



**ASHLAND
FOOD CO+OP**
— BOARD OF DIRECTORS —

Board Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2023

APPROVED

Directors attending: Mark Gibbs, Joanna Wnorowski, Kevin Bendaw, Bob Kaplan, Melissa Scudder, Erica Thompson, Larry Cooper and Ernesto Soto. **Others attending:** Nick Hardee, General Manager, Abby Lazerow, Board Administrator.

Facilitator: Larry Cooper Timekeeper: Erica Thompson. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Larry Cooper.

ITEM #	ITEM DESCRIPTION	DISCUSSION
1.	Positive Affirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Erica Thompson led the positive affirmation.
2.	Land Acknowledgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Melissa Scudder led the land acknowledgement
3.	Owners Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Owner Judy Emanuel had sent an email to the Co-op about the Black Lives Matter sign. She had concerns that the Chicago BLM organization stood with Palestine. She shared a photo of her grandparents who were murdered in Ukraine and said she was concerned that there is increased antisemitism in the world and in our community. She suggested having a sign that said "We support all of our Black friends and neighbors." The Board appreciated her sharing her feelings and acknowledged the ancestral trauma that all groups have had to experience.
4.	Announcements and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Erica Thompson reported that the Ashland School Foundation's Monster Dash was very successful. The Co-op had a tent at the event where children could build their own trail mix; six AFC employees volunteered to help.The employee holiday party December 2. Board directors should RSVP.
5.	Agenda Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Done.
6.	Consent Agenda	<p>The following Consent Agenda documents were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Board Meeting Minutes, 10-11-23Executive Session Minutes, 10-11-23Board Finance Report, 9-23
7.	Provender Conference Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nick Hardee reported he attended the recent 47th Provender conference in Hood River. It was attended by private stores, co-ops and collectives in the natural foods movement. The

		<p>conference increases solidarity between businesses. Former AFC board director Annie Hoy was the MC of the conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annie Hoy reported Megan Westgate from the Non-GMO project gave an excellent talk. Mark Mulcahey from Columinate spoke about joy in the workplace. He led exercises about how joy in our lives and work is so important. • Kim Gibson Clark, CEO of Coconut Bliss, spoke about being a woman in a male-dominated world.
8.	AFC Gives Committee Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melissa Scudder reported the November register round up organization will raise funds for a health program for Klamath Tribe members. • The Board discussed the AFC Gives Funding document. The policy would allow the AFC Gives committee to distribute funds up to \$1000 for single emergency gifts or grants. The committee would make a report to the Board if this mechanism has been used. • The Board will vote by email by January 1, 2024 whether to approve the AFC Gives Funding Policy document. • Committee members are getting ready to review application rubrics for the coming year. • The committee recently discussed the legacy buttons for donations at the register. Shoppers may donate at the register anytime to the Food Bank, Access, Red Cross, and the Ashland Schools Foundation. • The committee also discussed whether AFC could share a list of links of local organizations for owners to consider for donation.
9.	EDI Committee Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erica reported the EDI committee met today. • Employees celebrated Dia de los Muertos at the store; this event was meaningful and will be repeated next year. • January is Poverty Awareness Month and January 15 is MLK day. The CAN program will also be promoted in January. • There will be a special speaker in the classroom for Black History month. • The EDI committee recommended adopting NCG's 8th principle as it was written. • Committee members discussed employees' experiences interfacing with customers. Training for conflict resolution could be offered to make sure staff feel empowered and know they do not have to accept abuse from customers. • The EDI recommended helping fund affinity groups in the schools. The Marketing Department may be able to donate food for some events. • The committee discussion about the BLM sign discussion was tabled because facilitator Marvin Woodward was absent. • The Board discussed updating the outdoor Black Lives Matter poster and proposed the new wording "At the Ashland Food Co-op, we believe that BLACK LIVES MATTER." • The Board discussed adopting the 8th cooperative principle of "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion"

		<p>recommended by NCG. Directors were in support of the concept but wanted time to develop meaningful wording that was uniquely our own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Kevin attended a recent EDI Committee meeting and offered them the writing an 8th principle in our own words, EDI committee members said they did not want to write an 8th principle themselves. • Melissa will write a letter to the EDI Committee to let them know that the Board is in support of the idea of the 8th principle and that the Board wants to take the time to develop their own wording that reflects the values of the store and our community.
10.	Employee Initiative Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Kaplan reported the Employee Experience Initiative had wanted to invite an AFCEA representative to participate. • Kevin proposed that an AFCEA representative be invited to participate. The Board unanimously agreed to invite an AFCEA representative to participate in the Employee Experience.
11.	Board Retreat Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board retreat will be held on December 2 from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Details and an agenda are still being worked out.
12.	Board Finance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Treasurer Larry Cooper reported that this past month there were 8042 shoppers compared to 7969 last year. The number of total owners has increased from 12,668 to 13,045. • The store has \$7, 683,000 in CDs, earning an average of 4.8%. This is a major source of potential funds for a refresh project. • The Finance Committee asked the Financial Manager to determine how much cash should be retained as a reserve to protect AFC from future emergencies. Projections will be estimated by early January. • The Finance Committee is also considering costs for carrying out strategic initiatives and how to budget for those in addition to the refresh. The FC is also considering the capacity for the business to take on conventional debt. • The FC discussed sharing financial information with owners. It is possible to share summary financial statements without the numerous line items.
13.	GM Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GM Nick Hardee reported Oct '23 sales were up 2.2% compared to sales in October '22, and up 4.17% to the prior year. This fluctuation could be due to a 10% coupon. Owners can use the 10% coupon for Thanksgiving or Christmas. • AFC has partnered with the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department to adopt North Mountain Park, which has lost program and maintenance funding. Starting in March, AFC will have 3-4 events per year for maintenance (pruning, fire mitigation, cleaning) of the park. Employees, board directors and owners will be invited to participate. • The Prepared Foods Department is accepting pre-orders for holiday meals. • The classroom gas cooktop has been changed to an induction stove. • The roof has been leaking for many years; the GM is getting quotes for it to be fixed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022 Sustainability Report was recently published. Nick is working to get the store's 2030 goals in line and is developing a roadmap of benchmarks and milestones. AFC is also accepting applications for a Sustainability intern who will join for a year. In 2024 Chris Byrne will have a full-time position as Sustainability Coordinator.
14.	Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Consent Agenda documents were unanimously approved. • Nick will ask Mel about developing a public financial report. • The Board unanimously recommended the BLM sign should read "At the Ashland Food Co-op, we believe that BLACK LIVES MATTER." Melissa will send an email to the EDI committee. • The Board approved the appointment of an AFCEA representative to the Employee Experience Initiative team. • Nick will provide the board with his 6-month goals. • Kevin will confer with Joanna about scheduling the 6-month evaluation of Nick in January of February. • The Executive Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 3; Abby will confirm this new time will work with the Board officer and Nick's schedules.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m. Minutes were prepared by Abby Lazerow, Board Administrator.