

## **June 1, 2016 Board Meeting**

*@ the Meetinghouse*

Board Present: Sara Carlson, Becky Clawson, Jim Eisenstein, Grace Emmerling, Michele Marchetti, Chris Rand, Catie Rasmussen

Staff Present: Stacey Budd

### **Follow-ups from May minutes** (action - status)

- *Cait Simpson will help Stacey research borough regulations for food trucks and using public parks - not yet completed*
- *Sara Carlson will work with Stacey on coming up with a distribution plan for brochures - on target; Stacey is working on brochures*
- *Grace, Melanie, and Catie will work together to implement "become a member" text for the receipts - complete; Catie added a general statement about the average of sales/savings. Melanie is running a report of shoppers-not-members and adding customized info on invoices.*
- *Cait and Grace will follow up regarding student outreach initiatives (workshare and others) before next meeting - not yet completed*
- *Becky will compile list of board outreach ideas, send to Sara. Sara will survey the board. - Becky compiled list and created survey, while Sara was out of town with family emergency. 6 board members responded to the survey; will let go another month.*
- *Board voted and approved the May minutes.*

### **Membership/outreach** (see Stacey's report):

- The co-op gained 19 new members in May, surpassing our goal of 450.
- Catie signed on new Local Loyalty Partner (JuneBug Soap Co., Lewistown, PA).
- Elk Creek (Tim Bowser) is interested in joining LLP; benefit to be determined.
- Stacey gave input on the membership ideas that were proposed by board members.
  - Stacey would love to do more "lunch and learns" with community groups, moms groups, etc.
  - Bringing food to pre-schools: would rather make face-to-face connections, with a presentation than just making a donation.
  - After Stacey and Josh meet to work out Mail Chimp issues, she would love to work on automated email messaging.
  - Give board members materials in their welcome packet.
  - More member referrals are an opportunity to build a sense of community and involve members. Would love to explore other ways to do this. Giving members a toolkit to help us achieve our goals can be powerful.
  - Workshops and classes will be a project of the OLM, as part of the grant. This will be a way for us to share our members' talents.
  - Big event: Stacey's on board, if the effort is comparable to the benefits.
  - Stacey is in touch with the Y to promote F&F when they do a membership drive and perhaps implement some healthy eating programs.

- Boalsburg Memorial Day parade on the calendar for next year. We can work toward the Halloween parade.
- Partnering with fitness facilities: good synergies.
- **Friends & Farmers Street Team:** Stacey has devised a way volunteers can get involved on a beginner level. Tasks include Liking social media posts, recruiting members, helping at an event, etc. - and meeting monthly to debrief. We select and feature a “volunteer of the month.” We could do a drawing for small gifts to thank them for their efforts.
  - Chris: can we create a newsletter that goes to people who have mentioned they want to get involved?
  - Stacey: Volunteers are semi-tagged in Nation Building, but we’re fine-tuning the system to identify those folks.
  - Sara/Catie: A checklist might help volunteers stay on track and keep reporting/recording easier for staff. “Here are 20 things you could do; pick 7.”
- **"I am Friends & Farmers" marketing campaign:** PSU marketing class (see Stacey’s outreach report)

**Festa-Nic (Stacey and Chris):** Under the (rainy) circumstances, it felt like a success. Stacey estimated 300+ attendees, including strong board representation. No new members were gained, but a few good interactions/contacts were made. It’s unlikely the event (and therefore F&F) profited, but we’re ok with this, considering it was the first year for this event. Melanie and Clay (Village Eatinghouse) are hoping F&F will take this on in future years. They are hosting a debrief meeting soon to wrap up and think ahead.

**Plow to Plate** (Jim, Stacey, & Michele) - should Friends & Farmers take this over this year?

- Jim urged the board to consider taking over the planning and hosting of P2P. He has investigated with Sarah Potter (past organizer) the planning needs and begun getting buy-in from interested parties. Janet of the Boalsburg Farmers Market was not too keen on the idea, but Tony Sapia is on board and would be happy to recruit chefs to participate. Jim listed a number of local chefs that may be interested in speaking and cooking. According to Sarah Potter, Mt. Nittany Winery did not charge us for use of their facilities, as our guests buy a lot of wine from them. In the past, ticket price was \$35 and included a glass of wine; we could change the ticket price. He expressed that the effort of organizing (minimal) will be well worth the end result. Past profits have totalled \$500-\$1100.
- Michele voiced concerns about F&F taking on the event, based on her observation that Stacey’s hard work on the day of the event contributed largely to its success, and that the level of input from Stacey on that day was too much to repeat. Attendees didn’t feel they got a good value for the ticket price. There were problems with no-show food providers. Stacey agreed that the amount of work that would need to go into planning the event to make it successful is more than she can take on, considering her full plate of other outreach projects. It

would require that someone else step up to take on the planning, yet no clear candidate has been identified.

