

Friends & Farmers

COOPERATIVE

09/07/16 – Meeting Minutes

Michele Marchetti called the Wednesday, September 7, 2016, Board of Directors meeting of the Friends & Farmers Cooperative to order at 7:30 PM at Board Member Sara Carlson's house. Other board members present at the meeting were: Anna Grieco, Deb Simpson, Catie Rasmussen and Grace Emmerling. Absent from the meeting was Mike Pipe, Chris Rand and Jim Eisenstein.

Also present at the meeting: Former board member Carolyne Meehan and Jacqueline Hannah, Food Co-op Development Specialist with Food Cooperative Initiative, who is visiting this week as part of our SEED grant award.

Michele motioned to approve the minutes from the August Board Meeting. Sara seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Board elections & Annual Meeting

- We have (2) 1-year terms, (1) 2-year term, and (3) 3-year terms to fill.
- Deb and Anna have decided not to run for seats on the board, but will stay involved at the committee level.
- Sara had a conversation with Near Carlin, someone who is interested in a board seat. Excited about mission. Grace will do some outreach into the student farm community.

Membership Meeting

- Stacey provided overview of our options for holding the meeting. UU is not available. We discussed Meetinghouse as an option with an open-house kind of appeal. Also discussed Millbrook Marsh, Calvary church, Friends School and Lion's Club in Pine Grove Mills.
- We will have an activity to get members engaged in a visual way.
- Strategic plan work would inform much of the business discussion.

Membership (Stacey)

- slow past few months with membership, often have to do some type of giveaway to get people to join.
- Chris and Dana are willing and wanting to host a backyard pizza oven as incentive to get members to join. Love to see us at 500 at membership meeting or maybe by the end of the year.

- October is National Cooperative Month. Idea would be to get members to have a conversation with people they know.
- Jacqueline pointed out that big round numbers are effective as far as membership targets. With the right messaging that's perfect.
- We should follow through with calls to our founding members.
- Anna would like a letter that she can forward to her network. Says she wouldn't forward a newsletter, but would a letter. It's tough when people don't get it, so a letter would help explain. Michele said she would follow up.
- Jacqueline remarked that we hit the low-hanging fruit already. We have to understand how this next group thinks different. We have to market different. It's time for us to relook how we market ownership. We're marketing to people who are completely disconnected. There's still room for co-op ambassadors who are pitching to their friends, but it's part of a multi-prong strategy with this being just one prong. You just need more prongs.
- Jacqueline: People may want what you're offering, but they're hearing confusion and they're hearing, I have to work. Or they're thinking granola. It's about messaging. WE have to help them understand it's just a grocery store with all the stuff you get at the farmers market. It's completely normal.

Online Market

- Recap of meeting with Sharon (See notes)
- Meetinghouse United Way Day of Caring Event, October 6...big part of the project is installing a walk-in, lot of the work being done will directly impact the Online Market, we need to articulate clearly how this project is going to feed back into our work, it will feel more connected.

New Online Market Hire Job Description

Sara: main strategy to reach out to a lot of other co-ops who have gone through this process who also use an Online Market, e-mailed 9 different co-ops, heard back from 6. Just one more yesterday.

We have a large pool of very beautiful crated job descriptions.

Sara has started to compile a job description based on what we know, also the experiences of other cooperatives. The most useful example is from the USDA. It's clear and concise, spot on. We need to communicate that this position will require an elevated skill set. Core requirement might be an MS in business. See it as having 3 categories: requirements, preferences and icing on the cake.

Grace: would like to empower the employee to flesh out the nitty-gritty of their job. First month: here's what we're doing. Second month: Innovate and advise. Sees the first 20 hours of week as operations and the second 20 as strategic planning.

Sara: we have a lot of inefficiencies. In terms of communication this change at our membership meeting, this is a reflection of a necessity of an elevated skill set that will advise our operations and advise the board.

Jacqueline: Think you're going to need more of a project manager. We tell the PM we need the OLM streamlined so they can take on these additional responsibilities.

Sara: We have mentorship opportunities for this person to shadow someone effectively using LFM in a thriving food hub environment. Important to keep the lines of communication open with other co-ops who can help this person. There are a few relevant co-ops that are drivable. As we're looking for candidates, we may get someone with a lot of business experience, but not a lot of experience in food

systems. But we have these connections at other co-ops. And we're prioritizing a more elevated skill set.

Jenn can rerun grant budgeting to accommodate whatever new hiring would happen. We over budgeted for a lot of things so there's more money than we thought.

We need the finance committee to meet to see what the implications will be on the Friends & Farmers budget.

Scenario 1- Includes \$15/hr wage for 25 hr/wk Nov. & Dec., and 40 hr/wk Jan-Sept. (remainder of the grant). Partial wages will be out of the general F&F budget to cover in-kind match for grant. Estimated to be ~\$6k by November.

Grant course/potential partnership with Spring Creek Homesteading

Spring Creek Homesteading has requested access to LFM, would like to use the system so people can reserve spots, registration fee is refundable.

Several board members pointed out that accessibility is a core value. Grace: therefore, this needs to be an *optional* registration reservation fee.

Carolyne: people will still pay and not show up.

Grace: I see the good in what they're proposing, and foresee us moving forward unless they pull out. SCH can be treated as a vendor on the system. We need to explain our policy around accessing OLM contact information for folks registered. If it doesn't work out, we'll figure out another way. But we're not going to lean on emotions, but on factual info.

Another idea was proposed that when people register, we make it clear that they're agreeing to a reminder phone call the day before. Then the cost is zero. As long as we're respecting people's privacy, it's ok.

Brief Committee/project updates

- Michele showed a first draft of the Online Market video produced by Tyler and Elena. Michele would like to see it fleshed out more, and include more voices. Jacqueline loved it.
- Grace is completing her professional certification in Food HUB management. Grace (with help from Michele) will work on a PDF, which is a glorified to-do list with SMART goals, timeline for completion and metrics for evaluation. Will include contextual text. Ideally this is done before the membership meeting
- The next piece is the organization map: starting with core team and going from there, not only articulated role and responsibilities, but communication lines. For example, an outlined process if we have someone who asks for financials. Would also like a project management tool for in-house stuff. Online tool or some dry erase board in our office. Want to be able to step away from something for a few days and then come back and know what's happened.