

Minutes of the Springfield Food Co-op Board of Directors

Thursday, November 29, 2012

Board Members Present: Christine Speidel, Aram Polster, Steve Greene, Brooke Decker, Dan O'Donnell

Ex-Officio: Neomi Lauritsen (General Manager), Lucy Georgeff (Bookkeeper)

Member Audience: No Attendees

Call to Order: 6:02 PM

Minutes of 10/25/12: Christine made a motion, seconded by Steve to approve the minutes of 10/25/12 as presented. The motion passed unanimously, with two abstentions.

Board Training Dates, CBLD NCGA funding is still up in the air; awaiting word as to availability of assistance in order for the Co-op to participate for another year. Assuming the funding is in place there will be training available on January 26 and March 16.

Executive Limitations Monitoring

A: Ends – The Board has decided to postpone this discussion until the next meeting. **[Q: did we decide to postpone until next year?]**

B7: Board Communication – The Board briefly discussed this, and decided to vote on this next month when Neomi has had more time to review the policy. The board reminded Neomi that she can change the operational definition of this policy, if that makes sense to her.

GM FYI Report

A net loss was incurred for the month of October, of 3.45%. Inventory levels were up. Labor is at 22% including taxes and benefits (still a reasonable percentage; it is 18% without taxes and benefits included). Our gross margin is slipping some, but this is being addressed with David Fowle. The Board would like an update once November's numbers are in. If this trend continues, more in depth discussion will take place. We are current on all bills. VTel's check for their employees' Thanksgiving turkeys is expected tomorrow.

Customer count was down from the week before (less a whole day of customers), but basket size was up. Sales growth is still positive. Sundays are proving to be great sales days.

Website – Department descriptions are in the works, and the site is within days of going live.

Thanksgiving week was a record-breaking week of sales. Oliver did a fantastic job managing 115 turkey orders. Thank you again to Black Watch Farms for use of the refrigerated trailer and to VTel for the large turkey order.

Neomi was pleased to join the Board for their Retreat on November 4. "It is invaluable to have a facilitated meeting with room for all of us to share our hopes & dreams for our Co-op." Thank

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you to Trudi and Steve Greene for hosting the meeting.

Wellness Manager Josie and herbalist Cindy Hebbard held another herbal workshop focused on stress; there were 5 participants. There have been 106 new members for the year with 10 joining over the holiday. Thank you to our super volunteers Ann Whitcomb, Dan Keebler and Aram Polster who are in the Co-op each week. Welcome and thanks also go out to Tami Mallard who recently joined the volunteer team!

Charlotte is back in town and will rejoin the staff due to a shortage of weekend coverage and the loss of a part-time bulk bagger. Lucy has researched and written a new staff policy on IOUs. In the past money has been lost as employees have left the staff without paying their tabs. All staff members have now signed an agreement stating they understand the policy.

Neomi will be meeting with Marilyn Scholl regarding the Policy Governance Ends Report.

We continue to add Co-op baked goods into the store's product offerings. It will take some time as Neomi is not yet ready to hire, nor is there space for a baker at this time.

Condo Update

Dan has proposed a new sign and is working with Kiosko to create it. The old signs will come down and be replaced. The cost will be \$850-\$900 for a two sided sign, which will last approximately 7 – 9 years. Installation will be around \$200. Lighting for the sign will be about \$750, which is a condo association cost. Neomi would also like an outlet by the Co-op's front door and believes this should also be a condo association expense. Steve will bring it up with Joe.

Steve met with Joe's attorney regarding the our agreement with Joe to purchase the common space. There will be another unit created, which the Association will sell to the co-op. A meeting of the condominium owners needs to take place (by phone is fine) to vote. Christine will participate for the co-op. A total fee of \$4,000 (\$2,000 now and \$2,000 in 6 months) will be the final out of pocket cost to the co-op for the purchase of the "common space". By the next meeting we should be owners of this area. We will then be free to completely reset our space.

Retreat Debrief (*Next steps towards our 5-year vision.*) Marilyn's notes from the retreat were emailed to the board and GM.

Consensus at the retreat was that we want to grow the Co-op. The board and GM discussed the reasons why we feel positive about growth, and why growth makes sense for the co-op right now. The bottom line is that we can better serve our members if we can offer more variety, a more comfortable store (wider aisles), lower prices (economies of scale and greater organizational efficiency), more community activities, etc. More activities might increase member engagement. Growth will help us achieve our vision for healthy people and a stronger local economy. Neomi said the #1 comment she gets from customers is, "are you going to get a bigger store?" Followed by "Why can't you carry X product?" Space is crowded; it becomes difficult for people to shop. If you could comfortably have a conversation in the aisles, it would

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promote a sense of community. More workable space for staff is needed, for multiple reasons. Overall we want to make the members and customers happy, and we think growing our business will help us do this.

A reset would be a good step towards our vision. A budget needs to be created as well as a layout for a reset. Steve will work with Neomi on this. We should hire a professional layout person. Tom Snyder from NCGA consults on resets, and has us on his calendar for January.

The board agreed to keep moving towards the 5-year vision. We should discuss making a capital plan. If we want to grow, how will we finance that growth? How much risk are we willing to take? How much do we want to invest in feasibility planning (to lower our risk)? Marilyn Scholl could potentially come to a board meeting or training and facilitate this discussion.

Committee Reports / Updates

Bylaws – A work in progress.

Member Engagement – Discussions should take place with the membership via survey (email and in store) regarding their wishes for the growth of the store. NCGA will help design a survey. We also need to keep members informed about our capital plan, as we develop it.

Open Session: No members were present to speak.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Thursday, January 31, 2012 at 6:00 PM in the Co-op Community Room.

Steve made a motion, seconded by Christine to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Angela Farrar
Recording Secretary