



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020 • 6 – 8pm

Jefferson Community Center

Present at meeting:

Board Members: James Kloor (President/Treasurer), Colin Fiske (Vice President), Leah Stamper (*via phone*), Cheri Strong, Kirsten Lindquist, Roger

Absent Board Members: Laura Wright (Secretary)

Co-op Employees: Kristen Hayen, Emily Walter, Josiah Pumpkin, Jason Davenport

Member-owners: David Cobb, David Dahler, Kathleen Pelley

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm by James.

2. Agenda Review and Approval

Consensus to approve the agenda.

3. Member Comment Period

- David D. – upset that the board approved reinstating their full stipends even though the Co-op is losing money. Would like to see more separation of the Finance Committee and the board. There are large problems facing the Co-op that are not being addressed or addressed quickly enough. We need to get more diverse participation.
- Roger – Food For People needs help right now. Other stores are signing onto a letter about reducing plastics and we should too. There was a civil issue about a person getting petitions signed in front of the Arcata Co-op. Customers and staff were complaining because the person was not staying in the designated tabling area. It might be good to discuss how to keep something like that happening in the future.

4. Board Correspondence

None

5. Board Education - Public Banking – presented by David Cobb (Cooperation Humboldt)

Cooperation Humboldt is working to build a solidarity economy. They support existing cooperative efforts and create new solutions where needed. They are a strategic partner of the Co-op.

Cooperation Humboldt wants to cooperate with multiple institutions, including the Co-op, to help promote the creation of the first public bank in California now that law has been passed to allow public banks. Public banking is banking operated in the public interest, through institutions owned by the people through their representative governments. Public banking is distinguished from private banking in that its mandate begins with the public's interest. Privately-owned banks, by contrast, have shareholders who generally seek short-term profits as their highest priority. Public banks are able to reduce taxes within their jurisdictions, because their profits are returned to the general fund of the public entity. The costs of public projects undertaken by governmental bodies are also greatly reduced, because public banks do not need to charge interest to themselves. Eliminating interest has been shown to reduce the cost of such projects, on average, by 50%. With city and state-owned banks, we cut out Wall Street middlemen. Bank fees are eliminated, interest costs drop, and public bank profits are reinvested into our communities.

Humboldt County is not large enough to create its own public bank, but we could be depositors in a public bank in another area, such as San Francisco.

Public banks are aligned with the Co-op as they address two of the seven cooperative principles.

- #5 – Education, Training and Information – informing the general public and opinion leaders about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

- #6 – Cooperation Among Cooperatives – strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

David C. is looking for general support of public banking that includes requesting public officials look into being depositors into an out of area public bank. He would like to see the Co-op taking the lead in educating the community about public banks.

The board is interested in this topic and would like more time to learn about and discuss how the Co-op could become involved. It will be discussed at the March Member Action Committee meeting with a follow-up at the April board meeting. Another topic for discussion at MAC would be what does it mean to be a strategic partner with the Co-op.

More information about public banks can be found at www.publicbankinginstitute.org.

6. Review Action Items from February Board Meeting Minutes

Action items were reviewed, and all have been addressed.

7. Consent Calendar

Motion: Approve the March 5, 2020 consent calendar.

a) Approve February 6, 2020 board minutes.

Colin moved, 2nd from Kirsten, approved (6/0/0).

8. Review Staff Directives

Tabled

9. Report on Board & Directors Retreat

The board and management team participated in a facilitated retreat on Saturday, February 29. The board and management team agree on goals but have differing ideas of how to achieve them. Financial stability is at the top of the list of goals. There was an effort to improve communication between staff and the board. The board felt there was real honesty to begin building trust between the board and management. The overall consensus was that the retreat was time well spent.

10. GM Report

Sean was not able to attend the meeting. The board reviewed the submitted GM Report.

11. Reserved for Removed Consent Agenda Items

National Co-op Grocers (NCG) Contract

- James – the board is asked to sign an NCG contract every few years. There isn't much of a choice. It's a better contract than the one from five years ago.
- Colin – contract concerns include
 - o The contract lays out that NCG and members must commit to growth. Growth for its own sake should not be a goal.
 - o The contract limits information to paid staff, excluding the board. I'm concerned how that holds up to our bylaws and the board's right to information.
 - o There is no process required if NCG has a grievance with a member but there is a process vice versa. In a future contract there could be more balance between members and NCG. I think we should continue to try to improve the contract but at this time we need to sign it by the end of March.

Motion: Approve the member agreement between NCG and the Co-op and authorize Sean Nolan as the designated representative.

Kirsten moved, 2nd from James, approved (4/0/2).

12. Member Comment

- David – would like to see something in the next newsletter about the board retreat.
- It was mentioned that we might want to start rotating who writes the board reports.

13. New Business (items for next agenda):

- Public Banking – take a position
- Review proposed member benefits proposal
- Approved Securities Permit renewal
- Approve FY21 Budget
- Discuss NCG contract changes the board would like implemented
- Review staff directives
- Review strategic plan

Consensus reached to adjourn the March 5, 2020 meeting at 7:48pm and move into Executive Session.

Minutes by Emily Walter

**North Coast Co-op
Board of Directors Executive Session Minutes
March 5, 2020
Arcata Community Center**

Present at meeting:

Board Members: James Kloor (President/Treasurer), Colin Fiske (Vice President), Leah Stamper (*via phone*), Cheri Strong, Kirsten Lindquist, Roger

Absent Board Members: Laura Wright (Secretary)

Approved Guests: None

No reportable action taken.

Executive session ended at 8:10pm

Reported by James Kloor