Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Hybrid Meeting held in EEFC Conference Room and via Cisco WebEx
September 23rd, 2024

In attendance:
Board Members: Tom Pandaleon, President; Nick Leise, Vice President; Tyleda Worou, Treasurer; Desmond Zheng, Secretary; Mark Bowers, Nico Demkin, Carlos Gasca Yanez
Management: Tyler Kulp, Interim General Manager
Member-Owners: Fritz Geist, Breezy Mueller, Erik Oas, Kenny Mostern, Hannah, Julie Paris, Keren, rus, Mike Murphy, Syd Blackwell, Emily DeFerrari, Mel Packer, Rick Varner, Jeffrey Fisher, Josh Trapp, Ayala Hoch, Reuven Hoch, Simone Shapiro, Jaime Lawton, Kate Daher, Lauren Sacha, Louis Peterson, Mike Myzak, Megan Laychak, Jil Stifel, Marty Seltman, Abhishele V., Mackenzie O'Conner, Sina Lawson
Board Clerk: Jessie Ryan
Absent Board Members: Lucia Covato

Introduction
Tom called the meeting to order at 7:04p.m.

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
Directors skipped check-ins this month to make more time for the Members Open Session.

Amend/Approve Agenda
Decision: There will be an extended Members Open Session. The EEFC Board of Directors Social Media Policy Draft will be tabled and discussed at the October Working Meeting. Tom motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Second by Nico. There were no objections.

Amend/Approve Minutes
Decision: Tom motioned to approve the August meeting minutes as written. There were no objections.

Member-Owners Open Session
Union Chief Steward Fritz Geist proposed a petition to the Board asking the Co-op to disclose all Israeli-sourced products and divest from any entity associated with Israel. The Union endorses the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel and would like to make the Co-op an apartheid-free zone. Members in attendance were given the opportunity to comment and share their opinions on the topic directly to the Board. Both sides of the conversation were passionate about their stance. The Board states that they do not take an official stance on socio-political issues.

September Working Meeting Report
The EEFC Board of Directors met on 9/9/24 for its monthly Working Meeting. All Board members were present for the meeting.
- The Board discussed progress on real estate matters.

- After an ad hoc subcommittee (Nico, Desmond & Tom) report on the 102 applications submitted, the Board discussed the Permanent GM search. The list for consideration was narrowed from 12 to 7, and Board members were tasked with taking a few days to submit their preferred 3 top candidates for potential interviews.
- The status of the directives which came out of the HR Audit Report were discussed briefly, concluding with a decision to request a management update on the same.
- The status of the delayed B1 was briefly discussed. The B1 will be presented in October.
- Tom presented a summary of the Board Candidacy and 2024 Board Election schedule, which commenced on 9/1/24. The Board discussed following up with Marketing & Member Services on resources for potential candidates, and the potential for live info sessions for interested candidates.
- Mark gave an update on the MOP Committee's Annual Meeting planning.
- The EEFC's general need for an updated strategic plan/roadmap was discussed.
- The mechanism and schedule for annual GM evaluation was discussed. Tom will review prior Board process and report to the Board.

GM Update
This report is in addition to the monthly monitoring reports. The expectation of this update is 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 active Member-Owners: 16,792
Fully Paid Member-Owners: 14,429
New Member-Owners: August – 27 (net)
Total Member-Owner Sales: August – $567,092
FYTD New Members (net) – 61

Register Round-Up Total:
July-Sep (Q1) Recipients:
Landforce – landforcepgh.org
Family Resources – familyresources.org

YTD Total Raised: Not available at this time

Operations Update:
- YTD sales week ending 9/15/2024: $2,717,874 which is 5.0% above PY sales.
- Fall is starting to arrive at our Co-op! Look for some fun new seasonal displays in the vestibule soon. Local apples, hard squash, house plants, and more to come.
- It's almost turkey time! Our holiday pre-order menus will be coming out between now and the next board meeting. Stop in to customer service or check the website in the next couple of weeks.

Updates/Questions/Comments:
- Our largest distributor UNFI has moved to a new warehouse, so there have been some hiccups during that transition. There have been more empty shelves over the past few weeks. Trucks have been late without communication, but we are working through things.

