

**Bloomington Cooperative Services  
2015 Annual Meeting Minutes  
Bloomington Convention Center  
Sunday, October 18, 2015**

We hosted our 2015 Annual Meeting at the Bloomington Convention Center.

- The Business Meeting began with brief welcoming remarks from our facilitator Michelle Mattoon from Coltrain Group in Bloomington.
- Board President Caroline Beebe also extends a welcome and reads the Articles of Incorporation and the ENDS statement. She then introduces the rest of the Board Members—Kristina Wiltsee (secretary), Lauren McCalister (treasurer), and Dedaimia Whitney. She recognizes that Vice President Danielle McClelland’s term on the Board ends this month and extends her gratitude for Danielle’s dedicated service and detailed knowledge of policy governance.
- Election candidates are introduced—Caroline Beebe, Dave Debikey, Janice Lilly, and Jeremiah Junken. This is an uncontested election (four candidates running for four open seats), but number of votes will determine each director’s term length.
- Bloomingfoods’ Senior Leadership Team is introduced.
  - Paula Gilbertson—NCG Consultant.
  - Brad Alstrom—Interim General Manager.
  - Mac McLauchlin—Operations Manager.
  - Paul Read—Finance Manager.
  - Patty Steward—Human Resources Manager.
  - Keith Hughes—IT Manager.
  - Jean Kautt—Consumer Services Manager.
- Board Vice President Danielle McClelland moves to receive and approve the minutes from the 2014 Annual Meeting at the Wonderlab Museum. Board Treasurer Lauren McCalister seconds the motion. A vote is called, all in favor, motion passes.
- Board Vice President Danielle McClelland gives official announcement that the meeting was both announced and made public. She moves to acknowledge receipt of Annual Meeting announcement. Board member Dedaimia Whitney seconds the motion. A vote is called, all in favor, motion passes.
- Board President Caroline Beebe provides an update about our progress with and implementation of the union contract.
- Board member Dedaimia Whitney speaks about the Board’s progress in relation to suggestions, ideas, comments, etc. that the Board has received within the last year.
- Board Treasurer Lauren McCalister, Finance Manager Paul Read, and Interim General Manager Brad Alstrom present the financial report and trends from this past fiscal year.

- NCG Consultant Paula Gilbertson addresses and clarifies some “myths and urban legends” that have been circulating as of late.
- NCG Consultant Paula Gilbertson and the Bloomingfoods’ Consumer Services Department present and discuss several items.
  - “Positive Change” program. Owner-members voted during this election to select 10 organizations that are in-line with Bloomingfoods’ ENDS statement to receive donations from this program. Customers will have the opportunity to round-up the total of their purchase towards a donation that will go towards one of these selected organizations.
  - Bloomingfoods Ambassadors Volunteer Program. We are extremely limited on in-store volunteer opportunities due to labor law and other factors, so we are introducing the Bloomingfoods Ambassadors Program to allow our owner-members to volunteer with organizations in-line with our ENDS statement for a discount/incentive at Bloomingfoods.
  - Limited Income Access Programs.
  - Customer Survey is explained and will be rolling out very soon to randomly selected individuals on Bloomingfoods’ email list.
  - Senior Leadership is working on developing a three-year business plan.
- Facilitator Michelle Mattoon introduces a group exercise for owner-members to participate in. She asks for each individual to answer each of the following questions individually, and then to share responses with the group. A selected group leader will present the most prominent responses to the entire audience.
  - What is one significant thing that you heard?
  - What is one question that you have?
  - What do you want Bloomingfoods to know?
- Board Support liaison Taylor Ritchie captures all comments, questions, suggestions, and answers presented during exercise and will also capture all comments, questions, and suggestions that were written but not presented.
- The designated leader from each group then presented comments, questions, suggestions, etc. on behalf of their groups and NCG Consultant Paula Gilbertson, Interim General Manager Brad Alstrom, and Board President Caroline Beebe took turns responding.
  - Out of the 12,000+ member-owners, who are actively shopping at Bloomingfoods stores and depending on that number, how do we get those [people] back?
    - A similar question was asked at the June meeting and we are getting better at some of those analytics. We are casting a very wide net to make sure everyone knows our store and focusing on trying to get the word out. Anyone can join our email list—both owners and non-owners. If someone has not shopped within two years, they are dropped off the membership list. You do not have to shop a lot to stay an active member.

