

MINUTES

Weavers Way Cooperative Association Board of Directors, 4/3/2012

Attendance: Sue Wasserkrug, Sylvia Carter, Margaret Lenzi, David Woo, Bob Noble, Chris Hill, Nathea Lee
Excused Absences: Ian Zolitor, Linda Shein
Staff present: Glenn Bergman, Karen Plourde (minutes)
Guests: Jeremy Evans Thomas (board candidate), Nancy Weinman (past president)

Agenda Review

A report from the Diversity Committee will be added to the agenda. Some time will also be set aside to discuss board elections.

Approve Minutes of March 2012 BOD Meeting

Sue wanted to add the name of one of the guests at last month's meeting who did not sign in. It was determined that she was Jonna Naylor, a board candidate.

Board Action: The minutes of the March Board meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

Policy Monitoring L7: Conflict of Interest

There was a request for clarification of the term "buyers" under Operational Definitions ("WW buyers are informed of this limitation policy..."). Glenn explained that in this context, "buyers" meant staff buyers. He offered to add "staff buyers" in the next revision. A board member asked who holds the Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms that are filled out by board members; Chris said that he has them, which is consistent with board policy that requires the treasurer to obtain and retain them.

Board Action: The board unanimously accepted the L7 Policy Monitoring report.

Policy Monitoring M1: Unity of Control; & M2: Accountability to the GM

David went over the results in the bar graph because it was hard to read. All sections, except for M 2.3, received scores of 100 percent of good to total compliance. Regarding the comments underneath the graph, the board members who wrote that M 2.3 should be a portion of M4 and that M 2.3 should be reconsidered were not present to expand on what they wrote, and therefore no further discussion could take place.

Diversity Report

The committee considered Weavers Way member Dave Tukey's proposal for instituting a policy that would encourage membership diversity by amending Policy L3 to require the GM to report on diversity. However, the Committee were of the opinion that it did not belong under L3, which is about Financial Planning. Instead, they felt it belonged more as part of the Ends policy. They felt that diversity is a complicated thing at the co-op, and discussed what Weaver's Way needs to

do to move closer to achieving its goals of increasing diversity. They wondered if the discussion could go into greater depth at the board retreat.

Glenn said that management has had discussions about diversity in regard to staff. They are considering engaging someone to help the co-op pinpoint advertising to increase the diversity of the pool of applicants. The committee drafted a change to the current E7 Ends policy; they like the change but don't think it's critical that it be adopted. This will be discussed at the May meeting, and the committee will keep Dave apprised of developments in this area.

Report of the Committee to Select a Chair of the Grievance Committee

Sylvia reported that she is the only board member participating in this committee, because Ian hasn't attended any of their meetings. The Grievance Committee consists of one chair, one manager, and one staff person, and the board is responsible for appointing the chair. Sylvia reported that there were several concerns regarding the board appointment of the chair and the operation of the Grievance Committee. Historically, according to one of the board members, the board was the last step for any staff who had a grievance with the co-op. But a grievance that was undertaken in 2000 was so onerous that the board decided they would not take on that role any longer. The L5 provision covers treatment of staff, and the staff came up with the current policy. So it is up to staff to modify the policy, not the board.

The board can meet their responsibilities by getting Len Reiser to continue as its chair.

Board Action: The board unanimously voted to accept Len Reiser as Grievance Committee chair.

Approve Board Budget Request

There was a question as to whether the board wanted to send all four new directors to CBLD 101 in July in Baltimore, and all generally agreed that should be done. The budget numbers from last year are missing in this year's request, and a member thought it was important they be included before a vote can be taken.

Board Action: A motion was made and unanimously accepted to table voting on the budget until next month to see last year's numbers and the projection for expenses for the next 12 months.

General Election Update

David emailed the board policy manual, bylaws and articles on policy governance, to all the board candidates. David Chaplin-Lobell expected that online voting would be up and running within a day or two of the Shuttle coming out. There was a question raised about the confidentiality of online voting, and the person was encouraged to talk with David C-L about that.

David Woo said he expects to get nominations from the remaining board members for president and vice president. It was also suggested that newly elected board directors should get information on nominations for officers. There have been no nominations so far for secretary or treasurer. It was suggested that a new board member be nominated after the elections.

One member said that Stu and Nathea would be good candidates for vice president. Bob nominated Margaret for president, and Stu, Sue and Nathea for vice president.

Member Engagement Committee

The committee focused on three things: (1) Charging the General Manager with the responsibility of collecting data from members about the ways they engage with the co-op in order to gather baseline data; (2) Surveying members; and, (3) Reviewing the survey data to determine what else we want to know from members about their engagement with the co-op. To that end, the committee drafted a new member linkage policy (L6.3). They felt the new policy might fit better under L8, which will be changed to Member Participation rather than Member Committees.

The committee compared member linkage versus member engagement, and came to believe that with member linkage, the board is in touch with members and has its finger on the pulse of what the members are thinking. They discussed to what extent the co-op is being successful in that area or where it may be lagging behind. They thought that examining the data over a year or two would give them a better sense of where Weaver's Way is going. They also talked about how the board can collect data from members on its own through regular, quick surveys that motivate and inspire members, as long as they don't send them out too often.

