

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
November 29, 2017**

Board Members Present: R.J. Adler, Molly Anderson, Nadine Barnicle, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Lynn Dunton, Kate Gridley, Ann LaFiandra, Jay Leshinsky, Tam Stewart, Louise Vojtisek.

Board Members Absent: Amanda Warren.

Others present: Victoria DeWind (staff liaison), Laura King (HR), Glenn Lower (GM).

Board Monitor: Louise.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm after a tour of store expansion highlights. Glenn also informed the Board that the sales for Thanksgiving week were over that of 2016 even though the store was closed for two days instead of the usual one. The contingency fund has \$30,000 left. Glenn said “it was a wonderful cooperative project”

Member-owner Business: R.J. asked if gluten free pizza is available in the Deli. Yes. Ann asked Glenn to confirm that people can bring their own containers for bulk maple syrup. Yes. Molly and Nadine reported customer complaints about made to order sandwiches not being available. Molly also mentioned a comment on the purchase of CBD tea being limited to 18 years and older. Kate reported questions on staff levels from several people. Glenn confirmed levels are not yet up in the new store as hiring has been slower than expected.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by R.J., seconded by Ilaria, the minutes of October 25, 2017 were approved as amended with all in favor and Nadine abstaining.

GM Report: Glenn talked about the all-staff meeting in October at which expansion and staff appreciation were the main topics. A racial harassment incident on the Co-op plaza was also discussed and Glenn encouraged staff to report any incidents like this to him or the MOD. There was generally very positive feedback about the meeting except for one comment about internal racism. Being surprised and saddened by this, Glenn has been working with Laura on steps to take to increase inclusivity and learn how the Co-op can be more welcoming. He wants to consider what role the Board can have in addressing this issue. He is looking to create a long range plan for education and new practices in an ongoing process. They will start with a dialogue with staff next week.

Laura mention an incident three years ago that did not get “day lighted” or resolved that generated staff concern about management response to a racial incident.

It was acknowledged that the whiteness of the local and state population make it difficult for people of color. Taking proactive and intentional steps to increase diversity in staff as well as for the Board was discussed as a way to be more welcoming. While there is age diversity, the Board is less socio-economically diverse than staff. The importance of appearances and awareness were agreed on.

The Board consensus was that consulting with other co-ops on how they deal with this issue would be helpful. CDS 101 board trainings and CDS library materials on diversity issues should be used and education workshops explored as a way for the Board to join with staff to create

more unity. It was agreed that a review of Board director recruitment materials should take place to consider how to reach a broader range of applicants.

(Laura left the meeting at 7:54).

On other GM report topics, Jay asked when the first year of the pro forma budget starts. Glenn replied November. Molly asked if grocery sales numbers could be broken out as it is a large department with so many sub-categories, especially with the expanded meat department. The Board supported this suggestion. Jay asked if the letter by Robynn Shrader was about the general issue of defining organic or the specific issue of hydroponics. Glenn thought it was about the disagreements in general.

Ends Monitoring: Glenn informed the Board about the results of the blower door test. The Co-op exceeded its goal for limiting energy loss in the building envelope but did not meet the goal of net zero increase in energy use from the old store. He noted the substantial investment of time, equipment and subcontractors to make this happen.

With the store tour and expansion update serving as the Ends Report, the Board agreed that the report was on time with reasonable interpretation of sufficient data and in compliance.

Newsletter: Nadine reviewed the assignments and due dates for upcoming newsletter articles

GM Evaluation: Tam reviewed the process for evaluation. It includes three monitoring options. 1) Yearly monitoring. 2) Direct inspection of insurance binders and personnel policies. 3) Third party review. Lynn agreed to review the binders. The December meeting will include an Executive Session for completing the evaluation. Compensation will be effective April 1.

(Lynn left the meeting at 8:15).

Staff Appreciation: The Board thanked Louise for her work organizing these successful events. Louise felt the opportunity for interaction with staff is the primary goal. The consensus was that appreciation events should continue in a similar way, perhaps quarterly or with a special event.

Annual Retreat: Tam suggested starting to consider what and when for the annual retreat. The Board agreed on March 10th as a first choice, the 11th if necessary. Ilaria will find out if the same Weybridge St. house used last year is available.

It was also agreed that the December 13th meeting be changed to December 20th and the March meeting move to March 21st. Jay suggested that these meeting date changes be posted on the website and included in the newsletter.

Term limits have previously been suggested for Board consideration. Tam reminded the Board there are CDS articles on this subject on Basecamp. He asked Kate if she would take the lead on this discussion for a future agenda.

R.J. proposed the impact of price, product and perception on social economic diversity for a retreat discussion. He would like to do some research to collect data for a conversation and will make an outline for Board consideration. It was suggested this could tie into staff training on racism.

Adjournment: At 8:34 the meeting was adjourned with all voting in favor of a motion by Ilaria, seconded by R.J.

Respectfully submitted by Victoria DeWind