

Anacortes Food Co-op
Annual Membership Meeting Minutes
23 April 2024
Anacortes Public Library

Attending:

Board Members – Phil Cohen, Chair; Karen Nemiah, Vice Chair; Teresa Brum, Braxton Cox, Members

* Retiring Board Member Deborah was absent with Covid

Staff and Volunteers – Shawn Bell, Manager; Sara Holahan, Bookkeeper; Tim Heiner, Note-taker for Minutes

Co-op Members – see sign-in sheet for names

6:30 – Meet and Greet

- Many snacks were set out to welcome members
- Posters showing Co-op values and goals were displayed
- Sign up sheets for volunteers were laid out – commitments to shop, to help at the store, to spread the word in the community and on social media, and more, were available
- Color sheets and crayons were available for children

7:05 – Report by Board Chair, Phil Cohen

- Report focused on the time since re-opening in the new location – early July 2023
- Handout – Bylaws about electing new Board Members, including a list of current Members
- Gross sales
 - o About \$167,000 in our last partial year at our old location
 - o In our new location they were about \$135,000 in the first six months through the end of last year, plus another \$100,000 since January 1 of this year (total about \$235,000 since re-opening)
 - o The improvement at the new location is about 36%. About 38% stays local
 - o We are currently about \$600 - 800 per month short of our first goal of breaking even
 - o For every \$100 we receive, about \$25 can be used for other expenses
 - o This translates to about 7 – 10 new regular customers, member and/or public, or about 3 – 5 new shoppers per day

- Thanks to current Board Members – Karen, Teresa, Braxton, Deborah – who could not attend due to Covid
- Thanks to Staff and Volunteers, especially Shawn Bell and Sara Holahan
- Currently working on a 4 point recovery plan for 6 month recovery
 - Rent reduction – currently in the second month of one-half rent for two months, granted by landlord
 - Have increased marketing in a number of areas – rack cards, events, advertising, social media
 - Improving daily sales – learning from other co-ops, constantly updating inventory, improving store appearance
 - Grant and loan applications – we potentially qualify for a number that are or will be available
- Just applied for a new Grant
- Last Grant
 - Received just as we were closing the old location
 - New coolers – were able to retire older, failing units
 - New marketing initiatives – print ads in local papers, Chamber of Commerce, signage, shopping bags and coffee mugs
 - New fixtures in new location – sinks, tables, coolers, freezers, cabinets, wall covering for food preparation area, ceiling tiles, and more
 - Was provided by the WA State Department of Agriculture to support resilient local food infrastructure, a need highlighted by the pandemic
- Next Grant, if approved
 - External walk-in Cooler
 - Estimated at \$48,000
 - Will provide many benefits
 - Able to receive inventory during the normal night delivery hours without requiring one of our people to be on-site
 - Will be able to buy in bulk, and take advantage of opportunities, to increase offerings and lower costs
 - Marketing - \$8,500
 - Doing a lot of Social Media, which is becoming more and more important
 - Working to improve exterior signage - \$5,800
 - Business and financial development - \$5,000
 - Want to add a Menu Option to our website - \$2,400
 - Staff and/or volunteers will pull orders together
 - For in-store pickup, or delivery
 - Long term goal is to get a delivery vehicle once we successfully grow into “Phase 3”

- Many small local farmers and other vendors cannot provide delivery
 - We could deliver menu orders for a small fee
- We currently pay \$400 – 600 per month in credit card fees
 - We have a new gift card program
 - Cards can be purchased in store, and used like debit cards
 - Members can set up a PIN, and don't even need to have their card with them
 - Note – the door prizes for the evening raffle were Gift Cards to promote this new service
- There has been a lot of positive feedback from the community from our marketing, and from impressions in our new location
- Many of our members have been volunteering, and you can talk to our Board Member, Karen Nemiah, about opportunities
- We encourage members to buy and use the new gift cards, and consider donating directly to the co-op
- You can also donate to the co-op through a 501(c) corporation, www.nwcdc.coop, to receive tax benefits, there is a modest 5% fee to cover costs
- Please bring your membership dues up to the \$200 lifetime total, if you haven't already
- Visit the store more often, and spread the word
- Sara Holahan – Co-op Membership
 - We have had about 750 members sign up since we first opened
 - About 400 are currently active

7:30 - Store Manager Report, Shawn Bell

- The new cooler and freezer are in the food preparation area. Customers don't see them, but the employees really appreciate them!
- Shawn has been getting very good feedback on the new staff, Judas and Avery
- We have a new distributor, Kehe, which has much lower prices on many products that we carry compared to our old distributor, UNFI
 - This translates to lower prices for customers, and/or better margins for the store
- Shawn LOVES getting feedback on anything and everything – products, procedures, store layout – more, please!
- Acadia is a new product line this month
- Constantly looking for new local options

7:35 – Board Member Election

- Report by Board Member Teresa Brum
- A copy of the bylaws and current members was handed out
- We have four vacancies
- We have not received any applications
- The two year term of the current Chair, Phil Cohen, is expiring
 - o Teresa Brum nominated Phil for another term
 - o A number of people spoke up to second the nomination
 - o Phil was elected to another two year term by unanimous acclamation
- We will continue to seek additional Board Members
 - o There are provisions in the bylaws for the Board to approve new temporary board members
- The new Board Membership will be announced by newsletter and social media
- Officers will be selected by the Board at the next Board Meeting
 - o 14 May 2024
 - o 7 – 9 pm
 - o Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, 819 Commercial, Suite F
 - o Attendance is open to all

7:50 – Raffle of Door Prizes, Karen Nemiah

- Co-op Gift Cards, for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes
- Note – Gift Cards are now re-loadable, and the amount on the cards can be increased by visiting the store and purchasing an upgrade

8:00 – Meeting Adjourned

- Volunteers cleaned up

Minutes compiled by Tim Heiner

Approved by the Board at May 14 meeting.