



General Meeting Agenda

Date/Time: Wednesday May 31st 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Location: [Zoom](#) (remote)

Facilitator: Ben Werner

Note-taker: Kelsey Wickel

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

The Co-op's 2023 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: Ben, Jake, Zhun, Luis

Other members present: Theres Wegmann, Akiko Ichikawa, Sarah Chinn, Zina Sockwell, Kelsey Wickel, Liz, Zoe, Alex Van Trigt, Zina Sockwell, DK Holland, Phoebe, Amy Kao

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)

Summary: Board votes whether to approve the public minutes from the April meeting. These minutes will then be available on the co-op's website. [Link to minutes](#) from April 26, 2023.

Outcome & Next Steps: Approved by Board

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

Summary:

- *Finances:* Sales continue to hold at around \$19k – 23k per month. We've been able to cut down

on waste and streamline ordering, which has helped with overall expenses at the co-op

- *Operations:* There have been relatively few operational issues this month. The walk-in cooler has had a dripping issue that needs to be addressed. The meat freezer has also had issues keeping a consistent temperature.
- *Membership:* Staffing has continued to be a challenge. I would recommend shifting member labor from committees to in-store work, or hiring an additional part time staff. It's unclear how much open weekend shopping is affecting membership numbers. Conversations regarding changing membership structure will be considered as part of the long range planning initiative.

Outcome & Next Steps:

- Jake to explore refrigeration repair services for the meat refrigerator and the walk-in
- Ben to reach out to design/build about making a shelf for the olive oil, so that the cart it's currently on can be used for stocking the refrigerator

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

Committees ask for help or support / others give below:

Beer License

Background: The Board has been pursuing a beer license to be able to sell beer in-store

Summary: The Board has submitted paperwork to Joe Bender, co-op member, to file for a beer license. Several members of the board, Luis, Brit and Zhun still need to file the correct identification paperwork.

Outcome & Next Steps: Timeline TBD. Waiting to hear back regarding paperwork submitted.

In-store Demonstrations & Cheese Cutting

Background: Theres & Phoebe have been discussing opportunities to do food demonstrations and cheese cutting in-house to cut down on costs and waste.

Summary: Food handling in-store may require a food handling license, which would be challenging for enough members to get in order to do cheese cutting in-store.

Outcome & Next Steps: Phoebe to look into the licensing requirements for in-store food handling.

Agenda 7:30-8:30 (60 min)

Kelsey's nomination 7:30-7:45 (15 min)

Background: There are currently five members of the Board, including the General Manager. The Board has been soliciting members to join the Board to support the co-op. The Board may be comprised of up to seven members, not including the General Manager. Today's vote is to consider Kelsey Wickel's nomination to the Board.

Summary: Kelsey is a fourth-generation New Yorker, Bed-Stuy resident, and Leslie Knope wannabe. She began working in food systems as part of the inaugural class of FoodCorps service members, and her passion for public service evolved into a career in New York City government, first at NYC Parks and currently at the NYC Department of City Planning. She's thrilled to continue pursuing her interest in building better food systems as a board member of the Greene Hill Food Co-op.

Outcome & Next Steps: Approved by Board

Fundraiser 7:45-7:50 (5 min)

Background: In April 2023, the Board launched a fundraiser to help replenish the cash reserves of the co-op after entering a payment plan with UNFI, the co-op's main distributor, to eliminate our debt with them.

Summary: The co-op has approximately five payments left with UNFI. The fundraiser is currently at 44% of the \$10k goal. A progress bar has been added to the co-op's main webpage, so that members can track progress. The Revel POS system was identified as a way to collect donations for the fundraiser in-store.

Outcome & Next Steps: Jake to set up a barcode for \$5 in the Revel POS system, with the option to increase the quantity of the barcode item to reflect the total amount a member would like to donate (in \$5 increments). Jake to also begin socializing this idea with cashiers on staff.

Long Range Planning Timeline 7:50-8:05 (15 min)

Background: In April 2023, the Board proposed a long range planning initiative to address some of the issues around lack of labor, sales growth, institutional knowledge, and accountability for improvements, while giving structure to opportunities in the co-op, like a membership dashboard and pursuing a line of credit. The purpose of a strategic plan would be to give structure to these issues and opportunities, and provide accountability and a timeline for implementing improvements to the co-op.

Summary: The Board has proposed the following timeline for the creation of a long range planning initiative:

June 2023	Board visioning sessions
July 2023	Confirm scope at Board meeting
September 2023	Factfinding & community outreach
October 2023	Develop first draft issue & opportunities
December 2023	Publish strategic plan including recommendations and action items
June 2024	6-month implementation check in
December 2024	Annual review of strategic plan (and annual review every December thereafter)

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The Board will be meeting at 7pm on Tuesday, June 6 at the co-op, and then at 7pm on Thursdays thereafter starting June 15.
- If you are interested in participating, please reach out to the Board at board@greenehillfood.coop

4. Vori 8:05-8:15 (10 min)

Background: The Board has been exploring alternative point of sales systems to replace our current system, Revel, since it is not equipped to deal with large invoices and changing products and SKUs. Vori has been identified as the most appropriate option, and the Finance Committee has been exploring a contract with Vori. The current proposal from Vori includes discounted installation costs of

approximately \$10k if the co-op agrees to the contract by end of June.

