

Plainfield Co-op Meeting Minutes

November 11th, 2014

Present: Adrienne Allison, Bob Fancher, Scott Harris, Sue Chickering, Joseph Gainza, Mike Peabody

Minutes: October minutes approved unanimously

Communication charter: Gail wrote a draft and Joseph suggested that indicators might not actually reflect how effective communication is. Things such as attendance at functions, hits on the website, measurable indicators might be useful to take note of. Historically since we have not kept track of these things in the past, it would be hard to compare to past years. Is there overlap between the membership committee and the communication charter? Karen Starr suggested that the committee meet after the new year. We decided to table this discussion until the December meeting.

Building committee Report – Alan Banbury has been ill so this committee has not met. Great progress has been made on the ramp. She has ordered some metal railings for wheelchair accessibility. She has contracted for Snow arresters to be put up on the roof to stop the chunks of snow from falling on the loading dock. Next meeting is this coming Thursday, November 14th.

Treasurer report: Quarter three - 2.5% this last quarter on sales, gross profit up 5.8% from last year. Expenses have gone down 7.2% year to date from last year. Our overdue to suppliers was substantially lower and these bills were paid within 15 days, so excellent progress is being made all around. We are hiring a new tax accountant named Don Wegner, located in Madison, WI. We are saving over 40% using someone with this kind of expertise. Things are looking good. The MC and the bookkeeper are forging a new relationship and the financial review will be put on hold while this is being established. Equity cannot be predicted either at this point, probably not until February of next year.

Jennie Barlow is interested in helping with member unpack/repack (breakdown). Just an FYI.

Annual Meeting: We looked at the issue of someone wanting to add something to the agenda. It takes 1/3 of the assembled members to add an agenda item. Mike will make sure that Jamie is aware of this procedure.

Board Candidate updates: Karla Hassmoskowitz is the only person that we know who is running officially. Set up duties: Art Bob Joseph and Sue, Jamie Spector will facilitate with Lee Blackwell as back up. Quorum needs to be established before the voting occurs to elect our new member. Carl Etnier will be the speaker after all of the board, MC reports and voting are completed. Adrienne suggested we have a discussion about communication in general during the comments and questions period at the end of the meeting. She will bring this up and facilitate this process. Whole board will clean up.

B1 report: In compliance in all aspects except for B1.8 (which is supposed to be 10% current). We are down to 23% current which is great compared to where we have been in the past. The board is very encouraged by the direction that the MC is going and the priority of paying locals first. Keep up the good work! No further action plan required.

Link Report: A troubling trend with the B1 report is that when we look at the effect of inflation which is starting to rise, the scope of this inflation is daunting and concerning for the Co-op because it makes it really difficult to be compliant, quarter to quarter, depending on this trend. This past quarter has been one of the best quarters we have ever had. We have had another banner year and it would be even better had we not lost one important account that brought in a lot of revenue, due to unforeseen circumstances. Bob asked if there was a search underway to replace this vendor with comparable products. Mike doesn't think that it is feasible to find someone who can do similar products, but the MC is working on this. Karen and Mike took an 8 hour Serve Safe training (food handling procedures) put on by the Vermont Food Bank which was very valuable. The strategic plan may be a little late in coming as a result of a disciplinary procedure that is underway. The person in charge of the strategic plan is also the person facing disciplinary action which is why this timeframe is being affected.

The board went into executive session to discuss a personnel issue at 7:35 pm. The board came out of executive session at 8:06.

Board Management Relationship monitoring D2: 10/28/2012 version: Accountability of the MC's Link. Given the prior evaluation done of the link, we seem to be in compliance with this

Board Management Relationship monitoring D3: 1/5/2010 version: Delegation to the MC. It seems that for all intents and purposes we have "pretty much" been in compliance.

Link Evaluation: The board asked for input from Mike about his role. A while ago, it seemed that the board and the MC were on somewhat different pages about expectations of the link. As time has passed Mike feels like his role has become more clearly defined which has made his job easier. At times Mike feels that the MC and the board have different priorities. The board wants data and the MC wants something different. He experiences frustration at times because he is the messenger and sometimes he takes the brunt of the MC's frustrations personally. Mike believes that if both groups could better understand each other's process more thoroughly it would help. He is in a really tough position trying to explain each group's process to each other. Each entity has very different ways of operating and it is hard to be the interpreter of each group's actions. He often has to be the bearer of bad news from one entity to the other that is not welcomed by the other. This puts him in a very challenging position. In these cases, the MC sometimes hears only the negative reactions (regarding the Ends let's say) and this makes some of the tasks that come down from the board seem daunting to the MC. Mike doesn't usually get the feeling that the relationship between the MC and the board is adversarial for the most part. Bob wanted to reinforce that our meetings are open to the public and that we would welcome more participation. Scott will draft an evaluation and send it around for feedback and input from board members.

Next meeting is the annual meeting on Sunday, November 16th from 3-5 and the next board meeting is scheduled for December 9th at 6:30 pm

