

Board of Directors Meeting  
**Monday, September 17, 2018**  
6:00pm check-in | 9:10pm adjourn

**Call to Order & Check-in**

6:05pm, *Discussion*

**Directors:** Tony Bezsylo, Sean Shatto, Norma Samame, Celeste Levitz-Jones, Ally Young, Ed Corcoran, Rebecca Reynolds, George Langford. *Absent: Claudia Richman.*

**Owners:** Sharon Hoyer (GM), Meghann Wilkinson (scribe), Tom Pierson (facilitator), Em & Tella, Sendy Soto, Brian Perea, Nora Portis, Lily Baker, Audrey Sekendur.

**Staff:** Ashley, Arlik, Andy, Devorah, Jada, Nick.

Rounds question: everyone shared one thing that they appreciate about the co-op.

**Consent Agenda**

6:14pm, *Decision*

- Approve August Meeting Minutes
- Approve Annual Meeting agenda
- Accept Election Committee Report
- Accept Development & Eval Committee Report
- Accept board monitoring report on D3, Delegation to the GM
- Approve new owners and share repurchases

All items passed with one abstention, GL.

**Meeting Agenda**

6:15pm, *Decision*

- B6 discussion moved directly after Owner Comments, followed by the GM Report, then break.
- Strategy Corner time may be tacked on to items that require additional discussion, like Ends.

Agenda adopted with consensus.

**Owner Comments**

6:18pm, *Listening (TB)*

16 comments submitted via email, attached for reference. Record of in-person comments:

- Arlik: has accumulated a lot of tickets due to lack of parking around DPFC and is struggling to pay for tickets on his wages-- but is grateful for support he has received with paycheck advance.
- Jada: finds that her wages are prohibitive to finding an apartment in the area, needing to earn 3X as much as rent.

- Andy: wants to see the co-op move beyond survival to thrive. Struggling to afford commuting on CTA and is challenged by physical taxation of bike commuting plus working. Thinks most staff are just squeaking by financially- if emergency hits, there is no cushion.
- Em: has found in past non-profit work that paying less than \$15/hr resulted in turnover, low commitment, etc. has seen a lot of turnover in DPFC staff due to low wages. Turnover weakens the community of the co-op and the valuing of staff.

Proposal to add 12min to this item passed.

- Brian: echoes that livable wages build community.
- Devorah: lots of turnover during her introductory period in prepared foods, took on a lot of responsibility but was still paid introductory wage.
- Audrey: July wage increase was a step in the right direction. Hopes that the board will continue to push for \$15/hr minimum wage by July 2019.
- Lily: makes over \$15/hr, works close to 40hrs/wk and has more wiggle room financially: \$500/mo rent and lives nearby. If any of these factors changed, she would not be solvent. Interested in joining a committee that looks at what a real livable wage for this neighborhood is.
- Sendy: could there be a campaign to fundraise toward this wage increase? She would be happy to be part of that kind of work.

## **GM Monitoring: B6, Staff Treatment and Compensation**

*6:41pm, Decision*

Report accepted as demonstrating non-compliance with the Global B6 policy. SH will include updates on progress toward the plans provided in monthly operations reports moving forward. Plans may be revised after GM meets tomorrow(?) with admin services and union steward.

- **B6.1:** Accepted as in non-compliance with plan outlined.
- **B6.2-5:** Accepted in compliance.
- **B6.6:** Accepted as in compliance.
  - Data clarification: there is not currently a manager in the store at all times; a “person on duty” system is now in place which includes Tier II staff with training to handle customer service and emergency situations.
- **B6.7:** Accepted as in compliance.
- **B6.8:** Accepted as in non-compliance with plan outlined.
  - Data point of recent raise doesn’t singly support feeling “fairly paid.”
  - Previous data request for pay scale across tiers and identity groups not present in this report. SH will follow-up with Melanie of CDS on how to move forward with collecting and providing data on pay equity for future reports.

Proposal to extend the length of the meeting by 10min passed with one abstention, TB.

- **B6.9:** Accepted as in compliance.
- **B6.10:** Accepted as in non-compliance.
  - Practice of 90 day intro period has been in place to offset administrative costs, but violates the spirit of this policy. SH will move forward with cost reviews and report back in December 2018 with a path to compliance. This may include revising the 90 day intro period to include health insurance benefits at hiring.

Proposal to add 15min to this item passed (10min from strategy + 5min by extending the meeting to 9pm).

