



# CONCORD FOOD COOPERATIVE

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5PM

Hotel Concord, Concord NH

Jaran Blessing, President, called the meeting of the Concord Food Cooperative Board of Directors to order at 5:22 PM. **Attending in person:** Pete Engel, James Stever, Krista Helmboldt, Shawn Menard, Joe York, Sam Pike, Adam Orcutt (Interim General Manager), Vicki Bennet (Finance Manager) and Melanie Waldvogel (Board Administrator). Jaran Blessing, Garland McQueen and Chuck Gilboy attended via Zoom. Board quorum is met (8 out of 8 present).

### INTRODUCTION OF GARLAND MCQUEEN

Garland will be coming to the co-op around Nov 1, as the Interim General Manager. Garland has over 25 years of co-op experience, and has served as an emergency General Manager in this world. Previously, he worked as a CEO, and is based in Atlanta, GA. Garland noted that he will stay with us as long as we need him but the arrangement is usually not longer than 6 months. If the right GM is found in a shorter period of time, he will work with that person to get them integrated as needed.

### GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Adam began his report with the ERC (Employee Retention Credit) Funds update. August and September saw significantly higher expenses than what was budgeted, which caused around \$168,000 spending of ERC Funds, with about that same amount remaining in the account. Unusual expenses included: labor costs (PTO payouts), post inventory buying (when buyers reduce inventory, there is a spike in buying), holiday preorder drop shipments, additional pre-orders, and other costly situations such as replacing the air conditioning in New London and financial audit bills coming due.

Adam noted that sales were down 2.8% from budget projections. While there was an emotional reaction and a time of lower staff morale due to a change in leadership, staff are enthusiastic about moving forward with a new Interim General Manager. Adam is also eager to get back to full hot and salad bars, and possibly a weekend brunch menu with a new head chef and kitchen manager hire.

Ideas for going forward:

- Promote a robust Thanksgiving season
- Improve efficiency with labor and cross-training staff
- Provide co-op wide customer service training
- Address any lack of product placement and promote creativity
- Have stellar produce, prepared foods and customer service
- Support the morale of the staff through the transition period

### BOARD LETTER TO MEMBERS UPDATE

Krista authored the gentle and informative letter to staff regarding recent transitions, and she will work with Adam and Garland to craft a message to the membership. Chuck would love to see new energy and inventory promoted, as well as excitement for the upcoming holiday season. Kim (Marketing Manager) was on vacation so Krista and Adam will try to have a letter prepared by the time Kim returns so it can promptly be sent out by email.

### THE BOARD RETREAT

The Board retreat will take place November 11<sup>th</sup>, 9am-3pm at the Hotel Concord, and cover the General Manager hiring process. Michael Healey, our Columinate consultant, is also preparing

some training for board members to feel more comfortable reading financial statements to understand the implications of our performance throughout the year.

### **INTERIM EXECUTIVE POSITIONS**

**BOARD VOTE: Approve Shawn Menard as Interim Secretary.**

*(Motion by Jaran Blessing, seconded by James Stever; approved unanimously).*

**BOARD VOTE: Approve Krista Helmboldt as Interim Vice-President.**

*(Motion by Jaran Blessing, seconded by Pete Engel; approved unanimously).*

Shawn and Krista will serve with Jaran as President and Pete as Treasurer as part of the monthly Planning Committee.

### **COLUMINATE RENEWAL**

The Board discussed renewing the Columinate contract, which includes Michael Healy's consulting and facilitating services, monthly planning meetings, and access to workshops. These services run \$8,100 per year, with a \$400 discount if the contract is signed by October 27<sup>th</sup>. The Board felt there may be a need this year especially for supporting staff and Board learning experiences. Garland noted NCG offers free webinar training for staff, as well.

**BOARD VOTE: Engage Columinate for the consulting package, and take advantage of the early bird special.**

*(Motion by Jaran Blessing, seconded by James Stever; approved with 5 in favor, 2 not in favor and 1 abstention).*

### **GM HIRING TOOLBOX**

A GM Search Committee will consist of James, Sam, Chuck, Krista and Garland. The Committee will start with a job description and pay range.

In the meantime, Joe, Krista and James will serve as the Nominating Committee, with a goal of appointing a 9<sup>th</sup> Board member to fill the remainder of the 2024 term. Minute approvals will be tabled until the next meeting.

**BOARD VOTE: Enter Executive session at 6:28pm.**

*(Motion by Jaran Blessing, seconded by James Stever; approved unanimously).*

The Board adjourned from regular session and Executive session at 6:50PM.

The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 5:00 PM, The Hotel Concord.

---

### **ITEMS ADDRESSED AFTER THE MEETING BY EMAIL**

#### **NEW BOARD MEMBER VOTE**

After the meeting, the board conducted a vote by email to have Ryan Poirier fill the vacant seat on the board with a term ending October 2024. This vote took place on November 2nd, 2023. All eight elected board members voted in favor of Ryan filling the vacancy. This will take effect immediately and Ryan will join the board at the November 11th retreat. Ryan was identified by the Nominating Committee as a highly qualified candidate who had expressed interest in joining the board earlier in the year. He is delighted to be joining the board.

#### **2024 ROUND-IT-UP RECIPIENTS**

Co-op staff provided a full list of Round-It-Up applications to Shawn, who then organized the recipients and asked all board members to rank each organization's mission alignment to the Co-op. Rankings were made between November 4th and 12th. The top 12 average scores were then

emailed to the board, who was asked to approve this as the final list of 2024 program recipients on November 16th. Eight out of nine board members voted, with all eight votes in favor of approving the list.

#### **GM SEARCH COMMITTEE CHARTER AND BUDGET**

Krista emailed the board a GM Search Committee Charter and Budget on November 13th. After some discussion a vote by email was cast on November 15th. The budget (totaling \$7,755) and charter were both approved with eight out of nine board members voting (all voted to approve).