

TPSS Board of Representatives Meeting

January 19, 2023

Open Session Minutes

Board present: Bob Gibson (BG), Elizabeth Teuwen (ET), Esteban de Dobrzynski (ED), Adam Frank (AF), Ami Amin (AA), Taylor Dibbert (TD), Orly Keiner (OK)
Board members absent: Susan Cho (SC), Katea Stitt (KS),
Staff present: Mike Houston (MH), General Manager (GM)
Minutes submitted by: Solveig Mortensen (SM), Board Administrator

Meeting held at the Takoma Park Community Center and remotely, by zoom; called to order at 6:30 pm

Board ACTION:

- The Board approved the December 17, 2022 Open Session Board meeting minutes.
- The Board approved the Monitoring Report for Policy B-9, Emergency GM Succession as submitted by the GM.

Agenda/Expectations for 2023 Board Retreat: BG shared that he and members of the Board Retreat Planning Committee spoke with the Columinate consultant Jade Barker (JB) re: Board retreat agenda ideas. BG reported sending a meeting summary to the Committee and JB, so JB can create the agenda.

At the retreat, content may include co-op grocery business issues; financial training; Board work on goal setting; defining what people expect from and want to achieve through Board service; set expectations for the Board's committees—including the committee's charters; do a self-evaluation; and have some unprogrammed time.

MH identified the retreat, also, as an opportunity for the Board to give input on the proposed members' shopper survey, which last occurred in 2020 and will happen again this year. In the Co-op manager's meeting, MH shared, they discussed that this survey can have tailored questions and be used to gather baseline member and shopper information. Board members encouraged the Co-op to time the survey's completion with the member meeting, so findings can be shared with the membership.

TPSS Engagement/Education Event on The Hunger Cliff, February 8: ET shared that at the last Membership committee meeting focused on creating a general outline for the February 8th educational event on food insecurity titled "The Hunger Cliff". Event registration has been created and seven people are registered thus far.

ET noted that presenters will include Allison Schnitzer from the Montgomery Food Council , Lauren Goldberg of Crossroads Community Food Network, Mike Houston of TPSS and JD Robinson from MD Hunger Solutions.

ET commented that community discussion helps us figure out how to make change. MH suggested the Co-op/Board remind people to plug into the presenting organizations to remain abreast of these topics. ET encouraged Board members to utilize their networks and neighborhood listservs to publicize the event.

Additional Discussion of Board Committees: BG reported sending out an updated list of the current Board committee and members. Both the Membership and Community Affairs Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committees have full rosters.

Finance and Audit Committee (FAC): AF is Chair and MH, and the Co-op's Finance Manager, Yodit Gebremeskel, also participates on the FAC. Board members agreed that this Committee should continue to meet as a separate group on the first Monday of the month, examine the financial statements, and routinely bring focused topics to the Board. AA joined the FAC.

Policy Committee: This Committee was paused while the full Board revised the policy register and is now ad hoc. In conjunction with reviewing the GM's monitoring report for a policy, the Board will review the policy itself—a plan to additionally discuss at the retreat. After the recent Ends Statements revisions, the Board will likely prioritize reviewing the bylaws next.

Board Development and Elections Committee (BDE): This Committee informs the membership about the Board and helps to organize the Board election process. TD joined the BDE.

Annual Meetings Committee: The Board discussed how this Committee will meet ahead of the two annual membership meetings and focus on coordinating the logistics of and publicity for the event, while the Membership and Community Affairs Committee (MCAC) will create and organize the content of the meetings. TD joined the Annual Planning Committee.

Topical Calendar: BG reviewed upcoming February 2023 event dates to add to the calendar.

GM Report: MH reported that TPSS Co-op has begun planning for one of its largest events of the year, Earth Day. It will occur, rain or shine, on Saturday 4/22 in the large parking lot and include speakers, a large tent, community tables, and food for sale.

