

**Quincy Natural Foods and Feather River Food Cooperative  
Board of Directors, Minutes of Regular Meeting (Remote)  
August 18, 2020**

**Board Directors Present:** Rachel Bauer, Gia Martynn, Aubrey Pickerell, Vanessa Vasquez, Amy Napoleon

**Staff Present:** Irene Kling (Finance Manager), Nova Kolpin (Interim General Manager).

**Welcome guests:** Piers Strailey (Member), Jim Cross (Member), Wayne Cartwright (Member), Nance Reed (member)

**Also Present:**

Remote Meeting by Zoom due to COVID-19. Meeting called to order at 5:06 by Vanessa Vasquez.

**Open Forum/Announcements:** None

**Agenda Review & Approval:** A motion to approve the August agenda was made by Gia Martynn. Aubrey seconds the motion. The agenda is approved as is.

**Approval of Minutes from the July 21, 2020 Board Meeting:**

Aubrey Pickerell motioned to approve the minutes and Gia Martynn seconded. Minor edits included. Five directors voted in favor; none were opposed. Motion approved.

**Board Education:** Jim Cross presents to the board ‘Empowering You’, a powerpoint presentation regarding the Coronavirus. The presentation focused on how coronavirus is impacted by comorbidities like hypertension, obesity, and stress. Jim mentions that our food system can be utilized as an important ally to health and the important role that QNF plays in ensuring access to healthy food for our community. Jim’s advice on food, “Eat local, photon-rich, nutrient-dense, fiber-rich; not too much; according to your genetic makeup and in a calm and relaxed manner”. Jim provides the meeting participants with strategies for combating the virus, eg. Neti pots and Vitamin D intake. Jim proposes to put on a Powerpoint workshop that will teach QNF members how to empower their bodies to strengthen its defenses against the disease. Vanessa brings up a concern about how bringing up medical advice as the co-op could potentially create problems. Nova adds that this could be addressed by providing a disclaimer at the beginning of the meetings/presentation. Vanessa mentions the co-op is following a COVID protocols including county and CDC guidelines. She adds we want to make sure that any messaging does not conflict with COVID protocols in place. Nova requests that Jim get in touch with member coordinator, Amber Hughes, to discuss logistics. Jim poses the end of September for possible time.

## **Board Education: Vanessa**

Vanessa shares her board education piece on communication for board members, outlining strategies and techniques both internal and external communications. She notes that although the case studies are not exactly what we are encountering, it was nice to see we are not alone.

Vanessa adds that because Co-Ops are value driven organizations, issues related to them can become emotionally charged and it is best to expect that emotions will flare up. In addition, policies and guiding documents should serve as a basis for communication. She also notes that controversies can take time to resolve and require board involvement and that communication needs to be robust both internally and externally. In addition, she shared communication best practices that include transparency (open, honest communication). During times of change, communications need to be increased (we lagged after the pandemic first hit- when we know there are changes we need to ramp up our communication); listening goes two ways and is only half the communication equation; the need to create opportunities for all voices to be heard (tabling/surveys); clear direction— and adds that using existing directives to communicate consistently are great springboards. Be clear and direct with your communication. We presently do not have a communications department but perhaps we can look into making that part of our organization more robust. Communication is a type of currency in our current world.

## **Manager's Report:**

Nova presents the Manager's report circulated in the August board packet. She reports bank accounts look good; we transferred PP funds. Sales up from August but down overall from last year but looking good comparative. June to July up 33%. Both stores showing increased sales. We have requested loan forgiveness for PPP and are complying. The application is presently being prepared for forgiveness. Bank accounts remaining stable. Basket size increasing as well as customer count. Management team meeting biweekly for now, will shift to monthly in October. Welcomed a new employee at Quincy store. At FRFC, sales exceeded prior years in July. She notes we raised funds for the brewery, crisis center and theater impacted by the July 29 structure fire downtown. Nova attended a couple trainings she found valuable from Columinate since our last meeting. Both stores are looking at reopening the bulk departments, September 15<sup>th</sup> being the tentative date for reopening those departments in a mix of gravity bins and pre-packed goods as we cannot presently allow folks access to scoop bins. Quincy store will hold safety training on Friday, Portola next Wednesday—will recap COVID protocols. Assessment underway of curbside program. We are no longer renting our hand washing stations now that we've purchased ones to own. Both stores are reopened for 7 days a week curbside and in-store service. Labor costs have not increased. Most employees have agreed to shift time changes to accommodate employees with children. Looked at policy to accommodate families with children while parents are on shift.

