

Los Alamos Co-op Board Meeting
Wednesday, 27 May 2020
Via ZOOM

Agenda item 1. Welcome and Introductions Call to order 6:03

Board members in attendance: Joshua Faulconer (President), Dave Hampton (vice-president), Steve Snapp (treasurer), Robi Mulford (Secretary), Jeff Jansen, Laila Badran, Jesse Samdahl, Jack Majure-Barklay, staff liaison

Also participating: Jim Fischer, General Manager, Beth Eutsler, Coop Member, Kate Gallagher, Outreach Coordinator

Agenda Review

Discussion of the role of the new accounting person is added to the agenda

Agenda approved as amended 7:0

Agenda item 2. Review of March Monthly Meeting Minutes

March minutes approved as submitted 7:0.

Agenda item 3. Review of April 22 Monthly Meeting Minutes

March minutes approved as submitted 7:0.

Agenda items 4 and 5. Review of April 29 **and May 14 Weekly**
Check-in Meeting Minutes

Because these weekly meetings contain some material that constitutes executive session, Board members require additional time to re-read the minutes and ascertain that the boundary between publishable content and executive session is correctly delineated. Approval will occur at a later date.

Agenda item 6. Open Member/Owner Time and Comments

Beth Eutsler, Member-Owner, wonders how these last three months have been at the Coop. She is happy to see well-stocked shelves and in particular happy to see meat on the shelves.

Steve reports that the store is doing well financially, well in morale, and that it is time for the store to settle in and prepare to compete effectively with the soon-to-open Natural Grocers.

Agenda item 7. GM Reporting

Jim reports that the Point of Sale (POS) system contract is signed, and that we are waiting for install and set-up. The POS system will provide us with an online catalog and e-sales capability, and will enable the store to support a loyalty system.

The meat department is doing very well and produce is also doing very well. Deli is recovering, adapting to new practices, and out-performing Deli departments at other Coops.

Hero pay will continue through the next two weeks, after which it may be possible to supplant this bonus with tips from the curbside service.

Curbside is working, with several new employees who are proving useful elsewhere in the store as well. Some of these new employees may be long-term, and a permanent benefit to the store.

Fire inspection occurred today, requiring a few fixes which were made immediately.

May is always a slow month for sales. The majority sales were to non-members last week. Jim suggests signing up new members with a bonus.

Kate reports on membership tracking. Details are presented in the section on Community Outreach, Agenda Item 11.

Agenda item 8. Staff Auxiliary Board Reporting

Jack's term as staff Auxiliary is drawing to a close. While the board is happy for Jack to continue in the absence of another candidate, a new Staff Auxiliary Board Member will be sought. Jack wants to prepare the new candidate to take over the position, and would like very clear expectations as to the role of the Staff Auxiliary Board Member. Can the board provide a job description or a set of tasks?

Laila wrote a job description at one time and sent it to Jesse. The role of staff liaison is to be available for staff to speak to candidly, and to present information to the board without interference from the GM, or filtering through the GM's perspective.

At present, the staff feels welcome to talk to the board, but the board feels the position still has value and should be retained. Regardless of whether we extend Jack's tenure or get a new Staff Auxiliary Board Member, let us be sure we get a vote from the staff or at least more staff input into the choice of staff liaison.

Jack's limited role as HR liaison is confined to reporting metrics. (See under Agenda item 14.) The board finds there is no conflict of interest between Jack serving further as Staff Auxiliary Board Member and also as the in-store HR representative.

Agenda item 9. X3 Report: Financial Conditions for Q1 2020

Jim reports compliance on most points of X3.

Timely bookkeeping records are needed, and we are looking forward to Jack improving performance and timeliness, so the financial records can be reviewed at each meeting.

The assets to liability ratio is still less than 1, but is approaching 1 as assets build up.

Sales are good, cash flow is good, but debt is still a bit high.

X3 Approved 6:0. (Robi absent for this part of the meeting)

Agenda item 10. X-1 Customer Survey Discuss delay due to coronavirus and discuss questions

We have previously discussed delaying this survey until normalcy resumes so that we measure store performance under normal conditions. With store operations in a stable new mode, it is now time to proceed with evaluation of store operations.

Since there have been some adjustments to store operation, perhaps it is appropriate to add some additional questions regarding adjusted hours, curbside service, the cleaning station, and other improved aspects of store hygiene.

The decision is taken to make a separate coronavirus survey, with 4 or 5 questions.

“Thank you for shopping here during this time period. We’d like to feedback on how we are doing during this time period. How do you like x, y, z,” and add a comments section. Jim would like to start promptly.

In addition to putting a membership application in every basket, this small survey could be added to every basket.

For the large annual member survey, we will keep the same questions, with timing left to Jim’s discretion. Online is a good format right to use now, because everyone is online anyway.

Kate can easily prepare a survey in Survey Monkey.

