

Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
July 29, 2009
Approved 8/26/09

Board members present: Kristin Bolton, Ross Conrad, Mary Gill, Kate Gridley, Jay Leshinsky, Michelle McCauley, Ashar Nelson (presiding), Johanna Nichols, Tam Stewart

Board members absent: Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Francisca Drexel

Regular attendees: Susan DeWind (staff liaison), Robert Keren (recorder of minutes), Reiner Winkler (bulk food manager)

Board monitor: Kristin

Call to order: Ashar called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Members business

Ross recollected that the board had agreed to reserve 15 minutes for members business, not the five minutes as on the agenda. Ashar said he had been allotting 10 minutes on recent agendas, and that he cut it back to five for the July 29 meeting. Tam spoke about the local food system “wheel” which shows, season-by-season, what’s available in certain areas.

Approval of the minutes of the meeting on June 24, 2009

Ross offered two amendments to the minutes. On a motion made by Ross and seconded by Kate, the board voted 8-0 to approve the minutes as amended. Mary, who was not at the June 24 meeting, abstained.

Review of the minutes of the Annual Meeting on May 30, 2009

The board made three revisions to the minutes, and will hold the revised minutes for approval at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

General manager’s report

Reiner raised a question about including the Co-op’s financial statements in the September issue of the newsletter. After discussion with the board about the cost, the amount of paper needed, and the alternative of posting the data on the web, Reiner agreed to have a conversation with GM Glenn Lower before reaching a final decision about how to proceed.

The board discussed with Reiner the Co-op’s sales growth of eight percent, which is running well ahead of the budgeted sales growth of three percent. Reiner said the new weekly sales, plus the inclusion of a \$2-off coupon in the newspaper, is generating excitement among members, new customers, and staff. The sales are also helping to change the MNFC’s price image, he said.

Webinar report

Ashar reported on the webinar “Board Acting on the GM’s Monitoring Reports.” By closely examining the GM’s executive limitations, Ashar said, board members are

fulfilling the trust placed in them by the member-owners. In August, Kristin will report on a webinar.

Executive Committee

Ashar reported that consultant Michael Healy is not available to facilitate a retreat on January 23. Ashar offered February 6 as the date.

The board reviewed the committee's revisions to the Executive Limitations and recommended several minor alterations. Ashar said the Executive Committee would revise the policies further and return to the board for a vote at the next meeting.

On a motion by Kristin, seconded by Michelle, the board voted 9-0 to adopt the Board-General Manager Relationship policy as presented by the Executive Committee.

Education Committee

With Kristin as facilitator, the board discussed the MNFC's role in creating and sustaining a vibrant local food economy in Addison County. According to the board, the MNFC could or should:

- extend the availability of foods to the wider (non-member-owner) community,
- play a role in extending the growing season,
- use its position as a retail hub to extend education to the community,
- be an integrator for other, food-related organizations,
- be a connector, facilitator, catalyst, or provider of management for the next steps,
- consider being a micro investor in the food-related ventures of others,
- play a much greater role in educating the community about local and healthy foods,
- do more communicating and partnering,
- support ventures that will expand its reach without expanding the store,
- unite the localvores, farmers, and intellectuals
- help local food vendors accomplish their goals in terms of marketing, education, storage, and processing,
- do the higher thinking needed to make available healthy local foods most of the year so growers/producers can make a living and more people in the community will benefit, and
- consider a new level of executive directorship in the MNFC that is separate from the general management of the store.

Meeting closure

There were no remarks about how the meeting was monitored. For the August 26 meeting, the Executive Committee will return with final policy revisions for a vote, the Education Committee will present a DVD, and the Linkage Committee will discuss the newsletter and the member survey.

Adjournment On a motion by Michelle, seconded by Mary, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.