



General Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Wednesday September 29th 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Location: [Zoom](#) (remote)

Facilitator: Eleni Christine Papaioacovou-Lane

Note-taker: Belinda Ju

Timekeeper:

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](#).

Community Agreements

- Take space/make space - be aware of sharing space and hearing from multiple voices.
- Ask for clarity - default to curiosity. Information moves quickly and not everyone can be up to date on everything happening in every committee. Ask what has been done before assuming no one has worked on it or thought about it.
- Center cooperation - think about who is already working on certain areas before bringing something into the meeting.
- Move through defensiveness towards shared learning and responsibility.
- Open space for disagreement and multiple perspectives - we don't all have to agree all the time, we're making the best decisions we can with the information and resources we have currently
- We operate always with a commitment to anti-racism and dismantling systemic oppression.

Welcome/Orientation 7:00-7:10 (10 min)

Welcome and introductions. Brief explanation of the purpose of the Board Meeting. Questions welcomed!

Board members present

- Isabella, Hannah, Ray Jowdy, Patrick Smith, Stefanie Steele

Board members not present

- Lindsay Reichart

Others members attending the meeting

- Travis, Eleni Christine, DK Holland, Zoe Hutchinson, Luki Anderson, Belinda Ju, Willa Sheikh, Theres Wegmann, Luis Calleja, Renee Bergan, Devon Reichart

Total

- 15 participants at 7:35pm

Consent Agenda (skip unless items are added)

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.

Approve Minutes 7:12-7:15 (3 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 August 26, 2021 Board meeting

- All board members approve.

General Manager Update 7:15-7:25 (10 min)

- By Willa
- September has been a stable month.
 - Open shopping helped inspire new folks to try the trial membership.
 - We're getting new members. Lots of shoppers from Park Slope Co-Op.
 - \$60K sales from September 1 to today (29th) at 4PM.
 - Compare to September 2020, made \$80K.
 - Store feels less eerie than August when it was slow. Store feels more vibrant now.
- We've had less operational or fridge scares.
 - Finally replaced dairy cooler.
- Shift challenges - members have been stepping up.
- Personal front: a little lonely without the interns.
 - Still waiting to hear back about their fall to spring internship applications.
- Inventory Day
 - Biggest thing preparing for right now: trying to prepare for Inventory Day, tomorrow.
 - Excited a lot of people interested.
 - Store open from 8AM-9PM doing inventory counting. Hoping to enter all that info day of. Usually Amanda staying really late to crunch numbers; hoping that's not the case this year.
 - Great day to reset and get Revel numbers in order.
 - We have enough members to complete the entire task.
 - Can come in even for an hour, not entire shift, would still be appreciated. A lot of cleaning and tidying that can go well with counting inventory; let Willa know via email or text message.
- October begins this Friday. It'll be National Co-op Month.

Committee Asks and Gives 7:25-7:30 (5 min) (Committee Chairs and Liaisons)

Committees ask for help or support / others give below:

- Shifts
 - Question: Thaisa has asked us to revisit and clarify whether we should ask members who miss a shift due to a planned store closure to make up their shifts.
 - Answer: Yes. All board members vote yes.
- Outreach
 - Seeking volunteers to table. Sign up [here](#).
 - Fall Fest Tabling. Aiming for every Sunday in October: 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th. Two shifts per day: 11:00-12:30, 12:30-2:00.

Agenda 7:30-8:50 (80 min)

I. Open shopping reflection and next steps (20 min)

- Prompt
 - Isabella: hoping to hear about successes and challenges, experiences, looking to strategize how and if we continue some regular scheduling of open shopping to bring in new members.
- Willa

