

PFC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – November 20, 2013

Location: /sh/aut at Braun Court

Attendance

Board Members: Gaia Kile (president), Rebecca Kanner (vice president), Keegan Rodgers (secretary), Matt Graff (treasurer), Leah Hagamen, Ann Sprunger, Vanessa Marr (arriving 6:25)

Lesley Perkins, General Manager
Rusty Brach, Finance Manager

Patti Smith, Board Assistant, recording minutes
Susan HR
Kevin

Lou Glorie, member-owner
Devin Leatherman – staff member
Kaitlin Pedri – staff member
Philip Patterson – staff member
Sam Molnar, graduate student at the School of Natural Resources who is doing a study of co-op/labor relations

Call to order – at 6:15 pm by Gaia Kile, president

Agenda Review – None

Member Comments— Lou is a member of the Co-Op Elders. She brought us the thoughts of the Elders on growth and thriving—perhaps we need a paradigm shift to look how to thrive rather than just grow.

Announcements, Info-Sharing, Future Scanning – Rebecca attended a talk by a professor of natural resources, Raymond De Young. Part of the proceeds from his book, *The Localization Reader*, go to the co-op.

Consent Agenda— The minutes from the October meeting and the synthesis of M.1 Unity of Control were on the Consent Agenda. Rebecca moved to approve, Matt seconded and the motion carried 6-0.

GM Report – Lesley read over her report, highlighting plans for our upcoming marketing campaign and an appearance on the Lucy Ann Lance show in January after the new hot bar has been put in. Susan continues to work on the nuisances of the Affordable Car Act; open enrollment will be in December. New salad and hot bar will be installed on December 30 and 31. A new chef has been hired, Greg Elrod. He formerly was the sous chef at the eve restaurant. We are close to selecting a new point of service system; Lesley will make the request at next month's meeting. Lesley is planning to have a party for the staff so folks from different departments can get to know each other.

There was some discussion about last year's Board-Staff party and the "bonding" party. Rebecca will talk to Lesley before the next Board meeting.

There was also some discussion about the ongoing parking situation. Rebecca suggested that a staff member document when the gate is open. If it continues to be closed, we can use that data to re-approach the county commissioners.

L.3 Financial Planning – This report will be discussed next month.

L.4.9 Financial Conditions and Activities – This report will be discussed next month.

L.9 Gifts to the Co-Op -- This was not approved at last month's meeting. Therefore, Rebecca moved to approve it now, Keegan seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

GM Evaluation Final Decision – The GM Eval Committee met and decided that they wanted to give Lesley some time to settle into the job. There will not be a staff survey on Lesley's performance at this time; next year's committee will have to determine whether to do one. It is not being done because it is not a mandatory step and further because Lesley has not been in the position long enough for any reliable data. There is also a significant cost associated with a survey.

Some of the employees expressed concerns that the survey was not being done as they are given feedback after their probationary period. They would like the people on the floor to be able to express their opinions.

The Board suggested that the employees have less formal ways to communicate suggestions either through the suggestion box or through their manager. There was a concern that there is no commitment to follow up or accountability when you put something in a suggestion box. Matt indicated that if contact information is put on the suggestion, then that person will be contacted.

Rebecca explained that monitoring reports are submitted most months and that is a method of evaluation.

Lesley asked Susan to give the managers a survey about Lesley's performance. Susan would then give the feedback to Lesley, presenting it anonymously.

Ann moved to approve the committee minutes, Vanessa seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

Member Comments re-opened—Because we were ahead of schedule, Gaia reopened this section so that employees could speak. Former employee Philip (current member-owner) said that everyone on the floor is committed to democratic feedback and that workers' voice have meaning. He would like to see policy to affirm internal cooperative values within the store (collective management or hybrid management with the GM to ensure that the workers have a voice). He does not feel that the democratic process exists for workers as far as how decisions are made (i.e. the cashiers who use the POS system were not consulted regarding the new POS system and they are the ones who use it). He suggested a workers' congress or councils for each department to discuss issues on the floor. He did not feel that workers were supported especially given the level of harassment that he saw workers sustain.

Kaitlin stated that while members should remain a priority, workers should also be a priority and valued. Given the diverse needs of the store departments, it is difficult to understand every single need. Therefore, the input of people in those departments needs to be heard.

