



APPROVED MINUTES

Upper Valley Food Co-op | Board of Directors Minutes

June 23rd, 2020, 6pm | Videocall via ZOOM

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

Directors present: Cat Buxton, Kerry Rosenthal, Elizabeth Feinberg, Johanna Mirinda, Carrie Kocik, Tina Barney, Zea Luce, Rio Pires, Kye Cochran, Debbie Diegoli (joined late), Sarah Wood (joined late)

Directors absent: Sam Cronin

GMT present: Sue Miller, Norm McMullen

Members present:

Facilitator: Kerry Rosenthal

Recorder: Larissa Sharff

PROCEEDINGS

Open meeting begins at 6:00pm. Called to order by Kerry Rosenthal.

1. Agenda & Announcements

- Reading of the Ends
- Board Emails: One customer suggestion that was forwarded to Sue and Norm.
- Member Comments: none
- Agenda Amendment: Zea will take a few minutes to report on board recruitment. The Store Budget is not yet ready for the board's approval.
- Announcements: Michael Healy is giving a workshop on June 30th at 8pm. "Being a Great Employer". This is open to everyone on our board, and all are highly encouraged to participate. Kerry will send out the link.
- Board Connection: The board and GMT took ten minutes for everyone to check-in about how they're doing personally. In person, the board is able to socialize and connect before and after the meeting.

2. Meeting Minutes

- May Meeting Minutes
 - Change: Minor correction to Norm's report.
 - **Approved by CONSENSUS**

3. New Business from the GMT

- Financials
 - The coronavirus situation has completely changed how the store functions, and therefore Norm hasn't even tried to make a store budget. He simply doesn't have the information to project the numbers. He will work on trying to create a budget given the new situation of the store. Our sales look very different than they did before we closed the doors. People aren't working in town and coming in for lunch like they used to. The deli has low sales. We're only open six days and nine hours, as opposed to seven days and twelve hours.
 - Norm is focused on expenses and revenue right now, and just getting through each week.
- Re-opening
 - If you haven't been in the store, it's going really well. We've been busy and the customers have been wonderful. Sue and Norm have been on the front porch monitoring activity and the number of customers in the store. It has made a huge difference in the comfort of customers and keeping things running smoothly.

- We have resumed special orders, although we're never certain what we can get given the current stress on the supply chain.

4. New Business for the Board

- Board Budget

- Debbie, Carrie, and Rio talked over the budget. Debbie didn't have the heart to bother Norm about it. Corrections will be made on the cost of CCMA attendance. Further discussion was had about specific numbers.
- Sue said that, given the current situation, there's no way to project some of these costs and adjustments will be made as we reach them. Sue reminded everyone that even if the numbers look scary, it's just a moment in time and we will come out of this on the other side. It's the time to think creatively, and not the time to panic.

- Annual Meeting Harvest Celebration

- This will be planned as an online event. There's no reasonable way to safely have it in person.
- Elizabeth suggested that we do something like hand out a cookie at the store, and then everyone gets to eat it at the end of the meeting, making it feel like everyone is actually together.
- Cat recommended including clips from the Soil Series as part of the presentation for the membership.
- Sarah suggested including Bill Ellis, a musician.
- Jo commented that in her experience having already done these types of large group gatherings, the Q&A was very robust. We should allow members to submit questions ahead of time. Also, customers would appreciate a COVID-19 Report on how the store is doing and what the plans will be moving forward.
- Kerry brought up the idea of changing the day and time of the meeting.
- Kerry also brought up a conversation she had with Michael Healy about the Officers for the coming year. Cat will not be able to resume the role of president for the foreseeable future. Debbie offered to step in as president if Kerry would like to step down from that responsibility.

- Nom Com Check-in

- No one has submitted an application yet. There was some discussion of people interested in the board. The Nominating Committee is setting up another round of publicity about the board.

- CCMA Report

- Kerry attended a number of the webinars. The first day, the CEO of NCG talked about how right now we're operating at a one-day-at-a-time level and we're trying to keep up with supply chain changes. But he recommended people start thinking about the long-term economic impacts, which Sue and Norm are already doing.
- Kerry also wanted to give a shout out to Sue and Norm for all the work they've done, especially the curbside pick-up. One webinar was about the struggles of curbside for the GMT and it really opened her eyes.
- Tina watched four of the webinars and was impressed with how well they went. One thing she thinks we should follow up on was a list of books about diversity. The speaker offered to host a consult with any board that asked its directors to read these books. Perhaps it could be a back-up plan if the board is unable to meet with Darnell for the retreat.
- Debbie saw that same webinar about diversity and was struck by the comment that all communities have diversity, and color or ethnic group are not the only forms of diversity.

- Carrie went to a few sessions, and was struck by one that talked about ways their board was supporting the GMT in operations. It blurred the line between the Board and GMT, but Carrie thought it was interesting.

5. Assignments

- G6: Sarah
- Debbie will correct the board budget for approval next month
- Cat will reach out to Darnell about the format for the retreat
- Cat will get in touch with Bonnie
- All Directors: keep an eye out for prospective nominees
- All Directors: think about their interest in an officer role
- All Directors: think about what outcome you'd like for the annual meeting
- Set time aside at next meeting to talk about the Harvest Celebration

6. Takeaways

- Rio: The trouble with Zoom is I don't always hear everything. But it was a good meeting.
- Cat: The words pivot and reimagination and flexibility and evolution all describe how I feel. I'm proud of our co-op and our board.
- Elizabeth: I'm having good thoughts about the Harvest Celebration. It seems daunting, but it seems like we have good ideas.
- Debbie: In general I like the idea a lot that the board is thinking about alternate ways to do things and contingency plans.
- Jo: We're at a place where we need to start settling in with a new normal. Like with budgeting, we're no longer in a place where we can plan a year out. So we need to rethink our budget. It's great that the GMT has been so flexible and has been so protective of the staff safety. I feel that as a board member and as a customer.
- Kye: I'm really glad the store is open. I have every confidence in the GMT and staff. I have a hard time meeting virtually, it's hard for me to do it this way.
- Tina: I think when we all acknowledge the competence and creativity, that's a really important part. But I also want to celebrate the warmth that the staff has, and how wonderful it is as a customer. As far as the meeting, I'm really glad people are thinking about alternatives.
- Carrie: I'm in a personal place where I'm feeling good, and I feel good about this group and store operations and the team. But it's a challenging time and it's going to continue to be. It'll be interesting to see how the store evolves.
- Kerry: Kye's comment made me think. Lately there have been musicians who have been getting together and doing socially distanced jamming. I'll just put that out there. I want to agree how happy it makes me to have such competent managers.
- Zea: I don't feel like I have anything new to add. I could reiterate what everybody has said about gratitude and curiosity about how the store will continue.
- Sarah: I want to thank Sue and Norm tremendously. I can't imagine how stressful it must be to look at that budget and compare it with past years. I kind of agree with Sue that this isn't going away and it's a good chance to look at what is the role of a co-op in times like this. Including online ordering and special hours for high risk shoppers. It's important to be open to that change and evolution.
- Sue: I have great gratitude for this group and the support you've given me and Norm. We're very lucky to have you. I'm also grateful to the staff and what a great group of people they are. I also want to reiterate that there is no going back to how the store was before. There is only excitement about moving forward.

7. General Session Adjourned 8:05pm