- Open Shopping this August was slow. Had to do with summer slump. Did not get as many visitors or prospective members as we'd expected. By EOM, had at least 45 people interested in learning more. Visitation wasn't a regular thing; was slow.
- It's a great idea.
- Thinking about when it would be most productive. Would also like to happen throughout year instead of just summer. When we can incorporate to more consistent schedule to make planning easier and people can mark calendars and know when happening. Do thoughtful planning around outreach.
- Opportunity for training and development. Cashiers and better relate to anyone and everyone coming into the store. Can be challenging to do that if not worked in customer-facing environments or a lot going on. How we speak to person coming in, better engage, how to communicate resources, how to make it easier and more accessible, leverage technology instead of pen and paper.
- COVID's social distancing was a challenge. Probably added to anxiety of trying to interact with people and share/inform about the co-op.
- We made it happen. Appreciate the effort.
- Helped that EBT came back in the right moment so we were way more accessible to the greater community.
- With more planning and ways to make it more fun and vibrant, would be great.
- Discussion and Q&A
 - Isabella
 - Can pitch to Operations or cross-team: documentation or preparation for cashiers to better greet prospective new members.
 - Patrick
 - Question on finance and store revenues?
 - Ray
 - We are not hitting the uptick that we wanted at this point, especially the last couple weeks of sales.
 - Finance lost person doing the monthly reports so we don't have the monthly detail we used to have.
 - Patrick
 - Store revenue and membership were the 2 things we were hoping to drive up.
 - Hard to prove counterfactual of August without open shopping but comparing to July would be the closest.
 - August was pretty bad for membership. Net loss of 16 members. New members: brought in half from July, 8 instead of 16.
 - Maybe smaller windows of open shopping? 1-2 weekends a month.
 - Isabella
 - If we were to extend Open Shopping every weekend, would not actually expand the membership.
 - Hannah
 - I like the idea of one weekend a month. The store doesn't always look great mid-week. If someone is trying it out on a Wednesday, that's not the best look. First weekend of the month is easy to remember. With that regularity, it will help with Operations and everybody knowing it's part of who we are and people who work in the store so we can give a better first impression.
 - Maybe open to everyone but require email or phone, say at checkout. If you want to look around, no need to ask. But if you're going to buy.
 - DK

- If put on the calendar, in March, we should talk about summer. You can't stop people from going on vacation. If we have a strategy for summer in March, we'd do much better in July and August. Channeling Renee, who's no longer here. e.g., preparing for when people can't make their shifts.
- Travis
 - Regular cadence of open shopping would be great. Lining up with tabling/outreach. Maybe going to farmers markets or community things.
- Isabella
 - Addressing flyers discussion in Chat.
 - Propose a pile of flyers always at checkout desk. So folks can circulate postcards within the neighborhood. Or allow people to print their own.
 - DK: would need to monitor inventory in store.
 - Ray: will talk to Liz about it.
 - Isabella: no need to be complicated about it, let's say 100/month.
- Isabella
 - Q to Willa: is there a better part of month for this to happen?
- Willa
 - Should get Merch's opinion but towards end of month: when our bigger dairy and frozen deliveries arrive so the store looks more full and abundant.
- Theres
 - Saturday and Sunday both work.
- Willa
 - 3rd weekend would be the best weekend of the month.
- Willa
 - Checking dates on Nov and Dec - 3rd weekend right before both Thanksgiving and Christmas, so works out!
- All board members vote in favor.

II. Guiding principles update (15 min)

- By Hannah
 - Sharing final draft to send to entire membership to vote on next week.
 - Engaged >150 co-op members. There's been a lot of input.
 - Link: [GHFC: Guiding Principles Proposal](#)
 - Documents both principles themselves and accountability measures.
 - Open to additional input/feedback/specificity on the accountability measures.
- Discussion
 - Travis: add that we work to minimize food waste through donations and diverting waste. Added in line under Ethical Sourcing.
 - Belinda: shared observation that only quantitative metric was the 15% in ethical sourcing.
 - Hannah: This was pre-existing commitment from Merch and GM before entering this process. As working group, we didn't want to impose metrics on other committees but would welcome other committees to propose metrics.
 - DK: How will the new Principles be broadcast? How to keep these principles alive?
 - Hannah: will email out to all members to vote on next week. Will be included in New Member Orientation.
 - DK: can include in weekly and share visuals of principles in action.

- Isabella: yes, let's make sure it's not a performative act but ongoing way for folks to join in. Invitation for committees to fold in this work.

III. Sliding scale membership model (10 min)

- Hannah

- [Sliding Scale Membership Investment Proposal](#)
- Proposal
 - Moving from different tiers of membership equity investment to broader sliding scale enabling self-assessment.
 - Based on income, health insurance, inheritance / financial support from family, debt, housing, GHFC gives suggested member equity investment range (per individual) and admin fee.
- Overwhelming support when discussed last month.
- Gap in previous model: a lot of people who don't qualify for federal assistance who still fall below federal poverty line.