- **B6.II:** Interpretation not accepted.
  - Next steps: AY will convene a working group within the policy committee consisting of GM, staff, and owners with two objectives: 1) determine what our working definition of a local living wage actually is and provide a recommendation to the board by December and 2) support the GM in building a plan of action by April 2019 for how to get there.
  - Thanks to SH for making progress on raising wages this year-- still work to do!

## **Break ----**

*8:00pm*

Proposal to revise agenda passed with consensus: Ops: 10min, Ends: 25min, All other items: 5min.

## **Operations Report**

*8:14pm, Decision*

August sales show improvement across departments due to both customer count and basket size. New equity is much closer to the plan-- several new owners joined at \$250. SH will begin data collection on why new owners joined. SH will provide a report of new owners and initial equity payments since new store opening, and include this data in the new owner approval list each month moving forward.

Rollovers don't count toward funding goal. Need a significant bank balance increase for the \$150,000 paydown scheduled for April 2020. No new loans were raised since the last meeting. SH will schedule a phone call to organize loan campaign and get the group starting on calls within the next 7 days. SS, AY, TB, EC volunteer for team, + CLJ after wedding. SH will work with Finance Committee on resolving unclaimed property for unreachable owner lender whose loan has matured.

SH will re-submit B9 report with the current succession plan.

Report accepted.

## **GM Monitoring A, Global Ends**

*8:27pm, Decision*

Interpretation accepted with two abstentions, NS and AY. (Note: in the future, would like to see policy language unpacked in the interpretation to build framework for how to relate the data back to the points it supports.)

Data and summary accepted as demonstrating sufficient accomplishment for the year with three abstentions, NS, GL, AY. Notes:

- This is the first report on our revised Ends policy. Policy Committee will recommend changes for future reporting.
- Interpretation includes 'missing marks,' but data doesn't support; is completely positive despite GM conclusion that compliance cannot be reported because Ends are 'infinite.'
- Bravo that DPFC achieved everything celebrated in this report with Sharon's leadership!

## **Owner Equity Brainstorm**

*8:55pm, Discussion*

Following up on questions around insufficient equity that arose during BI review:

- Policy Committee is working to evaluate a “one and done” model vs 2.5 share “full vestment” and will bring more research on this to future meeting.
- How does the board support operations in hitting equity goals on a month to month basis? In the interest of time, will hold for future meeting.

## **Action Items, October Agenda, Announcements**

*9:00pm, Discussion*

Action items from tonight’s meeting reviewed by MW.

October Agenda:

- GM Monitoring: B11 and B12
- Board Monitoring: D4 (RR and NS will team)
- Approve next board calendar (Policy Committee will propose)
- Approve content for the Annual Meeting (consent agenda)
- Approve contract (Development Committee will propose)

Committee work:

- Policy committee will draft board calendar, pick up recent flags, organize wage working group.
- Election committee will submit messaging to staff, open candidate nominations.
- HR committee will draft GM contract.

Announcements:

- Coffee with the Board: 9/22, 11am @ co-op cafe.
- Chicagoland Cooperative Ecosystem Coalition: 10/17, 6pm. DPFC should send reps!
- DPFC had planned to host LSNA Member Action Council quarterly meeting, which will now be a general march for racial equity, looking to mobilize over 500 people: 10/23, 5:30pm.

## **Meeting Evaluation & Check-out**

*9:10pm, Discussion*

Applause for getting through a year!! There’s surely stuff to improve-- but good work, all. Onward.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

**Owner Comments**  
submitted to board@dillpickle.coop

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*Living Wage Policy*

Dear Dill Pickle Food Co-op Board,

As an owner, former Board member, and long-time resident of the gentrifying northwest side of Chicago, I feel compelled to write in support of the Dill Pickle's living wage policy and the hardworking staff members who keep the co-op operating every day. I recognize that I'm no longer regularly privy to the financial circumstances of the co-op, which of course are a factor in determining wage levels. If the bottom line allows for it, though, I'd be proud for my co-op to be out in front of the city in terms of labor policy.

The Fight for Fifteen is both a powerful movement and a reflection of what is necessary to stay afloat in an increasingly cost-prohibitive city. The Dill Pickle has done an outstanding job hiring from the local community to support the store's expansion; it would be a moving and empowering corollary to now step forward to increase those employee wages - especially recognizing that many are trying to stay in the community even as the cost of living rises volcanically - and setting a positive example for elected officials and corporate CEOs alike to emulate.

Again, I'm sympathetic if the current balance sheet precludes such a move forward. But if margins are too precarious to facilitate an increase, I'd welcome a call to action from the Board to us, the owner base, so the progressive practices of the co-op as a whole are able to run in parallel with its labor policies.

