

## **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**April 1, 2020**

**Present:** Caroline Kinsman, Ryan Peters, Margaret Gerard, Ceci Lopez, Laura Weiss, Randy Rydel, Adrienne Renz (early portion of the meeting), Jean Rogers,

**Absent:** Melissa Morin (approved leave of absence) Terrance Morris (cannot attend weekly meetings)

**Facilitator:** Holly O'Neil

**Teleconferencing Protocols:** For group chats, give everyone an opportunity to speak once before speaking twice. It helps to give a visual thumbs up on decisions. Stay muted when not speaking. Each person will say "here" to confirm attendance via teleconference verbally.

**Board Advocacy Letters:** General Manager (GM) Adrienne Renz shared draft letters with the Board. She is asking the Board to complete and send the letters requesting support for Co-op staff, access to safety supplies, and for food system workers statewide as first responders to Covid-19.

- Minnesota, Michigan and Vermont have recognized grocery stores so stores can receive more support for safety and well-being.
- Priorities include increased status as essential workers (testing access, clear safety guidelines, clarifying benefits, childcare, compensation, how to keep shoppers safe, cleaning supplies from Unified Command.
- The letters should go to City Council, Whatcom County Health Department, Whatcom County mayors, Whatcom Unified Command - as many places as possible.
- The GM would like to include advocacy requests from Community to Community Development (C2C) for farm worker safety. Farm workers are essential workers placed at risk of Covid-19 due to continuing unsafe working conditions.
- The GM also asked to:
  - Increase communication to recognize at the state level that all food and grocery workers are putting their lives on the line.
  - Make a Board statement to shoppers so people know how best to support food system workers as essential to the pandemic response. Warehouse workers also are struggling, which affects distribution and creates shortages.
  - Note that Co-op staff interact with 27,000 shoppers weekly – all risking exposure to Covid-19.
  - Recommend level 3 or 4 for the Co-op as a state designated first responder.

**Suggestion:** Re-write the letter to the state to request support for Whatcom County food system workers.

**Proposal (Full request provided to the Board is on file):** In order to advocate on behalf of the Co-op and all food system workers, The Co-op Board of Directors will send letters to encourage local, state, and federal representatives to help grocery workers gain official status as Covid-19 first responders, and as Tier 1 Emergency Personnel (Whatcom Unified Command). The Board will finalize advocacy letters recommended by the GM, and send them to designated recipients before the April 8 Board meeting.

**Decision:** Approved by consensus.

**Staff Contribution and Letter:** The Board Development Committee proposed allocating \$7,000 from the Board budget for staff. Upon review, directors had concerns that we don't know what things will look like in 2 -3 months. The Board might need funds for planning, consulting or operational emergencies. It is more likely for staff and operations to access funds from sources dedicated to addressing Covid-19.

**Proposal:** Table this idea for now and revisit it if needed.

**Decision:** Approved by consensus.

**Changes to Board and Committee Meetings (Full proposal document provided to the Board is on file):**

**Proposal:** In light of the Covid-19 crisis, the Board will meet weekly instead of monthly. The Finance committee will continue to meet monthly. The Board will suspend meetings of all other committees until we can return to regular meeting protocol. Members can direct concerns to the Board by emailing the Board Administrator. The Board will post the changes on the Co-op website and the Board Administrator will maintain and post a record of the meetings. The Board can re-convene any committee as needed. **Decision:** Approved by consensus.

**Changes to Monitoring: Proposal (Full proposal provided to the Board is on file):** To maintain a weekly verbal report from the GM on key policies, and a weekly written financial report in accordance with policies P1.2.2 and R4.1.2, which allow the Board to choose the method and frequency of monitoring, The reports will be documented in Board minutes. The goal is to maintain essential Board functions and monitoring of Co-op financials, members, shoppers and employees during the Covid-19 crisis The Board will add questions about safety and member input (what the trends are and how we are gathering input) to Adrienne's weekly report. **Decision:** The Board approved the proposed monitoring changes by consensus

**Preview of April 8 meeting agenda:** Caroline outlined the upcoming agenda topics for the group, including Board appointment. BDC has discussed inviting former director Phil Buri to fill the remainder of Caroline's term. Phil has a lot of expertise. If he cannot serve, BDC will propose leaving the position open for now.

**Check out & how people are doing:** The group shared mixed experiences of life and work demands, anxiety and hopes resulting from the Covid-19 crisis. Directors appreciated being able to teleconference. It's important to maintain unity as we adjust to virtual meetings. Think 18 months for the long haul with the pandemic.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 8 at 6:00 pm via Zoom**

*These minutes have been approved by the Board*