- The group discussed the costs/benefits of taking over this event. Some felt it might not increase visibility to *new* audiences and therefore not contribute to growing membership. (Sarah Potter's email to Jim remarked that the co-op should focus not just on reaching new members but on serving existing ones.) The profit margin mentioned in Sarah's email, several remarked, did not justify the planning effort. Several remarked that there are likely more details and logistics to manage than Jim's initial inquiries uncovered.
- Many board members feel that the effort outweighs the benefits for F&F; Jim disagrees and sees passing this up as a big missed opportunity. Instead of deciding at the meeting, **Jim will further investigate the logistics, including a follow-up conversation with Stacey about what tasks she managed on the day-of, and the board can vote by email.**

**Business Plan:** Grace will get back in touch with our contact at SBDC about reviving a business plan, by our annual meeting this fall.

**Online Market Update:** Grace (with input from Melanie's board report)

- The board was unable to discuss the report in detail due to having received it last-minute. **Board members will read through the report and contribute comments via email.**
- Looking at the numbers at the top of Melanie's OLM report, Jim expressed frustration with the OLM's lack of growth, including a concern that we are not meeting the objectives of our LFPP grant. Sara asked for clarification: aside from the numbers, are we meeting them? Jim: if we were meeting the grant objectives, we would see growth. Grace: It may be worth considering whether the objectives are as effective for contributing to growth as originally speculated.
  - Sara: At the membership meeting, two separate people asked publicly, "If this doesn't work, at what point do we walk away (from the OLM)? What's our exit strategy?" It may be time to sit down and determine our benchmarks and plan for this.
  - Grace: This planning and benchmarking will be included in the business plan.

**Financials** (Catie & Anna) - see financial reports

- Chris and Maria are discussing whether our member equity should be considered income. She will check with tax preparer for implications.
- Chris mentioned that our COGS-to-food sales ratio is a tight margin. How can we lower that ratio?
  - Michele: are we short-changing ourselves by ordering over a weekend? **Grace will look into purchasing trends.** We can revisit delivery day and ordering schedule. Stacey: moving away from Tuesday would make delivery challenging for vendors and would increase our expenses.

- Chris is going to investigate our cost of goods for the Online Market. How does the price we get from our producers compare to the retail price at the farmers markets?

### **Board succession & Annual Meeting**

- Joshua Brock has resigned from the board due to personal conflicts/commitments.
- We will need to replace 4 board members - 3 terming out and Josh's vacancy.
- Anna Grieco is interested in joining the board. She will be a good fit considering her interest and financial background. We may vote to appoint her sooner than the annual member meeting, due to Josh's vacancy.
- Jeremy Bean is interested in being more involved.
- Michele: we should write "job descriptions" or a list of duties and expectations that we need addressed, and strategically go after people who can fill those roles. ("We need someone who likes communication strategies; consider applying for the board...")
- Deb and/or Cait Simpson might be interest.
- Emily Newman is a potential candidate, though Jim and Becky suspect a slow cultivation may be the best approach, due to her other obligations and recent graduation.
- We could reach out directly to founding members and committed volunteers.

### **Other**

- The co-op got two articles in the CDT last week: bike promotion and Festa Nic
- Michele encouraged the board to Like and Share F&F content. Many boards ask for financial contributions. We are asking at a minimum for social media involvement.
- Michele also encouraged board members to shop on the online market. **Chris suggested an anonymous survey where folks could contribute why they might not be shopping the OLM.**
- Jim, Doug Goodstein, and Peter Buckland are meeting soon to discuss PSU Sustainability Week; we may be able to piggy-back on it.
- Kerry Zelman has been looking to do a screening of the Polyface Farm film screening. We might be able to do a fundraiser event at the State Theatre, with the help of a sponsor. Could do free admission with donation box. Chris is willing to help think through the process. Non-refundable 1-day rental for \$750. Chris thinks they'll add on labor for staff (~\$500). Movie rights will cost several hundred dollars. They can only hold the date until July 1. Perhaps we can shoot for September 30. **Michele can put together a proposal, and the board can vote by email before the next board meeting.**

### **Parking lot**

- Chris will follow up with fundraising.

- Michele will investigate Slack and Moxtra as options for having conversations around projects like fundraising.

*The board entered a closed session before adjourning.*