General Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Wednesday February 24th 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Location: Zoom (remote)

Facilitator: Tal Bar-Zemer
Note-taker: Belinda J
Timekeeper: Tal Bar-Zemer

Any person attending may participate equally in discussions, but only Co-op Board members may vote on any issues.

The Co-op's 2021 calendar can be viewed here.

Welcome/Orientation 7:00-7:05 (5 min)
Welcome and introductions. Brief explanation of the purpose of the Board Meeting. Questions welcomed!
- Everyone says their name and what they're looking forward to

- Tal BZ - facilitator, timekeeper
- Isabella B - boardmember
- Amanda - co-chair of Merchandising
- Chris G (he/him) - former boardmember, now IT and Shiftleading
- Rikki MG - co-chair of Governance
- Theres Wegmann - co-chair of Merchandising
- Travis Amiel
- Ray Jowdy (he/him/his) - boardmember
- Hannah Weitzer(she/her) - boardmember
- Patrick S - boardmember
- Nick M (he/him/his) - co-chair of Governance
- Daanish - recent new member of Governance
- Lindsay (she/her) - boardmember
- Robin - new member
- Stewart W (he/him) - new member, worked 2 shifts as Cashier
- Ariel L (she/her) - new member as of this past summer
- Belinda J (she/her) - Secretary/notetaker
- Willa S - general manager of the store

Consent Agenda 7:05-7:15 (10 min)
A collective vote on decisions that have already been made or that don't generally require/solicit discussion. Attendees can pull out any item they would like more discussion on, and this item will be moved to discussion at the end of the meeting. Information on all consent agenda item votes will be circulated in advance of the meeting.

- Everyone consents to the agenda and wishes to move forward.

Approve Minutes 7:15-7:20 (5 min)
Board votes whether to approve the public minutes from the board meeting. These minutes will then be ready to post online.
- Link to minutes from January 27, 2021, Board meeting

- All board members approve the public minutes from the last board meeting

General Manager Update 7:20-7:40 (20min)

- Update by Willa S
  - Financials
    - Sales for the month - $70K (it's shorter month, cold, winter, some setbacks)
    - Average order size has increased by $2
  - Timing of sales
    - Evening sales from 7-9PM have dramatically decreased
    - Expanded hours of 1-3PM - sales have increased by 10%
    - Most customers are coming in before 5PM
  - Management
    - Cross-committee work - working with pretty much everyone
    - Onboarding and hiring - preparing for Matt's transition in April
- Q&A
  - Ariel L - what does the $70K represent?
  - Willa S - sales from 2/1 until today 2/24 6:30PM

Committee Asks and Gives 7:40-7:50 (10mins) (Committee Chairs and Liaisons)
Committees ask for help or support / others give below:

1. Amanda on Merchandising
   - Amanda - looking to bring in products with potentially questionable ingredients such as MSG. Also Japanese curry root with very long ingredient list. Meeting on Monday - most are OK as buyers bringing in products. Wanted to bring into larger group. Are we OK with MSG in th store?
   - Belinda's Q - is MSG the only "questionable ingredient" under consideration right now?
   - Amanda's A - there's MSG and also say the Japanese curry root which has a long list of processed ingredients
   - Chris G - the store as a whole does not stock a lot of processed foods
   - Willa S's Q - will we share what the ingredients are, labeling ingredients?
   - Amanda's A - Merch historically does not call out ingredients
   - Lindsay R - new jam has no preservatives so they spoil quickly. Some people care but I don't. I think it's important to diversify our inventory. If there's anyone who makes small batch, I would love to support them, and that would be preferred.
   - Amanda - sounds like we're OK with things a little more processed than usual. If you have feedback, you can email.

2. Hannah and Eleni on Guiding Principles Working Group Update
   - GPWG has rewritten draft of principles: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HMuouRqPehQAH9ECG0lau8LNKRqYTbKyD6DsP-Kq_sw/edit
   - 2 modes of information collection
     - 1. Request that one representative/scribe from every committee and in-store work - how these principles show up in the work that is done currently and aspirationally how they would like it to show up in the future
     - 2. Eleni CP - creating interactive activity where there's voting activity at checkout + QR code to give more information and fill out survey notes. Leaving 1 principle up at a time for voting

for some period of time (e.g., 2 weeks). As way to remedy scarcity of survey responses. Based on feedback, GPWG will redraft/revise. Then the principles will be shared with the entire community to ratify.