- This group wanted to discuss the financial performance since the end of FY15. Some information on the slides was not as easily viewed. How are we doing in this first quarter (FY16)?
  - The slides were primarily backward-looking. Sales are showing greater decline in most recent quarter, but we do not have full financial statements yet. We know what happened in July, August, and most of September. We have some declines at East, evidence of things starting to “flatten out” at Elm, and rising at West. Personnel costs have dropped a lot—it went from 30% of sales to roughly 25%. We also dropped occupancy costs through [closing] Kirkwood, administrative offices at Gentry, and a South Rodgers warehouse. We have also cut marketing expenses. We have applied the tourniquet and are no longer losing cash. We do not have a strong, positive cash flow but we are no longer losing.
- It is important that the union itself gives progress a report and allows discussion with the board on how we are doing adapting to having a union.
  - The suggestion is recorded
- Find other ways for membership to benefit other than a 10% discount. We want to let the co-op know that there are people who would like to volunteer for no benefit at all. Take advantage of membership.
  - Committees are a great way for those individuals to get involved. We are legally limited from having volunteers working in the stores, but they can volunteer on committees and outreach. There are other ways to get involved—be a spokesperson, for example. We have to limit it to non-store work, but it doesn’t preclude from volunteering in other ways.
- We believe strongly that the way forward is to have a laser-like focus on ownership, local, and organic. To move forward and help differentiate from other competitors, we have to find ways to get better at all of those things.
  - The suggestion is recorded.
- This group was wondering whether a small garden center is an option? It used to be [that way] before the larger one happened. It was really valuable and had a lot of native and food plants that are otherwise hard to come by. If [we] go elsewhere to get those things, [we] will shop there as well.
  - Paula has addressed this topic at the June meeting and in other communications, but if there is a strong desire for a garden center, then we will explore the options around the beginning of the year. Right now, we are focusing on the bigger departments to start with. Todd Baker will be selling trees so that we are still offering them without incurring the expense. We are looking at the feasibility of a small, partial, or even potential full garden center as time progresses.
- Cashiers and stockers are front-line staff but do not seem informed about things going on. What are HR policies for training and how can that improve?

- We have made efforts in the last few months to implement regular communication with our staff. There is an all-staff memo that goes out every two weeks and is posted both in-store and online. We are doing our best, and although we can continue to do even better, we have to know that folks want to learn about this information and play a bigger role. It is good to hear this feedback because it is an indication that we can do better. They do receive that information and we hope that they can impart that to all of you.
- [References cooperative model] Are we indeed looking at low prices in terms of inclusivity in the community? Is profitability the only criteria in choosing inventory? Are we looking outside retail food coop model in terms of cooperative structure?
  - We are rolling out a promotional program called “Co-op Basics” with support from the NCG. The “Field Day” brand is an example. It will extend to other prices in stores as it becomes a staple program. We are replacing the “Member Rewards” program and are also researching the “Limited Income” program.

We have a policy of “good, better, best” in terms of product selection to have a more accessible price point for all.

We are connected with other coops and are looking for ways to continually connect across sectors.

- Interim General Manager Brad Alstrom speaks about coops and how they are about trust and community.
- Announcements:
  - We have a “coop shop” going on before, during, and after this meeting with various items such as bags, shirts, hats, totes, etc. for sale.
  - The Board election results have been calculated. Caroline Beebe and Dave Debikey have received the most votes and longest terms at 3 years each (terms ending in 2018), followed by Janice Lilly (term ending 2017), and Jeremiah Junken (term ending 2016).
  - The bylaw change to add two additional board members passed overwhelmingly.
  - The results for the “Positive Change” program have been determined. The following organizations have been voted upon by the members to receive donations via the “Positive Change” program:
    - Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Monroe County Community Kitchen, Middle Way House, Sycamore Land Trust, Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Interfaith Winter Shelter, Local Growers Guild, Shalom Community Center, and Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington.
  - Winners of the door prizes were announced.
- Business Meeting Adjourned.