

Minutes: Yahara River Grocery Cooperative Board Meeting

**Giles Dow Room in City Hall, 381 E. Main St., Stoughton, Wisconsin
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 12, 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); Stephen Lawrence (Business Development)

Also Present:

Mike Markin (YRGC General Manager), Phil Caravello

Myra Hajny called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT – WARREN KMIEC

Warren reviewed the treasurer's report for July 2008, which listed the month-to-month sales and expenses since the store opened. There was discussion regarding the inventory figures and it was decided that Peg Sheldon needed to be consulted again to determine if she has the correct figures in her books. On **MOTION** and unanimous vote, the remaining \$5,000 on the line of credit will be withdrawn in order to pay down some expenses.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – MIKE MARKIN

Mike reported that more conventional items are coming in. The new store hours just went into effect and the resulting reduction in labor hours will appear on the next Infotracker report. Cash flow needs are very important right now. Mike projects that the store needs \$75,000 to operate through the year's end, up to \$100,000 in order to pay vendors and get new products on the shelves. He will discuss possibilities of a capital campaign with the finance and marketing committees. Mike also reported that the purchasing discounts with UNFI resulted in a \$730 savings last month. Finally, Mike stated that as a cost-saving measure, he will no longer be reimbursed for his insurance and phone expenses.

STATUS OF 5% MEMBER DISCOUNT – MYRA HAJNY

Myra reported that a special board meeting was held on July 29th to discuss potential changes to the member discount (moving to a member dividend, to be paid in the store's profitable years). The board decided that though other cooperatives have moved in this direction, it is not the time to make the change at the YRGC. The Research committee was assigned the task of researching the possibility of doing this in the future.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING MEETING – STEPHEN LAWRENCE

Stephen reported that the Business Development committee met to brainstorm methods of improving business and raising cash. Among the ideas: create a corporate membership program for companies to purchase memberships for their employees, targeted sampling to specific businesses/service groups, adopt a customer service policy, hold a Harvest/Local dinner, Eat Local Challenge, target select members for marketing, etc. The committee will meet again soon to prioritize the projects and start working on them.

Laura Anderson suggested the idea of a "Cap Off" campaign, similar to the SNAP program. This would be an in-store campaign, asking members at the register if they'd like to donate an additional amount of money to the store. This will be discussed further.

MEMBER INTEREST PAYMENTS

In a follow-up to a suggestion made by Mike Markin, the board discussed the possibility of asking those who have purchased certificates of investment to forego their interest payments for this year. Warren pointed out that the bulk of the payments have already been paid and that the upcoming payments do not amount to a high expense. Marlene Widra suggested that we could ask those investors if they would volunteer to forego their payments. On **MOTION** and unanimous vote, it was approved to give investors three options: to defer, gift or receive their next investment interest payment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE – WARREN KMIEC

Warren reported that the committee will meet the first Tuesday of each month.

MARKETING – NORMA SAMPSON

Norma reported that the on-line survey was sent out that day and in just six hours there were already 19 on-line responses in addition to 10-12 paper responses. She provided a quick overview of member responses gathered so far, with full results to be analyzed and shared when the survey ends on August 18. Norma also reported that the committee continues its ongoing weekly email updates and advertising.

MEMBERSHIP – LAURA ANDERSON

Laura reported that there are now 932 members, which includes two courtesy memberships.

PRODUCT BUYERS – GLEN TIMMCKE and SENIOR LIAISON – HOMER HOWARD

Glen and Homer both stated they had no new developments in their respective areas.

FUNDRAISING – MARLENE WIDRA AND NORMA SAMPSON

Marlene and Norma reported that planning continues for the Chili Cook-off and the Dickens of a Run/Walk events. Volunteers are needed to assist in the planning and to work the events. Marlene reported that Sid Boersma is interested in holding another Yahara Radio show as a fundraiser for the Co-op. It would be held November 22.

PERSONNEL – MYRA HAJNY

Myra reported that the general manager evaluation forms have been distributed to the board members and to the employees. The personnel committee will meet soon to assess the evaluations and meet with Mike.

RESEARCH – JON HAJNY

Jon reported that the committee is in the process of researching potential grant opportunities and has been charged with researching the possibility of changing the member discount to a dividend payment.

BOARD/STAFF TRAINING – JON HAJNY

Ann Hoyt from the UW Center for Cooperatives met with members of the board on July 30. A variety of issues were discussed and Ann is working on a training plan. She will consult with Mel Braverman and work on some suggestions for financing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deb Piper reviewed the minutes from the July 22nd and July 29th board meetings. On **MOTION** and unanimous vote, the minutes were approved.

On **MOTION** and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 26 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Location: Training Room, Stoughton EMS Building, Fourth Street, Stoughton.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Piper

Secretary

Yahara River Grocery Cooperative