3. Patrick on new Compliance role
- Board and store managers have determined that it makes sense to create a new position in the co-op structure: the Compliance officer.
- Goal is to understand the cycles of all applications and inspections.
- We're looking for someone to take on that role.

Agenda 7:50-8:50 (60mins)

I. Community Guidelines Brainstorm 7:50-8:10 (20mins)
   A. Shared values and practices to support respect and cooperation in meetings and other forms of communication among member-owners

- Hannah
  - Introduction
    - Motivations
      - 1. We had never set community guidelines
      - 2. Educating/onboarding new members
      - 3. Given interaction on Zoom, difficult to read tone
    - Applications
      - Behavior in meetings and in store
      - Especially when more heated discussions
    - Practically
      - Tal BZ - I find it helpful for everyone to see rules of engagement at top of agenda. If in physical room, these would be listed on a piece of paper.
    - Request
      - Hannah - how might we put these into action?
  - Brainstorm
    - Hannah - "take space, make space" AKA "step up, step back." Ensuring we hear from lots of voices in the room. Being conscious of whether you've said a lot and making space for new members who may not be as comfortable jumping in. And to take space.
    - Hannah - centering cooperation. Sometimes people make assumptions about things not being done rather than having conversation with someone. Thinking about who might already be doing work in certain areas and checking in before jumping to assumptions.
    - Hannah - centering commitment to antiracism and dismantling systemic oppression.
    - Isabella - debate the idea not the person
    - Isabella - acknowledging we're speaking in draft
    - Nick - protocol around stack that facilitator can invoke if there's a lot of opinions. And if so, some brief description posted at top of agenda so new members understand what it is.
      - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_stack
    - Hannah describes Nick's proposal - enabling different modes of participation

- ■ Chris - Robert's rules, a more formal shift to consensus protocols. Phrasing as guideline: "we seek to create consensus." Though that can be problematic given acknowledgement of difference.
- ■ Nick - Robert's rules is already what's formally prescribed. It's more a matter of membership education.
- ■ Hannah - also feel free to chat to all or private message to Hannah or Tal should you prefer to give opinion that way
- ■ Isabella - seek clarification and offer clarification
- ■ Lindsay - approaching people with a sense of curiosity/inquisitive mindset, assume people have done the work / recognizing that people may have put a lot of energy and effort into a project already
- ■ Hannah - move through defensiveness. Hoping people come with curiosity. Not getting stuck in defensiveness around any project or piece of work.
- ■ Tal - opening space for disagreement. There is room for debate and questioning and following up.
  - ○ Q&A
    - ■ Rikki's Q - not understanding why we need so many different protocols/guidelines. We have Robert's rules, guiding principles, these community guidelines. I'm not sensing a whole lot of enthusiasm for these community guidelines, nor were there for the guiding principles.
    - ■ Isabella - these guidelines are more accessible, more casual way to embrace how we treat each other on daily basis, informs how we hold space here. Success or failure may not be dictated by this very meeting/moment.
    - ■ Chris - I see community guidelines as the action component. Principles are really broad. Guidelines is how does it actually look when we're having a meeting?
    - ■ Amanda - we are creating a culture. Let's be intentional about it. Recognizing what we're doing, is it working, especially about really tough topics. We need to have shared values in order to have some of the really deep discussions that we'll hopefully be having more of. At the same time, if there's a lot to know in order to participate in a meeting, then can be really overwhelming.
      - ● Sends into chat: "The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture" - https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html
    - ■ Lindsay, sent to chat - I think these guidelines are different in that they will be a friendly and accessible reminder that can be used for meetings/communication, rather than the broad/overarching guidelines
    - ■ Chris, sent to chat - Cooperating effectively takes a lot of work, so I think it makes sense that there are many, sometimes overlapping guidelines.
    - ■ Rikki's Q - don't we already have that in the agenda?
    - ■ Amanda - not explicitly right now
    - ■ Ray - I personally support and have heard a lot of excitement around the guiding principles
    - ■ Tal - as facilitator, I'm really new to facilitating in Zoom context. It's hard to read tone and intent, even see raised hands. Whenever I'm facilitating anything, I like to have a shared agreement as we start whatever conversation we're having so we're all accountable.
    - ■ Rikki - the proof will be in the pudding. If people feel comfortable expressing their views, if more people come. So far, I haven't seen the guiding principles do much but take up time. Time can prove me wrong.

