

**Littleton Consumer Cooperative Society**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Minutes: Regular Board Meeting**  
**April 23, 2018**

**Meeting convened at the Co-op break room @ 5:02 pm.**

**Members Present:** Patricia O'Brien, Tom Southworth, Mark Hollenbach, Marcie Hornick, Laura Walls, Charlie Wolcott, Luther Kinney, Alyssa Sherburn, and Marni Hoyle.

**Staff Present:** Ed King, Chris Whiton, Minnie Cushing, Kristina Zontini, and Charise Baker.

**Guests Present:** Wayne Ruggles

**Agenda Items:**

**1. Housekeeping & Governance:**

- a. Laura motioned, Alyssa seconded and the board voted unanimously to accept the March minutes as presented.
- b. Mark motioned, Trish seconded and the board voted unanimously to accept Ed's compliance with B1-Financial Condition and Activities to include Q1 Financials and with B4 Membership Rights and Responsibilities.

**2. General Manager's Report:**

- a. Quarter 1 Financial Report:
  1. Sales were \$91 over budget.
  2. Sales growth was about 22% over Q1 2017.
  3. Cash minus reserves is on budget at \$497k.
  4. Net loss of \$9k in Q1 beat the projected loss of \$18k. Q1 is always the hardest quarter of all to meet budget goals.
  5. Labor was 0.15% above budget. The labor budget is challenging and this figure is acceptable.
  6. Major budget variances include Utilities under by \$6k, Repairs over by \$6k and Marketing over by \$7k.
- b. Voting for Annual Meeting opened and approx. 117 members have cast ballots. This is a faster start to voting than in previous years.
- c. Market Match continues to be popular and funding is secure through June. A FINI Grant is in the works for further funding. If that grant falls through, there are possibilities to be explored about self funding the program. One idea is charging for bags, which have a cost to the Co-op if approx. \$28k annually.
- d. Ed recapped the NCG Spring Meeting. Ed stated that NCG is currently looking for a new CEO. Of the almost 200 Co-ops that are part of NCG – six closed last year and 12 are currently on the watch list. Increased competition is believed to be a contributing factor.
- e. There are several, much larger Co-ops that stepped back from offering e-commerce shopping. The reasons for this include zero sales growth, increased labor costs and the financial costs associated with the program. At this time, it has been decided that we will put any e-commerce plans on hold. AGNE does not have plans to establish an e-commerce platform. Ed stated it would be nice if NCG supported a universal POS system that streamlined a platform that would unify all Co-ops, creating a stronger financial position. NCG believes that individual Co-ops should focus more on what makes them different.
- f. Marcie will participate in the CDS calls with Michael Healy. Luther also expressed interest and possible dates and times were discussed.
- g. Topics for the September retreat include the NCG 2017 theme of "Telling our Story" as told from competitive angle that might appeal to customers and a mission statement review.
- h. Board Orientation is tentatively scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm at the Co-op. Orientation materials are available on the Board Drive. All board members are welcome to attend. Technical assistant is still available for accessing the Board Drive.
- i. Sidewalk upgrades and crosswalk installations are postponed until spring 2019.
- j. The NCG topic for 2018 is Customer Service at Co-ops.
- k. Competition update:
  1. Of the Top 50 food retailers, there are nine within 25 miles of the Co-op.
  2. The merger of RiteAid and Albertson is expected to be finalized this summer.
  3. The new Dollar General in Bethlehem is hiring and should be open in a few months.
  4. Construction of the new Cumberland Farms has begun.

### 3. Board Issues:

- a. Bound copies of the Audit Report were made available to anyone who wanted one.
- b. Trish, Mark and Marni received flowers as a thank you for their service on the board. Pizza and drinks helped round out the celebration.
- c. It was suggested that a committee be formed to start reviewing the mission statement. It was also suggested that perhaps a vision statement was needed. That statement would be focused on where we would like to be as a Co-op.
- d. The board reviewed section D1 of the Governance Policy.
- e. Each board member has been tasked with picking one month of the planning calendar and suggesting a topic or question for board education. The calendar is available on the board drive. Please allow enough time for Ed to research the question/topic suggested.
- f. A question was asked about having department extensions available for customers who call. This question centered around the volume of calls on Pizza Friday. Ed stated that having extensions was discussed when the new phone system was being installed. This would require an automated answering service that seemed too impersonal and the concern that departments would not answer the ring, especially if the department employee was working on the sale floor. Because of these two concerns, it was decided that department extensions did not fit our needs.
- g. Trish thanked all board members for working with her through the past years. Tom thanked Trish for her years of service with a poem titled "To Be of Use."
- h. Everyone present thanked all outgoing board members. Ed stated how important volunteer service is to the Co-op.

### 4. Other Topics:

- a. The board was informed about the new hiring orientation practice of having tour guides and ambassadors. It is hoped that by having guides/ambassadors that employee retention will increase and the turnover rate will reduce.
- b. The Annual Meeting is Wednesday from 12-7. Plans include a slide show running all day and a "Meet the Candidate" from 4-7. Current board members have been requested to attend at some point during the day and to stay as long as possible.
- c. Future dates were established. They are:
  1. May 12<sup>th</sup> – Anniversary Celebration
  2. September 9<sup>th</sup> – Board Retreat
  3. September 15<sup>th</sup> – NFCA Board Peer to Peer Training in the Hanover area.

Laura motioned and Charlie seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm. This motion passed unanimously.

**The next scheduled meeting is May 21st in the Co-op break room to begin at 5:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by:  
Charise Baker