

Oneota Community Co-op
Minutes for Regular Board Meeting

September 26, 2023

6:30 PM

Co-op Classroom

Board Members Present: Bailey Lutz, Brennan Allsworth, Detra Dettmann, Scott Timm, Hannah Breckbill, Bill Iverson, Aaron Detter

Board Members Absent:

GM Present: Nate Furler

Co-op Staff: Niki Sanness, Tanya O'Connor

Member/Owners Present: Jeanine Scheffert (Bd Admin Asst), Martin Refsal, Nate Preus

Timm called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Dettmann to approve amended agenda adding 10.3 discussion about co-op potlucks under new business and adding to board learning: Allsworth recaps Columinate training. Second by Breckbill. All ayes, motion carried.

During Board Learning Allsworth reported on a virtual leadership learning session he attended from Columinate. The main takeaway was that great leadership is about listening and in order to move forward, it is important to step back. The board then reviewed the strategic action plan and where things are at as we end Q1.

During Member Comments Board introduced themselves to co-op member-owners Nate Preus and Martin Refsal. Both Nate and Martin grew up in the area and returned during Covid. The two brought up concerns about co-op wages asking the Co-op to consider raising wages and offering the same wage for same work, regardless if an employee is full time or part time. They also acknowledged getting compensation right is tough because keeping prices low are also important. Overall, they have a lot of trust in the board and management and express hope that the Co-op can set ambitious wage goals.

Furler thanked Preus and Refsal for attending the meeting and being involved. Furler recapped what the Co-op has done in terms of wage growth and why a two-tiered system for full and part time was introduced. He also shared the recent focus efforts on employee benefits including short and long-term disability, basic life insurance, dental, and vision options for all employees working 20+ hours/week. He also acknowledged leadership is wanting to increase wages and figure out a sustainable plan to do that. Sanness added that as part of finance and HR, it is on the agenda to raise wages. Timm says that from a board perspective, we are always thinking about this. He also reiterated that we want involved members who are interested in sharing perspectives and passion. Breckbill added that as a policy governance board, we can think about ways we can be more ambitious with that policy.

Preus stated he felt heard and isn't surprised to learn that the board has already thought a great deal about this topic. He's appreciative of being able to add his member-owner voice to the discussion. Refsal says he appreciates the thoughtful, empathetic, and transparent response.

Motion by Breckbill to approve the August 2023 Meeting Minutes. Second by Allsworth. All ayes, motion carried.

Furler presented the L2: Staff Treatment policy monitoring report. Reported compliance. Would like to do more 360 reviews for staff surveys in the future. Safety is important and we do a lot of safety training with onboarding. Working on a revised handbook. Co-op is well above benchmarks for all metrics on staff survey, and we are always working towards continued improvement. Overall, this survey gives great information and staff seem pretty aligned on how they feel about things. **Motion by Breckbill to approve L2: Staff Treatment monitoring report.** Second by Lutz. All ayes, motion carried.

Furler presented the L3: Compensation & Benefits monitoring report. Reported compliance. L3 does not include GM compensation and benefits. According to staff surveys, staff feel their rate of pay is good and reflects their performance. This went up overall from past years. The current living wage here is considered \$15.25 for one FT adult. Oco-op entry-level FT wage is \$14.25. Continuing to work to make progress with this, in a sustainable manner. According to data available, Oneota Co-op's wages are more compressed than corporate positions and less compressed than corridor co-ops. Co-op is offering competitive wages compared to other opportunities in the area and is happy to be able to offer benefits to those working over 20 hours per week. **Motion by Detter to approve L3: Compensation & Benefits.** Second by Allsworth. All ayes, motion carried.

Detter reported on the **Policy Monitoring committee** meeting held earlier this month. Starting next month, instead of individual board members being assigned reports, the report will be a discussion during the board meeting, with a motion to approve compliance or non-compliance and a discussion of the relevance and wording of each policy. This will give the board the opportunity to discuss and learn from one another and keep policies up to date.

In Furler's **GM Report** he reported the store is 3.59% or \$121,000 above budget for August. Weekly sales up 6.7% compared to last year. Co-ops in general are doing well right now, with some seeing over 10% growth in sales. Labor is over budget, but being compensated by increases in sales and complemented by good sales per labor hour. The kitchen classroom has been used a few times. Have a contract ready and will put it up for public rental as soon as our alcohol consumption license goes through. Annual raises have been communicated; staff are happy. Installed a fan near the meat freezer to help with airflow. Purchased three stock picking carts which can be rolled upstairs and down. Sanness will be attending an operations conference. Furler recently attended a GM meeting and may also attend the operations conference. Continue to plan for the 50th anniversary.

Motion by Dettmann to approve ad-hoc Board Nomination Committee of Detter, Lutz, Allsworth, and two member-owners. Second by Breckbill. All ayes, motion carried.

Board has started to plan for board candidate recruitment and will table at the store again.

In new business, Breckbill reported she met with Co-op staff to discuss the idea of a grant program for local producers. Leadership voiced concerns, including the possibility that it would increase their workload, and whether this is the best place to focus energy. Because this is an example of something the board can do to work towards community-based Ends, the Board will continue to look into the idea. It will be important to educate members and staff and to be clear how the program relates to board priorities and operational priorities. Breckbill will come to the next meeting with a clearly defined proposal and examples of how other co-ops have implemented grant programs.

Furler and board members are scheduled to meet with a rep who helped Seward Co-op with software to run their digital board election to see if that might be something that would work for us.

Co-op potlucks continue to happen on the third Thursday of every month. Now that the weather is cool, they will be held at Good Shepherd. It is \$65 per potluck to rent the space.

Next meeting is October 17 at 5:30 Co-op Classroom.

Motion by Lutz to adjourn meeting. Second by Detter. All ayes, motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.