Sam has been interviewing co-op workers. They are very committed to cooperative values but there are not cooperative values *for* the workforce.

Staff/Member Communication – Rebecca explained that the Board *governs* and does not get involved in operations.

In the past month, Gaia has received two communications that included personnel issues. The Board cannot govern personnel issues so those will not be discussed. When Gaia received these anonymous comments, he communicated them to Lesley. The information turned out to be based on rumors. A third anonymous email was sent to him and again it dealt with personnel issues which are not the scope of the Board. Gaia stated that his investigation convinced him that the comments were not based in fact.

Gaia then received a letter from Dan (Minchinovitz?) asking that the Board set a meeting time with staff to develop a proposal to put to the membership to create a bylaw creating collective management. Gaia's reading of the bylaws indicating that this is not necessary for a bylaw change to happen.

Gaia then received a letter from Kaitlin referencing a meeting she had with Lesley. Gaia reviewed the store's grievance policy in regards to her concerns about the process. The policy does not direct the Board to do anything in regard to the grievance. It does prevent a GM from getting in the way of an employee bringing a grievance to the Board. Gaia's reading of the policy is that the grievance goes to the GM and that is where it stops. If a grievance is to be brought, it might best be brought in the form of policy because that is what the Board deals with (i.e. a policy that allows employees to bring grievances to the Board and the Board will get involved).

Gaia also received communications from someone who wants to make money available for solar efforts; a meeting has been set up. Gaia and Leah have also talked to folks from Tilian Farms about the co-op's future involvement.

Gaia asked if a Board member could review the emails and his responses. He did not share the emails with the entire Board because they dealt with personnel issues.

Rebecca suggested that the GM Evaluation Committee offer support to Gaia. Ann will review the information.

Kevin indicated the information contained in the emails was incomplete and were dishonest by omission.

Keegan shared his concerns that the emails were sent anonymously. This is not cooperative communication.

Kaitlin said that the anonymous senders are scared of losing their jobs and that is why they were sent anonymously. The fears are based on the hierarchical nature of the store and that they are in positions that are disempowered.

Ann indicated that employees need to use the policies and management that are in place currently.

Electronic Elections/Identifying Potential Candidates – Ann met with Kevin to talk about putting the next round of elections into electronic format. Keegan suggested looking at other co-ops that do electronic voting; Ann will talk to Joel.

Two board openings are coming up—Vanessa and Gaia. Vanessa definitely wants to run. The Elections Committee is going to meet prior to the next meeting; please contact us if you have suggestions for candidates.

History of the PFC – Ann would like to collate information about the history of the co-op as a personal project.

Staff Ends – Rebecca explained that there are a few things to address in the future. For now, Rebecca and Keegan would like approval for their changes: added E.5, changed language “E.2—E.4”, fixed a typo, and deleted the words “in January” at the end of the policy. Keegan moved that we accept E.5 as written and the other above mentioned changes, Ann seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

Retreat Follow Up – Vanessa will send her notes from the retreat to the Board and to Lesley. Keegan suggested that we make the January quarter retreat focus on updating policies; Gaia said to delay this for a year or so.

An article about expansion will be written because member-owners are starting to hear that we are talking about expansion and that word means many things to many people. Keegan will write the article.

Looking Ahead -- G.1 and G.8 syntheses,

Task List Review –

Future Meetings – The next meeting will be on December 18.

Attendance – No issues.

Meeting Evaluation –

- Liked the passion and intensity in the room
- Liked having staff members and member-owners attend
- Staff Ends policy
- Regrets low morale/dissent
- Glad to know what the Board does
- Glad to attend as not interim GM
- Some points where conversation could have been reigned in
- Liked how Ann took initiative on the history of the co-op
- Liked how agenda was used as frame but not a constraint
- Participation from everyone
- Tension is where the growth happens
- Staff Ends closure was a good thing

- Enjoyed having staff members present
- Things could have been different if role of the Board was more clear to staff
- Hope nothing was taken personally
- Important to hear diverse voices and that everyone is valued
- Appreciate the opportunity to be heard and to be listened to

Adjournment: Gaia adjourned the meeting at 8:28.

Respectfully submitted, Keegan Rodgers, Board Secretary