



November 2012 Board Meeting

Present: Merianne Myers, Kelley Huckstein, Matthew Stanley, Allie Evans, Mark Albrecht, Beth La Fleur,

Absent: Mindy Stokes, Tom Duncan

A motion was made to approve the October board meeting minutes. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

Merianne announced that she has procured a filing box for the Board to put copies of pertinent articles into for Board perusal and discussion. This library will be sorted by topic.

Public Comment: No public were present to comment.

Merianne read a first draft of the endorsement policy. There was a discussion of language, and suggestion of further revision to allow specific endorsements be required to have actual board discussion and motion to approve at a Board meeting. Merianne will amend and bring back to Board for further revision and/or motion to approve.

Merianne passed around a matrix of skills and expertise for the Board members to complete. It was reiterated to keep eyes and ears open for new board members as we have two openings. Hopefully these will be filled by Spring. It was again suggested that any prospective board member attend at least one meeting as a guest to see what they are getting into.

Merianne handed out the calendar for 2013. Each month has a discussion topic for that month's meeting. It is to be an outline for the next year, and is to be used as a skill building exercise for the Board. It was suggested that the discussion topics are almost the framework for a strategic

plan for the Co-op as we look forward into the future and anticipate increased competition.

Merianne suggested flipping the schedule to do competition first. Perhaps a 4-5 hour strategic planning session would be worthwhile as some point. IN light of how to stay competitive with anticipated Wal-Mart and remodeling of Fred Meyers, member surveys were suggested as a way to find out what keeps our customers: What do people value? How

do we get at that question? Merianne iterated member surveys are difficult to develop, administer, and subsequently extract meaningful information.

Matthew was broached with the question of "how can the Board be most helpful as we go forward in competition/ outreach/staff positions, etc., because we have the time, skills, and effort."

Matthew iterated he has a role in fostering this Board commitment as well and will keep fostering fiduciary aspects. He iterated the importance of reading financials, especially as part of specific Board responsibilities. Maybe allow 30 minutes per meeting to discuss. For example we will likely discuss 2012 in February 2013, or 4th quarter 2012 in January 2013. January might be the meeting to discuss the 2013 budget, which was done over the Summer 2012.

Merianne agreed it is important to start working on something and let it evolve through the process.

Matthew reviewed the points of his Managers Report for November/ December 2012. He stated the UNFI rep gave him the statistic that the Co-op is the 22nd/100 largest store pulling out of the Richfield StoreHouse. We are at the 17% growth level. Allie asked about the Community

Outreach Position recently advertised in the newspaper. Matthew discussed the position and having a few well qualified applicants and that Kennlyn and Mike Nelson's last day will be December 23. The Community Outreach Position was advertised only locally. Mick, Matthew, and Kelly are the hiring committee. Sam will be the new Deli Manager.

Matthew discussed the high personnel percentage of the budget in the financials. Kelly stated vacation numbers were quite high. It was discussed that perhaps this was because a number of employees were utilizing their vacation hours.

Matthew stated 21% was good for pre-health insurance 25% could be from costs associated from cleaning up the membership databases and raises that were given later in the year. April should be decent sales and we should be back down to 21%.

Matthew also discussed the health insurance impact. As it stands, an employee can qualify if working minimum 24 hours/week. It was suggested at NCGA to bump that up to 30 or 32 hours/week but staff decided to keep it 24. Current costs/month per out-of-pocket/employee ranges \$20-\$40. That may increase in 2013. Could be a 50/50 split between Co-op and employee. Matthew will be watching health care costs closely and anticipates an 8%-10% increase in costs.

There was a brief discussion of end of the year Staff bonuses. Matthew stated that staff received generous bonuses last year and year before and there is an expectation of an end of year bonus this year. Beth questioned that an end of the year staff bonus should be an expectation. Matthew and Kelly iterated quarterly bonuses have been irregular and staff have been doing a great job. Perhaps next year look to quarterly performance-based bonuses. Checks for \$25-\$50 was what he decided on

rather than Co-op gift cards, as not every employee necessarily shops at the Co-op.

Final point of discussion was of possible generator purchase. This would be natural gas-powered, automatic switch, portable if the Co-op relocated. Matthew has received one quote of \$16,450 from an electrician, not including gas plumbing costs. This would power the entire store. The store is small enough that to scale down the generator power would not be cost effective. Matthew will research financing options and acquire more quotes. It was questioned as "reasonable" but is it a "priority". To be a place of community gathering in a time of emergency was discussed and seemed to have very real merit. It was suggested to talk to the City of Astoria to see if City can contribute some dollars, and "emergency infrastructure".

Mark asked for web page verbiage. He was assured appropriate web page intro will be sent to him.

Mark mentioned he knows of two people who were not asked if they were members, and had they been asked, they would have signed up. Matthew assured him that is unusual as the staff has been doing great job of membership recruitment at the register.

Being able to accept WIC customers was raised. Kelly will be looking into that subject area again after the new year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30. Respectfully submitted.
Beth La Fleur