

TPSS Board of Representatives Meeting

June 16, 2022

Open Session Minutes

Board present: Bob Gibson (BG), Diane Curran (DC), Elizabeth Teuwen (ET), Adam Frank (AF), Susan Cho (SC), Esteban de Dobrzynski (ED), Fred Feinstein (FF), Katea Stitt (KS), Kathy Tsantiris (KT)

Minutes submitted by: Solveig Mortensen (SM), Board Administrator

Meeting held by zoom and called to order at 6:30 pm

Board ACTION:

- The Board approved the May 24, 2022 Open Session Board meeting minute as amended.
- The Board approved the monitoring report for policy L-9, Membership, as submitted by the GM.
- DC moved and the following was approved by consensus: in regards to the labor issues at and request to join a boycott of Amy's Kitchen, the Board will create a blog post to inform shoppers/members about the issue and will post this information on the Board's in-store bulletin board t; additionally, the Board will reply to the member that inquired about TPSS Co-op's joining the boycott [done by BG] and ask MH to continue dialogue with his contacts at National Cooperative Grocer to keep us informed about developments on the issue.

The Board noted that MH is out on leave until June 27th.

Topical calendar: ET and SM met and discussed the purpose of the Topical Calendar and added items to it. ET noted that certain things such as election dates, call for annual review and revision. There are also time-sensitive actions noted on the Topical Calendar which remain static and transfer from board to board.

Member Forum: DC gave positive feedback about the Co-op's most recent newsletter and noted the work that the Co-op's new Community Engagement Manager (CEM), Chloe Thompson (CT) has been doing. Board members planned to share the newsletter on their neighborhood listservs.

The Board shared their experiences of signing people up for TPSS Co-op's Time for Change initiative. Board members commented that people's reactions to the campaign varied greatly, from asking what the catch was to commending this kind of action coming from a grocery store. BG added that he enjoyed learning about the CEM's projects in person and seeing her in action with members and shoppers. The Montgomery County Food Council will be having a

celebration, TPSS Co-op is one of the primary sponsors, and Mike Houston (the GM) and CT will be there.

Board Business:

Membership meeting report and discussion: FF reported that the regular, monthly membership meeting was not held in June 2022 for a personal reason but may still be rescheduled. FF summarized that there was a good turnout for the recent, spring membership meeting. Attendees were very engaged and might have talked past the ending time. BG noted that it was nice for people to meet in person again as well.

Amy's Kitchen discussion: BG opened the discussion noting the articles and links sent on the topic of a campaign to boycott Amy's Kitchen. Amy's Kitchen is a big supplier to TPSS and co-ops around the country. BG explained that some workers at Amy's Kitchen have made claims of poor working conditions and suppression of unionizing efforts and filed a complaint. A TPSS Co-op member, Michael Brennan wrote the Board requesting that the Board pass a resolution in support of the boycott. Some co-ops on the west coast have joined a boycott. Other co-ops have continued stocking Amy's Kitchen products while providing members and shoppers with relevant information, leaving a decision on whether to buy the company's products to their discretion.

Several months ago, the Co-op's GM Mike Houston was informed about the issue by National Cooperative Grocer (NCG). To date, NCG has not directed member co-ops to take boycott action and has conveyed wanting to receive Cal/OSHA's report prior to taking next steps. NCG has also deployed a delegation to meet with Amy's Kitchen staff. Amy's Kitchen has issued a third party audit to investigate concerns. Its investigation found a broken eyewash facility and some other safety hazards.

The Board discussed the history of the Co-op's approach to boycotts. AF shared that the Co-op implemented a boycott policy when a member brought a boycott to their attention. The policy required TPSS to share varying perspectives and for a certain percentage of members to vote. Eventually, the policy was dropped when there was never enough member participation—in votes—to pursue a boycott.

Board members shared the following observations and opinions:

- Amy's Kitchen serves co-ops and big, corporate stores.
- Even though third parties met with managers, things can still be hidden.
- The Teamsters are organizing a campaign and are in support of holding a boycott; the call to action is coming from reputable sources, and members have a right to be made aware.
- The Board could make a new policy on boycotts; it would probably entail posting an in-store petition on the question of a boycott.

- The Board would like to know more about NCG’s decision-making process and is interested in more communication from them on how they are addressing the issue.
- TPSS Co-op is a union co-op. We want our business practices to be consistent with how we operate our store. Being responsive about social justice is what differentiates co-ops.
- While TPSS Co-op has very limited ability to investigate supplier operations, on occasion the Co-op has visited operations of local suppliers.
- The Board could correspond with members/shoppers about this issue independently: sharing link and article information by email, in the online member forum, and on the Board’ bulletin board in the store.

Ends Statements Discussion: BG shared he and Diane had worked further on the version of Ends Statements that ED proposed at the last meeting. Including the seven cooperative principles educates people about them. The Board discussed if the Ends statements should be more instructional, aspirational, or both. TPSS Co-op’s mission statement was identified as a place to express the Co-op’s broad vision. The Board also talked about wanting the Ends Statements to demonstrate how the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and food justice are being addressed at the Co-op. The Board agreed on a plan to integrate this feedback into a new version, submit comments, and vote on it electronically.

Policy Blitz in September: BG summarized that the Columinate consultant, Jade Barker had suggested dates for a one day Board and GM policy blitz session. The Board set the session for September 24th.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

Board Representatives’ Committee Memberships:

- Membership and Community Affairs Committee: (FF Chair) FF, DC, KT, ET, ED
- Finance and Audit Committee: (AF Chair) AF, SC, BG, KT, ET (DC, as ex-officios)
- Personnel Committee: (BG Chair) DC, KS
- Policy Committee: (SC Chair) SC, AF, KT
- Junction Committee: (FF Chair) FF, DC, BG, KS, ET, ED
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion KS (Chair), SC, BG, AF, KT
- Expansion Committee: (AF Chair) AF, SC, BG, ED
- Board Development and Elections Committee: DC, (Chair), AF, BG

Term 2021-2022 Meeting Attendance:

Board member	Dec. 2021	Jan. 2022	Feb. 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
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Curran	*	*	*	ex	*	*	*
de Dobrzynski	*	*	*	ex	*	*	*
Feinstein	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Frank	*	*	*	*	*	ex	*
Gibson	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Stitt	*	ex	ex			*	*
Teuwen	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tsantiris	*	ex	*		*	*	*

*Listing of election deadline dates, per 5/16/22 memorandum:

Deadline for board applications: Thursday Oct 13

Date for commencement of voting: Friday October 14

Date of fall membership meeting and candidate forum: Sunday October 16

Last day to vote: Friday November 18

Date for counting votes: Tuesday November 22

Announcement of election results: Thursday November 24

New Board terms start on: Thursday December 1