Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Hybrid Meeting held in EEFC Conference Room and via Cisco WebEx
May 20th, 2024

In attendance:
Board Members: Tom Pandaleon, President; Nick Leise, Vice President; Desmond Zheng, Secretary; Tyleda Worou, Treasurer; Mark Bowers, Lucia Covato, Nico Demkin
Management: Tyler Kulp, Interim General Manager; Jeff Guerrero, MMS Manager
Member-Owners: Phil, Lisa, Lucy, Edward Joseph James
Board Clerk: Jessie Ryan
Absent Board Members: Carlos Gasca Yanez

Introduction
Tom called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m. and read the Ends Statement aloud.

The East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community.
To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
2. An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
3. A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
4. A creative vision to transform the future

Check-In
Those in attendance checked in to express their feelings and any needs.

Amend/Approve Agenda
Decision: Lucia motioned to approve the agenda as written. Second by Desmond. There were no objections.

Amend/Approve Minutes
Decision: Tom pointed out a grammatical error on page 4. Desmond motioned to approve the April meeting minutes as corrected. Second by Tom. There were no objections.

Member-Owners Open Session
Phil asked if there was a process in place to bring more customers into the store during the summer. Tyler stated that in the summer we do lean into summer seasonal items and promotions. There is not a dramatic drop in sales for the whole season. We have an Open Streets event in July that will bring people into the store. We are working to reopen the Café counter to serve beverages such as smoothies and juices. Phil asked if we are looking to expand the retail sales floor at the new location. Tyler responded that we are looking to do so, depending on the situation. Nick encouraged Phil to attend a Resilience Committee meeting to bring his ideas to the group.

Lisa asked if the Co-op will be posting signage stating that it does not sell produce with apeel coating. Tyler stated that we sent an email to the membership to inform them of this. We don't want to call attention to something that we aren't doing.

Tyleda joined the meeting at 7:19p.m.

May Working Meeting Report
The May Working Meeting was exclusively devoted to expansion and the specifics are confidential. The Board expects to be able to share more details in the coming month.

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GM Update
This report is in addition to the monthly monitoring reports. This update expects to give additional information to the Board of Directors that may not be included in the month's monitoring report. This report aligns with parts of sub-policy B7: Communication to the Board…. 'The General Manager shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.'

Membership:
Current total Member-Owners: 16,653
Fully Paid Member-Owners: 14,300
New Member-Owners: April - 47 (11 refunds)
Total Member Equity: April - $1,670,698
Total Member-Owner Sales: April - $640,296 (updated)

Register Round-Up Total:
April-June (Q4) recipients:
Community Human Services – https://chscorp.org/
PFLAG Pittsburgh – https://pflagpgh.org/

YTD Total Raised: $5,575.51

Operations Update:
- Our Produce Manager Frank and I attended Four Seasons Fresh Fest in Ephrata, PA. A 2 day trade show with over 100 vendors and other Co-ops, supermarkets, etc. We are bringing in several new products in produce and other depts.
- I am speaking at the Fulton Commons Food Incubator class on 5/21.
- I will also be speaking at an event co-hosted by Chatham Center for Women Entrepreneurship & Western PA Small Business Administraction on 6/11.
- YTD Sales week ending 5/5/2024: $11,072,48 which is 7.4% above PY sales.

Questions/Comments/Clarifications:
- Can you add an expense line against sales?
  - Tyler includes that information in the B1 Report as it's not something we track on a monthly basis. We receive invoices daily so it can take longer to process that information. We do track margins so we do know what we are spending.
- How do membership refunds work?
  - Members can get a full refund for their membership. We usually have a few per month, but this month was a little higher than usual. The most common reason for people to request a refund is because they are moving away or don't shop as much. When a member requests a refund through the website or at Customer Service, there are voluntary questions they can answer.
- Is there an opportunity for the Co-op to participate at the Farmers Markets, teaming with a vendor?
  - Certain markets are producer-only markets. We would rather spend our marketing energy getting people in the store. Jeff stated that we do attend some farmers markets, including the Swissvale Farmers Market. Tyler and Jeff have discussed the early planning phases of a local vendor fair.

- Do we explore opportunities outside of the food industry, such as The Three Rivers Arts Festival?
    - Jeff shared that we have been a part of the "I Made it Market" which is an excellent opportunity. We hope to get involved in other art related events in the future.

Tyleda left the meeting at 7:36p.m.

Management Report
Jeff encouraged the Directors to read his emails about Member Services related events. This is a great way for the Board to see the work that the Co-op is doing regarding community engagement.

Questions/Comments/Clarifications:

- Are there any challenges with member feedback and engagement?
    - Jeff shared that we recently completed the Member Owner Participation Survey, which received about 670 responses. The data provided many good comments. The results of that survey are available to the Board. Most of the members are happy about the offerings we have here at the Co-op. He doesn't see these as challenges but more as opportunities.
- Will the MOP Committee be working with Jeff to go through the data of the survey?
    - Yes, one of the major focuses on the MOP Committee at the moment is to summarize the survey results, specifically the responses.
- Are you able to look at the events that you are hosting throughout the summer and overlay that with sales data?
    - Jeff does not believe there is a huge correlation between the events and sales, as they are geared more toward community engagement. The events are held to meet our Ends.
- Is there a way to track involvement or attendance for these events?
    - Tyler includes those numbers in the A-Ends Report.
- Tom asked Jeff to share some insights about the newsletter.
    - Jeff shared that we will try to send out the newsletter four times per year and his goal is to keep it a classic newsletter while adding a modern touch. More copies will be available, especially at events.

B5 – Customer Service and Value
The policy register states, "The General Manager shall not be unresponsive to customer needs."