■ Shen's Q - do we plan on framing these principles and putting them in the store?
■ A - yes

II. Committee Audits: Board Report Out and Recommendations 8:10-8:50 (40mins)

A. Ray on Cross-committee Recommendations

- Introduction
    - We've had conversation with each committee - what's working, how to improve. Focusing on how we can improve how these committees can work together. That includes working with managerial team, board, and store as whole.
- A few points that cross all committees
    - 1. Every committee should have a co-chair
        - We've found that chairs working alone tend to get overwhelmed, burnt out, and become the sole bearers of institutional knowledge in the co-op. Most committee chairs are working huge number of hours every month.
    - 2. Redistribute labor within committee
        - Delegation is big part of that. Make sure that we don't have situations where some members are not getting their 2.5 hours and others are doing 15-20 during 4-week period.
    - 3. Improving cross-committee communication
        - Being respectful in your interaction. Come at each other from place of cooperation rather than place of disagreement or policing each other
        - Clear documentation of committee description and leadership (point of contact) on website
- Q&A
    - Renee's Q - will there be set of protocols about expectations about communication? How will that be more than jargon?
    - Ray's A - we don't have mechanism in place to enforce that. But just having that written out: making clear we want you to communicate in respectful way. Open to more effective ways of making that happen.
    - Renee - maybe set of terms or protocols laid out, which one can point one too. Less room for argumentation or grey areas.
    - Ray - as example, I've had conversation where I'm saying we should not send emails saying "We didn't assent to this." Or "Our committee hasn't approved this." This just makes people angry.
    - Renee - I think having guidelines would be great to nip some of the perennial problems in the bud
    - Isabella - informing Renee, who joined late, that we were previously discussing community guidelines/agreements
- Patrick on documentation
    - Patrick - if we worked a little to record the things we did and know about how co-op operates. So much of how this organization works is off of institutional knowledge. When they step back, we risk losing that. I know everyone's already working so much, but increasing our efforts to keep record of what committee is doing and how they're doing it would be really beneficial for our organization.
    - Bianca - there used to be extraordinarily detailed protocols in Google Doc. One could start revising those.

- - - Patrick - given new Compliance role. Even efforts to educate new board members. Isabella, Hannah, and I became new board members in the last 6 months. We've done a lot of learning on the job.
  - Nick sends in chat
    - "For those interested in accountability process and how the Co-op has thought about this in the past, a document from 2012 outlining an apocryphal Hearings Committee: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DkktOE-I8vJKzmeca306n_vSxu5m4-1bmjd03R4Q96Y/edit?usp=sharing
    - For relevance to guidelines/expectations of communication, see II.V: "gross departure from Co-op principles."

B. Finance
  - Ray
    - Working on finding a co-chair who can help assign tasks, bring more people in
    - We need a CPA who can oversee our reports and tell us if there are more accurate ways we can be doing our books.
    - Finance communicate well with other committees but not always successful in communicating how we're in difficult financial straits and yet manage to still pay our bills
  - Bianca
    - We set aside 50 minutes for guiding principles. If we set aside 50 minutes to look through our numbers and just make everybody to try to understand would be useful. We post financial reports but nobody looks at it. I think some highlights should be given. We are constantly losing money. Possibly our pricing is not right, our expenses are going up. I'm like a Cassandra continuously. Finance reporting and analysis should be given a certain amount of time in this meeting and people should be paying attention. Finance is the language of business. It's not that difficult.
  - Q&A
    - Shen's Q - where can the financial be found?
    - Ray's A - we link to the folder at the end of the agenda. We don't want to make this public, but we do want all members to have access to this. Any member can email to request access. The reason we don't make it public is that it has caused problems in the past.
      - https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/1wGfmKCeL_sMuFLwa_vd4N1_fTgJrhkkE
    - Isabella - we are eager to give you time during these meetings. It's always welcome and asked to contribute to the agenda during these evenings.
    - Bianca - next meeting, we should consider how we make serious changes to make us viable. You lost $30K over the last 4 months. We lost $7K/month. When you asked me for budget for extra stuff, there is no budget. Are we pricing stuff right or should we be doing something differently?
    - Amanda, sent via chat - "Merch is doing a pricing audit this month, comparing current costs and delivery charges and adjusting our prices"
    - Tal - let's add that as agenda for future meeting
    - — Belinda hands off notetaking —

A. Membership - Hannah
  1. 17 members, 3 subcommittees
     a) Membership intake, onboarding, payment systems
     b) Lots of overlap with other committees. IT, Ops, Outreach, etc.
     c) Recommendation:

           (1) was seeking co-chairs to reduce time commitment of Renee, which is partially successful. Meredith is moving to Australia! But working from within the committee to identify another leader.
           (2) Outreach connections: Take a closer look at the lines between committees and collaboration between.

