



APPROVED MINUTES

Upper Valley Food Co-op | Board of Directors Minutes
June 28th, 2022, 6pm | Outside at the Co-op!
193 North Main Street | White River Junction, VT 05001+

Directors present: Tina Barney, Debbie Diegoli, Carrie Kocik, Kate Rohdenburg, Kerry Rosenthal, Sam Cronin, Zea Luce, Cat Buxton, Pamela Perkins, Elizabeth Feinberg, Rio Pires

Directors absent: none

GMT present: Sue Miller, Norm McMullen

Members present: none

Others present: Nick Clark (from HCCS)

Facilitator: Tina Barney

Recorder: Larissa Sharff

PROCEEDINGS

Open meeting begins at 6:07pm. Called to order by Tina Barney.

We struggled a bit trying to do a hybrid meeting outside, with all the outside noise. We passed around Norm's phone with zoom, which worked fairly well.

1. Agenda & Announcements

- Reading of the Ends
- Board Emails: lots of junk mail, but nothing relevant
- Member Comments: none
- Agenda Amendment: none
- Announcements: none
- Board Connection: The board and GMT took ten minutes for everyone to check-in about how they're doing personally.

2. Meeting Minutes

- May Meeting Minutes
 - Change: none
 - **Approved by CONSENSUS**

3. New Business from the GMT

- May's Financial Statement
 - We made a profit of \$8k in May, which is very good news.
- GMT Hours
 - Sue and Norm are both cutting back their hours. Sue will cut from 40 to 35, and Norm will cut from 32 to 30. Money saved from them cutting back their hours will contribute to the budget. It will allow more room for hiring new staff. They're both content with this change, and are confident that they can still get the job done. This discussion will continue when the RFP is submitted.
 - Elizabeth asked about starting wages. We're due for another bump in the starting wage, from \$13 to \$13.50. There are some new employees who were hired at a higher rate due to experience and qualifications, as has always been the case. Elizabeth feels that \$13 is too low, when places like McDonalds are hiring at \$19.
- Sew-op is returning
 - The Sew-op ladies have met and are planning a soft opening in September.
- Picnic planning
 - The picnic that usually happens in June is being loosely planned for August.

4. Policy Governance

- EL&EL1 Global & Customer Service

- Pamela led the discussion of the policy and monitoring.
- Pamela asked about EL1.4, which requires the GMT to offer locally produced products, when available, given that last month we discussed the GMT described a ceiling of 32% local products to maintain the financial stability of the store. The board voted to change the phrase “when available” to “whenever possible”.
- EL1.10 Sam and others feel that we are in non-compliance. The board is concerned with the level of programming in MEO, and that Covid-19 is no longer an excuse. Sam asked if the store is ever going to have a full-time E&O program like when Chris was around. Cat agreed that this has been an issue before the pandemic started. Sue responded that she will bring an updated plan at the next meeting.
- EL1.11 Sam shared concerns, both from her own experience and expressed by others, that the store has become unfriendly now that socializing is actively discouraged. It was questioned if this qualifies as part of the “shopping experience” as stated in the policy or is separate feedback. Debbie said that it’s hard for her to shop here because there’s nowhere to sit and rest. Kate acknowledged how much is encompassed in this “safe shopping experience”.
- **Approved by CONSENSUS** (with EL1.10 changed to Non-compliance with a plan)

5. New Business for the Board

- Store Budget
 - Norm led the discussion on the two-page store budget for FY23, starting in July. We’re forecasting for 4% growth. It might be slightly modified once the June numbers are in, but in general it should be the same. Our biggest area of control is the margin, increasing margins and reducing waste. Setting prices is key, but it’s a balancing act, since we’re already seen as more expensive. A 1% change on four million dollars in sales is \$40k.
 - Kate asked how inflation is affecting the budget. The GMT said we adjust as we can.
- Board Budget
 - Last month the board talked about putting a \$0 for the newsletter, and some typos. So Debbie cleaned it up but it’s basically the same. The board approved the budget.
- Post-CCMA Report
 - Sue and Debbie attended virtually. Tina and Sam went in-person.
 - Sam had a great time. It was about being rooted in your co-operative identity. Sam was interested in what co-ops have done to get through the pandemic and start-up co-ops and how they’ve been innovative in the current world. She was inspired by other forms of consumer co-ops, like housing and practitioner co-ops. It was also an opportunity for Sam and Tina to connect.
 - Debbie was interested in a workshop about accessibility, especially website accessibility for the blind and visually-impaired. Virtual attendance was streamed live, and she could hear and see fine.
 - Sue appreciated doing it virtually. She got to jump in and out of the side chat groups, which she enjoyed. Her focus was on co-op identity.
 - Tina thanked the board and the co-op for sending her to CCMA. It was very worthwhile to see how different co-ops addressed different problems. One presenter talked about their store getting burned by arsonists, and how they came back from that. She enjoyed the tours of other co-ops, looking at products and store set-up, as well as board mechanics and approaches to stipends. She was surprised that other boards don’t get as much financial information from their GMs as we do. There was a talk about indigenous people working in co-ops and white-dominated culture, and that acknowledgments of the indigenous heritage of land is insulting when it’s not followed by any kind of action. She heard talk of making DEI an 8th co-operative principle.
- Connecting with HCCS
 - Tina connected with Nick Clark at CCMA and was inspired to bring back board socializing activities, particularly a joint activity with HCCS. There’s a list somewhere of ideas and Larissa will dig that up.
 - Nick described HCCS board’s plan to deal with the lack of connection caused by zoom meetings and the struggle of hybrid meetings. They are planning to have quarterly

in-person meetings, which will be more strategy focused. They are unsure if it will be in place of a regular meeting or in addition.

- Nominating Committee Check-ins
 - Nominating Committee: Three potential candidates, but only one has filled out an application.
- Board Self-Eval Survey
 - Tina will look over last year's survey and update it as needed.

6. Assignments

- G6: Sam
- Larissa will change the wording of EL1.4
- Sue will report back about the non-compliance of EL1.10
- Larissa will send the social brainstorm list via email

7. Takeaways

- Debbie: It was fun to be together and I like being outside. I appreciated the report from CCMA.
- Kerry: I really loved Norm's explanation of margins and percentages.
- Kate: Great to see everyone and I loved hearing about CCMA.
- Elizabeth: Thank you to Nick for joining us.
- Pamela: I'm echoing what everyone else said, and I appreciate what Norm said.
- Zea: We reviewed the store budget and I appreciated learning that we're looking at a more realistic growth percent.
- Sam: I liked the feeling of being able to bring up something that may not be moving as smoothly and thinking up solutions.
- Cat: I loved being in-person and I enjoyed hearing the discourse on policy.
- Tina: I appreciate everyone tolerating the noise and the technical stuff.
- Norm: Appreciate the appreciation. It's been over two years since we've done this!
- Carrie: It's been nice seeing everybody outside, and I appreciate you accommodating those of us on the phone. Thanks for the CCMA notes.
- Rio: I believe the lines have been interrupted several times, I got bits and pieces, and it's good to hear about CCMA, but I missed much of the policy discussion. I am sad not to be there in person.
- Sue: I've got lots of things to think about and work on.

8. General Session Adjourned 8:10pm