

**Plainfield Co-op Board Special Meeting Minutes**  
**March 15, 2018**  
**6:15 pm at Community Center**

**Need for Special Meeting:** Discuss management and staff transition plan.

Called by: Jean Hamilton, President

Board attendees: Alicia White, Sarah Phillips, Jean Hamilton

Guests: Pete Boyle and Jay Hebert (voted at last board meeting – no quorum; ratified tonight)

Staff: Buzz

The meeting began at 6:30pm. There was not a quorum.

**Market Study Update**

- Board help with data entry – Jean is going to lead data entry. Alicia volunteered to help. Jean will reach out Gail for help. Perhaps another member can also assist.
- Communication to members – We will include an update at the annual meeting.

Jay entered at 6.37pm.

**Annual Meeting April 29th**

- Location
  - Pete will call Grace United Methodist and the Opera House to see about availability
- Agenda
  - Jean will provide a president's report
    - Market Study – Feasibility Work (update on Strategic Plan)
      - Action: Forward Strategic Plan and Member Meeting PowerPoint to new Board Members
    - Organizational development
    - Address critical weaknesses in our facility
    - Baseline marketing and communication resources
  - Alicia will provide a treasurer's report
    - Financial position
    - No dividend
  - Sarah will present on the management review process
    - Look for a staff person to co-present
- Member Communication (required >10 days before meeting by post or email)
  - Patronage decision
  - Annual meeting
  - Management/staff plan & Job postings
  - Market study update
  - Office desk, shelves, chairs.

Action: Jay will draft a letter to the membership and send to the Board by email for review by Saturday. Comments back by Sunday evening. Jean will finalize. Jean will send Jay the link to last year's email by last week. Sarah is willing to stamp and label the mailing.

Chris entered the meeting at 6:53pm. QUORUM ACHIEVED. Jay and Pete were officially voted onto the Board.

## Management and Staff Transition Process

Jean shared where GM and AM jobs have been posted. Folks agreed to (re)post on Front Porch Forums. The Board discussed other strategies for recruitment. Jean encouraged everyone to reach out through their networks. **Action items:** Pete will reach out to his network. Sarah will reach out to Ela Chapin at VHCB. Jean will print and post at the Plainfield Food Co-op, and forward to HMC and Hardwick Co-op.

Hiring Committee – Jean is organizing the hiring team. There was a discussion about how to include staff in the hiring process and how staff might want to be included in the hiring process. Some of what will be possible is dependent on how quickly we would like to move forward the process. The aim is to schedule interviews the first week of April. The Board will meet with the final candidate for each position and approve hire.

Sarah presented the timeline and transition process discussed by the MRG:

- New position descriptions/responsibilities, wages, and personnel policies will be in effect (first day of first pay period in May).
- Interviews will be used for staff who are interested in taking on new responsibilities/positions (positions they do not already hold). We want to encourage staff to consider new roles.
- For people who will/desire to hold multiple staff positions, if these positions have different wages, staff will be paid different wages.
- Personnel policies need review – Sarah will shepherd revisions with input from Pete, Margie, and Financial Analysis group. Board will approve.

The Board discussed current buyer team and how to provide support to a team composed of staff who are relatively new to this work, particularly as these are key positions with respect to meeting financial goals. The staff have asked for additional support with achieving financial goals.

**Decision:** The Board approved final [job descriptions](#) of other positions, with the caveat that Sarah may make some minor revisions to physical requirements, add reasonable accommodation language, and make a minor language adjustment to the Buyer job description.

Jean presented recommendations from the group tasked with financial analysis (Jean, Sarah and Alicia):

- Every staff person will receive a minimum 50 cent increase.
- Jean shared the revised financial analysis and wage budget, which takes into account the timing of the changes.
- The financial analysis presents wages at approximately \$300,000 for the year. This requires a 20% revenue increase.
  - There was agreement that this is an aggressive stretch. There was some discussion about the combination of better management of margins and increasing sales in order to achieve revenue targets. The approved budget is .2% profit (rather than the normal policy level of 2% profit).
- Sarah pointed out that the Office Coordinator and Maintenance Coordinator positions were drafted at hiring wage of \$13-15/hr (on position descriptions). There was agreement to align the wage budget and analysis with this level.

**Decision:** The board approved a final wage budget of \$308,000 and the respective changes in the Co-op's budget.

New office space & building improvements

- Buzz present budget and plan for the upstairs office renovation which includes materials and labor of \$5500-8200.
- Buzz and Jean have both reached out by email to the building committee.
- Sarah asked if there was staff support for the new office space change. Buzz reported that staff are supportive.
- Pete asked about where the funding would come from for covering capital costs. CAPEX is the restricted funds for the Co-op generated through membership equity. There is approximately \$22,000 in CAPEX currently. The Co-op currently has no debt, although Jean also mentioned the current line of credit which the board has approved. **Action:** Jean and Alicia will propose using the line of credit in the next month.
- There was discussion about how to prioritize building project items and whether to fund these from CAPEX. There was discussion about prioritizing activities that would provide the greatest marketing impact; all projects were discussed in coordination with Kathleen and with an understanding of the survey of building needs. There was discussion about whether/how much to invest in the current building, as the marketing study will look at whether staying in the current location or moving to a different site is more viable. There was discussion about what amount of investment is prudent at this time and what can leverage in-kind donations of labor and/or materials. There was discussion about the importance of inviting and including members in building improvement projects whenever possible, and the role this has played in past projects.
- **Decision:** The Board approved up to \$7,000 from CAPEX for building renovation and beautification, with a first priority of adding the office space upstairs. The remaining items can be completed without additional Board approval, if within this spending limit.
- Improving signage has Board support but does not require Board approval, as it is a marketing expense not a capital expenditure.
- **Action:** Sarah will reach out to Sam Clark about potential building project support, as well as other potential working members.

Marketing Ideas – Jean shared some marketing ideas, and the goal is to turn ideas into an action plan. **Action:** Board members should review and be prepared to discuss at the next Board meeting.

Meeting Minutes from January and February were approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm