plan. The board thanked Michael for his presentation and time!

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Chris Gilbert reported that sales and customer counts are strong and trending upwards. Online sales are break even, and UNH sales remain steady. He enjoys using NCG's new financial program JIRAV, which can run reports on trends in the network. Insurances have been updated (with a savings!), and cyber insurance has been added. Updated performance appraisals on Paylocity are being developed for the staff. Living wage remains a focus for Board discussion, and will factor into budget discussions along with profitability and productivity. The ERC reserve fund, and when to use the fund, was also discussed.

NCG BENCHMARKING DATA DISCUSSION

The numbers in the report reflect sales and staff for both stores. Chris continues to work on trend reports and will explore new ways to display data in a way helpful to the Board.

C AND D POLICY REVIEW: STRENGTHS AND AREA FOR GROWTH

Katherine led the discussion on the Board self-assessment. The results were from six members. The Board may also invite the General Manager to participate in the future for further input.

Board Strengths:

- Purpose and Ends policy
- Strong Board President leadership
- Good democratic practices
- Good Board and General Manager relationship

Areas to work on:

- Nominating process and board elections
 - The Board discussed possible ways to improve Board elections, such as term limits, recruitment ideas, and potential members serving on Committees. The Board should be careful not to lose invaluable Board member experience, and try to focus on diversity in Board members.
- Succession planning
 - Currently, there is management depth. Columinate also has an external interim program.
- Committee Charters
 - Board committees and charters keep committees strong
- Equal Board work
 - Manage through calls and conversations

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: LETTER TO MEMBERS IDEAS

Chuck will write the next letter to members. Ideas included: the new coffee bar, bakery items next to the coffee or coffee in the bakery, employee updates, welcoming James to the Board, and an invitation to have coffee with a Board member.

BOARD VOTE: Approve the February 21, 2023 minutes as submitted.

(Motion by Cathy Menard, seconded by Pete Engel; approved unanimously).

The Board adjourned from regular session at 7:08 PM.

The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 5:00 PM, at The Hotel Concord.