

Common Ground Food Co-op  
 Board Meeting Minutes  
 March 15, 2021  
 6:15 pm to 8:15 pm  
 Zoom Videoconference

Present: Jade Algarin, Lisa Bralts, Ben Galewsky, JP Goguen, Ming Kuo, Taidghin O’Brien, Robert Taylor, Calvin Wang, Mel Weinstein

Absent: None

Others Present: Gary Taylor, General Manager  
 Liz Moran Stelk, Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
 Jeffrey Chandler, Minute Taker

<b>Proceedings</b>	
<b>Meeting called to order</b>	<b>At 6:16pm by Robert Taylor</b>
<b>1. Preliminaries</b>	<p><b>A. Guests/Owners</b>          Gary Taylor, General Manager          Liz Moran Stelk, Illinois Stewardship Alliance          Jeffrey Chandler, Minute Taker</p> <p><b>B. Public Comment</b>          None.</p> <p><b>C. Agenda Amendments</b>          None</p>
<b>2. Board Study</b>	<p><b>A. Local Food Policy &amp; Advocacy</b>          Liz Moran Stelk introduced herself and reviewed her history in and out of the natural food industry as a community organizer. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance. She discussed current issues in the food system which is focused more on corporate profits instead of community health, local economies, and sustainable farms. She identified a need to build up the alternative, of which the co-op is a part. The goal to obtain power in the industry is a three part effort including changing policy, shifting the narrative, and building the organization. Their state policy agenda is farmer-led and eater-powered including Home to Market, Healthy Local Food</p>

	<p>Incentives Fund with SNAP match for farmers markets, Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) which requires suppliers of state funded food programs to meet values including local sourcing, as well as, conservation funding initiatives. She also provided a brief overview of the agency's federal policy agenda. She then reviewed upcoming events including the Virtual Food &amp; Farm Week of Action happening April 19-22.</p> <p>Ben Galewsky asked how to encourage owners to get more involved. Liz noted co-op members are one of their top three groups of "eaters", and requested input about ways her organization could provide more communication and education. She provided links to their agenda and the week of action to provide to co-op members. There was discussion about soliciting owners for interest in receiving information, at which point they could provide information both ways. Taidghin O'Brien also noted the possibility of bringing in local state representatives to talk with owner's about state policy. Mel Weinstein asked if the Alliance uses petitions in lobbying state representatives, and wondered if that could be provided to owners via newsletters, Liz noted yes.</p> <p>Liz noted they could identify producers of the co-op who would be impacted by legislation so that she could make direct connections for owner impact. Gary Taylor will provide the producer list to Liz for cross-referencing, and include Sarah for outreach. Liz also posed questions regarding networking with other Illinois-based co-ops. Taidghin noted he will compile some of the ideas and actions discussed for follow-up with the board and staff.</p>
<p><b>3. Consent Agenda</b></p>	<p><b>A. Public Minutes from February Meeting</b>  <b>B. Monthly Financials</b>  <b>C. GM Operational Update (MORe)</b></p>

	<p>Item B was removed as it was not submitted.</p> <p><b>Action Taken</b> The board approved items A &amp; C of the consent agenda. Ming Kuo abstained.</p>
<p><b>4. GM Monitoring</b></p>	<p><b>A. EL B15 Treatment of Customers</b> Ming asked how we determine what customers need or do we rely on customer complaints to identify needs. The ways in which customers can contact us regarding issues were noted, and that reasonable compliance would generally be meeting needs of which we are aware. Ben mentioned that previously customer satisfaction surveys were completed, though Gary advised high costs have been limiting. Ming offered to help create and evaluate a survey at no cost. Discussion about using social media to encourage participation and address more topics. The customer survey conversation was sent to Owner Outreach for further discussion.</p> <p><b>Action Taken</b> The board unanimously accepted the policy as in compliance.</p> <p><b>B. EL B6 Treatment of Staff</b> Gary reported non-compliance on staff emergency preparedness because in-person classes on CPR have been unavailable, and that staff needs to be refreshed on emergency procedures and plans. There was discussion about a plan for completion, including online CPR certification. Calvin Wang asked about the budgeted HR Audit this year, which Gary advised is on hold pending COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p><b>Action Taken</b> The board declined to accept the report and requested updates via email for an email vote.</p> <p>Ming requested that the Policy Committee review this policy.</p>

	<p><b>C. EL B9 GM Emergency Succession</b> Gary noted the second emergency successor was appointed last week, but the policy only requires one.</p> <p><b>Action Taken</b> The board unanimously accepted the report as in compliance.</p> <p>The Policy Committee will review the requirement of one or two successors.</p>
<p><b>5. Board Monitoring</b></p>	<p><b>A. Board Process C6 Officer Roles</b> It was clarified that JP Goguen is the acting Secretary. JP noted previous Secretary Colin Dodson advised there is a binder of board documents, potentially in the store, that JP should review, but that documentation is not up to date. Board minutes have also not been posted, which is another task of the Secretary.</p> <p>Discussion about the policy's requirement that monitoring reports be signed, which has recently lagged due to COVID-19 and secretarial back-log. This was one of the considerations when discussing DocuSign previously, and it was noted that discussion should resume. This was sent to the Policy Committee for review.</p> <p>The compliance of this policy will be evaluated in July 2021 with all other Board Monitoring policies.</p>
<p><b>6. Committee Updates</b></p>	<p><b>A. Board Development Committee</b> JP reported that the committee met last week. He noted CCMA will be virtual this year from June 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> and provided an informational link. He asked for volunteers to serve on the committee, but advised that those looking to run in this year's election may have to abstain from some items. He provided an update on the move to Google drive.</p> <p><b>B. Owner Outreach Committee</b></p>

	<p>Taidghin asked for assistance locating the previous signup sheets. He reported that he is reaching out to Evelyne for information regarding last year’s virtual FinMOO. He is also planning to meeting with Gary and Sarah for store support. Ming asked to be added to the committee.</p> <p><b>C. Policy Committee</b> Ben reported the committee has not met and is looking to replace a member.</p> <p><b>D. Store Strategy Committee</b> The committee members from the board and store met preliminarily to discuss their 3-6 month agenda which will be shared in the near future.</p>
<p><b>7. Board Admin</b></p>	<p><b>A. FinMOO Scheduling</b> This event requires notice to owners and must be within 120 days of December 31<sup>st</sup>. Robert noted some of the key aspects of the FinMOO historically. April 29<sup>th</sup> was selected. Calvin clarified some points of interest for the upcoming FinMOO-targeted newsletter article.</p> <p><b>B. Treasurer’s Report</b> Calvin clarified a charge from Columinate.</p> <p><b>Action Taken</b> The board unanimously approved the Treasurer’s Report.</p> <p><b>C. Basement Space</b> Lincoln square noted a \$20 monthly charge for water and electric for a janitor’s closet in the basement. This was determined to be a utility, not requiring board approval.</p>
<p><b>Executive Session Opens</b></p>	
<p><b>8. GM Evaluation – 6-month Check-in</b></p>	

**Executive Sessions Closes**

<b>8. Closing</b>	<b>A. Next meeting April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b> <b>B. Outreach Calendar Assignments</b> <b>Newsletter: Calvin Wang</b> <b>C. Other Assignments</b> <b>D. Check-out</b>
<b>Adjourned</b>	<b>At 8:33 pm by Robert Taylor</b>