

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
September 23, 2009
Approved 10/28/09**

Board members present: Kristin Bolton, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Francisca Drexel, Mary Gill, Michelle McCauley, Ashar Nelson (presiding), Johanna Nichols

Board members absent: Ross Conrad, Kate Gridley, Jay Leshinsky, Tam Stewart

Others present: Susan DeWind (staff liaison), Robert Keren (recorder of minutes), Glenn Lower (general manager), Reiner Winkler (bulk foods manager)

Board monitor: Kristin

Call to order: Ashar called the meeting to order in the Ilsley Public Library at 6:30 p.m.

Member-owners' business

Ashar noticed that cash register receipts at City Market contain the date of their next board meeting, and he asked Glenn to look into doing a similar thing at the MNFC. Glenn agreed that printing the board meeting dates on receipts posed a good opportunity for MNFC board linkage with its members.

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of August 26, 2009

The board amended the final sentence of the August 26, 2009, minutes under "Quarterly financial monitoring" by adding the phrase "...at this time due to the lateness of the meeting." On a motion by Ilaria, seconded by Michelle, the minutes were approved as amended on a 6-0 vote. Johanna, who was not at the meeting, abstained.

General manager's report

Glenn announced that the annual Empty Bowl Dinner will take place November 7. Johanna urged the GM to emphasize the purpose of the event in the pre-event publicity.

Glenn said he would e-mail the Ends Monitoring Report to board members, and to feel free to ask him questions about it at the October meeting. Also at the October meeting, he will have the once-a-year Executive Limitations Report ready for board review.

The in-store customer survey will be administered in October, the GM said. The final draft of the survey will be circulated to the board via e-mail, and board members are welcome to assist staff in giving the surveys to shoppers.

Webinar report

Johanna reported that she took part in two webinars: "Boards and Member Linkage" and "Including Members in Ends Dialogue." She said five recommendations emerged from the two presentations:

- define the levels of involvement of the various shoppers at the Co-op including customers, shopping members, social members, member owners, and active owners;
- understand the needs and motivations of the people connected with the Co-op, especially the staff, and be sure to thank the staff for their work;
- help members see how the Co-op benefits them and others;
- tune into metrics such as membership trends, sales trends, and buying patterns, and monitor participation in elections, in member loans, and at meetings; and
- report on the board's thinking process that takes place on the part of member owners, ask member-owners for their input, and follow up Co-op events with articles in the newsletter.

Linkage Committee

Johanna reported that the committee is working on the newsletter, bulletin board, customer survey, and Web site. The questions in the customer survey were discussed, and Ashar suggested that the survey elicit responses from shoppers about their use of the MNFC Web site.

Board Development Committee

Michelle reported that the BDC is reviewing the board survey of last year and consider using Survey Monkey to conduct this year's survey and compile the results. Survey Monkey will save a time in reporting the board's comments, she said, since the comments will not have to be re-typed. The committee is also discussing the recruitment of new board members for the 2010 elections.

Executive Committee

On a motion by Michelle, seconded by Ilaria, the board voted 7-0 to accept the revised Executive Limitations Overview and EL's numbered 1 through 10.

Neighboring Food Co-ops Association

Ashar reported that board presidents in the association met for a day of workshops and conversation in Springfield, VT. About 15 board presidents from the 17 member co-ops participated. Ashar said he left the meeting feeling that the MNFC is "well ahead of the curve" in terms of the board educating itself and in transitioning itself to envision the future.

Education Committee

Kristin opened the discussion by asking: What did we learn at the August meeting about the Co-op and carbon reduction? What's percolating in people's minds? What are the next steps? What direction should we give guest speaker Jim Merkel in November?

Glenn opened the discussion by saying that the bulk of the carbon reduction is not at the store itself, but in educating members about "eating lower on the food chain, eating local, and driving less." Michelle said it's interesting to think about the store's carbon footprint, but that "food miles" is the key issue to her. The board discussed the question, "Why are we looking at the Co-op's carbon footprint?" The 350.org event on October 24, and the Co-op's potential for having a role in it, was also discussed.

The board decided that at the October meeting Michelle would speak for about 15 minutes on climate change and human behavior, and that Kristin would give a 5-minute synopsis of Jim Merkel's book, "Radical Simplicity."

The board further decided that the November meeting, which will be on Nov. 11 at the Ilsley Library meeting room, will start with a 5:30 p.m. pot luck for the board and guest Jim Merkel. The open meeting will commence at 6:30 p.m. There will be about 15 minutes of business before giving the floor to Mr. Merkel at 6:45 p.m.

Meeting closure

The October meeting will include board education with Michelle and Kristin, a report from Ross on a webinar, a review of EL's, and the GM's evaluation. On a motion by Johanna, seconded by Kristin, the board voted 6-0 at 8:45 p.m. to adjourn. (Mary left a few minutes before the vote to adjourn.)