

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative  
Board of Directors Meeting  
November 17, 2010**

**Approved 12/15/10**

**Board Members Present:** Kristin Bolton, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Ross Conrad, Francisca Drexel, Mary Gill, Kate Gridley, Jay Leshinsky, Michelle McCauley, Karen Miller-Lane, Kevin Lehman, Tam Stewart.

**Others present:** Susan DeWind (Staff Liaison), Glenn Lower (General Manager), Reiner Winkler (Bulk Manager)

**Board Monitor:** Tam

**Call to Order:** Jay called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**Member Business:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by Ross, seconded by Tam, the minutes of October 27 were approved unanimously as amended. One discussion item while amending the minutes was that Glenn might want to track what is not recyclable or fair trade to more appropriately measure recyclable and fair trade sales in the store.

**General Manager's Report:** There was no discussion of the report beyond Jay mentioning he is interested in going to the NFCA meeting and that there is one possible prospect for carbon assessment but nothing firm.

**Linkage:** Tam passed a revised newsletter article signup sheet with a topic line added. Kristin suggested just summarizing the previous Board meeting work would be a good topic. Tam showed a possible new design by Karin Mott for the Board Bulletin Board with plastic sleeves for pictures, various reports, brochures and announcements as well as larger photos of directors. Ross suggested "Your Elected Board of Directors" as its title line. The challenge for this larger board would be where to locate it. There are convenience and safety concerns about placing it on the wall above the shopping carts. Splitting it into two boards in separate locations was suggested. Kate wondered if an in-store computer might be a way to get customers informed about Board work. Glenn spoke to giving customers the message that MNFC is a different kind of store.

Scott will be free in December to meet with Linkage Committee and they will report back at the next meeting about work on the website.

**Board Development Committee:** Kate will send by email a list of webinar signups and directions on how to access them on the website.

Kate presented the committee thoughts on self-evaluation and the use of online surveys. It is felt there should be some improvements made to last year's questions. New members need materials and follow up and there is a need to pose questions to see if monitoring is more intentional and improved. They are looking for input on what those

questions should be. Tam reported his conversation with Michael Healy about monitoring. Annual or semi-annual reviews may be enough but there can also be brief monthly sessions after each meeting. Reviews should include process, activities and discipline to policy. Ask:

- 1 - Are we doing what we said we would do?
- 2 – How could we improve?
- 3 – Is this still the right policy?

Francisca felt an important question for her was “What tasks and processes would make me a more dynamic Board member?” Kevin suggested asking “Do we have the right subcommittees?”

There was discussion of the on-line survey format. Multiple choice “bubbles” are too limiting sometimes but written comments can be hard to quantify. Bubbles can give an overview. Glenn suggested written comment for just areas with low bubble scores for explanation.

If a monthly review after meetings is done then the annual monitoring would be much broader. In monthly reviews, the Board Monitor could look for trends while summarizing verbally. Mary suggested identifying goals for the meeting to the agenda and then the Monitor could evaluate success in meeting those goals. BDC suggested that monitoring was a BDC function. As board monitor, Tam agreed.

Kate announced she is going to Jan. 8 CBLD meeting. Mary, Karen, Ilaria and maybe Kevin are also interested.

**Education:** Kristin led a discussion of the January 22 Board Retreat. One idea was that the Board should expand the discussion on what they had learned in education work and look in depth at 2-3 ideas. Glenn urged the Board to use the retreat to produce a plan and vision for the coming year – what should the Co-op do and what it would look like. Jay said the Board should connect what was learned in the last 2 years to future planning and a vision. Kate suggested taking what was learned, choose what to take forward and what to let go and start with connecting this to the Ends. The idea of a mid-year retreat was suggested again. There was consensus that reviewing the education history and creating a common vision may lead to more or different options than the seven presented at the last meeting.

Kristin provided these ideas in summary:

Focus: Clarifying the option(s) that we as a board envision for the future of the Co-op.

Outcomes:

- Connect learning with vision.
- Create a work plan for the year (and possibly beyond).

Process:

- Revisit history of educational initiative to gather learning.
- Identify what to move forward and what to let go.
- Discuss a vision for the co-op's future that:
  - 1) addresses growth pressures
  - 2) extends the reach/impact of the Co-op's Ends(N.B. we may come up with different ideas than we have previously expressed; we won't necessarily focus on the pros and cons of the 7 ideas

we discussed earlier; we'll see where the conversation leads us.)

- Create a plan for the year.

There was discussion of the pros and cons of a retreat facilitator. It was felt there should be flexibility to have time to exchange ideas and the leader should guide discussion without structured activities. Ross asked if would be helpful to have a different facilitator from CBLD to have a fresh perspective. The Board then accepted Kristin's offer to lead the retreat while inviting Michael Healy and Ashar Nelson to attend as resources and backup. A CBLD facilitator could also lead a mid-year retreat.

**Executive Session:** On a motion by Ross, seconded by Mary, all voted in favor of going into Executive Session for the GM evaluation at 7:52 pm. The Board came out of Executive Session to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm. on a motion by Michelle, seconded by Kevin.

Respectfully submitted by Susan DeWind