

## **Minutes: Yahara River Grocery Cooperative Board Meeting**

**Stoughton EMS Building, Fourth Street, Stoughton, Wisconsin  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 27, 2008**

### **Board Members and Committee Chairs Present:**

Warren Kmiec (Treasurer and Acting President); Norma Sampson (Vice President and Acting Secretary); Marlene Widra (Member-at-Large); Laura Anderson (Membership); Homer Howard (Senior Liaison); Mary Condon (Research); and Philana Friede (Fundraising)

### **Other Committee Members Present**

Stephen Lawrence (Finance)  
Kristine Vaughn (Membership)

### **Also Present:**

Mike Markin (YRGC General Manager)

Acting President Warren Kmiec called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. To expedite the meeting process, parliamentarian Homer Howard reviewed Robert's Rules of Orders. Acting Secretary Norma Sampson noted that she had made a change in the May 13, 2008, minutes relating to the Research Committee's report. On **MOTION** (Widra/Anderson) and unanimous vote the minutes were approved.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT – WARREN KMIEC**

Warren announced that before the meeting he had completed a QuickBooks report and that the loss for May is \$10,000 greater than April, however, there are some discrepancies in the report. The Finance Committee will meet at 6 p.m. June 2 at the co-op, and Warren has asked Peg Sheldon to attend to help analyze the reports. Stephen Lawrence reported that he will look at the QuickBooks report and the data generated by the Catapult system. He is concerned that the QuickBooks information is incorrect and pointed to a cost of goods sold issue.

Warren reported that he had drawn \$5,000 from the bank line of credit to pay startup costs for the electrical and security system and another \$5,000 to meet payroll which leaves \$20,000 as the reserve balance.

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – MIKE MARKIN**

Mike announced that he would meet with the "New Business" and Marketing committee to discuss how to get customers in the door.

He reported that Holiday Wholesale has dropped 10% off its pricing and the YRGC has also dropped 10% off its pricing leaving a 7% margin. He noted that health and beauty aids will see a price drop of 15% to customers beginning in June.

Mike asked the Board to hire a consultant, Mel Braverman of Cooperative Development Services, to go through the store and brainstorm ideas. The initial cost would be \$550 and then no charge thereafter for email and telephone consultations. Mike explained that Mel had been involved in the turnaround of the Durango co-op. On **MOTION** (Anderson/Widra) and unanimous vote the co-op will hire Mel as a consultant to look at marketing goals and develop a list of task items or a marketing plan that the store can implement with the help of other resources.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance – Warren Kmiec**

Warren reminded everyone about the Finance Committee meeting set for 6 p.m. June 2 at the co-op.

### **Marketing – Norma Sampson**

Norma reported that she had received favorable comments about the e-blasts and the weekly updates of the web site.

She announced that the co-op had been asked to organize a walk/run for the Victorian Holiday. She pointed out that it would require several volunteers and the proceeds could go to the co-op. On **MOTION** (Howard/Anderson) and unanimous vote the Board will establish an ad hoc committee to investigate a walk/run for the Victorian Holiday and report back to the Board. Marlene Widra, Philana Friede and Norma agreed to serve on the committee.

### **Membership – Laura Anderson**

Laura reported that the co-op now has more than 900 members. She thanked Kristine Vaughn for all the work that she has done on membership in the last couple of months.

On **MOTION** (Anderson/Widra) and unanimous vote the Board will allow courtesy members to have voting privileges at membership meetings.

### **Senior Liaison – Homer Howard**

Homer announced that he would like to hold a focus group for senior citizens with Mike as the spokesperson. Homer has a list of ideas to promote the store to the seniors including buying bulk, sale fliers at the door, and getting their input about grocery items.

### **Fundraising – Philana Friede**

Philana reported that plans are being finalized for the Uff-Da 500 August 17 at Mandt Park. A Cajun band will play and Pat Collins of Vincenzo's will oversee the food. The committee is formulating a race and considering selling beer.

She announced that there had been \$1,200 in sales – veggie burgers, soda, shish kabobs, water, smoothies and bubble tea – at Syttende Mai. After costs, the co-op cleared about \$600.

Philana briefly discussed other fundraising events including the radio program that Light Up Stoughton is doing, the furniture sale auction, and the chili feed in October.

### **Research – Mary Condon**

Mary noted that the Research Committee had not met and did not have anything to report.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Focus groups – Warren Kmiec**

Warren announced that he had developed a set of six questions to use during a focus group that would last for about 1 ½ hours. He plans to hold 3 to 4 gatherings of about 6 to 10 people who shop at the co-op. His budget for the focus groups would be about \$150 for food and \$300 for shopping gift cards at the co-op. The Board agreed that the focus groups should be part of the marketing plan that it presents to the consultant, Mel Braverman.

### **Call for committee members – Norma Sampson**

Norma stressed the need to get more members for the various committees. She pointed out that the committee structure could be part of a bigger discussion and a possible change in the bylaws and that the Board should continue to have future discussions. She said that a call for committee members would be included in a June e-blast.

### **‘New business’ committee – Stephen Lawrence**

Stephen volunteered to serve as project manager of an ad hoc Business Development Committee that would work closely with the Marketing Committee and other committees.

### **Update on SNAP (Stoughton Nonprofit Assistance Program) Funds – Warren Kmiec**

Warren announced that Terri Wolf, co-op staff member, and Allison Sorg, a co-op member, have agreed to serve on the SNAP Funds Committee. He plans to invite Carl Povlick, owner of Naeset-Roe Bed and Breakfast, to serve on the committee. The committee will meet later in June. Warren read the committee’s mission statement:

#### Stoughton Nonprofit Assistance Program = SNAP

A way for co-op members to share in the betterment of community life.

Each month a specific program, group, or cause that helps improve the quality of life in Stoughton will be chosen for the SNAP contributions of members.

These contributions will help local concerns that address areas of art, education, cultural development and quality of life issues especially those effecting health, housing, or nutrition for Stoughton residents.

Members contribute as they check out and round up their purchase amount to the next whole dollar by saying “please SNAP up my purchase today.”

A SNAP committee will receive suggestions for donations and choose the group to be assisted. The Board will name the chair of the committee. The name of the group will be communicated to shoppers with a sign at the check out lane. The committee will make a monthly report to the Board as to the groups receiving donations and what amounts given.

### **Update on Board/staff training options – Marlene Widra**

Marlene announced that the ad hoc committee would meet to discuss the options and report back to the Board.

### **Update on product standards policy – Laura Anderson**

Laura reported that the ad hoc committee had developed a policy and would be discussing it further at a future meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**In other business the Board discussed the summer membership picnic and meeting. The Board decided to hold the picnic at a Stoughton park from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, July 13. Philana volunteered to chair an ad hoc committee to work on the details of the picnic.

On **MOTION** (Anderson/Widra) and unanimous vote, the YRGC board meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 10 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Location: Stoughton EMS Training Room

Respectfully submitted,  
Norma Sampson  
Vice President  
Yahara River Grocery Cooperative