

**Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative  
Board of Directors Meeting  
August 25, 2021**

**Board Members Present:** Molly Anderson, Nadine Barnicle, Ilaria Brancoli Busdraghi, Erin Buckwalter, Ollie Cultrara, Lynn Dunton, Kate Gridley, Samantha Langevin, Tam Stewart, Amanda Warren.

**Board Members Absent:** Esther Thomas.

**Others present:** Victoria DeWind (staff liaison), Glenn Lower (GM), Greg Prescott (Store Manager)

**Board Monitor:** Ilaria

**Call to Order:** Amanda called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

**Member-owner Business:** Amanda reported her conversation with Ross Conrad who decided he will wait to attend a Board meeting about his member-owner return-on-investment concern until the Board responds to his initial inquiry.

The Board agreed to decline the request for a letter of recommendation by a member-owner as they feel it not appropriate in their role as directors and they do not want to set a precedent. Kate agreed to let him know.

Samantha shared a request from a member-owner that seniors can get the 5% discount every day as it is hard to get to the store on discount days. Glenn explained limiting days happened because in the past the fast growth of senior discounts was not financially sustainable.

Molly shared a request from a member-owner that paper labels be attached to twist ties on bulk plastic bags rather than stuck on the bags so that the bags can be recycled.

**Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by Molly, seconded by Kate, the minutes of July 28, 2021 were approved as amended with all in favor and Ilaria and Tam abstaining.

**JEDI:** In Esther's absence Erin explained the activity planned for this meeting. The JEDI committee had previously used this as a way to get to know each other and better understand each other's backgrounds and what they are bringing to the Board's JEDI work. Jedi work requires open and honest communication and vulnerability, and the JEDI committee felt this exercise would be a helpful next step for the whole Board in opening up with each other. Directors paired up and took 20 minutes to have these conversations.

Lynn followed up reporting that she had attended the monthly Neighboring Co-op Association's monthly JEDI meeting and will share some of the resources she had received from the group. There is one on the rules of engagement she thought would be helpful for the retreat. She encouraged other directors to consider attending these meetings.

**GM Report:** Glenn informed the Board that the annual financial audit was not complete in time for this meeting and he will have to do the EL-1 Financial Condition monitoring report at the next meeting. Other co-ops are experiencing similar delays.

Glenn reported that the transition back to requiring masks has gone more smoothly than anticipated with only one objection. Many customers have been supportive of reinstating the policy. The Board thanked him for taking this step.

The Board thanked Greg for his research and letter to staff explaining the complicated issue of the carbon footprint of plastic containers versus glass and local product versus those shipped from far away. An effort is underway to replace plastic water bottles with aluminum and glass. There will be new signage soon to promote refillable bottles and the re-opening of the fill station in the front of the store as part of an education effort. Glenn is considering installing reverse osmosis equipment.

The Board appreciated the report from Emily L. about the ACORN Farmacy Food As Medicine project. They especially support the education programs and classes that engage with different groups in the community outside of the Co-op.

**Communications:** Nadine reviewed the newsletter article sign up for directors. She will let the Board know when a theme has been set for the next print edition. She encouraged having new voices in these articles. Kate said that newsletter can be used as a strategic way to communicate about the GM search process and keep member-owners up to date. Nadine said she will meet with Karin about this.

The Board agreed that a computer with speakers does not work well for hybrid meetings and Glenn said he will look into an Owl device for the meeting room. The Board supported this even though it is expensive.

**Executive Session:** At 7:22 the Board voted all in favor of a motion by Kate, seconded by Amanda, to go into Executive Session for personnel discussions. At 8:15 the Board voted all in favor of a motion by Samantha, seconded by Amanda, to come out of Executive Session.

**Adjournment:** At 8:16 the meeting was adjourned with all voting in favor of a motion by Ollie, seconded by Lynn.

Respectfully submitted by Victoria DeWind