Chequamegon Food Co-op Board of Directors Meeting
October 19th, 2021- 5pm Zoom meeting

BOD Present: Laura Nagro ’22 (Chair), Mick Parent ’23 (Vice Chair) Karly Schultz ’23 (Secretary), Cynthia Dallzel ’24, John Adams ’23, Gary Sherman ’24
BOD Absent:

GM Present: Kiersten Galazen
Minutes: Sara Beadle
Meeting called to order at 5:05 pm by Laura Nagro Chair

Preliminaries

- **Consent Agenda**: passed by consent.
  - Agenda Review
  - Last month’s minutes
  - Committee Reports

GM monthly report - September

1. **Membership –** Once again, a stunning list of new members.
2. **Financials –** Sales continued to be strong and well over last year. We made a profit that is a little less than last year since we have continued to be over budget. We are also trying to ramp up our inventory, due to warning of supply chain getting worse. We will be issuing a staff profit sharing bonus – hopefully later this week. $1.83 per hours worked. Worker’s comp is negative. Rebates are going well. A few members wanted to donate it to the staff, so there is now a button on the register to do so. We’re looking at about $1200 in that pot right now.
3. **Department updates-** Holiday products have arrived and are still arriving.
4. **Staffing/personnel –** This is a big moving puzzle at this point. Rachel (cashier) has moved out of state, and Mike (cashier) is on a bike trip. Julie our wellness manager for the past 20 years or so, plus Sharon the deli manager are both retiring. David our front-end and POS manager has taken a job with the city. On the bright side, people can’t complain about upward mobility. We have been making sure our three new hires have been cross trained. Ava (cashier/stocker), Olivia(cashier/produce), and Aiden(stocker/cashier).
5. **Infrastructure**- The compressor rack is finally fixed, LED lights are all done, and the keypad on Chapple Ave door has been installed.
6. **Marketing –** Blood drive got moved to AmericInn due to bussing issues. Lar’s class got cancelled.
7. **COVID considerations –** We got some do it yourself COVID tests, for more immediate results.
8. **Other**- Looking into electronic invoicing set up, and EV charging stations – both have amounted to more questions than answers thus far. We got denied for the solar grant, but we can re-apply first thing in the spring; not exactly sure why we were denied.
9. **Education –** HR, operations, NCG meetings for Kiersten. Sara had an NCG zoom; Pat had a meeting with a rep.

Laura suggests reaching out to Pat Daoust from BART for info on EV charging stations

Suggestion to update the POS description to be more IT focused for security reasons. KG mentions that we may not have enough need. We hire out an IT - Ray, who manages our back-ups and security. Discussion of a security audit. Reaching out to insurance to help cover cost as it would lower our liability would be a good plan.

Membership Issue
A man brought in a 1978/9 membership and claims he bought it for $25 dollars. He would like it to be honored as a full-vested membership.
Gary motions to grandfather in this membership, John seconds, all in favor, motion passes.

GM Thoughts/Debriefing on Retreat
Kiersten’s project of 2022 is going to be the strategic plan.

John wants to know thoughts on getting rid of cashiers. Is it against the co-op grain? Gary says it's anti-labor. KG mentions the big 14 store co-op out on the west coast got them, and it went poorly, but that could be changing. Wouldn't be surprised if it's a growing trend, I think it's great customer service. Kiersten mentions we may have to simplify things like plus and chip, points, programs that would be hard to remove a cashier from the situation. Kiersten mentions it would probably be polarizing for staff and customers, but as labor shortages increase, it may become a reality we have to tap into. KG doesn't know of any co-ops that have them, we don't want to be the first.

GM Monitoring B6: Staff

This is based around our staff survey that happens every other year. This was the on-year. We followed with our standard questions, we cut a few that seemed redundant, and added some around COVID. Basically, what we found, is that our scores are really good, it's great that we don't glaring issues, but it's not a set it and leave it sort of thing. Most questions had small deviation aside from importance of benefits and longevity of working at the co-op.

The wage scale was revamped, working on another round of wage strengthening. We combined levels four and five. Based off of talking to other co-ops and NCG. Plus, benefits are listed. Approximately a little under half the staff are full time, maybe 5 in the 30-35, most everyone else are regular part time, plus a few limited part time with very specific jobs and hours. Kiersten has found that she can usually get anyone who wants full time to full time, the part timers usually don't want full time if they are part-time – they like their free time. It's not always easy to get people to want full-time, even with more benefits. In the current hiring market, we have a few more part timers than we would usually hire.

John is looking for employee handbook. KG says there are questions on the survey about the handbook asking if it is helpful/informative etc. Sara will put the employee handbook on the drive.

Discussion about HR. There is not specific HR person, it used to be the bookkeeper. Then we put Julie in that place as the most tenured. We have a grievance policy. We have a Society for Human Resource Management membership and did their Wisconsin handbook builder, and it was almost word for word what we have in place.

John has written down a note from last year about some sort of whistle blower policy in place. Ring any bells? – John will follow up with note he wrote.

Mick motions to approve the B6 report, John seconds, all in favor, motion passes.

Looking Ahead: B2 Planning and Budgeting, B1: Financial Conditioning

CFC Board Monitoring with Review from the Policy Committee

Board Monitoring D1: Unity of Control

Cynthia says unity of control is straight forward and acceptable.

Team would like to put employee handbook policy back on docket so that the board can look over the handbook more thoroughly.

Looking Ahead D5: Real Estate

Spending Your Money – John's Idea

John would like to reward members who suggest an implemented with Gary's $75 board stipend. For example, the suggestion to be able to donate patronage to the staff. Kiersten would approve suggestions, and if approved and implemented member would get $75.

Joel

Joel Langholz showed up! Joel wants to support for the co-op and the board, as a past board member, current member-owner. The topic being wage strengthening, staff morale, and retention. From a customer perspective I am at the co-op nearly every day – I observe and make relationships with those who work at the co-op. I feel like I am not out of the loop. I feel like there has been constant turn-over and it makes it a different experience, but I love meeting new people, but love my regular staff members too. New people slow things down, not for me, but others. I don't feel confident asking just anyone a question anymore. Staff morale changes when people have other jobs – they are tired etc. The deli is dead. I just want the experience to be better than any other grocery store. I want to be proud of the Chequamegon food co-op. I think I saw the new front end manager position posted at $14 an hour?! For a management position, that is concerning. I just want to reiterate that staff morale is big deal, it changes the customer experience, and the reputation. I know there are co-op employees that don't feel like they are getting a living wage. I love this co-op so much, I just want to see people happy working there, and I think folks need to be paid more. I would just love to chip up for the staff! Or other initiatives that go to the staff – there's got to be a way. Peace out.

More talk on wage scale. For example, we keep minimum wage on our scale for some people's benefits – new horizons folks.

John would like to suggest the board do the work for the "Gary trust fund" – advertising and announcement instead of always asking Sara to do it. Laura suggests this could just be a board line item in the budget since Gary will not always be on the board forfeiting his stipend. Mick suggests that any unused board compensation goes to the chip. John says that that idea lowers membership engagement. Kiersten says we can put it on a calendar and review it each year if it doesn't work well. Sara will think of some ideas.

<u>Ongoing/Next Month Prep</u>

1. Long Term Planning
2. Board candidate recruiting for the new vacancy and the spring election.
3. Board Member Applications
4. Annual Meeting Committee – Volunteers
5. Anything Else?

Motion to adjourn meeting by Mick, Gary seconds, all in favor, motion carries. Adjourn at 6:30.