



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2023 • 6 – 8pm

Zoom

Present at meeting:

Board Members: Brenda Harper (President), Mike Connors, Laura Jones, Roger, George WinterSun, Mimi Smith, Ellis Smith

Absent Board Members:

Co-op Employees: Emily Walter, Sean Nolan, Barney Doyle, Lawrence Fraser, Alex Villagrana

Member-owners: Kathleen Pelley, Joanne McGarry, Alina, Lucid, Varda Greenberg, Holly Hyatt, Aaquib Haq, Antonette Briot-Bersi, Marley Johnson

1. **Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 by Brenda and introductions were made.

2. **Agenda Review and Approval**

Agenda approved by consensus.

3. **Welcome New Board Members** – reported by Brenda

George Wintersun – 3-year Director term

Mimi Smith – 3-year Employee Director term

Ellis Smith – 2-year Employee Director term

4. **Member Comment Period**

- Roger – A worker was worried about increased theft at the Arcata store. Some of the out-of-town members would like a way to get their quarterly discount when they come to town, and not only during the Member Appreciation Month.
- Katheleen – I want to welcome all the new board members and especially thank the new employee board members for serving on the board. You have knowledge as employees that nobody else has.
- Lawrence – I'm part of the Boycott Divest and Sanction Israel movement. I think it's important that we do not stock and stop buying products that will support the ongoing genocide of Palestinian peoples. We had sanctions against Russia that worked, and I think they would work here as well.
- Alina – I think boycotting small businesses in Israel isn't helping anything. I know the Co-op stocks items for Hanukkah that are from Israel and boycotting those products is a step towards antisemitism. I don't believe boycotting small businesses is doing any good. As a Jewish person in the community, I feel threatened by this and fear for my own safety.
- Roger – The Co-op has historically had boycott movements around food issues, like Ben and Jerrys and Driscoll's. We generally don't drift into general, political social things at this magnitude. There are awful things going on all over the world and we should all do what we can to make the world better. What is going on is awful and we should be respectful of that. The first and foremost thing we can do is be peaceful here.

5. **Approve October 2023 Board Minutes**

Motion: Approve the October 2023 board minutes.

Motion by Roger, 2nd from George. All in favor, motion passes (7/0/0).

6. **Board Correspondence** – reported by Brenda

I got an email right before this meeting about boycotting products from Israel.

7. Annual Membership Meeting – reported by Brenda

The Annual Membership meeting took place at the D Street Neighborhood Center. We had an excellent speaker from the Foggy Bottom Boys. It was an inspiring presentation. James Kloor was the MC and did a great job. Emi, our store manager in Arcata, spoke, as well as Barney and Sean.

8. Finance Report – reported by Barney

Period 5. We had \$3.6M/36 days cash on hand. We recently moved a substantial amount of funds to an ICS location to protect the funds, and additionally we are earning good interest from the ICS accounts. We had a drop in Payroll compared to previous year. We are seeing higher benefit expenses. There was a ~\$73K loss in Period 5. Last year we saw a loss of ~\$90k, so we did better compared to last year. We just received our Q2 financials which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee later this month.

- Mike – I noticed the revenue is one of the lowest monthly revenues over the past year.
 - o Barney – We are seeing that Arcata is staying steady, but unfortunately Eureka is seeing fewer shoppers and smaller shopping basket size. We are doing things such as installing new lights, painting the building, and putting up new signs in Eureka to attract folks to shop there. The area where it's located can be sketchy so we are doing what we can to make improvements, including increasing security later with shorter daylight.
 - Sean – Period 5 is normally one of the slowest months of the year. And we do budget for lower sales and actually budget for a loss in sales during Period 5. But other periods bring in more profit and balance it all out.
 - o Mike – There has been talk about reporting that breaks out some of the elements of the stores. When can the board see that information?
 - Sean – We're working on that right now and it should be available by the next board meeting.
 - o Ellis – I would like a future discussion on the perception of the Eureka store as being sketchy.
- AGREEMENT: This discussion will be continued at the next Board meeting.

9. Board Offices

We will be deciding officer during Executive Session.

10. City of Arcata / Co-op Parking Lot – reported by Sean

The Arcata Co-op parking lot is getting a major makeover by the City of Arcata. The City is making 8th and 9th streets to be one way streets which required a change to the Co-op parking lot to work with the one way streets. The City of Arcata is funding the project. It's been disruptive and confusing but it's coming to a close and both ends of the parking lot are now open. There are some temporary arrows on the ground now to help. Once they're done with the parking lot they'll start working on the streets. We are getting quotes to get the parking lot resealed and striped. We did see a dip in sales during the construction, but we hope sales will go back up now that both sides of the parking lot are open.

11. Strategic Plan Quarterly Review – reported by Sean

- Brenda – Community Hub – National Co-op Grocers (NCG) Customer Service Survey Program.
 - o Sean – This survey is designed to be randomized and give an overall impression of the stores from our members. We are incentivizing the survey by offering a \$5 coupon.
- Roger – What is the timeline for creating a new Strategic Plan?
 - o Sean – We still have two more years to get a new plan together.
 - o Mike – I would like to ask the membership what they want in the Strategic Plan.

12. GM Report – reported by Sean

- Mike – What is happening with the generators?
 - o Sean – The generators are currently in the Eureka warehouse. We are waiting for the transfer switches before we can install the generators. We are anticipating receiving the transfer switches any day. I'm hoping they will be operational by the end of the month.
- Laura – It's nice to see sales increasing in Prepared Foods.

13. Member Comment

- Lawrence – I think the Co-op should get behind the BDS movement. We have a really big problem with performative leadership here in terms of gender diversity trainings that have intensified workplace discrimination. The last two years the pride display was not able to stay up the entire month of June. It doesn't feel like a safe space for Jewish customers – we have limited Hannukah displays. And in terms of accessibility, it's very difficult if you're in a wheelchair to access products. If the Co-op can take a hard line on genocide that would be a step in the right direction.
- Tonia – I agree with joining the BDS movement. I feel connected to the people dying in Palestine. I think this is the way we can show up for them in the community.
- Brenda – We have heard from members on both sides of this topic. War is not good for anybody. The board will be discussing this during Executive Session.

14. New Business (items for next agenda):

- Employee Speaker
- Eureka Co-op Discussion
- Management Speaker

Consensus reached to adjourn the November 2, 2023, meeting at 7:14pm and move into Executive Session.

Minutes by Emily Walter

North Coast Co-op Board of Directors Executive Session Minutes November 2, 2023

Present at meeting:

Board Members: Brenda Harper (President), Mike Connors, Laura Jones, Roger, George WinterSun, Mimi Smith, Ellis Smith

Absent Board Members:

Co-op Employees: Sean Nolan

Officers were chosen.

- President – Brenda Harper
- Vice President – Roger
- Secretary/Policies & Procedures Cmt. Chair – George WinterSun
- Treasurer/Finance Cmt. Chair – Michael Connors
- Nominating Committee Chair – Laura Jones

Executive Session ended at 8:19pm