

Bloomington Cooperative Services
2016 Annual Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
WonderLab Museum
Wednesday, October 19, 2016

The Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM by BCS Board President Caroline Beebe.

Beebe welcomed the owner-members to the meeting with the noting that Bloomingfoods was founded 40 years earlier in 1976 by a small group of people looking for access to healthier food. She then read the Bloomingfoods Ends statement. Beebe went on to talk about the current state of the co-op as reflected in the Ends report which the general manager presented to the board at its September meeting. She acknowledged Bloomingfoods is still in “survival mode” but the board and the GM are looking to the future, to the next iteration of the co-op. She went on to remind the owner-members of the importance of the 7 International Cooperative Principles, particularly the 2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control and challenged the owner-members to let us, your board, know what you want and need from the co-op and to step up in being involved and in spreading the word on the benefits of the cooperative from of business. She called for owner-members to be ambassadors for the co-op in the larger community.

The next person to speak was Ned Shaw, the first general manager and a current member of the Owner-member Linkage Committee. Shaw pointed out that for him, and most probably for many in the room, if we are what we eat he **is** Bloomingfoods. Also recognizing the founding of the co-op, he said, “We changed the way America eats.” But he went on to acknowledge that now this more natural and more healthful way of eating has become mainstream and, as such, has become big business, bringing us increasing competition. He encouraged owner-members to turn to the OML Committee as a way to communicate their vision for Bloomingfoods.

The next item on the agenda was the Bill Krejci Award, given in memory of Bill Krejci. The award was presented by Dedaimia Whitney, BCS Board Vice-president, to Dean Decker who retired this year after working 25 years for Bloomingfoods.

Whitney, who also serves as BCS Board Treasurer, introduced Todd Dixon, BCS Finance Manager. Dixon reviewed the financial condition of the co-op. He explained that it appeared that previous accounting practices were not always standard. He and GM Tony Alongi had to make an adjustment in order to make the cash flow statement reconcile with the income statement and balance sheet. Many owner-members had questions about this, but Dixon explained he could not say what happened since he and Alongi were not here at the time. On the brighter side he went on to present a couple of trends charts, which showed that while Bloomingfoods is still in a tenuous financial position the trends are looking good.

Last, but certainly not least, GM Tony Alongi spoke. He began by reviewing what had happened this past year. Staff has decreased from 190 to 145. The Elm Heights store was closed. A lot of institutional memory has been lost; 17 managers are in new positions. However, Alongi spent most of his presentation looking to the future. First, he talked about how BCS is investing in staff training; 100% of the staff has received customer service training. He went on to talk about

the importance of seeing Bloomingfoods as a “cooperative business” where both of these words are important. He explained the importance of making a profit because if Bloomingfoods had not made a profit in the past it would not be here right now; it has survived on its retained earnings. Alongi explained that he sees the Ends statement as articulated by the owner-members through the board as his job description. As part of this mandate he wants to turn to broader initiatives for Bloomingfoods: food education, more local food, making food more accessible to low income households. He said it is important to him for owners to see value in their dollars spent, not just through the product they buy but through what is done in the community. He pointed out that a local business has a multiplier of \$1.60 in the community while a chain has a multiplier of only \$1.36 in the community. He encouraged owner-members if they have a question, ask! He announced he will be starting quarterly owner-member financial reporting meetings. The first will be in January.

Alongi recognized staff anniversaries, some carrying over from 2015, when they were not recognized.

Beebe announced the election results: Gracia Valliant, Bobbi Boos and Maggie Sullivan were elected to 3 year board terms, Natascha Buehnerkemper was elected to a 2 year term and Claire Cumberland and Dee Bohler were elected to 1 year terms. The Positive Change organizations for 2017 are Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Hoosier Hill Food Bank, Community Kitchen of Monroe County, Interfaith Winter shelter, Shalom Community Center, Sycamore Land Trust, Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Bloomington Community Orchard, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington, Area 10 on Aging, and Bloomington Winter Farmers’ Market.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Lilly, BCS Secretary