**Rutland Area Food Co-op Board Meeting**

**March 24, 2016**

**Present:**

Board: Hannah Abrams, Jim Albright, Diana Hayes, Matt Karczmarzyk, AJ Ruben, Kathy Allen, Stephen Waite, Rhonda Bates, Dave Tibbs, Irene Gold, Laura Daubenspeck

Board Absent: Chris Littler

Staff: Zach Stevens, Julie Zaloudek, Caber Wilson, David Perrin, Kris Harmelink

Barbara Richardson (recorder)

Public: Regina Perrin, Sarah Start

Meeting brought to order: 6:35 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Add Diana as present, not absent, at last month’s meeting.

Dave moved that we accept minutes with proposed change; AJ seconded.

**Committee Reports:**

1. **Finance Report (In Dropbox) –** Jim stands in for Chris. February sales were up 7.6% over 2015!
   1. Product demos = increased sales!
   2. Taxes off again, Kathy’s husband (CPA) will help iron this out.
   3. Heritage made no errors in our accounts in February.
   4. Overdraft protection being set up with Heritage to auto-transfer from savings to checking to cover checks; $3/transfer fee vs. $30 bounced check fee
   5. Personnel changes (See GM Report)
   6. Front door lock – minor cost
   7. New hot food table; take-out cooler failure; sanitizer needs costly repair; produce cooler repair
   8. Plant starts from Alchemy Gardens coming in April
   9. Already over $2 million in sales for 2016!
2. **Strategic Planning Committee**
   1. On the Strategic Planning Chart, core values and purpose are now filled in, but Audacious Goal needs redefinition. More will fall into place once is is resolved. Committee is meeting every other week, a little behind due to pressing issues, but will regain momentum soon.
   2. Recruiting another board member for this committee.
3. **Annual Meeting Committee**
   1. Zach’s presence helped clarify the goals for the meeting. His meeting notes show a nice, tight schedule. See Zach’s notes (in Dropbox) for schedule, assignments, etc.
   2. The store will be closed so staff can attend.
   3. AJ will review language for bylaw change to allow for voting outside of the Annual Meeting. We won’t have a thorough process hammered out by the Annual Meeting.
   4. Board Candidates: Chris (yes?), Rhonda (yes), Kathy (maybe), Hannah (yes), Laura (yes) all up for re-election; Stephen is ineligible to run again. Stephen stresses that we really need members who are able to commit more time and energy to the Co-op. AJ will continue to provide support for legal issues after his term is up.
   5. We will NOT be sending the meeting warning/invitation via postal mail.

**PG Reports**

**C2 – Board Role, reviewed by Dave.**

In compliance overall, but we have room for improvement.

Stephen moves to accept; Rhonda seconds. Accepted by consensus.

**GM Policy B4 – Member Relationship (see Dropbox)**

In compliance. Kathy asks for a description of a patronage dividend system.

Decision tree – Laura moves to accept; Stephen seconds. Consensus acceptance.

Dave recognizes Julie’s contributions to the improvements in the Co-op’s performance!

**GM Report**

We can feel good about improved sales (as of Tuesday: $2,059,405!)

! Unfortunately it isn’t enough to offset losses in previous three quarters, but the trends are so good, we can look forward to a great 2016.

March News – beer & wine section is looking fresh and new, increased sales as a result!

Compost & seeds are in house.

Sanitizer part is on order, it’ll be a while.

Produce cooler is hanging in there, may need a weld. Kris is monitoring closely. Thanks to staff vigilance, we didn’t lose any product!

NFCA meeting: RAFC is one of few co-ops still using a discount structure vs. patronage system. All other co-ops are doing more with prepared foods – grab & go meals to heat and eat at home is an untapped area for us. Zach tapped Franklin Co-op for info. Dave asks why we don’t try the “box of ingredients” with recipe option.

Staff meetings; in celebration of the great sales in Feb, celebrated with pizza party. Reviewed the P&L and staff members asked great questions, really engaged. Staff also understands why hours haven’t been expanded back to previous levels.

Staff Changes: Steve is now Marketing & Outreach Manager! His work is really making a difference. Abi has been tapped for Produce Assistant, and Kris is happy ☺

Heating issues continue – 4 days in March. Mark Foley missed yet another meeting with Zach; next meeting will be with Dave & Zach. Our lease is up for renewal next year. Kathy moves that we form a Lease Committee (New Business).

Take-out cooler is overloading the 15-amp circuit (needs 30-amp circuit!). Having to empty the take-out cooler nightly to reduce losses.

Julie & Zach have a finalist for Produce Manager – just discussing final details.

Bookkeeper applicant interviews are being scheduled!

Inventory coming up: Hannah, AJ, Laura have volunteered to help with bulk!

NCG Rep was at NFCA and urged us to send in the application, even if incomplete, just to get the momentum going!

Thanks to staff for coming to meeting. And thank you to members for coming!

And nice to see so many Board members in attendance, too.

Liquor License – board members names have been updated (hadn’t been updated in many years)

Kathy asks what’s selling well; Kris has improved sales a lot. We’re also bringing in lower-cost staples, e.g. Field Day beans. Kathy requests that if we make a big product move, like we did with bread, to put up signs directing people to the new location. New demo table, too!

Dave wonders about a “Meet the Farmer” demo option, too. Butterworks was here. Farmers are busy, but maybe the new produce manager can reach out as they meet the suppliers.

Dave moves to accept report; Hannah seconds.

**New Business**

**Board Participation:**

Dave points out that Zach/Co-op need our help…and our MONEY! He wants board members to shop here. Zach gave each board member a report of their purchase totals for February & March. Shopping here is an indication to the staff and community that the board cares. Come in for demos, too. Everyone has to step up.

Board Help Wish List:

Inventory

Warehouse cleaning

Cleaning/Painting/Sorting

Kitchen cleaning

Flowers & pots for front of store

What tangible materials can the board members can hand to people they talk to folks about the Co-op – a coupon?

Facebook! Check it out all the time and SHARE

Washing front of building

Picking up litter on the lovely corner lot

Membership Committee

Nominating Committee  
Fundraising Committee

Special skills that can help Zach

Tabling at events

Create a calendar where board members can sign up.

Hannah suggests Board Members go to chamber mixers.

Dave says, if it weren’t for Zach turning things around, there wouldn’t be a Co-op, and now it’s the board’s turn to keep the momentum going, show support – he can’t do it alone.

Committees: Create Charters for each; templates in Dropbox we can modify. We need member involvement, too.

1. Lease Committee – Zach, Dave, Kathy, Rhonda, Laura – a member who knows real estate? Check with Sandy Cohen; Dave Fretz. Zach will send lease to all committee members. Current lease ends Sept. 30, 2017.
2. Annual Meeting Committee – Diana & Matt will join Zach, Laura, Stephen, Kathy, Irene. Meet after this to set next meeting time.
3. Strategic Planning Meeting – (Zach, Sandy, Hannah, Stephen, AJ) Reach out to Pat Hunter.

**Next Month:**

Board PG report: Kathy C3 – Agenda Planning

GM Report: B5 Treatment of Consumers

Dave moves to adjourn; Hannah seconds.

Adjourned at 7:58 p.m.