

Rutland Area Food Coop RAFC Annual Meeting

Date: Sept. 30, 2023

Location: side lawn adjacent to the RAFC, owned by the Freemasons



The meeting was called to order at 10:30 by Theresa Haywood once it was determined that there was a quorum per the bylaws. She thanked members for attending and expressed her enjoyment of being a co-owner of a store with all the other member owners. She characterized FY 2023 as a time of growth and solidification of processes for the co-op. She reminded all that the RAFC utilizes ends to justify their purpose that include climate and social justice and healthy employee conditions as its guiding principles. She thanked Jeffrey for his crucial role in the success of the past year, as well as fellow board members, and the wonderful RAFC staff.

The minutes from the annual meeting 2022 were reviewed and approved with the 1st motion from Chris Ettori, the second motion from Jeanne Kaufman and all in attendance approved, carrying the motion.

Steven Morneau provided a summary from the perspective of treasurer. He reported that the co-op's finances were more healthy than the previous year and that becoming a member of NCG has significantly reduced the prices of items. Jean Yager asked why the profit from the previous year was higher and Steve answered that inflation and fair pay of employees contributed. Jeffrey stated that since inventory had not been previously done for several years, now having an accurate inventory makes it difficult to compare to previous years.

Jeffrey Reel, GM, addressed the group and expressed a troubling trend of co-ops which is high turnover of Gms. He shared changes in the co-op to include new freezers, NCG membership and the Employee Retention Tax Credit which resulted in the co-op being awarded \$180,000 dollars. He discussed his commitment to the co-op's members by being willing to order requested products and has stocked halal approved meat and frozen dishes with signs that include two languages spoken in Afghanistan to welcome new Afghani Rutlanders for whom English is a second language.

Larry Gold recommended that the co-op invest in a large marketing campaign to educate co-op members/customers about the price reduction in order to de-bunk the often untrue belief that the co-op is more expensive than its competitors.

Jean Yager requested a marketing committee and agreed to chair the committee to the delight of all in attendance.

Marietta Yager mentioned that she would like to help with a cooking course which Jeffrey answered would be welcome as soon as the kitchen got a new stove.

The 5 proposed bylaw changes were reviewed to the group (see attached detail). Jean Yager questioned the legality of changing 1.2 to strike out the term non-profit d/t not knowing our articles of

incorporation. AJ Ruben was in attendance who had initially crafted the bylaw based on the co-op's article of incorporation and provided his opinion that striking the term non-profit would not be problematic to our article of incorporation which is a not-for-profit under VT classifications. The bylaw of 9.3 was reviewed with the members who were updated that a full audit has never been done due to cost and so the bylaw was recommended to be ammended. Jean Yager suggested that now that the co-op has reasonable funds, a full audit may be prudent given the history of inaccurate inventory and turn-over. Chris Etori mentioned that if the co-op is to expand, an audit will be required at that time.

A motion was made by Larry Gold to approve the bylaw changes with a 2nd motion from AJ Ruben, and the motion carried.

The slate of candidates were introduced for the board of directors roles: Theresa Haywood and Jeanne Kaufman for re-election of a 2nd term, Susan Feenick, and Irene Gold as a nomination from the floor. A motion to approve was made by Chris Etori and a 2nd motion was made by Annika Anca, and the motion was carried by all in attendance.

Theresa thanked the Free Masons were thanked for their use of space. The position of board recorder was announced. A raffle was conducted with Marietta Yager winning one and Taylor Morneau winning the second basket.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am after a motion to adjourn by Irene Gold and the 2nd by Kevin Gustafson , approved by all in attendance.