

**Cambridge Food Co-op  
Minutes of Advisory Board Meeting  
Wednesday, October 26, 2016**

Meeting called to order at 6:30 by Susan Sullivan, Board Chair

**Advisers Present:**

David Bayne  
Kendal Dwyer  
Claire Hartten  
Isaac Labish, Vice Chair  
Marcia Reiss, Secretary  
Hannah Stevens, Treasurer  
Susan Sullivan, Chair  
Kathleen Ward

Cory McMillan, Store Manager

**Absent:**

Megan Harrington  
Peg Winship

**Co-op Members Present:**

Terry Tietelbaum

**Approval of minutes**

*Susan Sullivan noted that Hannah Stevens might not run for re-election to the Board as previously stated in the September minutes. However, it was agreed to leave the minutes as they stand, in reflection of what transpired at the meeting. Motion was made by Kathleen Ward to approve minutes from the September 28, 2016 meeting of the Board of Advisors. Isaac Labish seconded the motion. Vote: All in favor, motion approved. Minutes from the meeting accepted with no changes.*

**Updates & Committee Reports:**

**Nominating Committee / Board Nominations** – Susan distributed bios for all Board candidates. Isaac reviewed election procedures for the upcoming vote and noted that future elections may run differently based on pending proposed changes to the By-laws. The Board acknowledged the efforts of Thom Jones, and the Nominating Committee, for finding such a great group of candidates. Susan noted that Megan Harrington would be stepping down from the Board, effective immediately, due to the demands of parenting a newborn baby. She thanked Megan for her efforts on the Board.

**Building Committee** – Marcia Reiss provided an update, stating that all rental spaces, including the Board's current meeting room, will be occupied as of November 1. It was noted that there are plenty of alternative meeting spaces available for the Board to hold meetings. Marcia also reported on efforts to explore grants for infrastructure development from the Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. Claire Hartten and Cory McMillan suggested some links and other possibilities for funding, and will forward to Marcia.

**Fundraising Committee** – Susan reported that the October 8 tag sale fundraiser was a great success, raising over \$1500 for the Co-op. The Board acknowledged the efforts of

many supporters, including George Scala of The Cambridge Assisted Living Residence, for allowing us to set up on their green, The Monks of New Skete for donating pop-up tents, Cambridge United Presbyterian Church for loaning tables and chairs, organizer Kim McMillan, set-up helpers Isaac Labish, Thom Jones, David Bayne, Charlie Reiss, Claire Hartten, Betsy Shiland, Melissa Carll, Kim McMillan, Steve Sanford, and Susan Sullivan, workers on sale day Peg Winship, Hannah Stevens, Marcia Reiss, Marty Kaukas, Betsy, Kim, Claire, Isaac, Thom, Steve, Susan and Doug Reed and all the marvelous members who donated quality items and baked goods to sell. Several loads of donations were delivered to good will and the library. The Outreach Committee has suggested some other possible events to raise funds, including a basket raffle, hot dog party, etc. Susan noted that she met someone associated with the fly-fishing museum in Manchester who may be able to support additional fundraising efforts or new initiatives, based on his Board experience with the museum. Claire suggested that members host cyclists during the annual bike race and donate proceeds to the Co-op. The discussion was cut short due to the fact that race may not take place next year.

### **Discussion of Finances:**

Hannah presented a third quarter report on Co-op finances, with comparison of budget and actual numbers. The Co-op is showing a very modest loss as of September, but anticipating a very modest profit at year-end. She noted that the Co-op historically does not focus on making a profit, but suggested that this model may merit reconsideration, to have funds for building repairs or unforeseen expenses. Susan noted sales are flattening across the natural foods market. Kathleen noted this is happening in other sectors as well.

It was noted that Cory has made big improvements in inventory and purchasing strategies. As a result, the profit margin has grown enormously in the past three months, meaning that the Co-op is able to hold on to more cents for every dollar spent on inventory. The Board acknowledged and thanked Cory and the staff for their efforts. Cory noted that the adjustments to inventory and purchasing may mean items are out of stock periodically, but he said the staff are trying to weed "dead" products off the shelves and focus on what is selling, turning a critical eye to increasing sales and offering more specials and discounts throughout the store.

Susan noted that Melissa has now been on the staff for one year as Assistant Manager, and that it is clear that she and Cory are working well as a team. The Board acknowledged and thanked Melissa for her hard work and noted that her presence is felt positively in the store.

Kathleen brought up a question regarding accrual and cash reporting of the Co-op financials. Hannah offered to output financials for a comparison, and will present that information to the Finance Committee, Kathleen and other Board members at a future date.

Hannah also presented a Balance Sheet, and indicated that there are some significant stressors on the Co-op right now, and that all these documents will need to be referred to in budget planning for next year. She states that overall the Co-op has strengthened its position but continues to be under stress. The cumulative effect of the minimum wage increases will continue to be a big financial strain. The Co-op is anticipating a loss on retail store income, but that was already projected into the budget from the start. It has been a challenging year - the store will end in a safe place, but not as healthy as we would like. The Finance Committee hopes to have a budget proposal to the Board for review at the December Board meeting.

Susan presented a copy of the Stone Mountain Co-op (Poultney, VT) membership report for perusal by the Board.

**New Business:**

**Review of proposed policy changes** – The Board considered a policy change proposal to allow members, or Board members, to get shift credit for work on the Board, committees, or other exceptional contributions to the Co-op. There was some confusion about the distinction between various aspects of the policy. Members did not agree about the change, with several people stating that they didn't feel Board or other extra work should merit shift credit, while some expressed a strong desire to offer the credit. Cory stated that he feels it's important to incentivize some Co-op work because it has become more complex. Hannah noted that at least half of the time that the Co-op has been in operation, shift credit has been offered to Board members. Susan agreed to take the proposals back to committee for clarification prior to the December Board meeting. Therefore no policy changes will be proposed at the Membership Meeting on 11/6.

**November 6 membership meeting agenda** – The Board will hold an election for new members. Cory will present on the Slow Food movement, there will be a discussion of the long-term future for the Co-op, including looking at financial stressors and current trends for coops. There will also be a discussion and brainstorm session among all present. Hannah will provide a financial update with an explanation of adjustments made this year.

**Local Farm Connection & Gleaning** – Claire opened a discussion about connecting with local farms to have the Co-op or members participate in 'gleaning' excess produce from farms to offer to members. Cory noted that there were some logistical hurdles involved with this idea. Michelle Nagai suggested that there might be some alternative benefits to connecting the Co-op and members with local farms. Susan noted that linkages with local community are very important.

**Important Dates for 2016 and Beyond:**

Nov. 16, 2016 - Board of Advisors meet at the home of Claire Hartten (please RSVP)  
Dec. 14, 2016 - Board of Advisors meet, location TBD

**Attachments (available by request)**

Third Quarter Finances (3 pages)  
News for Co-op Members and Board Candidate Bios (2 pages)  
Cambridge Co-op Policies, as of Nov. 1, 2015 (3 pages)

**Adjournment**

Meeting closed by Susan Sullivan at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Nagai, Board Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date