

Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday 25 April 2007
Approved 5/23/07

Board members present: Suzannah Kaster, Ashar Nelson, John Vincent, Ross Conrad, Jesse Kimler, Barry King, Michelle McCauley and Kira Winslow (presiding)

Board members absent: Margaret Olson, Abi Sessions and Jeanne Montross

Others present: Susan DeWind (staff representative), Lauren Welsch (recorder of minutes) and Glenn Lower (GM)

Board Monitor: Barry

Call to order: Kira called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Members' business: Barry commented on the recent newsletter article about shopping in bulk. She wishes that more bulk items were not prepackaged. She knows that some bulk items are too messy to let people package themselves but feels there are some items that we should allow people to package themselves saving labor time and lots of wasted packaging materials.

John announced that there is going to be a first meeting of "Creative Communities" at the Ilsley Library on May 15th at 6:30 and thought that we may want a Co-op representative to attend.

Barry passed along feedback from a member saying that the Earth Week display at the front of the store was great.

By-law Revision Information Session: Kira expressed thanks to the By-laws committee for all their hard work. Susan mentioned that Barbara was wondering if a list was going to be given to cashiers to make sure people who are voting are actually members and wanted to clarify what the cashiers' role is going to be in the voting process. Kira said that there will be voting instructions available at the voting table that will be set up during the voting period.

Approve March Minutes: The March minutes were approved 4-0 with the additions of the adjournment details. The March minutes should read, "On a motion by Ashar, seconded by Abi, the Board voted 6-0 at 8:25 pm to go into executive session. Later, on a motion by Ashar, seconded by John, the Board voted 6-0 at 8:35 pm to exit executive session and adjourn the meeting." Ross, Jesse, Barry and Michelle abstained.

Manager's Report: Glenn shared with the Board the business plan for the upcoming year detailing the list of goals we hope to accomplish or to begin work on. He commented on the purchase of the CVPS property behind the Co-op. He has been trying to contact the new owners about the possibility of the Co-op buying or

renting some parking spaces from them. In addition, he commented that we may soon be losing parking spaces at the Charter House.

The web site start up is moving along quickly.

There has been some response for the deli manager job. They are waiting for a really good pool before beginning interviews. There was discussion about where we are advertising for this job. It was suggested we put ads not only in "Career Builder" and "7 Days" but also look into other web advertising options like "Craig's List" and "Angie's List."

Business Plan and Budget Review:

Budget: The Board reviewed the budget for the upcoming year. Last year we budgeted for a 10% increase in sales and achieved 13% increase in sales. Next year we are budgeting for an 8% increase in sales. Glenn noted that so far our personnel costs for this year are below projections allowing for more profits. Additionally he pointed out a new line item for profit sharing. He intends to provide staff with some profit sharing but has yet to decide on a formula or commit to a specific amount. There was a question about line 33 the Health Benefit Expense. It was budgeted for next year at a lower cost than we paid this year. Glenn will check with Steve if that is actually correct.

There was discussion about maybe buying our own forklift instead of paying Watson to unload semis. It was agreed that he isn't charging that much and buying our own forklift comes with other tasks like training staff to use it, maintain it and where to park it.

As it is, the 2008 budget will provide \$44,000 in profits, but Glenn says he expects the profits may actually be closer to \$100,000.

Susan raised concerns about the Capital investments section and the idea of adding a 5th register. There is the issue of losing space and also the ergonomic problems some cashiers are having with the new registers. Some Board members suggested trying to educate shoppers about how to unload their groceries to help relieve some of the repetitive strain on cashiers. Perhaps a sign at the register or an article in the newsletter could help make shoppers better aware of the problem and how they can help.

Business Plan: Glenn presented the 2008 plan for Board feedback. He is happy to take written feedback at any time. A suggestion was made to add more night time HABA coverage.

The web site is making progress and there was discussion about the Board section. There will be pictures of Board members and some contact info. Barbara is the contact person.

Glenn raised the idea of creating a way for members to donate money to the community perhaps by opting to donate their 2% member discount. There was support for the idea and questions as to if it was a job for Staff or Board. It was decided to make an announcement at the annual meeting that this idea is in the works. It will be on the agenda for the next Board meeting to brainstorm ideas.

Jesse raised the idea that this job would fit well under an outreach/education job description and wondered if we have a need to create that kind of position now. Glenn felt that there is enough Staff who enjoy side projects so that at this point we don't need to create a new position.

Committee Reports: The Annual Meeting Committee reported that the meeting is set for Wednesday, May 30th at the Methodist Church. Beginning at 6:30 pm there will be social time and eating. The business meeting for members will begin at 7 pm. At 7:30 pm there will be a presentation from the "Localvore" movement. There will be a sandwich board reminder of the meeting a week before the event.

Kira reported for the Board Development Committee that there are 6 candidates running for 3 positions in the upcoming election. The candidates are Leslie Blow, Kristin Bolton, Ashar Nelson (incumbent), Johanna Nichols, Erik Shonstrom and Natasha Sky. The elections begin May 1st and run through May 27th. There is info in the newsletter and at the front of the store about the election process. The Bylaws Committee asked that a reminder to vote on the bylaws changes be added to the Board elections sign. It was suggested that each member of the Board try to encourage at least 10 members to vote.

New Business: Ross asked why there are no pictures of the Staff in the store anymore. The Staff photos are currently in the break room. Apparently some Staff are not comfortable having their pictures in the store.

Glenn related from the management team meeting that there was a request for more Board interaction with Staff and presence in the store. It was suggested that Board members could volunteer in the store, introduce themselves to Staff when they are shopping or invite Staff members to join committees. Staff members are welcome to attend Board meetings if they desire more contact and involvement with the Board.

John announced that he no longer has a computer so don't try to email him anymore.

Tasks/Set agenda for next meeting:

1. Brainstorm Community Development donation idea.
2. Annual meeting report.
3. Linkage Committee report.
4. Long Range Planning Committee report.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ashar, seconded by Suzannah, the Board voted 8-0 to adjourn at 8:40pm.