

## Plainfield Co-op Meeting Minutes, August 12, 2014

Present: Gail Falk, Bob Fancher, Art Chickering, Sue Chickering, Joseph Gainza, Dawn Fancher

July Minutes approved unanimously.

Membership committee update:

They have met two times and discussion has been around bulk ordering. The idea is that catalogues will be set up with instructions, calculator (ideally) and order forms at the coffee corner/deli. Amy Lester has volunteered to work a couple of hours a week to help break down orders. If it is a product sold on site, the minimum order would be three items, if we do not stock it, a person could order only one item. This committee is addressing both the affordability and the accessibility issue. They also discussed the upcoming Old Home Days and staffing a booth again. Art, Sue, Gail and Joseph volunteered to take turns. Bob also said he would help out with set up. They discussed the front entrance of the building, but decided to put any action on hold. They discussed putting together a new member packet.

Building Committee Update:

They will be meeting next week so hasn't actually met since the last meeting. Kathleen said that progress is being made with regard to the goals set. She gave an update to the staff recently, new access door to the crawl space is in the works, the next project is repairing the front ramp. The structural issues are still our major concern, but it was noted the nice work on the electrical outlets and the paint over the lead upstairs. The MC would like to see major improvements to the front of the building, but this would be several years down the road, so we don't want to expend a lot of money in the current ramp to repair it, since it will likely be replaced in the future with something substantially nicer and different in the future.

Equity Committee:

If your dividend is less than \$10 you would get register credit. If your dividend is over \$10 you would get a check in the mail. Based on member sales, Bob estimates that if we were to pay 1% of our member sales as a dividend, it would be approximately 8-\$9,000 at the end of the year.

Media/Communication/Newsletter update:

Mike and Bob tried to see how many hits they were getting on the website. The information from constant contact is higher than their average for other companies. FB showed that 60-80 people on average have viewed the "posts" when they are put up. Dawn showed us at the meeting that the largest group of people looking at our Facebook site is made up of women (20%) and men (12%) in the 35-44 age range. Women are 63% of our fans and men are 34% of our fans. Sarah A indicated that she does not have the technical skills to do electronic versions of a newsletter, but she would be willing to learn. Bob offered to help her with this. The Newsletter committee has not decided which way they would like to move on this issue. The skill of gathering information to disseminate is incredibly valuable and valued, even if we are still unclear about how to move forward with an electronic version of this. One

way to address the underlying “communications” issue is to incorporate communications under the umbrella of the Newsletter committee as a subcommittee. Sales information can come directly from the staff. Dawn also suggested the use of blogs and using the blog posts as fodder for the newsletter periodically. Joseph forwarded the information from the July minutes to the Newsletter committee that were relevant to this issue, but did not get any particular response. We agreed that we will continue to bounce this issue around and hear back from the newsletter committee and Dawn can also put out feelers to friends who she knows who are technologically savvy, but we will not create a separate communications committee. Marketing is the purview of the MC and communication is the purview of the board, and the lines are somewhat blurry and it is an ongoing conversation. Dawn will bring our thoughts back to the staff.

B1- Financial Condition: Dawn (in Mike’s place) There seems to be an error in the first chart regarding the numbers. However, the trend is still going in a positive direction even if the second quarter went down. Inflation varies and sometimes affects these numbers negatively. **This information needs to be corrected. Dawn will address this.** Sales are still up. The taxes that were paid in June were our estimated income taxes. The Co-op took the full depreciation that was allowed for the past year so they ended up with a refund. Bob, Dawn, and Mike were going to look into the assets information since it is out of whack with the grand list. Only B1.8 continues to be non-compliant (paying the vendors on time) but it is moving in the right direction. Vendors are not calling anymore so the relationships are good. In spite of the numbers, the local farmers are the priority and are generally getting paid on time. Bob put it in perspective, we purchase approximately \$58,000 monthly, so \$8,000 out of current is a relatively small amount. We budgeted for a financial review and Bob will work with Mike regarding setting this up and putting it on the schedule. The boundary issue is actually NOT done When Kerrin McCadden hired a surveyor, he determined that the land that we thought was ours was actually hers, but the Co-op had been using it. It behooves us to work this out. The town covered the cost of the survey, but in good faith, we could share the lawyer fees with her and it would likely be an amicable resolution. There is an issue of a box alder, but we can let someone else deal with this. The board accepts this monitoring report with the plan for compliance.

Link Report:

Staff members get .25/hr retention raise every year. The staff believes that the increase in the financial health of the Co-op has to do with the lack of cost of living increases. Given this information, the MC had decided to look at wages at the half year to see what would be affordable to do. The staff was feeling that a .75/hr across the board raise would be in order for the second half of the year and ongoing. The hope is that this be doled out with .50/hr effective July 1 and the other .25/hr at the end of the year as a bonus or a .25/hr raise after the Q3 results are in. The MC believes that this could occur, given our financial health, and we can still afford the 1% patronage refund. Bob has looked at the figures and supports this idea, and looking forward, we will be able to afford this raise in the foreseeable future. The MC is looking to the board for approval of this action. This addresses one of our long-term goals of moving towards a livable wage. Joseph suggested laying out a strategy if possible to eventually get our employees to a livable wage. The board feels positively about this move and thanks the staff for “taking those hits” when the Co-op was struggling.

The issue of “disruptive customers” is still in draft form, so it still needs work. The board does not recall getting this policy for input. Dawn will send it out to Gail and we will revisit this at the next meeting.

The MC is reviewing the Strategic Plan, and revising it based on the new Ends as well as other factors. Given the timing of the new baby, this conversation has been on hold temporarily. But the MC agrees that a bigger, long-range strategic plan is in order and should be discussed at all levels, MC, staff, members and board. There may be a plan for growth of the store, given how well things are going.

Annual Meeting:

Tentatively we will plan for November 16<sup>th</sup> for the annual meeting. Gail will contact Hunger Mtn to see if they have planned their meeting yet. We can see if either the church or the town hall is available for this meeting. We really need to recruit new members. We will have one empty seat.

Board Monitoring - C:7 Board committee principles. We have not recently developed written committee charters as stated in our monitoring, with the exception of the equity committee and the membership committee. As we develop new committees, we will need to keep this in mind and review the by-laws

Board Monitoring – D: Global Board - Management connection.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 PM.