

# Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

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*May 2020 Meeting*

*Monthly Board Meeting, May 13, 2020, Virtual Conference, 6:30 pm to 8:40 pm*

**Directors online:** Ruffin Slater (general manager), Alice Ammerman (treasurer), Dave Bright, Glenda Clare (secretary), Jon McDonald (chair), Linda Stier, and Charles Traitor.

**Others attending:** Mark Goehring (facilitator), Brenda Camp (notes).

## 1. Preliminaries

**Agenda:** Linda Stier added an item for discussion: Whether it would be beneficial for the Board to make a statement of appreciation to worker owners.

**Minutes:** Minutes from the April 8 and April 20, 2020 meetings were approved.

**Decision:** Minutes from the April 8 and April 20, 2020 meetings were approved.

## 2. GM Reports

Ruffin Slater presented his General Manager's Report covering the period since the last Board meeting on April 20th: April 20 – May 13, 2020. The report highlighted updates related to *Policy B6: Staff Treatment and Compensation*, *Policy B5: Treatment of Consumers*, and *Policy B1: Financial Condition*

**Workers:** The GM provided updates on worker safety, transparent communications, and employee compensation. Highlights include:

- Symptom monitoring, which is a pre-shift requirement, is progressing well with 2/3 of workers participating.
- Employees will receive a temporary appreciation pay raise of \$3 per hour for the next six weeks. The appreciation pay will amount to \$720 in total (\$240 per biweekly paycheck) for an employee working 40 hours per week.
- New communications include daily postings of customer counts and sales and daily posting of out-of-stock items for stores and the Food House.

Jon McDonald, Board Chair, reported that he had written a communication of appreciation and acknowledgment, which he posted to workers on the Teams channel and that Charles Traitor had added a second voice of appreciation to the message.

**Consumers:** The GM provided updates on consumer safety and meeting consumer needs. Highlights include:

We continue to require customers to wear masks, which is recommended by the State and the CDC.

- Occupancy during Phase 1 has been kept at 20% even though the permissible level was raised to 50%. Average and peak occupancy is consistently below our limits with the exception of the peak hours in Southern Village and Hillsborough the day before Mothers' Day.
- Online shopping with curbside pickup continues to provide a reduced-risk venue for consumers to shop at the co-op. More than 1,600 online shoppers participated in a survey about online

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shopping. 93% said online shopping at Weaver Street was better than or as good as at other grocers. 82% of said it met their needs extremely or very well.

- Since launching the online shopping service wait time has been shortened to next-day pickup, and out-of-stock items have been reduced from 20% to 8%.
- Rosie, our online shopping partner, has promised to provide in July the ability to change order once it's been submitted.
- Regular weekly enews continue to provide important updates about changes in policies, such as mandatory masks and Phase I reopening.
- Plans are being undertaken to install four self-checkout lanes in each store in 90 days. Capital cost will be approximately \$500,000. This will prepare for the possibility of a second wave of the virus in the fall.

In response to questions, the GM provided additional information and comments:

- The plan is to continue to have new online shoppers take the survey.
- The GM acknowledged that online ordering and the self-service lanes affect our view of ourselves—where we want shoppers to come in to shop and connect with us. He suggested that we need to be good at both of these to meet the needs of younger shoppers wanting online shopping services and individuals looking for us to be a community gathering place.
- We were working with Rosie to qualify for and seek USDA approval to accept EBT for online purchases.

**Re-opening Plan.** The GM report included a plan for the three phases of re-opening. He observed that the plan was influenced in part by recent data reported by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) tracking of the virus: <http://www.healthdata.org/>.

To develop re-opening plan (Dates are estimated and plan is subject to adjustment)

- Phase 1 May 9-May 30
  - Maintain 20% occupancy restriction.
  - Keep store hours 11 am-7 pm.
  - Expect 5% week-over-week increase in store customers.
  - Expect corresponding decline in online orders.
  - Continue to require masks.
  - Require staff symptom monitoring.
- Phase 2 May 31-July 4
  - Increase store hours to 10 am-8 pm to maintain 20% occupancy restriction.
  - Expect 5% week-over-week increase in store customers.
  - Expect corresponding decline in online orders.
  - Even though restaurants are allowed to open, keep our indoor and outdoor seating closed, at least at the beginning of Phase 2.
  - Keep food bars and coffee bars closed, and keep self-service and bulk closed.
  - Continue to require masks and symptom monitoring.
- Phase 3 starting July 5
  - Increase store hours to 8 am-9 pm to maintain 20% occupancy restriction.
  - Expect 5% week over week increase in store customers.
  - Expect corresponding decline in online orders. We will need a new operational plan for online order fulfillment in this phase.
  - Open outdoor seating, but not indoor seating.
  - Likely keep food bars and coffee bars closed, keep self-service and bulk closed.
  - Continue to require masks and symptom monitoring.

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The GM described an incentive approach being developed to encourage shoppers to shop once a week online or in the stores to keep the number of customers in the stores at the same number.

Directors expressed their appreciation for an approach to reopening that reflected balanced, principled thinking and for basing the plan on data and information from reliable, well-informed sources nationally and locally.

### **Financial Condition Report**

The GM presented his May Financial Condition Report. He noted that sales for the past three weeks are a little over last year's sales and that Raleigh sales are close to budget. He also pointed out that online sales are more than compensating for the loss of prepared food sales, which we're not getting due to the closure of the food bars.

**Loan Forgiveness:** The GM reported he's receiving helpful advice regarding the loan forgiveness portion of the PPA loan from our accountants at Wegner and from the Small Business and Technology Development Center. He noted that that with the PPP loan forgiveness, the co-op should meet all of its bank covenants for the fiscal year ending in June.

**Decision:** The Board acknowledged the General Manager's Report addressing the critical areas impacted by the current changing environment: The report is data-informed, reflects proactive thinking, and balances the appropriate risks of workers, consumers, community and financial. The Board fully supports the approach to managing the complex situation.

**Task:** Jon McDonald will follow up on communicating messages of appreciation with workers and consumers.

## 3. Board Business

### **Change By-laws to Allow Online Voting and an Online Annual Meeting**

Jon McDonald reviewed the proposed by-law changes that allow online voting and an online annual meeting as options. Brenda Camp presented information about an online voting service, Simply Voting, that a number of sister cooperatives have used and that Weavers Way in Philadelphia highly recommends based on eight years of experience with the vendor.

**Decision:** The Board approved changes to the Weaver Street Market's By-laws that added *online* as options for the annual meeting and voting, as shown below:

#### **Article VI, Section 2 Annual Meeting**

"The annual Meeting of the Owners of the corporation shall be held at the corporate office or in a county where we operate **or online** at such time as the Board of Directors shall determine, within six (6) months after the close of the fiscal year."

#### **Article VI Section 4 Election of Directors**

"Voting occurs at each of the locations where consumer owners shop or employees work or at the annual meeting **or online.**"

### **Approve Process That Allows Owners to Attend Online Meetings**

The Directors reviewed the features available with two options that would allow owners to attend monthly Board Meetings: regular zoom meetings and zoom webinars. For the June meeting, owners will

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be able to attend the meeting via a zoom webinar. The Board Directors will evaluate how that option works.

#### 4. Closings

##### **Decisions and Tasks**

**Next Meeting Agenda:** May 27 is set as a tentative date for second meeting if needed. June meeting will include a review of an updated Call for Candidates application packet and plans for the July retreat.