Thank you for your consideration and all you do to ensure responsible and meaningful governance of our co-op. I appreciate your hard work and your commitment.

Sincerely,

**Christy Prah, Owner #101**

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*A true living wage for our pickle employees*

to the board: as a Dill Pickle owner (#1576) and concerned citizen, i'd like to offer my opinion of your policy regarding staff treatment and compensation. i think the board should acknowledge that the stated goal of the general manager to 'not allow any employee to work for less than a living wage', is not currently being met. i strongly support the dill pickle employees who are working hard at their jobs and pushing to earn a true living wage. i don't believe the DP board's calculation of \$13.50 as a 'living wage' is realistically enough for a single adult to live on, much less an employee with one or more dependants. and for anyone desiring to live near their job, it's even less feasible, as logan square becomes more expensive to live in every year. i'd like to see the board actively and aggressively support the goal of a higher wage for employees as soon as it's financially feasible for the coop to pay it. thank you for listening,

**Joan Hersh, Owner #1576**

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*Comment for Board Meeting 9/17*

Dear Dill Pickle Board,

My name is Ellen Ray and I am member number 2094. I am writing on behalf of myself and my partner.

I fully support the Dill Pickle's policy that no employee work for less than a living wage, but I cannot support the current interpretation of a living wage being used by the Dill Pickle Co-op. I request the board reconsiders Dill Pickle's definition of a living wage, in order to be on the very forefront of economic justice in our city, consistent with my understanding of our shared values.

While indexes and calculators, like the BEST index, can be used as reference tools for assessing living wages, it is important to consider their scale. Often these tools consider Chicago or Cook County and its residents as a whole, without context or nuance. Work by organizations like the Social Impact Research Center at Heartland Alliance have demonstrated the hyper-locality of both economic conditions and living wages.

Using the BEST or any other index or calculator to directly set policy is unwise if it does not consider context and your values as an organization. These standards should be tested against additional, much more specific data. For instance, a 2018 report, released in mid-June by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, highlights the wide gap between wages and the high cost of rent. That report outlines that the housing wage for a one bedroom apartment in 60647 (Logan Square) is currently \$20.38 per hour. When we get more specific, more local, the wage numbers that align to our shared values change significantly. If we value locality we must consider it when making policy.

I understand the challenges of increasing compensation to small and mid-sized value driven organizations and I understand a strategy may be needed. But that starts with an honest assessment of where we are. Therefore, I urge the board to acknowledge its current interpretation of its living wage policy is inconsistent with its values, set a strong, sustainable hourly wage for Dill Pickle employees higher than the current standard, and encourage the Board to articulate a values-driven compensation strategy for the future.

Thank you for your service and consideration,  
**Ellen Ray & Ty Mulroy, Owners #2094**

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*More than 'Livable Wages'*

I joined the Dill Pickle because I want to be part of building a more equitable local food system, and I stand with co-op workers in demanding continued progress toward sustainable livelihoods.

**Hollis Birnbaum, HOO #626**

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*I stand with dill pickle workers*

Hi there-

My name is Lauren and I am owner number 1996. I stand with co op workers in their desire to earn a living wage. I am a member of this co op to bring my values and politics in line with my actions and where I put my money.

\$13.50 an hour is not a living wage. Please reconsider.

**Lauren Vallone, Owner #1996**

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*Living Wage for Co-op Workers*

Dear Dill Pickle Co-op Board members,

I am writing in support of a \$15 minimum wage for all Dill Pickle workers.

I recognize that the co-op struggles financially and am very grateful to all of you for your dedication in serving on the Board.

I recognize that the Dill Pickle is directed by the members to be accessible to people with limited incomes; and that everyone who lives and works in Logan Square and indeed in the city is struggling with the effects of gentrification and, in general, the sacrifice of ordinary people's needs in favor of the very wealthy.

I hope the board and other members can develop creative ways to protect at once the interests of the co-op, the workers, and people who can't afford to pay high food prices.

My full-time volunteer work is for single-payer health care, also called national improved Medicare for all. This and other universal programs would greatly increase the value of workers' compensation while relieving businesses of expensive administrative work.

With warm regards,

**Anne Scheetz, Owner #306**

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*Comment on Dill Pickle workers' wage*

Hello,

I suggest that the Dill Pickle continue to gradually increase worker compensation with the goal of getting to a family living wage, but consistent with financials. The living wage calculation depends on the assumptions made. However the food industry workers have a campaign "Fight for 15", so this should be the immediate target.