- Discussion

- Belinda: make explicit that everyone has equal voice despite different equity investments
- Eleni: proposal to have a laminated version of this chart in store for reference if people want to learn more while shopping, something reusable
- Stefanie: idea of making these into flyers, useful to have at front door
- Isabella: making a double-sided flyer. Can use current flyer, and use back side into this. Would need to translate into Spanish to accompany Spanish version of flyer.
- DK: this could be basis of membership application. Need opportunity for people to join on the spot. Big message is "join us" and then this is "how you pay." Will work on design and communication. Send this to DK, comm, design, and print. We need 2-3 weeks lead time on any thing so we can think through this.
- Isabella: we're advocating this is the copy and request for graphic/design help.
- DK: this needs to go on the website.
- Isabella: sounds good.
- Stefanie: sounds like we won't have flyers in time for tabling for Fall Fest and National Co-op Month? Good conversation piece when encountering someone for tabling. That's what someone immediately wants to know: how much cost and time?
- Patrick: what do we advise or say to someone who falls between different plans based on the different guidance points?
- Hannah: the goal of this is to be equitable and transparent and we trust you.
- Luki: GrowNYC did this 6 months ago. Asked all of us where we fell and we all had to adjust this language. Will try to share that language, perhaps we can borrow from it. [Link](#).
- Devon in chat: Was there any consideration to include conditions regarding supporting dependents? Thinking of caretakers, folks with kids, etc.
- Hannah: we can add a line that there may be other factors to take into consideration and people are welcome to do that.
- Belinda: propose moving "inheritance and family support" category to below debt and housing.

- Vote

- All board members in favor of the sliding scale.
- Now, we have permission to publish and promote it.
- How we implement that is left to committees.

- Anyone joining tomorrow is still joining in the conventional way. Would need to update website, etc.

IV. Store security in context of recent shoplifting incidents (20 min)

- Intro
 - Isabella
 - We have had a couple shoplifting incidents in last couple weeks. We are focused on greater safety concerns and protocols. Goal to brainstorm how we can feel safe and create culture of care, and ensure we have design build and operational infrastructure that remains active and listening to change.
 - Last week we had same couple folks come in and try to shoplift on repeat and threaten to use mace towards Willa. Do think we need to make changes in store so Willa isn't only one taking that on. Can share how entryway work can help mitigate this.
 - Willa
 - The people who are coming in to shoplift are very much part of greater community. Some of them are unhoused and sleeping on our bench overnight. Most hang out on Putnam and Grand, panhandle around entire area, some live in the single-occupancy motel / halfway house attached to The Fly. Let's remain mindful that these people are not random people who are far away but part of community.
- Discussion/Brainstorm
 - Luki: I was very involved with this process of deciding to get a turnstile. This is a very difficult and emotional topic because I was there when Willa was threatened. Willa deserves to feel safe in the store and I'm wondering if we can't try some of the solutions we initially proposed, including the turnstile.
 - Stefanie: I don't see why the barrier is seen as unwelcoming. It is a barrier, but it's one that we are used to seeing in NYC
 - Isabella: we can find solutions that can make this more welcoming
 - Travis: how feasible to test turnstile. I'm all for testing and getting feedback to see if that works because I imagine it'd be a lot of work to implement it.
 - Isabella: trying to organize a meeting specifically about safety and operational protocols, trying to find time for key committee folks and managers. We'll share that time to full member-ownership. Hopefully within the month, come back with much clearer path forward. Including our aversion to calling the police and resources, especially for cashiers up front.
 - Theres: I feel like the turnstile is not welcoming. The subway is limited to those who can pay the fare to get in so I don't think it can be called welcoming; it's definitely a barrier.
 - Eleni: hopping turnstiles - is it just the turnstile and something else? How might it actually prevent anything?
 - Willa: The turnstile will be more of deterrence. I don't think we can completely stop shoplifting or any petty crime. It's more of a visual barrier. You can totally just step over it.
 - Luki: As an architect, so rare to build a 1:1 mockup of a design. It's so close. There's a lot of design and thought that went into it from so many different people. We don't have a lot to lose, but we've spent so much time and effort. If we learn this isn't the fix for us, we can at least have put this to bed.
 - Stefanie: I agree with Luki. I wasn't suggesting that the idea of a turnstile is welcoming. I think it's a neutral piece of equipment. We have associations with turnstile jumping and you have to pay a fare. It's a way to control traffic.

