

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2019

Present: Caroline Kinsman, Ryan Peters, Ceci Lopez, Randy Rydel, Laura Weiss, Seth Mangold, Melissa Morin, Margaret Gerard, Holly O' Neil, Adrienne Renz, Melissa Elkins, Jean Rogers, Alana Smith

Absent: Terrance Morris

Facilitator: Holly O'Neil

Holly prefaced the meeting by noting one particular proposed guideline for participation, *"Call for process check when the meeting feels off."* She would like to implement the use of "jazz hands" (wiggling fingers) to indicate the need for a process check.

Study and Engagement: Sustainability – Co-op Practices: Melissa Elkins, CFC Sustainability Coordinator

- **Quadruple Bottom Line: People. Planet. Profit. Purpose.**
 - In early 2019, the Co-op chose to take its triple bottom line a step further by adding *Purpose*.
 - The Co-op defines Purpose as our commitment to act as a social change agent by supporting the cultural empowerment of our community through our personnel policies, interactions with our customers, and providing transparent information about our progress and impact.
- **Reporting Commitment:** Each year we strive for progressive improvement, practice transparency in annual performance audits, and select reporting metrics that are relevant to our business.
 - To be as transparent as possible we report our metrics annually to two non-profit trade organizations, National Co-op Grocers (NCG) and the Sustainable Food Trade Association (SFTA). We produce two annual reports – the "Snapshot" report, which provides highlights from the previous year and our full annual report, which is an overview of the previous year's performance.
 - The Community Food Co-op is a Certified B Corporation
- **What the Co-op Measures**
 - People: When tracking our performance, our primary focus includes employee impact/labor, community impact/engagement, governance, and product responsibility/new vendors
 - This relates to the Strategic Plan goals of Exemplary Workplace, Community Engagement, and Healthy Food Access
 - Profit: When tracking our performance, our primary focus includes financial performance, shopper impact, and local economy/sourcing
 - This relates to the Strategic Plan goals of Economic Resilience and Local Food System Development
 - Purpose: This area will evolve over the next several years as we learn more and take new steps to create a co-op that feels welcoming to everyone. Current performance tracking focuses on training, education, and opportunity as well as demographics, evaluations, and customer and employee experience
 - This relates to the Strategic Plan goal, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
 - Planet: When tracking our performance, our primary focus includes organic, water and energy, waste, animal care, greenhouse gas emissions, and packaging
 - This relates to the Strategic Plan goal of Stewardship and Advocacy
- **The Matrix:** Melissa revealed the massive spreadsheet in which she records all the data the Co-op collects on the areas above, broken down by quarter and dating back many years. She highlighted a number of specific metrics that the Co-op tracks:
 - Financial and in-kind support as a measure of community impact:

- Ex. Food recovery: The Co-op donates 62 - 67 tons of usable food each year to the Miracle Food Network and the Food Bank
 - Events and social media reach (a measure of outreach and education opportunities for members)
 - Organic sales and local products as a measure of product responsibility:
 - 15% of our sales are of products from the state of Washington
 - Energy efficiency as a measure of environmental responsibility:
 - Solar panels on the roof contribute to the energy required to operate the Cordata store
 - Rate of recycling as a measure of the CFC's waste:
 - 90.35% of the Co-op's waste is diverted from the landfill through recycling and composting
- **Question and Answer (Q&A) session with Melissa:**
 - Q: Does the Co-op have an operational definition of sustainability?
 - A: The Co-op has been moving towards the language of responsibility because sustainability is such a nebulous term. We use sustainability loosely to mean maintaining a balance between each of the aspects of the quadruple bottom line.
 - Q: What five counties does the Co-op count as local?
 - A: Whatcom, Skagit, Island, Snohomish & San Juan
 - Q: How does the Co-op use this data to make decisions, set goals, track progress, etc.?
 - A: Melissa assesses the data to advise the management team on operational decisions. She develops organizational goals based on the audits and the matrix data in each area of the quadruple bottom line. Historically, we achieve about half of our goals. This success rate is a function of the difficulty of the goals the Co-op sets for itself. B-Corps and SFTA help hold the Co-op accountable by ensuring that we demonstrate improvement in the outlined areas
 - Q: Are profit margins different on local and non-local items?
 - A: Margins are typically lower on local items to help keep pricing competitive.

Announcements: A director attended Clyde Ford's event, "Let's Talk about Race" and shared take aways from the talk. The Farm Fund is now accepting grant applications with a deadline of January 17, 2020.

Consent Agenda: All directors confirmed that they had read the consent agenda materials.

- *Monitoring Report P6 (Civic Engagement)* – No comments
- *Committee reports (Board Development, Finance, Member Affairs)* – No comments
- *November 2019 Board minutes* – No comments
- *Annual Meeting draft agenda* – No comments

Decision: Directors approved the consent agenda by consensus.

Proposed Guidelines for Participation: Directors questioned whether they would feel comfortable using the language in one of the proposed guidelines ("ouch"). The idea is to flag a hurtful interaction, and if needed, to follow up one on one as soon as possible. A director noted that this approach could leave the person being hurt carrying the emotional weight of the interaction. The guideline "*Show up with authenticity*" could do the work of the "say ouch" guideline. Directors acknowledged the need to develop deeper relationships with one another to better facilitate difficult conversations, as well as the trust necessary to "call in" as opposed to "call out." Another director asked about adding a guideline about using language of respect. Directors wondered if the socially constructed nature of "respect" and its exclusionary deployment in our culture could be problematic. The group agreed that the guidelines "*Hold space for differences*" and "*Practice Cooperation*" could do the work of a guideline about mutual respect.

Report from the Chair:

- The Chair recommended compiling a list of Board accomplishments for the year each December.
- This is Board staff director Seth Mangold's last meeting. He is taking a leave of absence from the Co-op starting in January to work for the Bernie Sanders Campaign and is not planning to run for re-election in March.
- The Board Development Committee (BDC) will discuss filling Caroline and Seth's Board seats at the January committee meeting. There will be a proposal on this topic before the Board in January.
- The Annual Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 31, 6 pm at Settlemyer Hall, Bellingham Technical College.
- January Study & Engagement (S&E) topic: the business case for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).
 - A resource packet for the S&E will go out before the next Board meeting.
 - Sustainability could be a facet of this discussion.
 - The Board will use this S&E session to codify the "whys" of the Co-op's focus on EDI.

Rose, Bud, Thorn: General Manager Adrienne Renz shared some highlights of current operational work.

Executive Session: The Board went into executive session at 8:00 pm to follow up on the Fall Strategic Planning retreat. There were no decisions to report at this time.

The meeting ended at 8:30 pm.

Next Board of Directors meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 pm in the Connections Building classroom.