

Minutes: Yahara River Grocery Cooperative Special Board Meeting

**Ed Overland Room, Stoughton City Hall, 381 East Main St., Stoughton, Wisconsin
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Thursday, February 12, 2009**

Board Officers Present: Norma Sampson (President); Deb Piper (Vice President); Warren Kmiec (Treasurer);

Board Directors Present: Jonathan Lewis, Regina Hirsch, Laura Anderson, Kristine Vaughn, Spencer Warren

Also Present: Wynston Estis (Interim General Manager), Valli Warren

Norma Sampson called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Deb Piper reported that due to recent traveling the minutes for recent meetings have not yet been completed.

TREASURER'S REPORT – WARREN KMIEC

Warren reviewed the Profit and Loss report comparing December, 2008 to January, 2009. He noted that sales are down a little, and that discounts are also down due to the cessation of the member discount. Labor costs are up due to three pay periods in January. The total loss for the month of January equal \$10,395.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT – REGINA HIRSCH

Regina and the committee reviewed the applications and resumes received for the general manager's position. There are two viable candidates of the 24 applications (most had no grocery experience). Jennifer Bormett, a volunteer with human resources is working with the committee. She conducted phone interviews with the top two candidates and reviewed those results with the board. She and the committee recommend bringing in the top candidates for in-person interviews. The committee stated that the benefits for this position might be an issue in drawing qualified applicants. They will research the possibilities of acquiring health insurance through the Chamber of Commerce. The board thanked Jennifer for assisting the committee with this portion of the search process. The board recommended continuing advertising for the position if these candidates are not hired, possibly in the Minneapolis/Chicago areas.

INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – WYNSTON ESTIS

Wynston presented her report to the board (see Attachment 1). She announced that Willy Street Co-op is open to Wynston taking a 6-week personal leave in order for Wynston to lead the transition and implement the action plan. She will be full time for the next six weeks, pending the RLF loan decision. YRGC will begin to pay part of her salary.

Wynston reported that the projections are for sales increases each month in the near future. That bucks the trend for the grocery business (tends to be slower June – August), but the warmer weather tends to bode well for YRGC's business.

Marlene Widra approached Wynston with a suggestion to turn the silent auction (recently held at the co-op) into a mercantile section on consignment. The board determined that the immediate focus should be on groceries, improving the store and the relaunch process, so it directed Wynston to focus on that aspect.

Wynston has recruited a nutritionist to work with the store and customer's food concerns for low-sodium diets, wheat-free concerns, heart-healthy, etc. The store has purchased software to help create recipes and nutritional information.

Wynston reviewed the estimates for new equipment for the relaunch, including a salad bar, a deli scale and ice machine. Please see Attachment 1 for the remainder of Wynston's report.

PREPARATION FOR DANE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMNT RLF COMMITTEE MEETING – NORMA SAMPSON

Norma reported that five board members and Wynston will be attending the RLF committee’s meeting on February 13 (Norma, Laura, Deb, Jonathan, Spencer and Wynston). Assignments were made to various board members for answering any questions that the committee may have. The pledge sheets and a summary document are needed to present to the committee, along with current financials.

NEXT STEPS – NORMA SAMPSON

If the RLF Committee approves the loan application, Norma will write a press release for immediate distribution. Deb reported on the process for collecting the pledge monies, which need to be turned in and reported to the RLF committee by Monday, February 16. An eblast and phone calls will be made in order to collect the pledged money.

On **MOTION** (Anderson/Lewis), the board meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held February 26, 2009 at 6 p.m., in the Giles Dow Room at City Hall, 381 E. Main Street.

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Piper
Vice President
Yahara River Grocery Cooperative

**Interim General Manager’s Report
February 12, 2009**

Attachment 1

Operations

CDBG Meeting

Projections for sales, budgeting pro forma, Re-launch action plan, and supporting detail information on the spreadsheets submitted to Norma in time for YRGC to get all materials to CDBG for RLF committee review.

Nutritionist

I have recruited a Nutritionist to work with Yahara to produce materials to support customer education on how our products provide valuable options for people on restricted diets. Brittany Bethel will be contacted once we know the status of the loan to go ahead with this work. She may at some point work with YRGC staff to help them get training on guiding in store tours that focus on these diets, low sodium, gluten free, natural sweeteners and so forth.

Equipment

I met with Martee Mikalson at Kessenich’s Restaurant Supply a week ago. She was able to give me several great equipment quotes on second hand options for an Ice Machine (\$715), Salad/ Olive Bar (\$350) and a scale (\$100) to replace the deli scale that is broken. All told the prices she gave me will provide YRGC with approximately \$6,000.00 of equipment for \$1165.00. We will be able to use this equipment to support the re-launch.

Mercantile: Marlene Widra’s suggestion

Due to the success of the silent auction Marlene feels there is a market and demand for a mercantile department within YRGC’s product offerings. She also suggests that such a department could be run on consignment thereby reducing the financial risk to YRGC for buying and selling product. Marlene feels such a department could highlight local artist and craftsman.

Personnel

Wynston has received a verbal agreement with WSGC to take a leave of 6 weeks to continue her work with YRGC.

Team meetings

Wynston continues to meet with the full time staff every Tuesday at 12: She is using this time to keep the staff informed of the latest updates with the CDBG effort. These meetings are well attended and provide staff with an opportunity for input to operations as well as fund raising and business planning.

Marketing

Outreach in the Stoughton Community

Kratz chiropractic has approached YRGC about their interest in partnering with us to provide healthy snacks for their customers. They see an opportunity for YRGC to get exposure to new customers and support their businesses goals of helping their clients feel good and healthy. We will pursue this opportunity in the near future. YRGC will put together a menu of items and signage for people to know the samples come from YRGC. The items will vary from week to week, a payment or discount agreement is not yet in place.

Financials

Year End 2008

We have not completely closed the Financials for 2008

Budget for 2009

Is forthcoming from the work we have done in preparation for the CDBG.