

Plainfield Co-op Meeting minutes
June 10th, 2014

Present: Gail Falk, Joseph Gainza, Art Chickering, Scott Harris, Bob Fancher, Sue Chickering, Adrienne Allison, Mike Peabody

Minutes approved thumbs up by all.

Equity update report: Member renewal payments will be expected on the anniversary date of their last renewal. Also, new members who join mid-year will only be considered for patronage for the 6 months between June and December, for example in the first year. The board remembers expressed that our intent is that as long as the Co-op is making a profit above and beyond the money reserved for Capital improvements (membership equity payments) the Co-op will pay dividends at the end of the year to our members. Bob will try to write up something for the membership whenever it is deemed appropriate.

Membership committee non-report: Given time constraints the membership committee has not been able to convene recently. Scott is hopeful that the committee will meet between now and the next board meeting.

Building committee report: \$10,000 seems like a reasonable figure to start with to tackle the projects that have been outlined in the report. Both the kid's area and the furnace project are complete. This figure was discussed and it was determined that the floor supports for the community center and the floor supports for the actual co-op, the snow slide arrestors and the entry ramp are the top priorities. If we do replace the ramp, we also want to improve the entrance to the building to be more welcoming. It makes sense for someone to create a design that meets both our goal of a more welcoming entrance and a safe ramp. If we focus instead on this priority as a new, accessible, beautiful entranceway instead of just a ramp replacement, Ben (Adrienne's husband) would be excited to work on this design. If the fire escape is going to come off that side of the building then this could also be worked into this design, since it will be in close proximity to the entrance way. Adrienne will follow up with Ben to see if this is a possibility. Mike will make sure to let Kathleen know that we would like to slow down on the ramp replacement until we have a plan that accomplishes both goals. Mike emphasized that the ramp needs to be fixed as soon as possible, so time is of the essence in determining what will happen. We approved \$10,000 for this calendar year, starting with the priorities stated above, with one hesitant, somewhat reluctant vote. Adrienne also had the suggestion that if the fire escape deck was built going out above the secondary entrance, this might address the snow slide problem. Bob will bring this idea back to the building committee. Art revisited the alternate fire escape idea but Joseph pointed out that this project has been suggested for completion in 2015 and this may be beyond the \$ we have set aside, given the other priorities. The building committee (with Ben's help perhaps?) will have to determine a design for this and given the cost estimated for this project, it may be possible to do this sooner than later. We agree that getting a design for this project is a priority for this committee.

Strategic Plan report: This is a work in progress. Many of the things on the plan have been

completed. The special/bulk ordering piece of this plan needs more input from the membership to determine what products to provide this way and look at the possibility of adjusting the mark ups. Is there a way to incentivize people ordering bulk? The membership committee could take a look at this issue in more depth to determine where to go from here. Joseph suggested that new initiatives such as expanded bulk buying, be considered a volunteer opportunity for member/owners. As we have become a more staff dominated co-op, members (now member/owners) have become less active. While there are many reasons for this, having paid staff allows people to think that “the staff” will do whatever needs to be done to make the co-op work. While allowing this trend to continue may result in a very well run and profitable neighborhood grocery store, the essence of a cooperative will be diminished and, perhaps, lost. Perhaps the Membership Committee can think of ways to provide opportunities for interested member/owners to more fully participate in the life of the Co-op.” Adrienne suggested that a “summer stock up” sale on bulk/special orders could act as a trial with the existing pamphlet, or a new one that Adrienne is willing to work on. Art brought up the subject of home deliveries. Staff is resistant to the idea for a number of reasons, including purchasing a vehicle, the time that would be involved in a program like this, etc. Art also asked the question as to how general costs are arrived at. Mike responded that the MC looks at Gross Margin numbers with regards to operations. Labor is the largest cost that Mike could identify. With the new Ends it will make sense to go through the current strategic plan and see if there are modifications that need to be made. Joseph suggested that getting the membership involved in looking at the “green” issues in this new End would be a good idea. Currently the office is in dire need of some reorganization. Adrienne suggested hiring an “organizer” to help with this space. The plan will be revised by the time the budget is created in December.

Link Report: Jill is done, she was already down to just one day a week. Jack has taken her place. Overdue member numbers continues to decline. New members are signing on almost every week. Meetings are down to once a month, which is major help to the cost of labor hours. The response to the board – MC gathering was positive and we agreed that it would be good to do this once a year. Cabot School had a senior project here. There is currently a “sculpture” on the piano created by Amanda Franz in the community center. There was an art show that had some potentially “objectionable” content at the same time as a Maple Hill event that created some discord and Mike wondered what the board thought about this kind of dilemma. It created a bit of an issue and it sounds like Mike handled it very well and very gently, even though there was unrest as a result of the perceived censorship on Maple Hill's part. Screening the potential users as to the appropriateness of the subject matter for the “general population” might be a good rule of thumb, but opinions varied somewhat widely on this topic. Alexis Smith is the person who coordinates the gallery shows.

B3 – Asset protection: Reported non-compliance with 3.3 and 3.6. In 3.3, both Q413 and Q114 were over the \$250 limit of the losses reported for each of these quarters. Q413 was explained away for the most part by the bookkeeper, but Q114 is still somewhat of a mystery. Naomi was going to contact the tax department to see if she can figure out why this happened. With regards to non-compliance for B3.6; we can't really demonstrate that membership didn't decrease even though we are reasonably sure that it did not. The art shows were mentioned in the local newspaper calendars. We should put out some positive PR in the media. The North Country Credit Union amount will be added when Mike can figure out how to add it to the final report.

Joseph wanted to know how often the offsite data terminal is updated. Mike says that the offsite data is backed up irregularly but it is more frequently than every three months. There is also a back-up of the POS system off site, sent to CoPOS. Joseph suggested that with the purchase of a new working file cabinet it should be fireproof. There has been talk of scanning documents to reduce the amount of clutter in the office, but this is an enormous amount of work. The board accepts this report with the plans for compliance in place.

B-9 Link Succession: Accepted without any major discussion.

Board monitoring: C-5 Director's Code of Conduct. Scott read this report in its entirety. We will revise this policy to eliminate 2d from the policy. Sue will find this policy and make this correction in google docs and share with the other board members.

Next Meeting will be on Tuesday, July 8th at 6:30 PM.