

Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative

Board of Directors Meeting

April 18, 2012

Approved 5/23/12

Board Members Present: Kristin Bolton, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Joseph Cadoret, Ross Conrad, Francisca Drexel, Mary Gill, Kevin Lehman, Jay Leshinsky, Karen Miller-Lane, JS Woodward.

Board Members Absent: Tam Stewart

Others present: Victoria DeWind (staff liaison), Glenn Lower (General Manager) by speaker phone, Reiner Winkler (staff).

Board Monitor:

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

Member's Business: Ross thanked Joseph for speaking on the behalf of MNFC at the GMO hearing in Montpelier. He noted that there were many MNFC customers there.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion made by Ross, seconded by Ilaria, the minutes of March 15, 2012 were approved as amended with all in favor, JS abstaining.

GM Report: Glenn reported from the NCGA conference that MNFC had been recognized for outstanding performance. CDS consultant Bill Gessner (who will be visiting MNFC soon) was inducted into the Co-op Hall of Fame, only the second time an induction has been related to food co-ops.

EL 11 Revision: The policy will apply to new and existing vendors. The Executive Committee put the reference to "local" into the lead sentence instead of in the numbered sentences knowing that the GM will focus on local and so they are not singled out from all vendors. "In regards" in #1 was replaced with "staff and vendors" so all vendors are treated the same. On a motion by JS, seconded by Karen, all voted in favor of the revised policy.

GP 6 Revision: After making a various grammatical changes, the Board voted all in favor to approve GP 6 on a motion by Ilaria, seconded by Ross.

Food Security Meeting Follow-up: From the March meeting, the Board learned that all attending organizations are actively working on food security but they are not having regular meetings together to share information and support and coordinate with each other. Having quarterly meetings could help them achieve goals. The Board was appreciative of having the perspective at the meeting of one person's personal experience living with food insecurity. They discussed the importance of not only funding but making time and transportation available to people to make connections with facilities and resources so they can be more self-sufficient and do for themselves.

Limited family income can be the biggest limitation to achieving food security and self-sufficiency. The Board discussed the importance of reaching younger generations and educating them on growing and eating natural food so they can “educate” older people. Changing the culture around healthy food and bringing in people from all segments of the community needs to happen.

There was concern that the Co-op should not try to “reinvent the wheel” but should gather information on existing programs so it can support efforts of other organizations such as ACORN and HOPE as they work for long term solutions. There should be an effort to promote collaboration rather than separate efforts. It was felt that keeping the scope of this work narrow for MNFC will help determine how it can help address food insecurity in the short term. Glenn noted HOPE’s shifting focus away from givers and receivers to doing more education and creating a sustainable food system for those in need.

The Board feels that the issue of food security falls under the MNFC End of Healthy Food and Glenn could include this in his Ends report. Establishing what metrics to use to measure success in increasing food security needs to happen by getting more information from other groups. Kevin and Mary offered to look at putting together discussions with others groups to keep momentum going and come to define how MNFC can play a supporting role. Later this year the Board will have a clearer picture on when and how to engage member-owners on this issue.

Strategic Planning: The management team is holding discussions on future growth. The Board’s role in this should be defined. The Executive Committee will consider with Glenn a mid-year retreat for the Board.

Elections: There are three candidates for four seats. Glenn is concerned this will create lower voter participation below the required 5% of member-owners. The fourth seat will be filled by appointment. Board members will create a list of potential appointees for the next meeting on base camp. There was consensus to work more with staff on elections and consider voting by computer for next year. With the elimination of the Education Committee, the Board reviewed who is serving on the other committees and agreed the role of the BDC should be clarified.

Self-Evaluation GP 2: It was agreed that the wording in #2 is awkward and will be revised. Other minor changes were made. It was asked if the Executive Committee was functioning as described. Issues are sent to the Committee from Board discussions and it is serving as a sounding board for the GM as well as having a leadership role.

Next Meeting: Business Plan and Budget, EL 4 monitoring, Annual Meeting, appointment candidates, Executive Committee slate, 2012-13 calendar

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm on a motion by Kristin, seconded by Karen. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Victoria DeWind