



APPROVED MINUTES

Upper Valley Food Co-op | Board of Directors Minutes

June 25th, 2024, 6pm | Hybrid

193 North Main Street | White River Junction, VT 05001+

Directors present: Tina Barney, Kate Rohdenburg, Kerry Rosenthal, Pamela Perkins, Rio Pires, Chris Sneddon

Directors absent: Sam Sukumar, Max Wunderlich, Zea Luce

GM present: Darrion Whalen

Members present: Laura diPiazza

Others present: none

Facilitator: Tina Barney

Recorder: Larissa Sharff

PROCEEDINGS

Open meeting begins at 6:00pm. Called to order by Tina Barney.

1. Agenda & Announcements

- Check-ins, Introductions, and Reading of the Ends
- Board Emails: one application to join the board, from Laura
- Member Comments: none
- Agenda Amendment:
- Announcements: none

2. Meeting Minutes

- May Meeting Minutes
 - Change: None
 - **Approved by CONSENSUS**

3. New Business from the GM

- Produce
 - Lots of local produce!
- Deli
 - We got a new deli cooler because the last one was breaking down every few months and leaking coolant.
 - Deli sales are doing really well. Sandwiches are selling out most days, lots of cold soups. Still looking for another employee, but overall doing well.
- Upcoming Purchase
 - We will need to buy a new condenser for the 9-door freezers. It's not in a great location. We spent about \$1200 last year to get it repaired. The store has no back-up for frozen items, so if the condenser goes down, we would lose a considerable amount of product.
 - The new unit is pricey, but it will be a much smaller unit and wall-mounted. With parts and labor, it's \$10k.
 - The request to buy a new condenser was approved by consensus.
- Management Conference
 - Mike, Robert, and Georgeann, will all attend the Focus on Fresh conference in the midwest. It's focused on grocery, meats, produce, and deli departments.
- Financials
 - Small loss in April due to a snowday, but overall we're still doing well.
 - Monthly sales are better than budgeted. The sales are up, but the cost of sales are going up as well. Guest count is up, which is great.

- Kate asked for Darrion's thoughts about our basket sale average, which seems to hover at \$40. He said that it would of course be nice for that to go up. But the pro and con with the deli doing well is that people come in for a coffee and a sandwich, so that drops the basket average.
- Kate also asked about gaps on the shelves that Darrion is trying to fill. He said that having secondary options are important. For instance, we now have Maple Hill milk in cartons, to be available when Strafford or McNamara sell out. Grocery has just brought in fresh chicken, where previously we've only had frozen meat.

4. Policy Governance

- EL&EL1 Global & Customer Service

- Tina led the discussion of the policy.
- An edit from last year was not instated. Larissa will do that.
- Chris asked how we know that Darrion and the buying managers are following our guidelines and values. The board is relying on trust that the managers are meeting the standards the board would like. Suggestions included, having an example of the research of a particular new product; what sources management uses to research products; what products have been rejected because they don't meet our buying criteria. There is also the question of labels like "natural" or "clean", which don't have a set definition.
- Tina asked how often Darrion hears complaints or compliments regarding the store. He said he gets a handful of complaints a month. Most are actually product complaints or being incorrectly charged for a product.
- Chris asked about the aspects of "sustainability" beyond the ecological effects, such as fair labor.
- **Approved by CONSENSUS**

5. New Business for the Board

- Store Budget

- Darrion presented the store budget. We have a budgeted 4.7% increase, which might be ambitious, but we're hopeful.
- We carry a low margin on local products, which means we need to take advantage of deals from our larger purveyors to make up on that low margin for local vendors.
- Sales have increased to 6% this past year, and Darrion is hopeful that we can continue those numbers. He's considering extending our hours to increase sales.
- Kate asked about the percent for staff and if 30% is a good number. Darrion said that ideally it would be closer to 25%, but the co-op is now giving paid holidays to staff, which adds up. The board agreed that they've asked Darrion to prioritize a living wage and investing in staff.
- The board noted that the policy-required audit isn't in the store budget. The cost should be around \$10k.

- Board Budget

- Kerry presented the governance budget.
- NFCA Annual Meeting is budgeted at \$500 for two people, which seems high for a nearby, single-day event.
- Kate pointed out that the budget has gone from \$29k to \$19k in the past 5 years, and why is that? Should we be investing more in training? The board agreed to generally increase the budget for training; doubling the retreat number, and doubling the number for CCMA. She also proposed taking out the newsletter, which the board is no longer responsible for.

- Bylaw Edits

- Larissa submitted a mock board calendar, as part of the bylaw edit proposal to decrease the number of meetings from 12 to 11.
- Chris asked if there is a legal reason to include the list of discrimination. Kate doesn't believe so. The list is simply the protected categories.

- Board Retreat Reflections

- Kerry had not been looking forward to the board retreat, but she thought it was an interesting discussion. Especially the conversation about the board's role.
- Chris noted that the organization was great, with very focused questions, and he thinks that is why it was so successful.

- Check-ins

- Rio and Max are doing the Coffee Date on July 13th.
- Larissa asked Kate to write a quick review of Jon Steinman's book "Who Owns Your Grocery Store?"
- Nominating Committee: Pamela and Kate are planning to run for re-election.

6. Assignments

- G6: Sam, or Chris

7. General Session Adjourned 8:00pm