

## **Minutes from April 28, 2021 Leverett Village Co-op Board of Directors Meeting**

In attendance: Danielle Barshak, Jean Bergstrom, Sam Black, Lori Lynn Hoffer, MaryJo Johnson, Martin Pittman, Jono Neiger, Kari Ridge, GM John Calhoun; Guests: Ann Ferguson and Ellen Edge

Meeting called to order at 7 p.m. Board unanimously approved Minutes from March 24, 2021 Board Meeting with one revision.

### **President's Report (Sam Black)**

Sam said he just learned that we have to start a new application for an ABCC pouring license and we must also file papers for our change of manager, and we would need to file paperwork and get state approval for a change in premises if we install a new patio. Martin asked if the requirement to apply for a new license affects our license to sell packaged beer and wine and Sam answered that it does not affect that. Sam said that past board members told him the process to get a pouring license in 2019 was very time consuming and took months to complete. Sam said he will work on the paperwork and let Board members know what information is required from them.

Martin said that we have only felt the outdoor patio was important if we can serve alcohol on it and that may not be a top priority right now until the Co-op can again pour beer and wine. John said he's not in a hurry to make the patio happen and, we may want to hold off or re-think the patio since we don't have the capacity to serve beer and wine anytime soon. Sam said that the Co-op's COVID Committee decided that it's premature to survey the community about opening café seating and that the Committee is on hold until there are changes with the State on re-opening. MaryJo said she remembers the COVID Committee saying it would do something proactive about masking with signage and Danielle said she will work on that.

### **GM Report (John Calhoun)**

John said he is pleased that sales in April have been strong and have been growing a bit faster than conservative projections. He said his high-achieving goal is to have 2021/22 be 10% above the Co-op's sales in 2015/16. He added that, if we can match the sales of those years with the fact that the cost of everything has increased, we would achieve profitability.

John said he spent a few hours last week with the tech team transferring the Point of Sale system from LBOSS to CORE.

Danielle asked if the Co-op is seeing new customers, and do we have a way to measure that? John said that when the CORE system is up and running, we'll be able to measure things like that.

## **Treasurer's Report (Martin Pittman)**

Martin said he would work with John to share with the Board the financial spreadsheet that John is using. John said he talked with Martin and Sam about the possibility of using the Co-op's EIDL loan to pay off high-interest debts and other loans. John said that getting a new pizza oven would be a smart investment since pizza nights are a profitable arm of the café and the existing pizza oven doesn't work well, and he will also look into repair costs. John said other expenditures could include the patio and a new generator, if generator costs are not prohibitive.

Jono said he would like to have a whole-system view of the Co-op's debts as well as funds available, such as the EIDL loan. He said there are a lot of capital expenditures the Co-op is considering and he is concerned that we proceed cautiously. John said he would provide that whole-system information to the Board.

Martin and John said the Co-op might want to keep a cushion of savings for tough times and John said he is meeting with a loan officer to discuss options and will share what he learns with the Board.

## **New Business**

Memberships: Ann Ferguson detailed options for possible changes to membership structures and suggested the formation of memberships for low-income members. John said that the New Orleans Food Co-op offered "limited income memberships" because it is not within a lot of people's reach to become members and he added that the third co-op principle is that members contribute equitably, not equally. He said the New Orleans co-op had a monthly payment plan to collect membership within the calendar year, which keeps it fresh in members' minds. Ann said the \$170, that the LVC currently considers a full-share membership, is a lot to ask people to pay in one year. Martin asked if shoppers might "round up" their change to go into a fund to help pay for memberships and John said the LVC system is not set up to do that, but we could have a fundraiser to help with that. Ellen Edge asked if we could incorporate volunteerism in exchange for paid memberships and John said he likes the idea of setting up a volunteer program with discounts, but for now wants to keep it simple. MaryJo said she would like to go with the simplest option now and have the Board continue to look at options for people with limited incomes and ways we might partner with and build relationships with other businesses.

There was a proposal that the Board offer Regular Full-Share Memberships, Annual Memberships and Limited Income Memberships. Martin asked if the Board can make this change or if it is a members' decision and MaryJo said she looked at the bylaws and she thinks the board can decide this since the change is simply adding an annual membership category, which is another way of being a member.

The resolution was passed unanimously to offer three categories of membership:

1. **Regular Full Share Membership** is 17 shares@ \$10 a share= \$170. Member pays \$170 and is entitled to all perks of membership which include member discounts with certain Coop business

partners, in-store discounts, patronage dividends when available, and voting rights at member meetings (1 member, 1 vote, regardless of number of shares owned).

2. **Annual Membership** (formerly called “Active” membership) is 6 shares @\$10 a share=\$60.
  - a) An annual membership entitles one to all discounts and perks of Full Share membership.
  - b) It can also be considered as partial payment toward a Full Share membership if it is renewed within a year of purchase. Renewing the yearly membership involves paying \$60 for the year. The 6 stocks purchased will be added to one’s previous year’s purchase.
  - c) If the membership is not renewed after one year, the member is moved to Inactive status, and is no longer eligible for member discounts or for voting rights until the balance owed in stocks is paid.
  - d) Member is moved to Full Share status after purchasing 17 shares.
  
3. **Limited Income memberships**, details to be worked out: Limited income eligible person (receiving EBT, Medicaid, SSI or equivalency) pays \$30 and then becomes a member as long as they need it.

### **Co-op Table at Leverett Town Meeting**

Danielle said she would volunteer to run a Co-op table at Leverett Town Meeting on May 1 to provide information about the Co-op and sell coffee and items from the café. Lori Lynn said she would make a sign with prices and is designing the Co-op brochure, which she’s updating to include the new information on memberships.

### **Co-op Clean-up Day May 2**

Lori Lynn said there would be a clean-up of the Co-op grounds on Sunday, May 2 and asked volunteers to come and bring rakes, pruners and leaf bags.

### **Columinate Policy Governance Seminars**

Danielle said she and MaryJo spoke with a consultant from Columinate about an upcoming 5-part series of Policy Governance seminars that Board members could attend. Participation also gives attendees access to the Columinate resource library. The cost is \$75 per person and Danielle asked if the Co-op could pay for attendees. If the board decides to also obtain consulting services from Columinate, the cost would be \$5,000 for a year and the consultant offered to come to one of the policy governance meetings that our Board is holding. MaryJo said the consulting cost would also include a board retreat. The Board agreed that the upcoming Policy Governance series would be worthwhile and we will discuss later the option of hiring a consultant. Danielle and MaryJo said they would send the Board information about the Policy Governance series, which begins next week.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kari Ridge, Clerk, LVC Board of Directors