

TPSS Board of Representatives Meeting

March 21, 2024

Open Session Minutes

Date/Location/Time: March 21, 2024 meeting 6:30 pm*

Board present: Elizabeth Teuwen (ET), Orly Keiner (OK), Bob Gibson (BG), Ami Amin (AA), Taylor Dibbert (TD), Kopal Jha (KJ)

Staff present: Mike Houston (MH), General Manager

Members present: Tatiana Dzekon (TD), James Gibson (JG), Marie Marcogliese (MM), Rebecca Stevens (RS) *remotely*, Betty Wilson (BW)

Not present: Esteban de Dobrzynski (ED)

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

**Meeting held at Historic Takoma and remotely, by Zoom*

Board ACTION:

- The Board approved the February 15, 2024 Open Session Board meeting minutes.
- By consensus, the Board approved TPSS Co-op's having a financial review completed this year.
- The Board approved the GM's monitoring report for Policy B-4, Membership.
- The Board agreed that Policy B-4, Membership, in its current form, is satisfactorily conveying its aims as a policy.

Open member forum: While no comments were offered during the open member forum, a number of Board candidates were present and shared information about themselves.

Agenda review: Due to logistical needs, the Board re-arranged the order of agenda items.

Vote on Biannual Financial Review: The Board agreed by consensus for TPSS Co-op to have a financial review performed this year.

Board Business:

Board Perpetuation:

Perspective Appointees: A number of candidates interested in a potential Board seat (by appointment) attended this meeting. Each candidate responded to the question of what interests them about the Co-op and why they responded this time around as opposed to the past.

JG shared that he has served in several community leadership roles, is currently the President of a condominium association, and would like to give back. JG also explained that the Board's email notified him of the vacancy.

TD shared that she just had a baby at the last opportunity to run for the Board and with her child being older, she would like to participate. TD is a program manager for a non-profit and is interested in promoting sustainability.

BW shared that she moved to the D.C. area about a year ago and is now ready to focus on connecting to positive community work. BW has been involved with a writer's group for years and has become an advisor to them.

MM is a sole proprietor of a gardening business who greatly values growing organic. MM noted that she learned of the vacancy through TD and that her life changed with the pandemic, so she was interested to see if her skills would complement those on the board.

Next steps: The Board discussed their need to create a timeline for the new Board member's appointment and established March 28 as the deadline for people to express their interest in a candidacy. The Board planned to reach out to candidates present at this meeting with a timeline.

In regards to increasing board member's compensation to attract more candidates, the Board noted that the topic was tabled for this meeting.

Delegation to Nominations Committee: The Board reviewed Co-op and Board actions that draw more candidates, such as a banner on the website, fliers at the cashier, a simpler intake form, and more urgent wording in communications. Board members planned to share the outcomes of their candidate interviews with one another. The Board noted there may be a role for people to participate in supporting Board/membership work while not becoming a full Board member.

Membership Engagement: The Membership and Community Affairs Committee (MCAC) is organizing the upcoming member-owners' activities: the Spring Member meeting and Earth Day.

Earth Day: TPSS Co-op will hold its Earth Day celebration earlier this year, on April 14th, which will not overlap with other organizations' celebrations and allow more people to attend.

The Board will be tabling at the celebration. OK will lead zero waste tours through the store. MCAC members noted the idea of using the topic of zero waste to continue engagement between membership meetings.

Additionally, there will also be a zero waste recipe contest that will ask participants to utilize the Co-op's bulk section. The contest's winner will be awarded at the Spring Membership meeting.

Spring Member Meeting: The Spring member meeting will be held in May at the Takoma Park VFW, 350 on either Wednesday, 5/22/24 or Thursday 5/23/24 and will include updates on the remodeling of the store.

Food Waste: Some TPSS Co-op members have expressed interest in engaging on the topic of food waste, which could be addressed by the Board or by an educational campaign by the Co-op store. The Board and MH decided the members with this interest could make a presentation to Co-op management/staff.

Delegation to Membership and Community Affairs Committee (MCAC): MCAC members planned to finalize logistics for Earth Day at their next meeting, and OK planned to join them.

