

Blue Hill Co-op Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2009 Community Health Alliance, Blue Hill

Attending: Marianne Vandiver, Gail Bartlett, Deborah Wiggs, John Vincent, Erich Reed, Becky McCall, Chip Angell, Bob Sullivan, Karen Doherty (General Manager), C.E. Pugh (Development Cooperative), Heather Albert-Knopp (Minutes Taker), Steve Benson (Facilitator)

Introduction: Steve Benson will be facilitating three meetings as a trial, then all will decide whether to continue with this arrangement. Steve would appreciate feedback from Board members.

Approval of Last Month's Meeting Minutes

The March board meeting minutes were approved

Open Member Time

No owners who are not Board members appeared to speak

General Manager's Report

Karen added an addendum to her report: an invitation was extended to the Co-op to separate the café from the Co-op and place the café in another location. The rest of the Co-op was excluded from this invitation. This invitation was declined, since the café is a vital part of the Co-op. Board members asked Karen about owner and staff reaction to a recent staff layoff, and whether the loss of the position would increase her workload. Karen responded that members of staff were saddened and that she had received no feedback from owners. Her responsibilities will now once again include supervising cashiers. Karen has not yet designated a new GM Interim Emergency Successor. **Karen will choose this person and inform the board by the next Board meeting.** One board member commented on the changes to the owner benefits package, and suggested that that the members have not been well informed about the positive nature of the changes. Another member asked about the changes to the health and dental package for employees. Karen clarified that there may be a reduction to the benefit, that employees may need to pay a percentage of the cost, and she is also looking into Health Savings Accounts. In response to Board members questions, Karen also reported that the Co-op is still projecting less than 1% profit this year, and sales were down 10.4% in the third quarter (January to March). Karen also clarified that the co-op currently has a cash reserve sufficient to last nine months at current rates of spending. In response to a member's question, Karen stated that the "Relocation" committee has not met recently, and will not meet until after the consultant's report is completed.

Policy Monitoring Reports

A6 Monitoring Report (Karen) – “The cooperative’s bioregion will have a vibrant local agricultural community and that community will, in turn, have a reliable retail market for its products.”

The A6 monitoring report was accepted. A6 is in compliance. One member disagreed with that conclusion.

D7 Monitoring Report (Karen) – Ownership

The D7 monitoring report was accepted. D7 is in compliance.

B8 Monitoring Report (Marianne) – Governance Investment

The B8 monitoring report was accepted with one revision to report that B8.2.C is in compliance. Policy B8 is in compliance.

New Language for Policy C4 - Monitoring General Manager Performance (Gail)

Cooperative Development Services has new template language for policy C4. There are several differences between our current C4 and the new proposed version. **John will revisit Policy C4 and the new proposed language, including dates for the Board’s annual evaluation of the General Manager, and will bring a proposal to the next meeting regarding new policy language.**

Letter Regarding Conduct

A complaint letter was received from Bob St. Peter regarding the conduct of one of the Co-op’s Board members. The letter did not ask for a response. The Board took no action.

Visioning our Ends Statement A6

“The cooperative’s bioregion will have a vibrant local agricultural community and that community will, in turn, have a reliable retail market for its products.”

Steve facilitated a go-around where Board members were encouraged to express their hopes and visions regarding the implications of this ends statement for the co-op. Board members shared a wide range of far-reaching visions including: broaden the context of “bioregion” to include Atlantic Canada; have a good ongoing dialogue with local producers; Co-op will do “local” as well as the farmers’ market does, and by buying local foods we encourage more local production; advocate for policies that strengthen and support local agriculture; local first, but not only local; co-op offers local alternatives to every item on the shelf; promote local agriculture regardless of revenue; host community suppers with speakers on agricultural topics; Co-op could be like a year-round farmers’ market; primary emphasis on producers on the Blue Hill Peninsula and close by; outside the box thinking, like free potatoes to bring people in and encourage appreciation of local foods; emphasize what the Co-op does best: local, fresh, produce, meat, dairy, bulk; more emphasis on local fisheries; co-op, farmers’ market and buying clubs all working together; local art/craft cooperative as part of the Co-op.

For Next Meeting’s Agenda: Policy B3 (Bob), Board Budget (Bob), Quarterly Financial Report/D1 (Karen), B5 (Erich), Ends Monitoring – A5, A7, D4 (Karen), Proposal on C4 language (John)

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 19, 6:30 pm in the Blue Hill Library

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Heather Albert-Knopp