Questions/Comments/Clarifications:

- Tyler did change the operational definition of B5.2. In the past, we kept security out of this report because it is included in the B3 – Asset Protection. Since he has received direct feedback from the membership regarding security, he wanted to acknowledge it.
- Can you explain what the complaints against customers are?
    - This could be customer to customer compliants, or staff to customer compliants, but a majority are between staff and customers. Before the pandemic, our numbers were lower than 13, but things have changed such as shoppers behaviors and staff members tolerance of those behaviors.
- Are customers and staff aware of the process to file a formal compliant? Is there a form to fill out?
    - Staff are aware of the process and customers are always given the opportunity, but most of them don't want to take it. They usually just want to be heard. There is an incident report that can be filled out. If there is an incident in the store, we have any witnesses or participants fill

out an incident form. We try to capture security footage of the incident, especially if it is an accident or injury. Those reports go to the HR Manager who then does follow up with the staff or customer if follow up is requested or needed.

- Does the Co-op have a Safety Committee?
    - We do have a Safety Committee that is chaired by our HR Manager and Co-Chaired by a Union representative. It also includes a representative from each department. They meet once a month to discuss a safety topic and discuss any injuries or safety incidents that have been reported. The committee is certified through our insurance company once a year and we get a discount on our liability insurance for having the committee.
- How do you emphasize basket size to staff?
    - We want customers to be able to find all of the products that they are looking for and get those items in their basket. Our staff needs to be available to help them find products and assist them with their shopping experience. Employee engagement is a priority.
- Do you think the basket size has anything to do with the trend that customers are willing to make frequent visits to a grocery store now that they aren't afraid of exposure to germs as much as they were a few years ago?
    - Tyler agrees with this statement. There is also a trend in grocery stores of smaller basket sizes because people are jumping around to different stores for different deals.
- Did all staff members attend the All Staff Meetings? Was there any feedback from the staff?
    - Theoretically, all staff should attend the meetings but we did not get 100% participation. We try to hold all staff meetings quarterly unless an urgent matter comes up. The feedback we got was positive for the most part.
- The Product Availability score seems low.
    - Yes, that is always one of our lowest scores. That has to do with out of stock items based on many factors.
- What factors do you consider for the Overall Value score?
    - Overall value is not just the price. There is an equation to get customer's perception of overall value and it has to do with price and customer service. If you provide excellent customer service, the price doesn't matter as much because people think they are getting a higher value.
- Do you have any insight as far as the meat and seafood department having a greater amount of variance between the national average?
    - It is most likely because we don't have a meat counter. We do run out of stock on chicken often and we are in the process of switching chicken vendors. There are fewer available items that meet our standards in meat than there are in other categories throughout the store.

Decision: Tom motioned to accept the B5 as compliant. Second by Desmond. There were no objections.

B10 – Environment

The policy register states, "The General Manager shall not fail to take reasonable measures to ensure that the Co-op activities and practices minimize the Co-op's negative impact, and maximize the Co-op's positive impact, on the environment."

Questions/Comments/Clarifications:

- There were some larger projects that Maura envisioned for the Co-op and included in this report that Tyler did not change. These goals are great but we haven't done any of them. He isn't going to change them until we put some of the things into place or change our direction.

- What does our lease say about utilities?
    - They are shared and divided by the landlord.
- Tyler can provide Nick with the Waste Audit information from 2022 to see what they are measuring and what the Resilience Committee might want to look at more closely.
- Does the Co-op have a Green Team?
    - We do not. We do have a couple of department managers who are really passionate about it, so we just need to reinvigorate that effort.
- Have we considered allowing members to drop off items such as recycling?
    - We have considered it, but it is too much to manage. We do have consumer compost drop off, but people have to be subscribed to the service.
- Do you have specific metrics that you want to focus on during a certain period of time?
    - Our strategic plan is broken down by time frame to include short term and long term goals. We do not have quarterly goals but we do have the A-Ends reports.
- Can you look at pounds per food Zero Waste Wrangler takes vs. how much we spend on the service?
    - It could be an interesting metric to look at, so Tyler can try to calculate those numbers.

Decision: Desmond motioned to accept the B10 as compliant. Second by Tom. There were no objections.

The Board completed the GM Monitoring Matrix, highlighting strengths and opportunities.

Committee Updates:

Resilience

The Committee had its first meeting with three members as well as Karen in attendance. The Directors asked everyone at the meeting to define what resilience means to them and the Co-op. They haven't received any responses yet. One member in attendance runs an HR survey platform, so they might look into that a little more. They are looking to hold the next meeting after Memorial Day. They will hold one to two more meetings to see who shows up, collect information, and then start working on some small, achievable projects. They will create a regular meeting schedule after they see what the particpant's availability is.

Finance

Tyleda was not in attendance to provide an update, but this Committee will meet again before the next B1 Report.

Board Perpetuation and Elections (BP&E)

This Committee is not active at the moment but will be closer to the Board Elections.

Member-Owner Participation (MOP)

Mark is now the Chair of the MOP Committee and has been working with Marty to learn more about this role. The Committee will meet on May 29th and will continue discussing the food film festival. The Annual Meeting has been discussed briefly, but planning has not started.

Executive

An update will be provided during the Executive Session.

Action Items

The Board will discuss which Action Items should be carried forward at the next Working Meeting.

Appreciations
Those in attendance took a moment to share their thanks.

Closing
Next Meeting: Monday, June 17th, 2024
Packet submission due: Monday, June 10th, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m. without objection.

The Board and Interim General Manager entered Executive Session at 9:01 p.m. to discuss the HR Audit, GM Search, Expansion updates, and security.