

Minutes: Yahara River Grocery Cooperative Board Meeting

**Stoughton EMS Building, Fourth Street, Stoughton, Wisconsin
7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 22, 2008**

Board Members and Committee Chairs Present:

Myra Hajny (President); Norma Sampson (Vice President); Warren Kmiec (Treasurer);
Deb Piper (Secretary); Marlene Widra (Member-at-Large); Laura Anderson (Membership);
Homer Howard (Senior Liaison); Jon Hajny (Research); Glen Timmcke (Product Buyers)

Other Committee Members Present:

Mary Condon (Research); Kristine Vaughn (Membership)

Also Present:

Mike Markin (YRGC General Manager)

This board meeting followed a 90-minute board training presentation by Anne Reynolds from the UW Center for Cooperatives. Myra Hajny called the meeting to order. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

Deb Piper reviewed the minutes from the April 8, 2008 board meeting. On **MOTION** (J. Hajny/Kmiec) and unanimous vote, the minutes were approved.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – MIKE MARKIN

Mike reported that Certco has finished its proposal for working with the YRGC on pricing, but Mike has not yet received it.

Mike reviewed a new budget proposal, suggesting that if YRGC lowered its margin by a certain percentage (1%), prices on specific items could be lowered by as much as 10%, but that creates a difference of \$15,000 in revenue. The difference would need to be made up by more sales, more memberships and/or fundraising.

A motion (Kmiec/Howard) was made to lower the margin on key items with the resulting \$15,000 difference to be made up through fundraising and memberships, through the calendar year of 2008. Discussion ensued with concerns raised that if the YRGC does drop its margin by 1% and the \$15,000 difference cannot be made up by fundraising/memberships, what is the consequence?

On Motion (Howard/J. Hajny) and majority vote, decision was made to table the discussion until the next meeting, with the Membership and Fundraising committees to explore the feasibility of making up the \$15,000 difference.

Mike Markin reported that UNFI has changed its pricing for smaller stores, lowering its weekly purchase amounts and creating incentives for higher discounts on higher sales volumes. One idea Mike suggested was a loyalty rebate for customers – a member would receive a higher discount based on the amount of their monthly purchases.

Mike also reported that some food will be purchased at cost for the Syttende Mai run/walk on May 17. For the MS Walk on May 4, YRGC is donating some fruit and will be allowed to place membership brochures in each participant's bag.

Mike reported that Journey of the Heart has made a request to be a recipient of the monthly SNAP funds from the store. Myra Hajny suggested that a list of organizations be created from which the board can select the SNAP recipients. Deb Piper offered to send an email to the board/committee members asking for suggestions, which will be reported at the next board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESEARCH – JON HAJNY

Jon reported that he is now the chair of the committee. There is a great amount of work to do with a small number of committee members. The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant was applied for, meeting the deadline.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE – MARLENE WIDRA

Marlene reported that the Courier Hub will have a front-page article on Stoughton's First Saturdays, which will be great PR for the YRGC.

CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Norma Sampson reported that it's been well over a year since the board has made a request for new members to join the various committees. Some committees are in need of new assistance, and it would be good to get some "new blood" in the groups. Jon Hajny also suggested that the board look at the current committee structure to determine if some new committees are needed (or a re-structure of some current committees). For instance, is there a need for a committee to coordinate volunteers (those who work in the store each week)? Mike Markin currently manages this. There is a need to continually refine the job duties for those volunteers.

PROPOSED STORE OPERATIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Myra Hajny returned to a proposal from several months ago regarding whether there is a need for a separate store operations committee. Both Laura Anderson and Jon Hajny stated that they think this is the responsibility of the board. The board agreed that no more discussion was needed on this proposal.

PROPOSAL FOR COMMITTEE BUDGETS

Discussion ensued regarding the need for line item entries in the budget for committee activities (Marketing, Fundraising and Membership). It was decided that tracking the money is needed. For instance, if Membership needs to purchase stamps, it should go into that committee's budget. Warren Kmiec suggested that the Finance committee look at the committee budgets and manage the board's budget – to keep it separate from the Operations budget. The Finance committee will devise a plan.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deb Piper reported that a group (Laura Anderson, Kristine Vaughan, Philana Friede and Deb) has been working on cleaning up the members' email database. Deb is working with Fred Leonard to do a major clean-up on the member database and create a better way for Laura and Kristine to enter new members' email addresses directly into Fred's email database. There will be a new "no-reply" mailbox created for rejected emails; those emails will not clutter the "info" email box after it's created.

Norma reported that there is a "rumor" starting to go around town that the YRGC is closing already! Does the board/store simply ignore it at this point and continue doing business as we are now – in a positive manner? Jon stated that this should be thought over and determined if a response is needed. Myra inquired whether there is money available to finish the exterior painting, as a way to show the community that the YRGC is here to stay.

Homer Howard distributed information relating to parliamentary procedures and asked the board to read them through. On Motion (J. Hajny/Condon), it was suggested that the YRGC board conducts itself according to Robert's Rules of Order, with Homer Howard appointed as the parliamentarian. Homer will appoint someone as the parliamentarian if he is unable to attend a board meeting.

Discussion ensued about the possibility of following a modified version of the rules because following the complex rules completely is hard to do. Mary Condon pointed out that the by-laws already state that the YRGC board is to follow Robert's Rules of Order. Norma Sampson offered a Friendly Amendment that the YRGC board should follow a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order. Jon Hajny and Mary Condon accepted the friendly amendment. Motion passed on unanimous vote.

Myra Hajny suggested that the board hold a membership picnic in the summer of 2008. The goal would be to review the by-laws, hold a membership meeting and have a social event for the members. Myra and the Research committee will look into the by-laws.

More discussion was held about the proposed board training this summer. Several more suggestions were made, such as having just a one-day session in order to stay within the \$1700 budget, or to hold a two-day session and invite other local coop boards to share in the costs.

On Motion (Anderson/J. Hajny) and unanimous vote, the YRGC board meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 13 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Location: Stoughton EMS training room.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Piper

Secretary

Yahara River Grocery Cooperative