Thanks,

**Bhaskar S. Manda, Owner #2210**

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*Support for increasing worker hourly wage*

To whom it may concern -

I joined the Dill Pickle because I want to be a part of a more sustainable, human-centered, and progressive food system, and I fully support the workers in their demand for a sustainable livelihood. Please demonstrate the coop's compliance with the the living wage policy.

**Gretchen Johnson, Owner # 1566**

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*Staff Treatment & Compensation: owner comment*

Hello, Dill Pickle Board of Directors.

We cannot attend this evening's meeting, but wanted to send an owner comment related to the Dill Pickle's Staff Treatment & Compensation policies that are on the agenda.

The Dill Pickle's employees are essential to not only the store's day-to-day operations but also to the striving community that the co-op purports to serve. We strongly encourage this body to revisit and adjust its definition of a living wage for all of its employees to accurately reflect the cost of living in Chicago, specifically those areas that are rapidly gentrifying. We stand in solidarity with Dill Pickle employees seeking sustainable earnings for themselves and their families.

Please feel free to reach out to either of us for further discussion of this issue.

Best,

**Anna Forsher & Leonard Pierce, Owners #2028**

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*Living Wage Policy*

Sorry for the copy-and-paste, but the sample message sums it up pretty well: "I joined the Dill Pickle because I want to be part of building a more equitable local food system, and I stand with co-op workers in demanding continued progress toward sustainable livelihoods."

Thanks!

**Esther Maria Norman, Owner #2157**

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*Owner comment for tonight's vote!*

Hi,

I wanted to submit a quick comment in support of the Dill Pickle staff ahead of tonight's meeting -- I stand with them as they demand continued progress toward sustainable livelihoods and a living wage.

Thanks!

**Erica Sagrans, Owner #1404**



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*Living wage policy*

Dear DPFC board members,

In anticipation of your review of the Staff Treatment & Compensation policy, we wanted to express our support for co-op workers. We joined the Dill Pickle because we want to be part of building a more equitable local food system, and we stand with co-op workers in demanding continued progress toward sustainable livelihoods. We trust the board to act with clarity and a focus on actionable steps toward equitable and realistically livable compensation.

Thank you for all that you do to make our cooperative shine!  
**Meghann Wilkinson and Michael Caskey, owners #1427**

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*owner comment -- witness slip for Dill Pickle Board meeting on Sept 17, 2018*

Dear Dill Pickle Board:

At tonight's meeting I would like to voice my support for board member Ally Young who is demanding that employees of the Dill Pickle be compensated monetarily.

I realize the Dill Pickle is a small grocery with a small profit margin, but if there is any possibility to better compensate Dill Pickle employees or to do so in the near future, I would hope the board can make a decision to help move in the direction of offering its employees a living wage.

Sincerely,  
**Andrea Kaspryk, owner #883**

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*Owner comment for board meeting*

Hello,

I understand that staff compensation is being reviewed tonight, and I want to voice my support for co-op workers demanding a policy that is fully and deeply equitable. Supporting fair wages for folks at all steps in the food system is a big part of why I participate in the cooperative movement. I believe that Dill Pickle can be a leader in this movement by making sure that a living wage is calculated in a robust way that incorporates concerns from staff about cost of living. Even if that's not financially possible at this point in time, let's keep pushing towards a goal that is true to our cooperative values.

I look forward to transparency from the Board as you make your assessments, and please let me know if I can support this process in any way.

Best,  
**Lincoln Stannard, Owner #1530**

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### *Living Wage Policy*

Hello all,

I know tonight you'll be discussing the report on living wages for employees tonight and I wanted to weigh in briefly as an owner, former board member, and former employee.

I know I'm the past this has been a difficult subject to navigate, and I'm sure tonight will be no exception. I'd urge the board to reject a simple solution to this complicated and emotional issue and push towards a more robust model that considers more than simple figures from a formula (that does not fully take into account the needs of part time workers).

The DPFC should be a place where workers feel valued and a true living wage is one of the many ways that can be accomplished.

This issue is only considered once a year and I think we can all agree it warrants extra attention.

Thanks for your hard work and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

**Brekke Bounds, Owner #472**

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### *Employee Wages*

I don't know what information was used to determine that \$13.50 was a livable wage for a single person, but even \$15 is not reasonable. Ask our 13.50 employees if they've started a savings account, if they make enough \$\$ to put some away for emergencies, for retirement.

Please... \$15 is the next hike we need to make with a plan to raise it to \$18.

**Laurie Tanenbaum, owner #9**

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