

Missoula Community Food Co-operative Meeting Minutes: March 21, 2011

Members present: Denise Alexander, Michele Disney, Steve Guerrari, Mike McCarthy, Brendan Moles, Bob Oaks, Christian Russell, Liz Stoeckel, Amy Weiss, Paige Woodruff, Caryn Lee Youngholm, Jess Glebke (co-chair), Ben Weiss (co-chair), Leslie Guerrari (director), Kate Meinig-Smith (director), Terri Roberts (director), Jack Rowan (director), Val Coulter (coordinator), Kate Keller (coordinator), and Cass Hemphill (recorder).

1. Welcome

Ben began the meeting at 6:13 pm and asked everyone quickly introduced themselves.

2. Additions to the Agenda.

No additions, although it was agreed that the product selection committee and POS committee reports would be moved earlier in the night's agenda.

3. Announcements.

No announcements.

4. Open floor for members.

Brendan asked about the membership model, specifically whether the Co-op would consider other ways for members to participate and remain in good standing (e.g., pay extra when not working). Kate and other members reiterated our commitment to the Park Slope model, which emphasizes contribution of hours in trade for shopping. Brendon asked when the membership last voted on this model (answer: about 1-1/2 years ago) and inquired whether it was appropriate to have the members consider this issue again. Bob Oaks offered to write a brief history of how the model came about and key decisions that led to the current structure. Val commented that our model levels the playing field for members, regardless of their financial status. Ben said the board will discuss this and similar issues at their retreat in April. The members returned to this subject several times over the course of the meeting.

Liz asked about retraining for the new store, saying that she was comfortable working in the old store but knew there were probably significant changes she'd want to be trained on for the new store. She also expressed concern about limited opportunities for certain shifts, such as the 5:30 weekday shift. Kate M-S offered to move to FTOP so Liz could have her (Kate's) 5:30 shift.

Brendan also asked about opportunities for "other" jobs. Several members discussed the various "other" jobs (jobs other than cashier and stocker). Kate emphasized that cashier and stocker shifts are, though, the key jobs that keep the Co-op open. Ben said there are "specialized jobs" and the membership committee is working on identifying these jobs and a process to announce and fill them. This information will be included in the member manual; job opportunities will

continue to be listed in the weekly e-mail. Questions about the definition of a “household” and the cost of joining the Co-op will also be clarified in the member manual.

6. Board of Directors (BOD)/discussion items

The minutes from February’s meeting were approved by acclamation.

[Action Item: The Board will discuss possible modifications to the agenda at their retreat.]

The board will finalize these policies and bring them to the general membership next meeting.

Grand Opening – Emily was recognized for her above-and-beyond organizational work making our grand opening a smashing success! **Thanks, Emily!!!** Val reported that 17 new members signed up, and most of them have already completed their training. Donors to the grand opening will be thanked in an ad.

Member Manual – The Attendance Committee has incorporated the requested changes and clarified additional terminology and explanations in response to discussions at the member meetings the last two months. The Board will discuss the revised language (and any other issues) at their retreat on April 9. The committee will then incorporate any additional revisions and circulate the draft manual to the full membership for review prior to discussion and potential approval at the April member meeting.

[Action item: Finalize the policies on specialized jobs, committee member jobs, and child care, and have the revised member manual ready for the April meeting.]

7. Reports

Coordinator

Donation Policy – The coordinators and Terri said they preferred to issue gift certificates for use in the store. Terri pointed out that this spreads the cost to when people use the gift certificates, rather than when the donation is given. The coordinators are still working out details of the donation policy, especially regarding trades versus donations. Terri and Kate K. will bring the recommended donation policy to the next meeting for discussion and a vote.

Financials.

Terri distributed the February Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement. She expressed concern about the financial picture and suggested we were at a point where we could slow down on adding new inventory. She recommended we establish a set percentage to spend on new inventory items. Terri complimented the membership about its ability to put things together on a shoestring.

Terri strongly advised we invest in regular ads. The Board will discuss guerrilla marketing and other opportunities at their retreat. Ben expressed a need to know more about the options and what each option costs.

Carrot – Jess and Emily are bringing the carrot back to life. (The carrot is our monthly tracking graphic that shows sales in relation to our goals. A full (completely orange) carrot means we’ve

met our financial goals for the month. Jess described their plan to use a clear piece of Plexiglas, with the outline and hash marks permanently painted on the back. This will reduce the effort of “filling” the carrot because we’ll only have to fill in the appropriate amount of orange each week. (In the past, each carrot was drawn on a fresh piece of butcher paper, which was wasteful and took too much time.)

Building and Ad Hoc Capital Budget.

Budget – Terri and Jack are nearing conclusion on the budget. They will bring it to the next meeting for approval, although Terri pointed out the budget isn’t set in stone but rather subject to some fluctuation month to month.

Lease – Jack is working to finalize the lease and expects it to be ready for Board review at the retreat and then member review at the April meeting.

Loan program – Terri reported that we have brought in \$33,700 of our \$45,000 goal. She reminded us we’re still looking for additional loans, and that loans do not necessarily have to be from members.

Attendance Committee.

Member Manual – Denise and Kate are continuing to work on clarifying policies, especially the definition of “good standing,” which is provided for but not defined in the Bylaws. We agreed that this level of detail was more appropriate for the member manual, which can be changed relatively easily, rather than the Bylaws, which are difficult to change. The members also discussed the need to clarify what a member receives from their common stock.

Membership Desk – Kate reported that three members are working on designing/building the new database with assistance from the Park Slope IT folks.

Product Selection Committee

Amy circulated a hot-off-the-press draft product selection policy. The policy is much shorter than the previous draft circulated last year. The policy incorporates a list of specific, potentially controversial or unwanted ingredients; the list comes from Whole Foods. The committee doesn’t recommend banning products with these ingredients but rather alerting shoppers through shelf tags/info when these ingredients are present in products in our store.

Kate K. asked that the policy be slightly amended to indicate our capacity for special orders is limited, especially for refrigerated and frozen items.

[Action Item: Discuss the policy and, if possible, vote on it next month.]

Product Survey – Kate M-S will compile an overview of the survey results (leaving out any personally identifying information) and share the results with the membership next month.

Point-of-Sale System Committee

Steve reported that the committee has worked out the kinks and the POS system is “95% there.” Steve recommended setting up a third station in back near/at the receiving station. The third station could be used for training and would provide redundancy (parts from the third station could be swapped with our two main cashier stations to keep them running). The committee does have a concern over limited access to the utility room, where the data is funneled through wires before transmittal to the bank. Jack said the room is kept locked. Entry is restricted to maintenance only, and Jack will work out how to limit keys to necessary maintenance persons.

To get three full stations running will cost about \$1100. We have some equipment already for the second lane, so finishing that statement will cost just \$450. The balance of the cost will completely outfit a third station.

Next steps: acquire missing hardware (including a used computer), do data entry, and retrain cashiers. Data entry opportunities will probably be announced in mid- to late-April.

Terri pointed out that our current systems are set up as backward-looking (what’s been sold) rather than forward-looking (what we need to order). This may not change now, but probably will in the future.

Warehouse Space – Jack discussed a proposal from NMCDC for the Co-op to lease the warehouse space in the back, which we could then sublease. This would put us in the role of property manager, responsible for the rent even if we don’t have a lessee. If we manage the space, we’ll have more say over who leases it and can have it ready for when we are ready to use it. It would give us more control over what happens in the building. Jack said there were some likeminded organizations who might be interested in the space. Jack will find out more when he talks to NMCDC and will keep us advised of the possibilities (pro and con).

The meeting ended just after 8:20 pm by general agreement.