

Agenda for Co-op Board Meeting 6-17-20

Minutes for 6-10-20 Approved

Lise Coppinger, Ann Ferguson, Jono Neiger, Sam Black, Lori Lynn Hoffer, Karen Traub, Danielle Barshak, Jeff Lacy, Board and Kari Ridge, member

Absent: Martin Pittman

President's Report (Sam)

- Mass. SBA Loan application for \$135K was put in and we have now been approved for the loan @3.5% interest for 30 years, with payments of \$661 a month beginning in one year. Sam will send the approval notice out to the Board.
- Report on Letter to Montague Reporter regarding paid ad soliciting legal action against the Co-op. Sam's letter in response which was edited and signed by the whole Board was submitted to the Editor and accepted for publication in the July 18 paper, forthcoming. Ann discussed the issue with the Reporter editor who notified us that the paper policy would not allow us to repeat our letter if this is a repeat ad, but individuals from the Board or others are allowed to take turns sending letters to respond to a repeat ad.
- Summer Dining Protocol: Sam created a protocol, agreed on at last week's Board meeting, and copies of it are now posted on our outdoor picnic tables, except for the stone tables where it is posted nearby. Our protocol requires a disinfectant to be sprayed on tables after every set of diners. Sam will send the protocol to Jean and Lori Lynn. They will post and announce this reversal of our policy (which had been to not allow outdoor dining in the first stages of Covid19). We will spray on request. Sam will coordinate with Paul to inform staff and Karen will talk to volunteers.
- Discussion of possible Summer or Early Fall Board Event: There is general agreement that we deserve a celebration for ourselves and our donors. Sam suggests it be either mid-August or after Labor Day outdoors at the barbeque grill. He plans an Argentinian night barbeque, veggies and meat offerings, music. Maybe a cover of \$30 except for staff who would be guests. We would invite former donors and some guests. We need a sub-committee to organize (Sam is chairing the committee which includes Danielle, Kari and Ann)
- Long Range Plans: Jono points out that we need to do more long range planning, particularly for the fall and winter months when revenue slows. The executive officers met with Paul for an initial discussion. Paul is only interim GM and doesn't want a permanent position but is willing to stay on until we are able to hire a new GM, hopefully by next fall. Work on the Turnaround plan has slowed down, but needs to pick up again. Each of the prospective committees need to weigh in on where the store is going and where it could go in relation to their special concerns.

Finance Committee Report (Jono)

- Finance committee will have a meeting with Board re Turnaround re budgeting on areas such as infrastructure, bookkeeping software etc. Sam mentioned that we haven't

figured out what the GM salary will be, and there has been some talk of considering co-GMs.

- L-Boss Point of Sale system (Cash register system and data recording) There was discussion of the need to update our L-Boss system so that it integrates with our bookkeeping system which would save bookkeeping and staff time. Jono mentioned that when Paul was here he was doing bookkeeping for number of hours that saved extra costs for bookkeeping. Ann pointed Re discussion with Pierre and Paul. Ann will send Pierre's proposal to Jono.
- There was general agreement that we should consider updates and perhaps a new bookkeeping accounting system, since our current one, which is Sage, is an old one and many bookkeepers do not know how to use it. This does not mean that we need to give up L-Boss, our register system, since it is the most popular register system and is an advanced system. Jono says that a transfer to Quick Books plus Infrastructure is part of long range planning.
- Financial Update: Mentioned last week that we did a pay down to vendor debt. Accounts payable down to 75K from 130K. We paid 6K more. Each week we are paying down vendors to zero. This round of checks 3 or 4 more are paid. Ann: Question re UNFI, are we reordering from them. Sidehill Farm is coming in. More produce in the store? Jono: We should check with Paul re how customers can give feedback and requests.

Discussion:

Danielle: The Ad gives us an opportunity to talk more about payoff of vendors. We can give the number of vendors paid off completely, numbers paying, accounts payable etc. Jono will work on this. Jono is prodding Susan Walker (SW) to get us a balance sheet for end of May for July meeting. We can pull out these key facts, etc.

RE staff getting Hero pay: All the staff in last pay period except Leela and SW were given a little bonus of \$100 to \$150 to say Thank You

Fundraising (Karen)

Ad has started this week on 4 stations WRSI, WHMP, 94.3, 96.9 (Oldies). Theme: How close are you to the LVC? Karen played the audio of 2 ads.

Karen believes that our message can be that we are saving Coop via our Mass Save renovations, achieving our PPP forgivable Loan etc. If people decide that their loan can become a donation that would be great.

Website group will be meeting Friday. Last week Karen did live streaming at the Coop on the Facebook Coop page, both the Amherst Chamber of Commerce and the Quabbin Harvest Co-op shared it. Tomorrow she plans to do it again at 10:30 am

Karen proposes that the next fundraising campaign should be a 34K campaign goal for September where we try to take our \$7500 anonymous matching grant offer and triple it. She proposes a telethon. The telethon will have an entertainment component, a reach out to membership campaign, and also an auction. People are starting to talk about it. We are

thinking end of September, possibly Sept 25-26? Jono reminds us to be careful to check with other local events to see if no conflict.

