

## **Plainfield Co-op Board Meeting**

**May 19, 2015**

### **Minutes**

**6:30 pm at the Community Center**

**Present:** Gail Falk, Bob Fancher, Art Chickering, Joseph Gainza, Karla Haas Moskowitz, and Scott Harris

#### **Consent Agenda: April Minutes**

April minutes were approved

#### **Committee Reports (15 minutes)**

##### Building Committee

There was not a Building Committee meeting since the last Board meeting and nothing dramatic has happened in the facility/building realm.

##### Treasurer

Equity dividends went out in the mail and register credit has also been activated. There were some glitches at the register, but they seem to be resolved. We also need to evaluate if it is worth \$.60 in postage to mail a letter that informs a member that he/she has \$.01 dividend credit.

Top two dividends were Hunger Mountain and Buffalo Mountain; individual member discounts from ranged from \$70 down. Also, Bob needs to follow up on the process to sign the dividend checks and getting signature stamps.

##### Communications

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday May, 28th at EarthWalk office. The Media committee will recommend to the Education/Outreach committee that they develop a membership packet that would be given to a member when they join. This membership packet would provide extensive information about the Co-op and the benefits/responsibilities of membership. Website going live Sunday, May 24th.

Minutes of Outreach Committee were sent out to committee members.

### Link Report (10 minutes)

#### End 5 Monitoring follow up--

Co-op is now able to itemize local purchasing on receipt. Sign behind cash register tells customers about this. Deadline set for August 1 to have new shelf labeling of products throughout the store, which will display ingredients, green information, and country of origin. Board accepted the End 5 Monitoring report with plan for compliance.

We discussed the fact that a large portion of the patronage dividends went not to individual members but to other food co-ops with which we have reciprocal agreements (Hunger, Buffalo, Adamant, and St. J). We wonder whether these individuals realize that they could be getting an individual patronage dividend if they joined the Plainfield Co-op. Discussed whether we should encourage the members of these co-ops who shop frequently at Plainfield to join Plainfield Co-op (and encourage Plainfield Co-op members to join other co-ops where they shop.) This will benefit members as they can receive dividends directly instead of dividends going into the general budget of the co-op where they shop. We propose that those who shop at the Plainfield Co-op and belong to another area Co-op will be informed at the register (in writing and/or verbally) how it could benefit them to join the Plainfield Co-op if they are frequent shoppers.

However, we will still be sending patronage dividends to the other co-ops. Mike and Bob said that, the way our by-laws are written, only members can receive dividends. Therefore, we agreed to propose to the membership at the next annual meeting an amendment to the by-laws creating institutional membership for other co-ops. Gail will draft the by-laws change. (er Mountain Co-op joins Plainfield Co-op).

#### MC Monitoring End 2 -- Local producers (20 minutes)

The board discussed the ways in which the Co-op can support the local economy as well as support small local producers. Gail questioned why so much of the report was devoted to listing our distributors: distributors such as Calmont mostly handle products from other regions and other countries. Mike responded that sometimes a company can contribute to the local economy by employing many local people, even though it does not produce a local product. He suggested that the Co-op may be better able to support the local economy by purchasing from a company that employs many people more than

if purchases from one farmer who does not have any employees, yet produces a local product. This comes down to defining the parameters of “local” and what it means to support the economy (e.g., a farmer may depend more on Co-op purchasing than a larger business with more local employees).

We asked the MC to re-examine the criteria for compliance with this end to give greater weight to local products. We will also be looking at the criteria for this end later in the year. The factors that were discussed in connection with End 5 (see above) will make it easier for the MC to produce and track data showing compliance with this end. The board accepted this Monitoring Report and found it to be in compliance.

Follow up meeting with staff (pick new dates) and further steps on strategic planning (15 minutes)

Mike said he thought that an evening in July would be the best time for the retreat. July 21, 2015 is the scheduled Board meeting and can be used for the staff-board strategic planning session. We can begin at 5:00 pm/5:30 pm, have a potluck dinner, and meet for three hours until 8:00 pm/8:30 pm.. The meeting will be the first step of strategic planning process and the goal will be to endorse a process going forward. Mike will check this date out with the MC.

**BREAK FOR DESSERT AND CHAT (10 min)**

Revisiting Board representatives at MC meeting (10 minutes)

When Mike reported back to the MC that the Board would be sending a member to each monthly staff meeting in follow-up to our discussion at the retreat, the MC said they did not want this. the MC proposed that a Board member come for 20 minutes at the end of MC meetings, and that the Board member come with an agenda item.

A discussion followed about the Board’s understanding of the purpose of having a Board member at MC meetings. We agreed that . Board member wish to be learners, compassionate observers, and to work toward building relationships among MC and Board members and strengthen communication between Board and MC. Proposal is to send one rotating Board member to each meeting. . Gail will compose a description of

the Board member's role in attending meetings, Board will review and edit as needed, and Mike will use it to inform MC of next steps.

### Revised B1 Reporting Schedule

#### MC Monitoring B1 (10 minutes)

Mike will get back to the Board at the next meeting regarding some financial questions based on discrepancies that exist in financial report.

Board will accept this report except for #8, which is out of compliance, and #9, which needs clarification.

### Interpreting the term "Healthy Food" in End 1

What do we mean by healthy food? End #1 is: "We will distribute healthy, affordable food and other goods."

Robust discussion on healthy foods and healthy eating.

Define "healthy food" as:

- Organic (either certified or reliably known to be produced without pesticides and chemicals)
- Meats not grown in factories
- Produced without chemicals, herbicides, pesticides or GMOs
- Whole foods that are minimally processed

We discussed the issue that these criteria are negative, rather than positive. We are saying what healthy food is not, rather than what it is (except for "whole goods that are minimally processed.")

### Board Monitoring -- C4 - Meetings (5 min)

Board reached consensus that we accomplish this.

Next meeting: June 16, 6:30.

Follow-up agenda items:

- By-laws amendment
- What to do next year about patronage dividend for people who have only a tiny dividend

