

**BisMan Community Food Cooperative  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Cooperative Community Room  
711 E. Sweet Ave.  
Bismarck, N.D.  
Wednesday, April 18, 2018**

Board members present: President Kevin Martin, Vice President Beth Schatz Kaylor, Treasurer Dina Baird, Secretary Dale Wetzel, Emily Brown, Erin Huntimer, Ellen Knudsen. Board member Tracy Potter was absent.

Others present: General Manager Carmen Hoffner, Grocery Manager Cory Knudsen.

President Martin called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Carmen Hoffner presented the general manager's report. She said a technician from Electronic Cash Register Software (ECRS) of Boone, N.C., which supplies the cooperative's checkout stations and point-of-sale software, had visited for three days to train employees about the software's capabilities and field questions.

Hoffner said the store's entire staff met with the technician, and employees had many questions that will take time to answer. Hoffner described the training time as very productive, and she said it was useful to establish a relationship with a person who is familiar with the store. She said the cooperative pays ECRS \$500 a month for tech support.

Hoffner said an inventory contractor that the cooperative has hired would be available July 1 to begin the work.

Dina Baird asked about the cooperative's labor costs in relationship to the store's sales. Hoffner said it is calculated according to a formula that includes the store's cost of goods, its sales, and the number of employee hours worked. She said the store's labor cost percentage has been brought down considerably, and is in line with where it should be. She said labor costs are reviewed weekly.

Beth Schatz Kaylor asked about the store's hiring plans. Hoffner said she was looking to hire a delicatessen employee and a part-time cashier. She said notices would be posted on BisMan Online and Facebook, and included in the cooperative's weekly email.

Dina Baird presented the finance report. Board members discussed the status of member promissory note loans to the cooperative, when they are due, and plans for repaying them or renegotiating their terms.

Emily Brown asked about paying employees for unused paid time off. Hoffner said there was a cap of 88 hours per year on the amount of unused time off that an employee may accumulate. The cap increases to 120 hours for employees who have worked at the cooperative for at least three years.

Hoffner said employees who work 38 hours a week or more get 3.92 hours of paid time off every pay period. (This time may be used either for vacation or sick leave.) She said there have been discussions about whether employees should be paid annually for their unused paid time off, or whether it is a “use it or lose it” situation.

Hoffner said she just wanted to alert the board to the store’s paid-time-off policy. She said she was not asking for any changes. Board members discussed various methods for offering paid time off, and how to encourage employees to take occasional vacations.

Hoffner said she would be going through the cooperative’s policy manual. Ellen Knudsen said she had been gathering materials for a board policy review, and she has found “some really good handbooks” to use as guides. Hoffner said some policies had been changed, such as those for employee discounts. Knudsen said the policy manual refers to the cooperative’s human resources department, “which we do not have. That needs to be changed.”

Beth Schatz Kaylor presented the marketing report. She said visits to the cooperative’s website are up, which she credited to search and AdWords advertising. Facebook engagement is slightly down, because we had fewer events than we did in February. She said events are important to drive social media engagement and bring people into the store. Carmen Hoffner said the second anniversary of the store’s opening was coming up in mid-May, which will be a four-day celebration.

Schatz Kaylor said Facebook “just dings you for being a business,” and there may be more social media engagement on Instagram “because they’re a little bit more organic in the way they’re displaying content.” She said stories have been pitched to local magazines and publications.

Schatz Kaylor said KFYZ-TV offers a 12-month advertising contract at \$495 a month, that could introduce an ad about the cooperative into the station’s morning TV rotation. KFYZ produces the ad at no charge as part of the agreement. “That is an entry point to hit mass media.”

Erin Huntimer said she has inquired about what it takes to get a KFYZ Kafe show at the cooperative. She said she would get details about cost. Dale Wetzel said one of the board members may even be able to host the show.

Dina Baird said the cooperative should have a goal of averaging \$11,000 in daily gross sales, and the average has been closer to \$8,300. “I’m just wondering what we need to do to keep moving up. Every problem that we have is solved by more sales. I think we need to seriously talk about spending some money to get people through the doors. This is going to hopefully be our busy season, when all the great new produce comes in.”

Chairman Martin said the cooperative now has a marketing budget and marketing committee – where do we draw the line between store operations and what the marketing committee does? He said he, Carmen Hoffner and Beth Schatz Kaylor perhaps should meet and spell out “who is responsible for what, and go from there.”

Board members discussed various advertising options, including social media, direct mail, local television and radio

Emily Brown presented a report from the in-store engagement committee. Brown asked about any promotions the cooperative was holding for Earth Day (Sunday, April 22). Hoffner said there would be discounts on bulk sales, and for customers who bring their own bags to carry their purchases.

Emily Brown said she and a friend would also be leading a group bike ride on Earth Day from the cooperative to the new Gideon’s Brewery in Lincoln and back. She said a celebration, with simple food and refreshments, would be held at 2 p.m. May 16 at the cooperative, and state and local dignitaries would be invited. Emily Brown said a bike helmet fitting could also be scheduled.

Emily Brown said the cooperative is registered to participate in the Band Day parade in Bismarck on May 11. Cooperative T-shirt wearing is encouraged and fruit and vegetable costumes are available.

Emily Brown said Montana-Dakota Utilities is coordinating the May installation of a food pantry at the cooperative to give local gardeners a place to share extra produce.

Ellen Knudsen discussed the rewriting of the cooperative’s policy register. She said the first meeting of a board working group to undertake the project will be held at 6 p.m. April 24 at 212 E. Main.

Kevin Martin said the paperwork to renew the cooperative’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamp) permit has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cory Knudsen said a SNAP administrator had called the store recently to ask about the renewal. Kevin Martin said he would follow up.

Emily Brown discussed the cooperative’s food policy statement. She said she was unsure whether there was a final draft of the statement, and more work and review is needed. “I’m going to read through and edit, and see if it’s easy to clean it up and have something that makes sense, without having to change the intent of the language. If I can’t, then we will reconvene the food policy committee. I don’t think it will be too hard. Hopefully, I won’t have to do that.”

Emily Brown said Steve Nagel, a Mandan chiropractor and former board member, is willing to help to construct charts explaining the meaning of certain farm practices. These would be posted around the store.

Beth Schatz Kaylor gave a report on a possible procedure for evaluating the performance of the cooperative’s general manager, including documentation and guidance that will be needed, and a procedure for allowing the general manager to respond to any evaluation.

Dina Baird suggested establishing a timeline for drafting a guide for evaluating the general manager, with a goal of having it finished by August. Kevin Martin said evaluation guidelines and the board's expectations should be drafted by the end of the cooperative's fiscal year.

Kevin Martin said he, Beth Schatz Kaylor and Ellen Knudsen met with Jerry Doan, the cooperative's landlord, earlier on April 18. Martin described Doan as friendly and personable, but said Doan was not interested in renegotiating the store's building lease.

Dale Wetzel moved that the meeting go into executive session to discuss employee issues and contracts. Ellen Knudsen seconded. All board members present voted yes. The board went into executive session at 7:57 p.m.

Erin Huntimer moved that the board go back into open session. Dale Wetzel seconded. The board went back into open session at 8:37 p.m.

Dale Wetzel moved that the meeting adjourn. Dina Baird seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.