

## MINUTES:

### Fare Share Co-op Fall Membership Meeting, November 12th 2016

**Present:** Mary Ann Haxton, Tracy Turner, Emmy Andersson, Peter Kreiner, Rosemary Bunn Laban, Lisa Moore, Stephen Bies, Katie Bessey, Rick and Caitlyn Meagher, Rachel McGarry and Kris Wright, Mitchell McGarry, Nikki Millonzi, Ken Morse, Cyndy Tinsley, Nancy Watson, Han Libby, Katey Branch, Andrea AskenDunn, Lee Margolin, Zizi and Jasper Vlaun, and Marty Elkin. (24 attendees representing 18 households)

#### 1. Introductions

We went around the room, introduced ourselves, mentioned how long we have been members, and chose the Cooperative Principle or Value that speaks to us most clearly today. We also did a quick review of our Meeting Agreements.

#### 2. GM Report: Emmy Andersson

More complete financial reports are available. We began 2016 with very strong sales goals and we are actually slightly above budget. BOD and GM have worked hard on member engagement and staff has worked hard to improve customer service. We remain understaffed, however (a problem that we hope to solve in 2017). We've also increased membership significantly (63 new members); as we continue to grow, more and more people will join us. The more exposure we have in the community, the more members we will attract because members are ambassadors. We have also grown in our ability to supply more products, and we offer more than 150 Maine vendors. We've increased gross sales in the first three quarters by 18% over last year's sales (14.8% increase in expenses). We have a new POS system in May and it's working fairly well; some aspects are not yet optimized. The old system was extremely expensive to upgrade and so we purchased a new system. We've done a lot of store resets and will continue to do more. We secured a grant recently that will allow us to pursue better community conversations and member engagement. Also received a grant through CDS consulting about marketing and greater engagement. We are partnering with Paris Auto Barn (auto supplies) and Pennesseewassee Brewing Company (homebrew supplies) to begin serving a vision to become a Green Market within our store. We hope to hire new staff soon. Emmy loves being here and feels supported.

#### 3. Board Reports

Vision Statement: Lisa presented a draft of a for everyone to consider and discuss:

**OUR VISION is a cooperative, welcoming, and sustainable food hub that educates and serves a diverse local community.**

- Only food? Some discussion: we also have supplements, HBAs, auto supplies, brewing supplies. Emmy thinks that we need to keep "food" as our center and focus.
- Is a Mission statement our overarching principles and Vision is how we get there or vice versa? Some confusion on this.
- Should the word *resilient* should be included or does "sustainable" include resiliency?

Introduction to Patronage Dividends: Mary Ann introduced us to this principle and practice. We believe ourselves a cooperative and we have functioned as a cooperative, so

legally (according to counsel), we ARE a cooperative. Currently, we offer discounts to members, which has a great impact on our profitability. In fact, it creates a loss. Patronage dividends would distribute profits when we have them. Members would receive a refund based on how much money they have spent at the store in a given time frame. We've never been profitable, but we have been giving discounts. We're getting closer and so we'd like to project that in a year or two, we'd shift from discounts to dividends. The BOD will be working on this, educating itself, then educating the membership, and proposing changes to Bylaws. Stay tuned.

Solar-Ready Campaign: We should congratulate ourselves for being free from fossil fuel for one year. We launched our solar campaign and raised about \$6,822 on Indiegogo from 64 backers and about \$1700 in the store from about 34 backers (a number that keeps growing). We have three businesses assessing our solar needs, and it appears that we'll need about 300 solar panels (the roof can handle about 45). Question: Can this be done in phases? We still have several stages to go through to tighten up our building to minimize our usage.

Holiday Dinner: Dec. 4th, 5-8p at Café Nomad: Anna will do food, live music, auction, singing. Sliding scale \$12-32. Plans still unfolding. Volunteers needed!

4. Board Nominations: We operate by Policy Governance, a system that gives direction and responsibility to a BOD of 9 people. "The progress of our organization percolates and ferments among the Board," observed Mary Ann. We need Board members. BOD members responded to queries about meetings, commitments, terms, etc. The BOD can appoint when there are vacancies. Andrea Asken-Dunn, Peter Kreimur, and Rachel McGarry volunteered: *yay!* We also seek an attorney and/or an accountant and/or a producer (farmer or vendor). Next BOD meeting is November 22 from 2 to 4; all members are always welcome to attend Board meetings.

5. Owner Roundtable: open discussion of what matters.

- Appreciation of outreach to cooperative support services, but are the coops really cooperating? Neighborhood Cooperative Association. Emmy attended a Principle 6 meeting in Augusta. Work, legal services, buying power could result.
- Observation: Would patronage discounts not encourage volunteering? There are issues around discounts and labor that have emerged in the last 40 years and the BOD must address them.
- Interest in organic methods, workshops, growers. Maybe there's a way to get grants to generate more interaction between producers and customers.
- Maybe there are ways for members to be educated through the work of the coop, such as solar panels and heat pumps and energy efficiency. We are advocates of these actions. For example, Emmy has fielded calls about the heat pumps.

6. Recognition and thanks to Rick Meagher and Mary Ann Haxton: complete with a song and flowering gifts. **Thank you both so very much for your long and dedicated service.**

We adjourned at 4:55, five minutes early.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Moore