Staff appreciation day/May 1: MH recounted to the Board that at the time of the original union drive in 2019, TPSS Co-op had a staff appreciation day with pins. Several Board members planned to work on staff appreciation day ideas.

Expansion Planning: TPSS Co-op is in the preliminary stages of exploring expanding to a second location. The Co-op has presented this consideration to members in previous meetings.

The Board discussed the fact that MH and Columinate have been the primary resources for expansion information and that the Board can pursue being well informed on expansion matters by broadening their resources. Board members discussed exploring the history of the former TPSS Co-op store on Grubb Rd. BG and OK have been working on two documents to help organize and focus the board's attention on planning for expansion:

Rationale for Expansion: The purpose of this document is to bring all board members up to speed on the rationale behind the need for expansion and to provide a reference source when board members need to answer future questions about why we are considering expansion. OK and BG agreed to begin answering these questions with input from MH. The full Board was invited to add input and make this a working document.

Roles and Responsibilities: This document lists the activities the Board will be responsible for engaging in should expansion to a second location move forward. The Board agreed to focus on this document once the Rationale for Expansion work has been completed.

GM Report: TPSS Co-op's Round up campaign to support the Co-op's Feed a Neighbor fund will begin. The SNAP Double Up program requires annual fundraising increases and by and large, the Co-op has done this fundraising by the round ups on online purchases. However, the online purchasing of Co-op goods has declined, so the Co-op is working on running an intentional gusNIP fundraising campaign involving cash register round ups.

MH confirmed that the Co-op will still offer round-ups for other organizations and that the Co-op's former poker chips program, paused during the pandemic, could be reinstated at the start of the next financial year.

MH met with the Community Grocery people re: their buying club and the Poolsville group and gave each group some feedback.

Remodel Update: MH reported that the Co-op remodel project received Historic Preservation Commission approval. Now TPSS can apply for the full county permit. Four general contractors were invited to bid on the remodel project by April 5th. The bids will include the general contractors' cost and construction timelines. The price of the new equipment is known—it has been ordered—and the Co-op may negotiate on other costs. MH confirmed that there are a variety

of staging and timing options for construction; some building work, such as electrical, cannot occur while the store is open. The deadline for choosing the contractor is 4/19/24.

Policy B4 - Membership: MH explained that the MADD money and ratio of members joining TPSS Co-op to those leaving it are essentially the same as in previous years. MH also shared that operations is looking into whether the Co-op can calculate and show individualized member savings on receipts. MH confirmed that he added owner responsibilities to this report as was requested in previous reviews.

In response to Board inquiry, MH explained that once TPSS Co-op knows where the second location will likely be, the Co-op can focus on membership promotion in that community. Also in response to inquiry, MH explained that members can see the membership installment options when they go online to pay or ask in the store. There are no administrative fees with paying in installments.

8pm Meeting adjourned.

Board Representatives' Committee Memberships:

Finance and Audit Committee: BG (Chair), TD, MH (GM), and a Co-op manager
Membership and Community Affairs Committee: AA (Co-Chair), ED, KJ, KS, MH (GM), and Chloe Thompson (Co-op staff)
Nominations Committee: ET, OK, TD

Term 2023-2024 Meeting Attendance:

Board member:	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Amin	*	*	*	*
Beck	*	*	N/A	N/A
de Dobrzynski	*	*	*	Ex
Dibbert	Ex	*	*	*
Gibson	*	*	*	*
Jha	*	*	*	*
Keiner	*	*	*	*
Stitt	Ex	*	Ex	N/A

Teuwen	*	*	*	*
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(Ex=excused)

Board Terms:

<u>Board Representative</u>	<u>Term:</u>	<u>Term Ends:</u>
Amin	3 years	2025
Beck	Resigned	--
Dibbert	3 years	2025
de Dobrzynski	3 years (term after appointment)	2024
Gibson	3 years (consecutive term)	2024
Jha	3 years	2026
Keiner	3 years	2025
Stitt	Resigned	--
Teuwen	3 years (consecutive term)	2026