

Onion River Co-op/City Market

Board of Directors Meeting

December 16, 2019

Board Attendance:

Faye Mack, Board Member, President

Jim Rudolph, Treasurer

Allison Searson, Board Member, Secretary

Julia Curry, Board Member

Joanna Grossman, Board Member

Caroline Keller, Board Member

Leah Soderquist, Board Member

Absent:

Eric Boehm, Board Member, Vice President

Also in attendance:

Michael Healy, Board Facilitator

John Tashiro, General Manager

Caroline Aubry, Membership Manager

Madelyn Cataford, Director of Finance

Mae Quilty, Outreach & Education Manager

Claire Ross, Director of Purchasing

Kiersten Hallquist, Member & Board Minutes-Taker

Serrill Flash, Member

Kristina Sweet, Member, future Board Member (attended August meeting)

A quorum was established, and the meeting started at 6:01 PM.

Preliminaries

Review Agenda

The agenda was accepted as written.

Review Minutes

The November 18, 2019 minutes were accepted with the following changes: on page 2, corrected “Downtown Store” to “South End Store” where notes referred to opening growth.

Review Follow-Up Items

The Board review the Action Items list, and two items were removed.

John is unable to share the full NCG survey; however, he will get survey notes to the Board and ensure there is a discussion at a future meeting.

Open Member Time

The Board Members, special guests, City Market staff, and members in attendance introduced themselves.

Serrill shared that he invited a member in the checkout line to join the Board meeting, this evening; unfortunately, they were unable to join us. The Board thanks Serrill for inviting people to join the meetings and always serving as an ambassador for the Board.

Board Education: Update on transition to new vendors

John invited Claire Ross, Director of Purchasing, to share an update since City Market changed a distributor, which is something that does not happen often. Claire provided the Board with a handout, which gave a synopsis on how the distributors were assessed and decisions were made. Claire shared that most of the analytics and decision-making applied to and were driven by the produce department experience.

Claire provided a timeline of the decision-making around transitioning vendors including an overview of the challenges and failed attempts to apply restorative practices with Black River, evolution of the identity of Black River (moving from a retail vendor to a general produce vendor), and the assessment of other vendors that finally led to the decision to change distributors, after over ten years working with Black River. The decision was made to move away from Black Produce (became Reinhart Food and then was purchased by Performance Food Group) toward Four Season's Produce, using Four Season's Produce and Albert's Produce as the store's primary produce distributors.

Claire shared that communication channels are being kept open and relationships maintained with Black River. Bananas and avocados purchasing still currently go through Black River with the current delivery schedule. Deli and seafood are also continuing to come in via Black River; Claire shared that produce, deli, and seafood are isolated departments within Black River. Claire does not foresee the changes with the produce channels impacting deli and seafood business; however, they continue to monitor this closely.

Claire also provided an overview of pathways for local producers to continue to move their products into the store. City Market has 20-25 direct relationships with local farms; this is high compared to other city cooperative stores, which run around five. Moving away from Black River will not impact City Market's access to local produce. Purchasing will have more information to report after a full season cycle (after next summer). Claire feels the experience has been positive and successful thus far.

The Board asked clarifying questions.

GM Update

Monthly GM Update

John presented his update to the Board. Highlights from John's updated included but were not limited to an update on the COT's tree sale, the drafted annual report (final to go out later this week), and a scheduled upcoming visit from Secretary Tebbetts to tour the cooperative and ask questions.

The COT's tree sale closed last Thursday. The price per tree went up by \$5 to cover increase from the tree-provider and supporting an effort to explore the opportunity for the South End Store. 660 trees were sold, which means the highest check historically will go to COT's and 660 trees to be planted in the Intervale.

The Board shared personal observations and asked clarifying questions.

Caroline A. provided the Board with a brief update on shifts in member worker hours. Caroline attributed this to declined opportunities available, transition in the membership role, and to hours that were submitted and logged later because of the holiday. Mae and Caroline are tracking the member hours and engagement in the Member Work program closely.