Communications and Member Outreach (Jean)

- Jean asks about what the content should be for this week's Coop Mail Chimp message and we discussed what to put in it.
- We decided to announce our Co-op public meeting on July 15. Kari suggested we should call it a Semi-Annual Members Meeting., but Ann thought it should also be open to the public. Karen wanted a more catchy title, like Community Hot Fudge Sundae Chat Members Meeting Celebration. Jean will take feedback and come up with something sexier.
- Karen, Lori and Jean will work on brochures.
- Membership process and data (Ann): These notes are now a final copy for cashier and staff information. Suzette Snow-Cobb is updating the LBoss system with new member data regularly and Ann will be putting that info into the Board google doc member lists.
- Karen asked Ann to procure a new updated copy of the Active and Lifetime Member Lists to be put in the binder at the register desk for cashier use. (Note: Ann has since had Suzette run off that list for that use.)
- Member Phone Campaign (Ann):

We are encouraging active members to pay up, and seeking new members. We have an informal phone campaign (Board members who want to take part please initial the relevant google sheet) We are working on the draft of the script for callers. Karen and Lori Lynn would like a script with bullet points.

Lori points out that the cashiers also need a very short script that has a list of member perks to recruit new members. This is waiting on Jean's research into our business partner perks.

- Kari will update the Phone script for calling members, it will be edited by other Member Outreach people and a final copy given to the Board.

Infrastructure (Lise)

Martin and Lise went to Atkins, 3 door freezer is great and will fit through our store door. Freezer has internal compressor and just needs an electrical outlet to plug it in to for it to work. It costs \$3500. Board has already approved this purchase. MJ Moran came to remove freon from old 3 door freezer and the open face cooler but it had all leaked out. We are now waiting for electrical to be disconnected so they can be removed from the store.

The air conditioner has been recharged with freon (it is actually not freon: it is another type of gas) and air filters got replaced so it should work better. We discovered that the 4 door freezer and 3 door freezers are wired together so we need to hire electrician to separate them so we can remove the old 3 door freezer.

Jono reported from Paul that the Atkins 3 door freezer is available mid July. New vendor little freezer will be coming from Bart's. The current little freezer by the register would either stay in front or go in back for kitchen use. Or he might buy a chest freezer for kitchen use. It is more expensive to replace the dairy case, either 2 or 3 door. Buying this dairy case is key because we are illegally using Snapple vendors. The new Atkins purchased 3 door freezer could hold meats, pizza, and frozen veggies. Paul is saying that is sufficient refrigeration for now, except for small merchandizer.

Jono thanked Lise and Martin for all the negotiations.

Sustainability (Danielle): No meeting last week of committee. She emphasized that the coffee compost should be separated from other food compost, and as of yet that is not happening.

Old Business

- **Public Zoom Meeting for July 15** was briefly discussed and tabled for discussion next meeting.

New Business

- **Mask Policy:** Lori Lynn's shared her experience with a customer who defied the mask policy for so-called medical reasons that he said was a permitted exception for the Ma state "No Mask" policy. Karen pointed out that the Wendell Country Store has a strict protocol that people without masks are not allowed in the store. This seems to be a political thing that people are not wearing masks to defy mask making.

A discussion ensued in which there was general agreement that it is our duty to allow "reasonable accommodation" to customers who can't wear masks for medical reasons, e.g. curbside service or someone to do shopping. We can be flexible but we should require masks in store. If medical conditions let us know. Lise suggested our policy should be No shirt, no shoes, no service, and to that we can add no masks, no service. Kari suggested that we should add these points to our existing sign.

Jono argued that the Board needs to be clear about our roles as the Board, so issues like these that the volunteer cashiers have with customers need to be coordinated with GM. As a Board we do not deal with that level of policy. We can express our concern to GM, he should make final decision.

Danielle maintained that generally we should leave decisions to GM but this is a gray area of public health and as a Board we are entitled to give our opinion. She noticed that one woman just came in to shop who had been expressing concerns re health. It is more important to show that we are strict with our public health policy implementation for the safety of staff and other customers. Ann and Jeff agreed with Danielle that this is a policy issue that the Board should discuss and then bring to Paul. Karen mentions that there are concentric circles and in this case there is overlap: e.g. policy level, and operations level, and staff.

Jono said that his discussion with Paul shows that he is on the same page, No Mask, No in-store service. If staff and volunteers are being threatened, police should be called. We should put a sign on door to clarify policy. Also Jono recommends a staff volunteer meeting to discuss these issues with Paul. Jono restated his views against micro-management of the GM by the Board and this should be a GM decision.

- **Solidarity Economy Map Project:** Hendrix Berry requests that the LVC consider being a part of a Massachusetts Solidarity Economy Map project that she is working on, and allow her to interview us about the ways our practices reflect solidarity economy values.

It was agreed to table this request and to discuss and decide on it at next week's Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm

Respectfully submitted

Ann Ferguson, Clerk