Summary: After engagement with the Vori sales team, Alex on the Finance Committee provided an update on the current contract negotiations and benefits of using the Vori system. The Vori point of sales system would include hardware upgrades, integrated barcode scanning, the ability to upload large invoices, and the ability to track price changes in items over time. Even though the system is expected to cost slightly more than Revel, it will allow us to expedite the work of the General Manager and Merchandising Committee efficiency and cut back on waste.

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The Board voted to approve the Vori sales contract, contingent on additional information on security and conversations with existing customers
- To address concerns about decreased sales over the summer, the Board will pursue installation in late summer/early fall.

Closing 8:30-8:35 (5 min)

Discussion

General Manager Update

Jake: Things are looking pretty good overall. Sales are between \$19 – 23k per month. Waste is very low. Operational items are all relatively fine. Walk-in has had a drip in the back so keeping an eye on it. Teaching more members put tags and helping the store look nice. Staffing has been challenging – maybe people should be working in the store instead of working on committees. Considering potential additional part-time staffing as well.

DK: How many people are missing?

Jake: Today alone he had to cover two shifts, which has made it hard for doing a job of managing.

DK: Is there a way to ask whether Fri-Sun is affecting people's membership?

Jake: It's a give and take between sales and labor.

Ben: Starting to talk about this as part of the strategic planning, but we haven't made any decisions about that yet.

DK: How will that be brought to the larger group?

Ben: If we were to more fundamentally change the structure of the co-op then we will bring that to the board. If thaisa walks away, we may need to find someone interim. Thaisa is leaving at the end of June. Board will come up with an interim solution.

DK: Would love to talk more about this.

Jake: Great – follow up via email.

Theres: Updated membership stats with open weekends?

Jake: Don't have updated numbers. Trial memberships don't work.

Theres: Follow up with August on membership numbers? Anecdotal evidence that people are just shopping on the weekend.

DK: Chronic problem and I'm sure we can figure it out in one meeting.

Ben: This will be folded in the strategic planning. We welcome everyone to be part of that conversation.

Ben: What should we do about the fridge? Design build? Fridge repair

Jake: will look into fridge repair companies

Ben: olive oil shelf needs to be built. I'll also get in touch with design/build about this

Theres: is it just condensation?

Ben: it should be draining and not leaking into the cooler. Don't we have a fridge that's icing up too?

Jake: frozen meat fridge – comes up to 29 degrees and condensation freezes. Also an issue for the fridge repair guy. Also the coffee drip!

Theres: I recall Joel having this issue. This should get repaired before the end of summer.

Fundraiser

Ben: UNFI debt – about 5 weekly payments left before that debt will be paid off. Set up a fundraiser, currently at 44% of the goal. About to send it out to the broader general leave (has only been people directly involved in the co-op).

Theres: what happened to the gofundme? Gives people a chance to track progress.

Ben: We've put a progress bar on the website! Next time we will probably use gofundme, but the goal of hosting our own fundraiser is for co-op to keep 100% of the proceeds.

DK: POS would be a great way to contribute to the fundraiser. We can also be advertising gift cards, very limited usage because many cashiers to know how to use it.

Jake: Something we've been trying to figure out for a while. Revel has been a challenging POS system.

Ben: Part of it is a training thing as well – cashiers need to know how to take payment.

Zoe: We can make a barcode.

Jake: Good idea. We'll explore.

Ben: Need to consider how that funding gets transferred from general revenue to cash reserves

Jake: Will set it in the POS tomorrow at \$5 and then change the quantity.

Liz: Recommend "high five us! As many times as you'd like!"

Long Range Planning Timeline

Ben: I came on to the board at the same time as Joel leaving, UNFI, etc. Realized it's great that we're breaking even, but we also aren't growing, and we don't have a cushion for crises. Quite a need for many issues to be addressed – lacking institutional knowledge, lack of labor, etc. Opportunities: lines of credit, dashboard. But we don't have any accountability or timeline, and it's not transparent. At the crux is we don't have a strategic and business plan. If we don't have a plan to keep ourselves accountable. Not to negate any success to date (surviving COVID, breaking even). This can be a powerful tool for creating community and growing. Board decided to start a long term planning session to identify, challenges, opportunities, institutional and professional knowledge,

Ben walks through timeline

DK: June might be tight to provide space for us have space to dream of all of the possibilities!

Theres: especially like the part of talking to members.

Kelsey: this is hot off the presses and looking for support and involvement as much as others are interested in all steps of the process.

Ben: also thinking about how we bring members in and keep them informed.

