



## APPROVED MINUTES

### Upper Valley Food Co-op | Board of Directors Minutes

June 27th, 2023, 6pm | Hybrid

193 North Main Street | White River Junction, VT 05001+

**Directors present:** Tina Barney, Kate Rohdenburg, Debbie Diegoli, Pamela Perkins, Rio Pires, Chris Sneddon, Kerry Rosenthal

**Directors absent:** Zea Luce, Sam Sukumar

**GMT present:** Sue Miller, Norm McMullen

**Members present:** none

**Others present:** None

**Facilitator:** Tina Barney

**Recorder:** Larissa Sharff

### PROCEEDINGS

*Open meeting begins at 6:00pm. Called to order by Tina Barney.*

#### 1. Agenda & Announcements

- Reading of the Ends
- Board Emails: none
- Member Comments: none
- Agenda Amendment: Store Budget will be postponed until next month
- Announcements: Georgeann from the deli offered to make a meal for board meetings. There was a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks to the meal. Larissa will announce the planned meal ahead of time so everyone can decide if they want to opt-in.

#### 2. Meeting Minutes

- May Meeting Minutes
  - Change: one minor correction
  - **Approved by CONSENSUS**

#### 3. New Business from the GMT

- Sue's last time doing a GMT report!
- Financials
  - Sue suggested the board look at the store budget again next month, with both Norm and Darrion present to answer questions about the plan for the coming year.
  - Tina asked about the store budget being in the red. Sue and Norm have said that the store can weather having the store be in the red. Tina asked how long Sue thought we could sustain that and Sue said 5 years. This is the third year with a deficit, but Sue said we should focus on if the sales are increasing.
- Staff Meetings
  - In the most recent staff meetings, Sue made it clear that Darrion is now the person to talk to, but Sue and Norm will still be around to support him.
  - Chris mentioned the staff meeting that he led at the end of last month to talk about Darrion's hiring. He said the staff seemed cautiously hopeful. There were some who felt that there should be a probationary period.
- Darrion's arrival
  - Darrion was here on Monday to walk around the store again and meet staff members. Sue gave him broad information about co-ops and our co-op in particular. Sue talked to him about her suggestion to do another reset of the store, to do a deep shelf cleaning, and possibly bring back the seating area.
  - He will be starting full-time on July 5th.

- Sue will be switched to hourly, with 15-20 hours per week. She'll stay around to work on the Ends Report and wrap up other projects.
- Ice Cream Social
  - Sue gave a huge thank you to the board for their thoughtful words and gifts given at the Ice Cream Social.

#### 4. Policy Governance

- EL8 Communication and Counseling to the Board
  - Kerry and Kate led the discussion of the policy and monitoring.
  - EL1.6 and EL1.10 are both partial compliance because of the need to increase the activity of Education & Outreach.
  - Rio asked about EL1.5 which says that we put Real Organic Project stickers on our produce. Sue said that Davey from ROP came by to walk through with Robert, the produce manager, to make sure all ROP produce is appropriately marked.
  - Chris brought up the levels of organic, local, sustainable, etc. Is there a way for us to track these things?
  - **Approved by CONSENSUS**
  - Tina pointed out in EL1.9 that "non-deceptive" would be better than "non-manipulative". Pamela suggested simply removing the phrase "and non-manipulative". The board approved this.
  - DEI: Chris asked if we monitor our suppliers to ensure diversity. Sue said yes. Then the question came up that since Sue is leaving, should we make a change to the policy to reinforce this for future GMs. The general feeling was no, which made Kate ask if we should keep asking about DEI with every policy if we're not going to make any changes. Tina suggested we schedule a discussion for next month to talk about how to incorporate DEI into the board's work, whether that's in policy or elsewhere.

#### 5. New Business for the Board

- CCMA Report
  - Tina gave an overview of what she learned at CCMA. Sam also attended, but isn't present.
  - Briarpatch Co-op in Grass Valley CA decided to discontinue having volunteers work in the store. They were spending too much time training and struggled with quality control. Instead they asked people to self-report volunteer hours at other organization. That also didn't work out. They then switched to having chosen organizations report to them the people who were volunteering, and changed their discount system. There was also a lot of cost of administering the program. One employee had to connect with the organizations and set-up the discounts.
  - One store felt that having an actively dynamic business plan was really important. That setting and evaluating goals every quarter made an impact. This applies to both the board and operations.
  - Talent acquisition in post-pandemic workplace: You've got to pay more to get good people. Watch out for requirements: if it's something you can teach people, then don't require it. Keep the application really easy.
  - Transitions in the food system: Look at competitive living wages as an investment, not an expense. They projected into the future that Gen Z may increase the demand for non-GMO. There's a group of people coming on as consumers who may be valuing that.
  - You can opt out of merchandizing, but if you don't opt out, then they track what you buy. If, for example, you buy hot dogs but not buns, the next month you'll get a coupon for buns. Tina didn't like this system, and the board generally agreed.
  - Someone suggested that we retitle GMs as CEOs. Yikes.
- Nominating Committee Check-in

- We've not had any bites. A flyer has been emailed out for people to print and hand out to friends. They have already put it on the listservs and tabled at the co-op. Larissa emailed the members who marked on their application that they might be interested in running for the board, but no one has responded.
- Chris mentioned that staff member Ben has expressed interest.
- Pamela brought up the previous idea of bringing on younger directors, possibly students. The downsides were brought up, that students tend to be ephemeral and might not be very active directors. Larissa pointed out that bringing in a younger person for one or two years to bring in their experience and possibly train them is different than expecting them to be a full director.
- Check-ins
  - Newsletter: Nom Com will do a piece.
  - Larissa asked for book reviews, or thought pieces.
  - Board social event at Tina's place: Tina said that her fruit trees were hit by the early warmth then frost, and all the fruit is gone. So perhaps the board should do a different event? Kate suggested a pottery night at Craft Studies. The board will revisit this next month.

## **6. Assignments**

- G6: Kerry
- Kate: Nom Com newsletter piece

## **7. General Session Adjourned 7:45pm**