Agenda item 11. Community Outreach

With the majority of our sales currently being made by non-members, getting new memberships would be a good mechanism for capturing this new business permanently.

Throwing an application in every basket would be one approach to capturing this business.

Kate presents current Outreach activities, including

- 3 volunteers working in garden, planning so that never more than two at a time, with masks.
- Revolt coffee is open to parking outside the Coop one day a week, which would solve our lack of deli coffee. Might draw new customers to the coop, and new customers to Revolt Coffee.
- Magazine “Los Foodies” wants to do a sharp video in the store.
- Jim has decided to do a sponsorship in the Abiquiu newspaper, so Kate wrote a welcome to the Coop writeup, which is now up in Abiquiu News.
- Sending out requests per Steve, the newsletters with the Coop sales. People expect this newsletter and inquire if it does not go out in a timely fashion, so they must be reading it.

A new membership pamphlet was discussed, which will include an immediate cash incentive for people to sign up.

Kate is keeping up the social media presence and sending out the newsletter. Store extended hours will be greeted with enthusiasm.

Kate will now attend Board meetings, probably remotely, and present metrics.

Steve has 4 metrics for Kate to present every month, in order to measure relationship with our tribe.

1. Membership Renewal (% Renew Year of Year, shoot for 100% or nearly).
2. New Members Year over Year Growth,
3. Engagement with Content (% Engagement with the Tribe. How can we measure this? (Fanaticism)
4. Monthly Activities / Events

and other metrics at Kate's discretion.

IT Retail will probably provide Kate with these data.

Let us look forward to competing aggressively with NG. Steve feels we have many advantages over NG, despite their new building and location. Our advantages are myriad, our Tribe, our outreach, our deli, and others.

Dave's question. Canyon Rim trail was adopted by the Coop Board. Jesse knows. This was set up some time ago, so that the Board was responsible for one day every few months in maintenance. What outreach function can this serve? Can we get members to help? On a trail day? Jesse has Covid guidelines for trailbuilding from Professional Trailbuilders Association to assist in conducting this activity.

The board is in agreement that we should continue to sponsor the trail, which puts the Coop name on the new sign being prepared by the county. This is a good piece of marketing so close to the Coop. The trail maintenance committee is now Jesse.

Agenda item 12. Staff Survey Committee

Jesse and Jim obtained a quote from Sarah Dahl of Colluminate for \$3900 for the complete survey. They will schedule a staff survey with her at her earliest convenience.

Agenda item 13. Employment Manual—Check on Status of New Manual

The external consultant edited the grievance section of the Employee Manual to adjust it to the new external HR service. She removed a full page and put in a small amount of new content. The board hasn't read it, and will approve the change at a future meeting.

Agenda item 14. HR-Grievance Policy Review

The store is proceeding with implementing the 4 new elements from UNFI, including HR. Third-party HR will be advantageous in separating griping from actual HR concerns, and will have the training and professionalism to speak and act most effectively, and to abide by applicable laws, rules and regulations.

The in-store HR person (and accountant) can be a facilitator and liaison to the external service, but the first resort will be to the HR tip-line and external HR service. The in-store HR person can include metrics regarding HR with the set of accounting metrics already being prepared monthly.

Agenda item 14a. Current Role of the Accountant/HR Position (Added)

Historically, the Board has hired the accountant and HR person for the store, in order to maintain independent monitoring of the GM. With the outsourcing of a majority of the accounting and also HR, it may be that this check on the GM is no longer needed. There is no mention of the structure in the Bylaws. Without clear definition of the relationship, it is possible for the accountant to assume authority not assigned to the position. Although the "dotted-line" relationship between the accountant and the Board is not uncommon in similar businesses, Todd (Colluminate consultant) says there is no other Coop that uses this structure.

The downside of the structure is that the accountant is in the awkward position of both answering to the GM and monitoring the GM. Since the board already oversees the GM directly, it may be redundant to have a second channel of oversight. Where there is financial disorder, the GM should be able to take action without the ponderous and time-consuming filter of the Board.

Until we determine, what the UNFI accounting service will provide, we will reconsider the board's relationship with the accountant, but until that time, the board will retain authority over the selection, hiring, and firing of the accountant, but will devolve that authority for the time being to the GM. In the future we will establish hard boundaries for the accountant position.

The accountant is expected to present an accurate P&L and a balance sheet complete to the previous month-end at every board meeting.

Agenda item 15. Colluminate's Events and Webinars

Colluminate courses and webinars are available for the board to take. We should select some.

Agenda item 16. Community Immunity

No discussion in addition to that under "Community Outreach," Agenda item 11.

Agenda item 17. Closings and Other business

The next Board Meeting is June 24.

Monthly GM/Board meetings: Jeff Jansen is scheduled for June 10.

David Hampton is scheduled for July 12.

Adjourn 8:20