

Member Meeting Minutes
September 19th, 2011 // 6pm to 8pm
Location: Co-op, 1500 Burns St
Facilitator: Jess

Members present: Jess Glebke (co-chair), Ben Weiss (co-chair), Jack Rowan (director), Kate Meinig Smith (director), Terri Roberts (director), Emily Lincoln (director), Kate Keller (coordinator), John Clarenbach (member), Barrett Campbell (member, recorder)

Welcome, Introductions

Start: 18:09

Additions to the Agenda (5 min)

- No additions.

Announcements (5 min)

- No announcements

Open Floor For Members (15 min)

- John Clarenbach: interested in discussing funding mechanisms when there are losses and general cash flow questions. As a MBA student, John is interested in helping where he can.

BOD Discussion Items (55 min)

Board met last week for a regrouping session, the results/topics of which will all be discussed tonight.

- Membership Desk implementation
 - There will be a desk and a computer with internet access. This could be ready around Oct 1. The desk could be up this week.
 - Desk is to be called the Member Services Desk (MSD). Organization and calendar set-up is still being hammered out. Jess suggests that we have the bulletin board and suggestion box by the MSD. The Community Events board may move to the current cart location.
 - The MSD will also help members with special orders.
- Annual All Member Meeting
 - It's a date: 11/10/11. 30 minute agenda followed by dinner, raffle and PART-HAY!
 - During this meeting, election of new members, amendment of the bylaws, raffle of donations by members. This year maybe we keep the bylaws to the survey and do a short "come to jesus" speech.
 - Location: possibly here. Theme: PARTY!!!! Soup, bread, desserts – vendor donations and potluck style.
 - No need for drink catering, we are a private party and can serve. We can get a keg and pass the hat.
 - We can promote and do invite through Constant Contact.
 - The survey (to be done via constant contact): let's do broad, provocative questions and the suggestion box can be used for specifics. The questions need to be honest and motivate the members to get involved. Jess suggests we put the survey out when we announce the meeting and indicate we will address those questions through the meeting. Terri indicates it might be

effective to have one directed agenda item to engage everyone in discussions. The survey needs to go out 10/10/11. The marketing committee will put together a list of questions and bring it back for discussion.

- We currently need at least one new board member, but we do have enough for a quorum right now. Ideally we'd like to have 2 – 4 more board members. We can have 11 board members. Information about each candidate needs to be out about 1 week before the ballot.
- Board member recruitment
 - The executive committee will coordinate ballots and get the word out.
 - Marketing committee will meet this week to discuss new board member recruitment.
 - Kate MS and Emily will work on coordinating the ballot, bylaws, getting information to the boards and newsletter and direct recruitment efforts.
- Improving sales /financial strategy
 - Our funding is dwindling and we have continuously drawn from our savings. We had roughly \$30k in savings before the expansion, because of associated costs and slow summer we are at a point where we need to be concerned with our month to month expenses. Our rent, rate per foot and inventory costs of all increased. Sales have also risen, but not in line with expenses.
 - To break even the Co-op needs to make roughly \$40k monthly
 - Need to increase sales (sales are now increasing post-summer, as expected).
 - We have had an influx of new members and staff has made efforts to engage cashiers in bringing members up to date on their dues by flagging cards.
 - Beer & wine license will hopefully bring in more sales and membership.
 - Fixed assets review is pending, as is the budget for these and then Jack and Terri will attempt to secure a loan.
 - A loan could help develop a deli for sandwiches, which could also help with members/profit.
 - Member loan program – should developing this be put on hold for right now? If a member came forward wanting to loan the Co-op money, this would be considered. The money previously loaned was spent as expected and we have started paying back on the loan. Terri suggests that perhaps a concerted effort to ramp up stock and attract new members will be expensive.
 - The buy order has been about \$3,000 per week, which is not sustainable with our sales. The best thing we can do is get our sales up and keep people excited about the co-op. Right now, 60% of members only shop during their shift. We can improve this!! A marketing focus could be to remind people why they are shopping here, show them where our prices are better than other places around town. John C. suggests some dynamic approaches to shop the Co-op.
 - Terri asks about ways we can be proactive purchasing our inventory: price comparisons with UNFI (our main distributor) and Amazon and some items are less expensive on Amazon. We need to explore options to price inventory at a lower cost. Kate reports that UNFI just got a Safeway account, so there is decreased availability for smaller orders. Also, after speaking with Tracy who farms in Dixon, there is talk about a Winter's farmer market, so do we need to start thinking more outside of the box; collaborating with the growers co-op or thinking of a different way to ... maybe we don't need to do this exactly the way we are. Competing with the Farmer's Market is challenging!
 - Ben distinguishes between farmer's market competition (a sense of place and an experience) versus other stores. Jess proposes we do a Survey Monkey before the all member meeting and throw out some of these ideas. "Are you happy with our grocery store model," "do you shop outside your shift?" "how often do you shop here," etc. The questions should make people want to come to the meeting!

- Jess indicates that we believe we have addressed complaints from previous surveys but yet this is not stimulating sales.
- Action Items:
 - In roughly 30 days from now, the Co-op will be opening on Mondays – 7 days!!!
 - From membership we need more participation and ideas. More members need to attend monthly meetings and be engaged.
 - The bulletin board will provide an opportunity for people to engage in change by addressing information in the suggestion box. This will provide a way for members to share their thoughts and for everyone to see what we're working on.
 - Jack: Do we need a 3rd employee who focuses on ordering? Kate: perhaps product committee could do more research on pricing/sourcing and that would alleviate pressure on staff.
 - Terri: For member meeting, we need to promote people joining committees and participating in decision making for the co-op.
- Alcohol sales update
 - Terri: The information for the criminal history is in process and nearly ready to submit. We need a management agreement with staff. This could be submitted in 2 weeks.
 - Final approval could take up to 6 months.

BOD Action Items (5 min)

- Meeting Minutes Approval: minutes were unanimously approved!!

Reports

- Coordinator (5 min) // Kate K: Props to Val for helping to flag cards and bring in member funds! Working hard on assigning PLU for POS. Cashier training for POS to commence soon!
- Membership (5 min) // Kate S: encourage people to sign up with their friends!! POS and Cashier manuals are dialed in. Also looking into photo member cards. Laminated check lists for stockers and cashiers that are revised/up to date. Working training and staffing membership desk.
- Executive (10 min) // Ben: We identified the roadmap for completing job descriptions in the near future. Will review ballot and bylaws before the October meeting. Kate K Do we want to rejoin the Cooperative Grocers Collective? Their list serve might be a great resource for us. They also offer weekly webinars that are effective.
- Marketing (10 min) // Terri/Emily: The NoFi event brought in about \$500; the turnout was great! Emily: Sunday streets was good! Working members turned out to help table. Ben: We are thinking about doing 3 next year and ramping it up to connect Lowell School to the market downtown on traffic free roads! Jess: we do quarterly ads in the indie. Listing of brands, farmer's market 7 days a week! Design team will mingle and create.
- Facilities (5 min) // Jack: This Sunday 10-4 planting will take place! Come by and cheer... or help. So far only 2 people have enlisted to help. Refreshment donations would be appreciated. More shelving units are in progress. Bike lock ups are in place! A member donated \$700 for building a bike shelter, some of which will be used for the lock ups. Plans are in the works for a bike shelter! The hydrant may pose a problem, so we're designing around it.

END: 20:00

Next Member Meeting: October 17, 2011