

# TPSS Board of Representatives Meeting

## October 22, 2022

### Open Session Minutes

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

Board members absent: Katea Stitt (KS), Kathy Tsantiris (KT)

Staff present: Mike Houston (MH), General Manager (GM)

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 September 15, 2022 Open Session Board meeting minutes.
- The Board approved the May 22, 2022 Spring Membership meeting minutes as amended.
- The Board approved the Monitoring Report for Policy L-3 Compensation and Benefits, as submitted by the GM.
- The Board approved the Monitoring Report for the April 2022 Ends Statements.

**Open Member Forum:** BG conveyed a question from a member-owner with a disability, who described experiencing increased parking challenges in the Junction lot and asked if commuters were leaving their vehicles there. MH shared the following observations: for semi-long term parking, TPSS Co-op has only allowed the firehouse and Small Things Matter to keep vehicles on its spaces. Although Board members and he recognize that the lot is more heavily used than in the past, the increased business activity is a factor. MH said that TPSS staff had not noticed a problem with Metro parkers but they would watch the situation.

ED recounted that a member, recently, proposed the Co-op obtain an alkaline water machine and suggested the Co-op also consider an orange juice machine. MH suggested people footnote these ideas for the store's reconfiguration discussions.

BG reported that SC, ET, and he heard various presentations at a recent Columinate cafe session. A co-op in Maine described their attempt to improve their DEI comprehension by creating area listening stations. Another co-op in North Carolina saw their community having trouble with potable water and acted to offer free, clean water, which brought in new people. BG remarked that doing the right thing also differentiates a business.

BG reported that he and ET reviewed the Topical Calendar together.

**GM Report:** MH reported recently attending the NCG GM Meeting in MN and the Natural Foods Expo East in PA. He found both events informative and invigorating. MH described the developments with sustainable packaging and a new upcycled certification for products made from surplus food. He received positive feedback from other GMs on TPSS's orientation model for staff.

MH announced that the rescheduled Takoma Street festival will occur on Sunday, October 23rd; the Co-op will have a tent there. FF noted LAB DC's breakdancing contest in the lot that drew a good crowd. MH said this is an example of the Co-op's Community Engagement Manager working with groups seeking event space.

MH confirmed that per TPSS Co-op policy masks are still required inside the store. Not all shoppers appear to adhere to the requirement, and there is divergence among the staff on what the policy should be at this point. The Co-op will be taking another staff survey on the topic. MH heard a Board member's suggestion to close the store or allow staff time off on election day to encourage people to vote.

**Policy L-3, Compensation and Benefits:** The Board confirmed that MH's and TPSS Co-op's managerial staff salaries are not disclosed to the public. The consulting cooperative, Columinate keeps an aggregated co-op administrative positions compensation database. In an era of growing disparity between executive and non-management staff compensation in businesses across the nation, a Board member voiced wanting—within reasonable limits—the Co-op to uphold the value of openness and describe where our compensation range is. The Board and MH discussed the idea of sharing the ratio between the lowest and highest paid worker at the Co-op.

**Ends and Indicators Update:** BG noted the thoroughness of the report and stated that in reviewing the included percentage numbers, for instance an 8% staff turnover rate, everything looked exceptionally favorable at this time. Board members gave feedback on the report's measurement of several Ends.

The second End pertains to member involvement in and knowledge of aspects of cooperative ownership. Board members encouraged the Co-op to standardize communications around core Cooperative business member events such as the two member meetings each year and the annual Board election.

The Board and MH recognized that some member participation tasks fall under the purview of Co-op management. MH touched on the relationship between accountability and having the license to direct tasks. The 'evergreen' issue of defining 'meaningful' member engagement was discussed.

Regarding the third End Statement related to the type, cost, and quality of food at the Co-op, a Board member asked if there are ways that TPSS can ascertain whether local vendors are acting in socially and environmentally responsible ways.

In regards to the fifth End, a Board member reflected on how we might assess our efforts at inclusivity. SC, ET, and BG gave examples that other co-ops shared in a recent Columinate meeting on DEI. One co-op thought it was being more inclusive by expanding its stock to include more ethnic foods, only to find that local groceries established to cater to their ethnic groups found such intention unwelcome competition and hurtful to their businesses and communities.

### **Committee Updates:**

***Membership Committee:*** The Board reflected upon the recent, Fall Membership, Member-owners meeting. BG thought that though the attendance was modest, the member participation and discussion was positive. FF shared that ET completed the last Membership Committee meeting notes and that he is beginning to step back from his Chair role as he transitions off the Board.

***Board Development and Elections Committee:*** BG reported that, currently, there are three open Board seats and three candidates who applied to run in the upcoming election. Originally, the Board had announced four open seats; however, the involved Board member decided not to step down at this juncture. The Board noted the value of gaining a good-sized pool of candidates and of the Nominations Committee and Board pursuing recruitment year round.

**Policy Blitz, Next Steps:** BG reported that the Board reviewed all the Board policies at the blitz. ET explained that various Board members probably still need an opportunity to give input on all the areas. Noting the discussion at this meeting, ET highlighted the End related to membership engagement. The Board was asked to review the revised document and offer suggested changes by email within the next two weeks. Revisions will be voted on at the next meeting. The Board also planned to discuss the potential for merging committees and the adequacy of the Board's agendas at the next meeting.

8:00pm meeting adjourned

### **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, ex-officio)

**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, AF (chair position shared), BG

**Term 2021-2022 Meeting Attendance:**

Board member	Dec. 2021	Jan. 2022	Feb. 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Oct 2022
Cho	*	\	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Curran	*	*	*	ex	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
de Dobrzynski	*	*	*	ex	*	*	*	*	ex	*	*
Feinstein	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Frank	*	*	*	*	*	ex	*	ex	ex	ex	*
Gibson	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	ex	*	*	*
Stitt	*	ex	ex			*	*	ex	ex	ex	
Teuwen	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tsantiris	*	ex	*		*	*	*	ex	*	ex	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