Vori

Jake: Revel is not meant for a grocery store, but more of a specialty store. Not equipped to deal with large invoices and constantly changing products and SKUs.

Alex: Would also include a hardware upgrade. Barcode and scanning would be incorporated. The user experience would be similar to Revel. Opportunity to upload large invoices. Can share price changes.

Would also give a lot of electronic shelf tags, which would allow us to easily change info for products.

Would definitely allow us to expedite a lot of Jake's work. Additional cost – almost everyone on the board has been walked through and are in agreement that it's worth the extra cost.

Jake: Better improvements to the store – less waste, allow us to get out of survival mode

Sarah: As a buyer, revel is a huge improvement, but the inventory element is just not there. Huge invoice from crasdale and unfi has been really challenging – need to physically be in the store to get inventory. Would be amazing to upload large invoices and get more accurate accounts.

Alex: May also allow us to see cost changes for distributors over time.

Jake: Don't want to take away from the merchdising team. Maybe more of a curation of specialty purchasing and getting people back in the store working as cashiers.

Ben: Implementation – cashiers will need to be informed of change, how would this change the merchandising committee?

Alex: Package deal they'll have people from their team helping to install and train. Whenever we set an implementation date. Not a strong perception of square – may be more retail oriented.

Ben: Not great for large inventory.

Jake: Also hard to make changes.

DK: Originally we went with Revel back in the day because it was a lot more slick, but I wasn't in the original committee making the decision.

Alex: Schedule Vori to start after UNFI situation resolved. Likely late summer timeframe. UNFI payments anticipated to be finished the end of June?

Akiko: Security issues? When I purchase things on Square, my credit card information was stolen.

Alex: They may use encryption, though that could be an issue with the payment processing. Will ask for more information.

Zoe: Have we talked about any of their current customers?

Jake: No, but customers included in promotional videos.

Ben: We can vote contingent on sufficient security and conversations with existing customers

Luis: Are there other systems we've considered? Park Slope has tailored their own system

Alex: We definitely do not have the capacity to build our own system like Park Slope. I haven't done a comprehensive investigation into competitors. Revel plug ins haven't been sufficient. A lot of other existing grocery systems are antiquated.

Ben: Customer service has been really great – really responsive. Pushes vote – with caveat reviewing current customer reviews, security, and cursory overview of competitors

Sarah: How many stores are they working with right now?

Alex: Not sure, but we are probably their smallest customer (others doing \$2M+) and their delivery schedule isn't available until end of June. Vori concessions – need to sign by the end of June. White glove installment 60 months 0 interest, shell pack, hardware for free, discount on the installation price – total value somewhere around \$10k. They are expecting to make most of their money in the long run through processing fees. What has monthly cash flow look like – if we maintain sales, we should be able to build up a reserve with Vori?

Ben: More or less maintained sales – between \$19 – 22k. Maybe slightly bolstered by open shopping. We have not rebuilt the reserve through the fundraiser, but we've made a good dent. My hope is once UNFI is paid off, we might be turning a slight profit.

Theres: "Summer slump" consideration – is it possible to start paying in the fall?

Ben: How significant is the slump?

Sarah: By August it's dire. Less labor and more sales

Theres: During the summer, we potentially open it up to open shopping all of the time. Made a big difference.

Akiko: Not a small deal – Park Slope was closed during the pandemic, we were not.

Jake: We didn't have the funding to do that

Sarah: Our sales soared during COVID

Akiko: Joined during the pandemic to get out of the house

Ben: Recognize the concern over new payments especially during summer months. Will be discussing it with the finance committee. Maybe install in August or September.

Luis: Based on sales, 2022 was better. More like a 10% drop off than a 20% drop in previous years.

Vote: Vori approved unanimously.

Committee Asks and Gives

Theres: Beer license update?

Ben: Joe is pursuing this – application process is extensive. Board has submitted paperwork. One of the issues was having a drawing of both floors. Believe we have that now but will follow up with Joe.

Theres: What's the timeline?

Ben: We're close to submitting...and waiting time should be?

Theres: Talking to Phoebe about doing demos and doing some food processing (cheeses, juices, etc). Do we have the permit to do that?

Jake: We have the facilities, but we don't have the permit. We can't do any prepared foods. There hasn't been much initiative to get that going.

Theres: Would be great if we could look into that. We could have less waste and make our cheese cheaper!

Phoebe: Happy to look into that permit

Sarah: Love the idea of cost savings, but it's really labor intensive! Need our labor issues to even out Liz: would need to have a before taking on something that requires so much labor.

Liz: Would require folks to have a food handlers license?

Jake: Might kill the issue.

Ben: Community days and bbqs – would be a great way to demo our space and intro that food. Is it an option to get a small group of folks at the co-op trained to do that?

Theres: How is Park Slope handling this? I believe folks at Park Slope are members doing this.

Alex: My friend's shift is cheese cutting, she doesn't have a license.

Ben: Doesn't mean it's legal

Phoebe: Volunteers to will investigate, potential option to look into as part of strategic plan.