- A trend that we are seeing over the last year is customer count growth each week. Right now, we are averaging about 200 more customers every week, over this week last year. We are still way down from where we were before COVID.
- How often do we set up a table to solicit new members?
    - We usually have a member drive twice a year. The last few haven't been as successful. Jeff is looking to come up with a new approach.
- Is there a geographic radius we go to in terms of outreach to grow sales?
    - Most of our advertising is done within 10 miles. We don't want to spend money to advertise much further than that, as there isn't much return on our investment. There is no point in going too far from the store as most people shop close to their home, but we are an exception for things like our Bulk section and organic offerings. We do events at the store and out in the community as much as we can, anywhere in the city. In our long-term strategic plan, there will be initiatives to increase advertising and engagement with people who don't currently shop here.
- Can you provide an update on the Café?
    - Counter sales started off quiet but have been growing each week. Now that fall has arrived, we will be trying to narrow in on what the next steps will be. We need to determine how much of our sales are coming from the counter, then we can decide if we want to expand days/hours, reconfigure what goes into the case v. what is made at the counter, etc. Right now we are seeing 50/50 in sales from the counter and the same products sold from the case. If the case is full seven days a week, we are capturing the same amount of sales and we don't need to have staff members working the counter every day. They could be assisting in producing other items in the Café. The trend we are seeing is convenience shopping, as people don't want to spend the time waiting for a beverage that is already prepared in the case. We have two Counter staff members and two Café Specialist who can float between the beverage bar and preparing food in the kitchen as needed. We are looking to purchase some new equipment, which is a step toward expanding our services outside of the beverage bar.
- Can you provide an update on the HR Audit?
    - Tyler is working with Jen to update the Employee Handbook and hopes to have it finished by January. He is working with NCG to bring a DEI Consultant on-site to conduct some training for Managers and Supervisors in January. Depending on what the content is, we may decide to open the training to all staff. There are specific topics to be addressed and we will try to tailor the content to the work we do as a cooperative and also related to food, people's access to food, the definition of food, etc.

Committee Updates

Resilience

Carlos has joined the Committee and has brought a few ideas to the table. The Committee is working through how to structure the proposals in a way that the Board can vote on.

Finance

The Committee will meet in October to discuss the B1 Report before the October Board Meeting. The report is coming together more quickly than it has the past few times, and this should be the last thin, delayed report that is presented. Tom and Tyleda met with Queeba from the Black Urban Farmers and Gardeners of Homewood. They have an initiative to open their own grocery store in the Homewood area. They came to us to see what we could do to assist them with that process. We made them aware that we have our own expansion efforts going on at this time, but may be able to be of assistance in some other capacity. They are

not against the idea of the Co-op moving to Homewood. A Director asked if there is an opportunity for the Board or Co-op to have a relationship BUGS and their community. Tyleda responded that there is a possibility, as former GM Maura participated on their Advisory Board for the initiative to open the store. Tyleda has attended a few of their meetings and shared that there is a community meeting scheduled this Friday at the Homewood Library.

Board Perpetuation and Elections (BP&E)
The Board has received one application so far from Nico Demkin. All electronic applications will be submitted to the Board's email address. Applications will be accepted through October 6th.

Member-Owner Participation (MOP)
The Committee is continuing to work on the details for the Annual Meeting. Two staff members from the MMS department will be at the meeting to help out. Board members will also be present to help with the setup. There will need to be a few people at the front to greet members and assist them with signing in. The Board will talk through more details at the next Working Meeting on October 7th. Tom reached out to the person who operated the soundboard at the EEFC FCU annual meeting. If she is interested, he will put her in touch with Jeff and the Committee. We will need at least two or three microphones. Jeff will be handling the photo documentation. The next MOP meeting is scheduled for October 16th.

Executive
The Committee met with Tyler to discuss confidential matters.

Action Items
Directors reviewed progress or lack thereof on Action Items from previous meetings.

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

Closing
Next Meeting: Monday, October 21st, 2024
Packet submissions due: Monday, October 14th, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 9:00p.m. without objection.

The Board and Interim General Manager entered Executive Session at 9:00p.m.