

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
June 23, 2021**

Board Members Present: Molly Anderson, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Erin Buckwalter, Lynn Dunton, Samantha Langevin, Kate Gridley, Esther Thomas (arrived at 7:45pm), Louise Vojtisek, Amanda Warren.

Board Members Absent: Tam Stewart.

Others present: Ollie Cultrara (election run off recipient), Kerry Dashnaw (minute-taker), Glenn Lower (GM), Greg Prescott (Store Manager), Ross Conrad (member owner/former board member).

Board Monitor: Ilaria.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at: 6:30pm.

Member-owner Business: Welcome Samantha Langevin, newest board member! Thank you Sophie Esser Calvi for your service!

Ross Conrad submitted a document outlining his concerns that member owners have been consistently losing a return on their investment as owners of the co-op. He feels patronage and member sales are not a large enough incentive or compensation. Kate pointed out that the patronage dividend often gives back a greater monetary return than the \$20 yearly membership and Lynn expressed that being a member-owner is more about community investment than monetary gain. The board plans to table this discussion and take a closer look at this perspective of member owner satisfaction in the future. Ross left the meeting at 6:45pm.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Ilaria, seconded by Molly, the minutes of May 26, 2021 were approved with all in favor. Nadine abstained as she was not present at the May meeting. Louise abstained as she and Ollie are awaiting results of the run-off election.

GM Reports: Glenn reported that Co-op continues to be in good financial health as the budget for 2022 was forecasted at 0% sales growth and is currently at 7% growth. He noted the budget could be re-worked as the year goes on if there is still continual above average growth. After a lengthy process, the PPP loan for essential workers has been forgiven. Staff profit sharing this June was the largest ever and board compensation checks have been mailed. Despite a few glitches, the annual meeting via zoom was a success with over double in attendance than last year. It is very favorable that there will be a return to an in-person annual meeting at American Flatbread next year with perhaps a hybrid model offering a zoom-in option or recorded for those to view later.

Ends Monitoring Report: Membership overall is growing but there was a slight drop in Food-for-all participants this year which could be due to less frequent but bigger shops at other stores, and no in-person membership drives due to Covid. Sales of organic produce has seen a 23% increase from last year and is at 80%, and total store organic sales at 34%.

The CX survey results for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 shows that customers' satisfaction is high with 90% of customers rating their experience as 5 out of 5, higher than other co-ops in the

region that are scoring at 86%. Price image and customers' perception of overall value is still a challenge, showing below 48% of satisfaction. While hard to quantify how customers' might perceive overall value, continuing to work on price image and fully reopening the deli are goals for this next year.

The Co-op is applying for a grant for the "double-up food bucks" program that would allow for 50% off fresh produce for qualifying individuals. If the grant is awarded, the program will start after the holidays.

Buying Criteria is continually being monitored to ensure product ingredients and practices meet our criteria.

Date of Monitoring: 6-23-21. Everyone complied

Patronage Dividends: On a motion by Lynn, seconded by Ilaria, the board voted to designate 50% of the patronage dividend to members. Any check amounts below \$5, and uncashed checks will be donated to local food shelves. The Co-op retains \$241,259 and \$241,259 for member-owners (4,461 dividend checks to be mailed out).

2021-22 Meeting Schedules & Summer-Fall Retreat:

Samantha put forward a motion, seconded by Ilaria to change the meeting time to 6:00-8:00 to meet everyone's time challenges halfway and to review it again after 3 meetings. Motion passed. A date of Sunday, September 26 was chosen for the September retreat.

EDI Committee: Esther reported that the committee is feeling very strong and focused and stands by the quote: "We will unlearn together, learn together, share together, create a safe space to be honest, and process together."

Communications/Tasks/Assignments: Nadine reported that there will be no print "Under the Sun" newsletter this Fall due to a turnover in the graphics department. There will be an E-newsletter in July. Amanda agreed to write the article.

Kerry will facilitate nominations for the election of Board officers. She will send a reminder email to all Board members on July 6 after the runoff election. Everyone will have their nominations in to Kerry by July 12th. Tam has expressed he no longer wishes to be the board president. If there is a contested position, we can get organized using paper ballots at the July meeting.

Adjournment: At 8:32 the meeting was adjourned with all voting in favor of a motion by Ilaria, seconded by Louise.

Respectfully submitted by Kerry Dashnaw