

Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

December 2018 Meeting

Monthly Board Meeting, WSM Admin Center, Hillsborough, NC on December 12, 2018, 6:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Directors present: Ruffin Slater (general manager), Hank Becker (treasurer), David Bright (secretary), Jon McDonald (chair), Linda Stier, and Charles Traitor.

Others attending: Susan Sachs (facilitator), Glenda Clare (consumer owner), and Brenda Camp (notes).

1. Preliminaries

Owner Input: There was no owner input.

Agenda: There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes: Minutes from the November meeting were approved.

Decision: The Board approved the November minutes.

Bank Resolution: The Board approved bank resolutions to make the new finance manager, John Bergartt, a signatory on accounts.

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2. Owner Survey Results

Ruffin Slater reported on the results of recent owner surveys. The report included both the annual owner survey in September and the ongoing cash register surveys that began in August. Highlights of the report include:

- In September 2,590 owners completed the annual owner survey with Net Promoter Score of 79, which is 2 points higher than the previous year.
- So far 943 shoppers have taken the new cash register survey. Both shoppers and owners are randomly selected to take the survey. The Net Promoter Score from these surveys is 76.
- The top reasons that owners are Promoters continue to align with our organizational priorities. The four top reasons for being a Promoter—quality, friendly staff, community, and local—align well with the pillars of our business plan: Trusted Quality, Locally Sourced, For the Community, and By the Community.
- The three top product categories among Promoters and Passives—Produce, Bakery, and Hot & Salad Bars— match up with categories that we plan to enhance in Raleigh and subsequently in our existing stores.
- The top things people want to change are similar to last year. In the owner survey, 36% of Passives cite lower prices or better discounts as the most important thing to change, while only 16% of promoters think this is the most important thing to change. The register survey gives more detail by breaking down how satisfied Promoters and Passives are with “overall value.” Only 6% of Passives are highly satisfied with overall value, compared to 50% of Promoters.

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- The best way to improve is to turn passives into promoters. It makes sense to focus on Passives rather than Detractors because we have 17% Passives and only 2% Detractors.
- Each quarter, the service and product indicators will be tracked for improvement and compared to the previous data from the cash register surveys. The goal is to move “satisfied” to “highly satisfied.” The Board will receive monthly reports on the results.
- Once a year, we’ll be able to compare our survey data with data from other co-ops and grocery stores participating in the survey program.
- At this time, we cannot add questions to the cash register survey.

Communicating to the owners about the survey

Slater identified key points to communicate to owners about the survey findings:

Introduction (thank you, number of responses reflects how much owners care, Board commitment to acting on results, sharing highlights, showing examples of how input is being acted upon, new survey tools)

Results indicate overall satisfaction is up a little and better than other grocers (chart of net promoter score over the last three years)

Alignment between what owners’ value and what we are working on (chart of what Promoters’ value)

Biggest improvement opportunity is price, like last year, and we are working on it (chart of what owners want to change, what we are working on)

Making changes based on your feedback (examples: reusable bags, outdoor eating at Carrboro store)

New register survey tool that provides us with ongoing feedback (how register surveys work)

Task: Ruffin will send the comments on the annual owner survey to the Board directors.

Task: Ruffin and Brenda will prepare a draft of the survey communication to send to the Board directors for feedback and edits.

3. Board Business

Board Process Survey

Jon McDonald led a discussion about the Board Process Survey. McDonald noted that the Board Process Survey is a tool that helps the Board assess itself, including if the Board is doing what it said it would do in the Board Process Policies, if there is a need to change a policy, and how the Board could be a better Board. The current survey assessed the first three sections of the Board Process Policies: C- Governance Commitment, C1-Governing Style, and C2-The Board’s Job.

McDonald identified Section C1, #5 (Set annual Board goals and evaluate performance) as receiving the most ratings of “Sometimes” in the survey. The directors agreed to add this task to the retreat agenda and the following items were identified for including in the discussion:

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- Set annual Board goals.
- Use opening segments to brainstorm about broader issues, such as food insecurity, housing access.
- Develop leadership, particularly in Raleigh.
- Host Board meetings at different store locations as well as the Food House.
- Decentralize how Board engages with owners.
- Take advantage of expertise at universities in the Triangle area.

Hank Becker prompted a discussion on the last part of Section C: Board Commitment, which says, “In fulfillment of this charge, the Board is committed to rigorous, continual improvement of its capability to define values and vision.” He encouraged the Board to set aside more time to expand on the terms and concepts the Board uses to define values and visions so that owners understood them better. He also suggested that it is important for the Board to communicate this to owners so that owners could see what the Board cares about and is talking about, and so that owners could join the conversation.

Linda Stier suggested having a different kind of owner session, one in which the focus is on inquiry and discovery rather than communicating about something that’s already known.

Task: The agenda committee will add to the retreat agenda “setting annual Board goals and evaluating progress” and will include communications as part of the goals.

Elections Reports

Linda Stier presented reports from the 2018 Elections. She noted the down trend in number of votes cast and observed that online voters often voted after receiving email reminders.

Decision: The Board accepted the Elections Committee Monitoring Report with a contravention. Linda Stier was recused from the vote.

Task: Linda and Brenda will investigate where to codify the change to have the honorarium as part of the Board budget rather than a Board decision.

Board Budget Report:

Hank Becker provided the Quarter 1 Board Budget Report for FY2019.

4. GM Reports

GM Report

General Manager Ruffin Slater presented his 2018 December General Report. Highlights include:

Checkout bags update: We continue to get positive feedback about eliminating single use checkout bags so we are moving to the next step of ordering bags and preparing for the transition.

Sales Growth: Sales grew 5% over last year for the first two months of the quarter (Oct & Nov), with Carrboro up 1%, Southern Village up 7%, and Hillsborough up 9%. Southern Village sales growth is now compared to a post-renovation period.,

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Weather: The snow last weekend was the third major weather event in the last three months.

Raleigh Bus Station obtains \$20 million grant: Plans to build a new station for local buses across the street from the Raleigh store got a boost Thursday with a \$20 million federal grant. The money will be used to build a bus station adjoining the new Union Station that will include six to 10 bays where local buses will collect and drop off passengers. Go Triangle expects to work with private developers to build retail, housing and office space adjacent to and above the bus station with a goal of opening in 2022.

Monitoring Report B9 - Emergency Management Succession

The General Manager answered questions on “Monitoring Report B9 - Emergency Management.” Linda Stier asked if at some point the Board might need to consider a policy change to the number of individuals named for emergency management succession given the size of our organization. (The policy requires one, but we have two.)

Marked for Future Consideration: Consider a policy change for the number of people named for emergency situations—in practice we have two, but the policy requires only one.

Decision: The Board accepted Monitoring Report B9 - Emergency Management Succession.

5. Open Board Time

Jon and Charles reported on their participation in Co-op Dynamics, a one-day workshop hosted by the Cooperative Council of North Carolina. Their session focused on our hybrid co-op model with consumer owners and worker owners. They reported that the attendees were quite interested in how the Board works with employees on it and that none had familiarity with policy governance.

6. Closings

Decisions and Tasks

Next Month’s Agenda: January Retreat (Linda Stier requested an opportunity at the January or July retreat to gain greater understanding of the Board arena, particularly our organizational future and governance in the context of the larger food industry, other food co-ops, and what’s happening locally.)

Calendar

Meeting Evaluation

7. Executive Session GM Evaluation