B8: Board Elections

The Board reviewed B8 and the 2019 election data.

The Board shared personal observations and asked clarifying questions.

The Board reached consensus that the interpretation and the data were sufficient to demonstrate compliance. The Board accepted the report as demonstrating compliance with the policy.

B11: Subsidiary Business

The Board reached consensus that the interpretation and the data were sufficient to demonstrate compliance. The Board accepted the report as demonstrating compliance with the policy.

Board Monitoring

D11: Board Perpetuation

Joanna presented D11 to the Board, and Joanna shared personal observations and review notes.

Joanna found the Board in compliance with the policy.

The Board explored whether the policy should be updated – language simplified and outcome measures clarified. Last year, review and updates to this policy were assigned to the Board Perpetuation Committee; however, this was tabled with the bigger asks of the committee. The Board decided to flag the policy for inclusion in the discussion around Board Perpetuation work, in the January meeting.

Work Plan Review

Faye presented the 2020 Work Plan to the Board to check-in on priority areas, Board focus on certain priorities and tabling of others (strategic priorities), the Board's progress regarding strategic conversations, and the flow throughout the year.

The Board discussed the 2020 Work Plan and reflected on progress thus far. Julia suggested sharpening priorities – defining the priorities more specifically, the level, and the specific goals. Allison suggested a formatting change to clarify the assigned subject areas on the tracking tool/Work Plan – aligning the letters with the assigned task.

Open Board Time

Caroline K. shared having a discussion with a member who suggested more open discussion channels between the Board and the staff.

Joanna shared an update on the South End Store music selection; it has been quite amazing since she last brought it up at the meeting. Her crow pie is delicious. People literally dancing in the aisles...

Allison shared she enjoys volunteering for the COTs sale. She dressed just right for the occasion and thinks it would be a fun Board bonding activity to have a Board COTs Tree Sale Day.

Jim receiving member feedback on the positive experience members had at the annual meeting, wishing everyone knew how much of a fun party and social it is – a clear benefit of being a member.

Leah received a handful of text messages sharing the joy of seeing John T. helping bag during the holidays – positive reflections to see management helping during the busy time of the year.

Appreciation for departing Board member – Julia Curry

Julia Curry has served on the Board for nine years. The Board and John shared their personal appreciation and reflections with Julia, as she steps down from her position on the Board, at the conclusion of her term. The Board presented Julia with a gift of appreciation.

Julia shared a brief reflection and farewell, thanking the Board and the Cooperative for her education, development, and letting her share in the journey.

Future Planning

Open Member Response

The Board did not have member comments to address.

Review Board Calendar

The Board reviewed the Board Calendar.

Allison may be out in February. Jim enters fatherhood in January, so he will most likely be out in January and maybe in February.

Leah will cover January Board monitoring (community service). Caroline K. will cover March. Joanna will cover April.

John emailed the Board the morning of December 16th, confirming November 14th for the Fall Board Retreat.

John presented on the Holiday Social for January 13th, at the South End Store community kitchen. Everyone will cook homemade pasta together.

Wrap Up

Board Members shared their appreciation for Claire's presentation. The food was delicious. The Board also shared their appreciation for the GM update and the work that goes into the presentation.

John and the leadership team presented gifts of appreciation to the members of the Board and the minutes-taker.

Executive Session

The Board moved into Executive Session at 7:49 PM to discuss expansion and contracts. The Board came out of Executive Session at 0:00pm.

Adjourn

The Board adjourned at 0:00pm.

Action Items

John will look into the NCG survey and report that was shared at the Co-op Café for the January Board meeting.

John will provide a mid-budget update on the budget for the Downtown Store at the January meeting.

Faye will include B11 Policy Review in the Board agenda for January, folded under the work of the Board Perpetuation Committee: simplifying language and providing clearer outcome measures.