

Blue Hill Co-op Board Meeting

June 16, 2009

Blue Hill Public Library

Attending: Gail Bartlett, John Vincent, Deborah Wiggs, Becky McCall, Chip Angell, Erich Reed, Karen Doherty (General Manager), Tim Seabrook (Co-op owner), Heather Albert-Knopp (minutes taker)

Last Month's Meeting Minutes

The May meeting minutes were approved with one adjustment, deleting a task assigned to one Board member.

Open Owner Time

Tim Seabrook was approached by the Board Development Committee and asked if he would consider serving on the Board. He is considering.

Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA) Conference - Gail

Gail reported on the CCMA conference that she attended, and where she was given an award for excellence in board leadership and service. 500 people attended, largely co-op board members, from co-ops around the country. Gail learned that many co-ops are grappling with issues similar to Blue Hill Co-o including staff treatment and lay-offs during the recession, and how to promote local agriculture while meeting owner needs for other products. Gail enjoyed connecting with other co-ops and specifically recommended that the co-op maintain linkages with the Rising Tide Co-op in Damariscotta (Mark Ward is a director there). Gail also encouraged future Board members to attend the CCMA conference.

Monitoring Report A7

The Board discussed Karen's report on Ends Policy A7. Several Board members expressed concerns. Proposal: to accept the monitoring report w/ great reservation and acknowledgment of noncompliance. The Board failed to produce consensus on this proposal, but agreed that there was a need to act in a timely manner on this item. Because of these conditions, the proposal was put to a vote, and was passed 4-2.

Decision: Monitoring report A7 was accepted with grave reservations. A7 is not in compliance.

Discussion of A1: Mission Statement

Blue Hill Co-op Mission Statement: "Through a thriving cooperative enterprise we encourage a vibrant healthy community and a sustainable local economy." The Board discussed the Co-op's mission statement, and whether it accurately reflects what the Co-op is hoping for and why we exist. Reasons for having a co-op include food, information, fellowship, health of the community and community members, having a place to sell things that local people grow, encouraging people to take up farming, creating a public space for connecting with neighbors, and demonstrating economic models that are alternatives to corporate capitalism. Other thoughts included: it's the community and economy that come first and enable a thriving cooperative enterprise, not the other way around; some Board members suggested new language for the mission statement,

including “there will be a thriving cooperative enterprise” rather than “through a ...”; and “through a thriving cooperative enterprise, we encourage health in our community and an economy that is local.” No formal proposals were made at this time.

Policy Monitoring Report D4 – Staff Treatment

The Board discussed Karen’s monitoring report of policy D4, Staff Treatment. Some Board members expressed concerns, and several proposals for how and/or whether to accept the report were presented. The Board did not achieve consensus on this issue, and a majority of Board members felt that this matter required a timely decision. Based on these conditions, a vote was held, and the Board made the following decision by a 4-2 vote. **Decision: The Board accepted monitoring report D7 with grave reservations, including its areas of noncompliance, with the consequence for Karen that she receive additional help in working with staff.**

General Manager’s Report

Karen reported an addendum to the General Manager’s report. She is applying for a \$30,000 line of credit to be used in case of financial need, and the bank requires official approval from the Board. The Board discussed the need to have a policy to ensure that the GM will report to the Board when the line of credit is used. **The Board agreed to add the following language to policy D1, which would become D1.10: The GM will not fail to apprise the Board of all activity regarding the line of credit, within the monthly GM report.** With that policy change, **the Board heard and accepted Karen’s proposal to apply for a \$30,000 line of credit.** One Board member noted that the GM report’s discussion of reversing negative sales trends includes a number of comments about cutting costs. This Board member emphasized the importance of also increasing sales, and encouraged that this should be considered closely during a recession. Another Board member asked about the owner coupons, and expressed surprise that as a working owner, she also received a coupon for an extra 10% off. Karen explained that the Co-op will evaluate the coupon incentive, and will measure the dollar amount given out as a discount.

Next Meeting’s Agenda:

Gail is responsible for next meeting agenda. Agenda items will include: review of Steve Benson facilitating Board meetings; Board budget; part one of GM evaluation which will require an executive session; proposal about restricted funds from John and Erich; C4 revision proposal from John and Chip; monitoring reports: A1, A2, A8, D0.5, D3. Ideally there would be time for a discussion of A2.

Next month’s meeting will be Tuesday, July 21 at 6:30 pm at the Blue Hill Library.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Heather Albert-Knopp; sections covering A7 & D4 amended by Gail Bartlett following CDS consultation. Content of these original sections reserved in executive session minutes.