MH also reported that the January 23rd inventory went smoothly. MH shared several observations re: pricing. The produce department sees more frequent price changes. This year

smaller vendors changed their prices more frequently than in previous years. Since the pandemic, the variety of produce offerings, call ordering process, and supply chain transactions have improved.

MH explained that end of December 2022 sales being 2.85% over 2021 did not account for inflation, but simply reflected the year over year increase. MH stated that not all the Co-op's product prices were raised across the board.

In response to Board inquiry re: member and customer feedback on TPSS Co-op's updated mask policy, MH shared that since the last meeting, he has not heard any new responses. MH reported that at this juncture, store operations seem undisrupted by significant health concerns.

MH met with one of the bidders on the TPSS remodeling project, Bates Architects, a firm that carried out a store remodeling for a co-op in Frederick (Common Market) when it opened a second location in a former Safeway store. The firm advised TPSS to expect the permitting process alone to push the project beyond the preferred window (summer 2023). MH confirmed that this will not interfere with the timing of the Co-op's use of a grant from the state of MD. MH informed the Board that Irene Cox had returned to her former position as the Co-op's Human Resources Manager.

MH explained that the Muoi Tieu Vietnamese food truck will be selling food from the Co-op parking lot. The arrangement, which came about through contacts with Old Takoma Business Association and the holiday market, presents an opportunity to increase lunch options at the Co-op.

In response to Board interest, MH gave information re: the SNAP program's effect on the Co-op:

- Over the last three years, the portion of produce sales coming from SNAP sales has increased enormously. The Double Up program has changed the Co-op's customer base.
- SNAP benefits can be used on produce, frozen items, and grocery items, but not hot foods or the Wellness section. SNAP sales have a multiplier effect on other departments.
- Due to pandemic funding changes, the amount of benefits for SNAP beneficiaries will be decreasing in February, so some SNAP spending may drop.
- The Co-op wants to reach out to more potential SNAP beneficiaries through community organizations and partners. The GusNIP goal is to gain 3,000 unique users.
- TPSS Co-op will be surveying the SNAP beneficiaries who utilize the program.

General Manager’s, B-9 Emergency Succession Monitoring Report: MH noted the staff listed for succession, starting with store manager Hussein Choteka. Hussein has prior experience at TPSS as the Co-op’s interim GM. The Board approved this monitoring report.

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Board Representatives’ Committee Memberships:

Annual Meeting Committee: BG (Chair), TD, MH (GM), and Chloe Thompson (Co-op staff)

Board Development and Elections Committee: AF (Chair), BG, TD

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: KS (Chair), SC, ED, AF, ET, and Chloe Thompson (Co-op staff)

Finance and Audit Committee: AF (Chair) BG, AA, MH (GM), and Yodit Gebremeskel (Co-op staff)

Membership and Community Affairs Committee: ET (Chair), ED, BG, OK, MH (GM), Chloe Thompson (Co-op staff) and Diane Curran & Fred Feinsten (former Board members)

Personnel Committee: BG (Chair), ET

Retreat Planning Committee: AF, ET, MH, OK, (and the Columinate consultant, Jade Barker)

Term 2022-2023 Meeting Attendance:

	Dec	Jan
Amin	*	*
Cho	*	
de Dobrzynski	*	*
Dibbert	*	*
Frank	*	*
Gibson	*	*
Keiner	*	*
Stitt	Ex	Ex
Teuwen	*	*

(Ex=excused)

(Re=Resigned)

Board Terms:

Board Representative	Term:	Term Ends:
Amin	3 years	2025
Cho	1 year (appointed term)	2023
Dibbert	3 years	2025
de Dobrzynski	3 years (term after appointment)	2024
Frank	3 years (consecutive term)	2023
Gibson	3 years (consecutive term)	2024
Keiner	3 years	2025
Stitt	3 years (consecutive term)	2024
Teuwen	3 years	2023