The committee wants to review questions from last year's member survey. Once they look at what's been done, then they can work with the people who are preparing the next survey to make sure the most important issues are addressed.

A suggestion was made to make the survey part of the Ends discussion in June. Glenn suggested that Ted Reed, who did the survey, be invited to come to the June meeting to report on the data. Stu said he will convene a meeting of the committee. They will go over the survey, try to focus on 10-12 areas determine if they need Ted Reed to explain the results. In the meantime, anyone who has suggestions for the L6.3 proposal can email Stu.

The draft L6.3 reads as follows:

L6.3 The GM shall not fail to report to the board on important measures of member participation in Co-op sponsored activities that support the Co-ops mission, Boards stated Ends and the good of the coop.

L6.3.1 Such reporting will be in sufficient statistical detail to allow the board to have some measure of the level & type of member engagement with the co-op.

General Manager's Report

Glenn told the board to expect a drop of 150-200 members in next month's report because the database is being purged of inactive members. Regarding renovations to the Mt. Airy store, they are waiting to hear about variances and permits for the project in two weeks. If the variance for 608-610 is approved, the items now on the second floor will be moved over there and that space will be turned over to all bulk foods.

A board member asked about accessibility to the second floor for those who have trouble with steps. A number of suggestions were offered, including turning the dumbwaiter into an actual elevator or installing an elevator on the outside of the building or a stair glide. Glenn will look into those alternatives. The goal for the timing of the renovation is to close the first or second week of July and reopen the end of August or earlier.

Glenn attended a fundraiser for the Kensington Co-op and reported there were 60 people there. Creekside Co-op has hired a general manager. Mariposa's sales are more than double what they were before their expansion.

The meat department in Chestnut Hill will start featuring less conventional meat than is there now. Also, staff is researching the possibility of moving the warehouse from the current location in Germantown to the SHARE warehouse in Hunting Park.

Sales continue to be strong.

Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance Participation

At present, PACA is trying to define its mission. Therefore, PACA is seeking input from Weavers Way as to what it would like PACA to be--what PACA can do to support co-ops.

Recommendations for what PACA could do to help area co-ops included: promoting development of other co-ops by growing the cooperative model; raising public awareness about co-ops; creating a business association for co-ops like the Chamber of Commerce; providing services to co-ops in the areas of human resources, finance and IT; giving technical support to start-ups, and advocating and promoting public policy on behalf of co-ops.

One member stated that it's critical that the public be made aware of the contributions of co-ops, especially with regard to how they support the local economy. It was suggested that the Shuttle include a four-page spread on area co-ops in a forthcoming issue, and offer ad space to area co-ops. Glenn will meet with Jon McGoran and Annette to discuss this in the near future.

Mid-Atlantic Food Cooperative Alliance Update

Sue reported that MAFCA had a table at the Philadelphia Farm and Food Fest, and got a lot of interest in their work from the attendees.

Retreat Update

Chris reported that everything is set for April 14 and they expect 12-15 members of the management staff and all the board members to attend. Michael Healey will facilitate and the retreat will start at the Cope House in Awbury Arboretum.

CCMA Update

It was suggested that there should be more than one tour of Weavers Way during the CCMA conference in June, because a lot of the attendees will want to see the host co-op. It would be helpful if board members can volunteer to be part of bus or walking tours that will be taking place at that time. Saturday night's party at Reading Terminal Market will be open to local co-ops and social change groups. There was also a discussion about whether all the board members should be allowed to attend CCMA, even if their terms of service will have ended before the conference takes place.

Board Action: The board unanimously voted to allow all current and newly elected board members to attend CCMA Philadelphia this year.

Calendar Review

Sue will write the June Shuttle article due May 1, on the board retreat. The General Manager Review Committee Report needs to be distributed, although not to staff. Discussions on diversity and the board budget will take place next month. However, there will be no member engagement report next month, just for this year.

Announcements

- Sue's food truck will be at Greene and Carpenter on Thursday afternoons starting in mid-May. She will also be appearing at two other farmers' markets in South Philly. For Jazz Appreciation Month, Nathea will be attending jazz performances in various cities and blogging about them.
- Bob's wife has applied for a part-time job at Weaver's Way. There is a Good Jobs/Green Jobs conference taking place April 3 & 4 at the Sheraton. There is a bill now before the U.S. Senate that will allow credit unions to expand their small business lending from 12 percent to 27 percent. A group in Newtown is trying to form a co-op. They will be meeting on April 21 from noon-2 p.m. in Yardley. David and Bob will be there.
- The Community & Economic Development unit of the Urban Affairs Coalition is meeting on April 11, and Boba and Chakkah Fattah will be giving a presentation about co-ops.
- Bob also is giving a presentation about co-ops at the Empowerment Group's Entrepreneurial Week.
- Information about the June 13 cross-sector co-op conference is available online at: conference.philadelphia.coop
- Another exploratory meeting regarding a co-op in Manayunk will take place at Mishkon Shalom on April 18 at 7 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.