- Patrick: thought problem would go away with COVID. I'm supportive of testing it. Want to throw out there: locking door isn't welcoming. If putting in turnstile would allow us to leave door unlocked.... It can be tough to imagine something that hasn't been put in yet and ask them to respond to it. Better to just try it, collect feedback, do in way that can be removed, open to that being a real possibility. My 2 cents: worth trying.
- Willa: I'm in support of trying something like this. And strengthening some of the other areas we need to work on. I just know we need to do something. From conversations I'm having with these people, there is no intention of stopping anytime soon. I think we need to try something different. I don't want to continue to confront them in this way.
- Travis: this feels like 2 problems. Could we solve this by giving to the people who are coming in? Is their intent to take large quantities or small quantities? Would kindness or giving what we have diffuse this?
- Willa: I think I'm being as empathetic and kind as I can be. I mentioned to the board that the last 2 times it happened, to me and one time to a closing shift leader, the people mentioned they were doing it to get medicine and food. I offered that we have food that we donate, I mentioned that our food is in the community fridges, I mentioned that I would offer to help her with her medical history if she came to me in a dignified way. It was a very violent thing to do. They came into the store and didn't ask for help. That's been what's happening. They're taking things. Most of the stuff they're taking makes sense to me: ideas you can resell. Mostly reselling the 1 gallon Dr. Bronner's. It may seem like nothing but that's a \$64 bottle that can be split into many bottles and resold. I love the idea of approaching with care and concern, when there is capacity, ways we can offer and having resources available to share, I love the idea of connecting people directly to where our food is. But is the piece about: it's still happening and it feels violent. It's never food [that they're stealing].
- Luki: I feel this situation is really urgent. I don't want anyone to get hurt. What's going to happen tomorrow? Last year, they were going to hurt someone.
- Willa: When the last incident happened, told the board: I am just going to start closing the door. Not doing the open-door policy anymore. Shared with everyone working at the register. Asking the closing shift to lock doors after 7pm. To be fair, it feels really urgent right now because it's just picking up and we've had 3 incidents. I'm glad that we're thinking about it but it hasn't really been happening so we haven't had to talk to anyone. Right now, just rethinking open door policy. Then question: when this does happen, how do you actually deal with it?
- DK: suggestion: if just narrowing the entryway would be enough of a the deterrent if the turnstile itself is what people are objecting to.
- Luki: last year when it happened, the police put restraining order on one of the people for both Luki and Willa. Can put them in place again if recognizable.
- Luki: there is a real mismatch in the community between how I respond as a woman often feel at risk walking around and men who aren't always aware of these risks. When these issues come up, the same sense of urgency may not be shared. I really don't want anything to happen to Willa. The lock on the door, I put in last year. That seems like a mean close-minded thing but [safety first]. Willa's doing these things to protect herself. What are we doing [to protect her]? I'm happy to call that police officer to start with, to get an ID on these people. This would be a totally different conversation in a week if someone gets hurt.
- Ray: does someone actually have an objection to the turnstile? Object to trying out the turnstile and giving Design Build the authorization to do that ASAP?

- Eleni: hearing more about the incident and more detail about what is going provides a lot better background for the urgency and the need. Hearing “shoplifting,” not immediately think about safety. If we are going to put in the turnstile as trial thing, writing out a thoughtful and thorough description of how this has been discussed. One day seeing totally different entryway.
- Zoe: Willa should be able to lock the door anytime she wants.
- Isabella: the turnstile requires it to be bolted to the ground. The floor is already being challenged by this. Would be a task to take it in and out. It’s a to do.
- Turnstile, gate, and IT side of turnstile - 3 different components.
- Travis: Chris said turnstile is ready to go.
- Vote
 - Proposal that Design and Build is now authorized to work with Willa to get the turnstile installed after the fridge has been delivered.
 - Proposal approved by all board members.

V. Strategies to improve labor situation: caps on committee membership (15 min)

- This will be deferred.

Bike Rack 8:50-8:55 (5 min)

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**
 - 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): **344**

Number of new members, reactivated and deactivated/cancelled last month:

8	new members (includes Zucchini) and reactivated members
45	one month trial members
24	members who cancelled, deactivated or went on General Leave
-16	membership gain or loss since last month