

Special Board Meeting - Plainfield Food Co-op

Minutes - Draft

12/20/17

Attendees: Jean Hamilton, Bob Fancher, Giordano Checchi, Sarah Phillips, Alicia White

Absent: Chris Jackson

The meeting convened at 6.05pm

Jean called the special meeting to discuss the scope of work of an interim hire and to meet with a potential candidate.

The Board approved the minutes from the Special meeting on 12.7.17.

The Board acknowledged the discussion that was had by board members in between meetings. Jean drafted a scope of work for an interim hire and Board members reviewed and commented on this scope of work. There was discussion on a salary range for the position, the number of hours, and potential tasks or projects that an interim hire might accomplish. The Board acknowledged that it is a departure from its practice and policy to conduct board discussion in between meetings and agreed to minimize this practice. Current circumstances required the ability to move forward quicker than meetings would allow.

Entered into executive session at 6:10pm to discuss the needs identified for an interim hire/scope of work and to interview a potential candidate.

Left executive session at 7:15pm. No decisions were made.

Margie and Laura joined the meeting.

The Board shared that it is making progress on its commitment to hire someone.

The Board is designing the scope of work and still looking for feedback. Jean shared some of the goals/scope of work that the Board has been considering:

Improve communication, Prioritize tasks, Support decision-making, Problem-solve generally,
Improve and facilitate group accountability, Support positive group dynamic

Laura and Jean met after the last staff meeting, as Laura had a difficult time joining by phone. Jean took notes on their conversation and shared with the Board. Laura agreed that notes from her conversation with Jean could be added to these minutes (so that she need not repeat her feedback).

Notes from Laura and Jean's conversation are included at the end of these minutes.

Margie does not desire to add more hours or take on more responsibility. She is concerned about how Chris's workload will be distributed. She's hopeful that a potential new hire will relieve this pressure. She's hoping that the interim hire will be able to support problem solving redistribution of work from now vacant positions. Margie asked how quickly the Board really thinks it will be able to make the interim. Not having made a decision as a Board, Board members shared thoughts that hiring will be done as quickly as possible given the realistic constraints of candidates, finalizing scope of work, etc.

The Board discussed whether there were steps that the Board could take to help staff be ready to accept the help of an interim hire, and the importance of staff being able to be open minded and willing to accept

The Board clarified that the MC does not need to approve of the hire; the Board has taken this responsibility based on the current situation.

Laura shared her perspective that any new hire will be seen as a positive. Margie agreed.

The Board thanked Margie and Laura for coming and encouraged them to continue to bring these questions to the Board.

Alicia, Margie and Laure left the Board meeting.

The Board re-entered executive session at 7:45pm to continue to discuss the scope of work for an interim hire and the interview of a potential candidate.

8:02 - We left executive session.

Next Steps:

Jean will draft a scope of work for a management consultant and to send to both the candidate and to the staff for feedback.

Jean will work on developing a contract with the consultant to be reviewed by the Board.

If a decision is needed to finalize an offer, Jean will call a Special Board Meeting by phone with Board members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Laura-Jean Meeting Notes attached:

- Store coverage - Laura raised to my attention that MC/buyers have no standardized schedules and do not post schedules for when they will be working. Often there are no managers on duty and it falls to whoever has been there the longest to address any issues that arise (creates tension between staff).
- Laura gave the feedback that having someone during the mid-day who could provide relief and support would be the most helpful 11-3 ish. This is a time that staff are often alone in the store.
- Laura questioned how a part time (10-15 hour/wk) manager would be able to support the main challenges of communication disconnect, lack of leadership, etc.
- Laura says: MC is very stressed about the financial position, which creates a lot of stress and is demoralizing.