## Old Business

**Staff appreciation planning:** Vanessa notes that Nova prepared a spreadsheet of staff survey results that she will distribute. We have \$20 per person, card, gift and in person thank you. Vanessa would like to have it completed by the end of August. Nova notes we have not set a date for picnic. Nova will respond with the quarterly staff meeting time. Possibly looking at an event for October in terms of staff appreciation.

**In-store board member hours:** Rachel and Gia took on the task for last Friday, received a few surveys and talked to a few members. Rachel adds she had no specific suggestions, Gia suggests perhaps shifting the location of the board table to keep it from getting too crowded. Vanessa adds she could do 10-noon out at the Portola store this Friday, Aubrey agrees to assist.

**Policy Governance:** Rachel notes a desire to keep the policy governance component in mind. Amy adds we discussed it a bit at the last committee meeting, suggested reaching out to other coops who employ policy governance. The board would like to continue to explore governance policy.

#### New Business

**Appointing a new secretary:** Rachel makes a motion to approve Aubrey as the new secretary, all those in favor.

**Check signing authority:** Rachel reports at the last finance committee meeting we approved an additional check signer. Andrea is on leave, she and Sharrill are the only check signers. Nova suggested —bank date set for tomorrow, she'll be added as a check signer. In order to add Nova, we would have to have everyone come to the bank and add Nova. All in favor.

**Board Goals:** Rachel reviews the goals, her recommendation is to keep goals—we can remove providing unilateral support. Recommends adding improving communication between membership and board and GM and board. Vanessa wants to continue board education, Gia adds, per board education, add some specificity to what board education should look like. She also adds needing to have better representation and perception for the Portola store. Maybe we need to establish a focus on east county store, staff and members. This would serve to improve communication and visibility with east county members. *How* do we support the managers role? Vanessa notes we should investigate making an inclusion statement. Governance vs. operations continually an important focus for board training.

**Customer Mask Policy Statement:** Rachel created a statement regarding the board's position on the mask policy. Gia makes a motion, Rachel seconds the motion. Rachel will email a copy of the draft statement.

**Community Appreciation Day:** Date for community appreciation not yet set.

## **Committee Reports:**

Board Development: Next meeting Friday August 21<sup>st</sup> working on staff appreciation and board vacancies.

Membership: Gia volunteered to chair the membership committee.

Finance: Met on the 12<sup>th</sup> to review 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter bank and CC statements, PPP and EIDL loans. Next meeting September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Policy: Met August 5<sup>th</sup>, discussed policy governance and gauging small coops. Want to sit down with Nova for input on inspection of records. Need new board member for the policy committee.

Executive: Has not met since last board meeting, no schedule.

## **Closings:**

Rachel Bauer will email board goals and mask statement for edits and review. Vanessa will work on scoop article. Vanessa & Aubrey will table at the Portola store. Nova is going to send out link to staff meetings to the board. Vanessa to send out employee appreciation tasks. On the calendar for August are staff appreciation, bylaw review by policy committee. Review beforehand. Continued planning for community appreciation day. We expect Andrea to return September 3<sup>rd</sup> and need to look at contract renewal.

Next board meeting September 15<sup>th</sup> via zoom.

Rachel moved to adjourn the open meeting at 6:49pm and was seconded by Aubrey. Five directors voted in favor, none were opposed.

## **Closed Session:**

A closed session was held. The board voted in favor of appointing two new board members, contingent on their acceptance of the positions.

Minutes taken by: Aubrey Pickerell