B. HR - Hannah
1. Mighty committee of 2!
   a) Run payroll, support bookkeeping and finance. Benefits, facilitation of meetings, and leading staff hiring processes.
   b) Rec: Add a member, and that has been successful!

C. Marketing
1. Marketing is a huge committee, because there are so many subcommittees. Trying to address this, with DK and subcommittee chairs. These subcmt need more autonomy, and perhaps should be treated as Chairs,
2. Consideration on how frequent the Weekly is sent
3. Website: Shen offers they are redesigning the JOIN page, and the flow.
4. We have 6 different plan names for membership, but can be boiled down. Perhaps we remove the names, and simplify? Chris Gollmar and Dara F. have contributed to this conversation. Designs are available, but it is very in process. Not taking feedback on the design, and moving forward with the trust of the co-op.

D. Operations

E. Design-build

F. Operations

G. Merchandising
1. 15 members all working hard on merch retention and evaluating the inventory system with Willa.
2. Started several partnerships to with more diverse neighborhood business.
3. Issues to address: Lots of turn over, and takes a lot to train a new committee member on the software and communication pathways, as well as submitting orders on time.
4. Suggestion: Have more redundancy, so that folks can cover each other's work easily.
5. Sarah Chin, (who has been long standing chair) has stepped down. New co-chairs: Amanda and Theres Wegmann will share the responsibility.
6. Continuing to develop reliability with inventory, so that it can be accessed from afar, and trust it's accuracy.
7. Hoping to create greater cross-committee collaboration, and act as liaison to other working groups, such as Marketing.
8. Theres: Excited to check all the prices, and potentially adapt them as necessary.
9. Amanda: We are double checking the delivery costs, knowing how the delivery prices ripple into the price on the shelf. Are the margins because things are wrung up incorrectly? Or mispriced?

10. Effort to create documentation of the institutional knowledge, so any member-owner can be empowered to move confidently.
11. Produce operations definitely need to be documented, and clear instructions will reduce training time.

H. Outreach

I. Governance - Patrick
1. Responsibilities:
    a) Stewarding, updating, the bylaws of the Co-op.
    b) Facilitate Co-op elections
    c) Keep tabs on NYState Cooperative law
    d) Actively promoting a culture of cooperative values
2. 5 members, with 3 members being very new
3. Goals:
    a) to enhance outreach about these values
    b) Bylaws have been adjusted over the last years, after Board voted, but terms were never ratified by general membership.
        (1) Starting with the 2013 Bylaws, big project to update, assess, and vote in batch at the Annual meeting to formally adopt these changes.
        (2) Goal to share these materials a few months before the Aug meeting.
4. Nick (co-chair agrees!)

J. IT - Patrick
1. Efficient committee. Brava.
2. Full handle of the Google Drive, accounts and password.
3. 4 to 6 members currently active.
4. Maintenance and data analysis of membership data
5. Assisting with Banking, check in system.
6. Goals:
    a) Seeking additional members! (Software specific "Python" and others.)
    b) APP Conversation recently with Jonah Burke discussing the ParkSLope App, and would the work necessary pay off for us?
    c) Chris: Not a lot of backup at th emoment, meaning institutional knowledge is very silo'd and an effort to share the knowledge is very important!

Working toward publishing a group document for review, to be shared before the next meeting.

Bike Rack 8:50-8:55 (5mins) (Notetaker)

- Bianca on finance behind counter in store
  - Ray commits to make sure this is updated!
    - Many committee's contact information needs to be updated, and this will be incorporated to the Design Build Entry update!
  - Question: What happened with the Survey calendar. Waiting on next steps!

■ Proposing to vote next meeting on this matter.

Closing **8:55-9:00 (5 min)**
Board reviews votes at the end of each Meeting

Reports in writing:
- **Committee Reports [Folder](#)**

- **Membership and Finance Report**
  - January Finance Statements will be added to [this folder](#). Email ray@greenehillfood.coop if you are unable to access the folder.
  - Monthly Membership report ([link](#))
    Summary of report:
    Current number of working members (includes parental and medical leaves, does not include any new Members in onboarding status)
    381
    Number of new members, reactivated and deactivated/cancelled last month:
    44   new members (includes Zucchini) and reactivated members
    52   one month trial members
    23   members who cancelled, deactivated or went on General Leave
    21   membership gain or loss since last month