



Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Monday, August 24, 2015; 5:30 pm - 8:34 pm

232 South Main Street, Goshen

Goshen, IN 46526

In attendance: Eric Amt, Robin Ebright-Zehr, Tim Martin, Vicki Mast, Phyllis Miller, Amanda Qualls, Brian Wiebe

Absent: Ava Breniser and David Gerber

Others Attending: Brad Weirich (General Manager), David Shenk (Manager), David Gleysteen, Greg Imber

5:00 pm: Board shared dinner and team building. Many thanks to the Maple City Market deli staff for providing the meal.

5:33 pm: Declaration of quorum

- Preliminaries:
 - Check-In: “Are we prepared to act on everything before us?”
 - Commitment to stay on task
 - Ends reflection: Because of MCM: Owner-members and customers in the Michiana region will be healthier; there will be a local, sustainable food system in Michiana; the local environment & resources will be responsibly shared, protected and restored; there will be a locally-owned cooperative business; there will be a thriving model that inspires other businesses in the Great Lakes region.

5:36 pm: Approve or amend agenda and Consent agenda

- **Motion:** To accept agenda as it stands and accept the July meeting minutes
Brian Wiebe moves and Robin Ebright-Zehr seconds
The board at large wants it noted that they are happy with the minutes and the detail therein.
Motion passes: 7 in favor; 0 oppose; 0 abstain

5:40 pm: Board decisions

- Finance and Fundraising committee
 - Brad and Eric met to discuss both of these things a couple weeks ago. They feel they want to meet once or twice more and perhaps meet with some outside individuals before reporting to the board.

- Correction: it is a fundraising committee, and not a finance committee (*Phyllis to correct the agenda*).

5:42 pm: Discussion

- Owner Feedback
 - Tim Martin:
 - What people like: clean foods; clean products. Everyone likes that everything in the store is non-GMO and clean and well-organized. Ethical production. Supporting local producers.
 - What could be changed: They would like to see staffing changes and pricing changes. Concern over non-organic foods appearing on the shelf. Cleaning and personal care products (some dislike for fragranced products). Comments about MSG and derivatives. People want more parking and a cafe area.
 - If the market had to concentrate on one thing and one thing only, what would it be; what do you want from the market: Quality, non-GMO and organic products. Local produce and local products.
 - Robin Ebright-Zehr:
 - Talked to five people (both members and non-members).
 - In the cases of the non-members, misinformation (working requirement and cost) was the reason that people had not joined.
 - People want more fresh produce.
 - Perimeter shopping (one member family never shops in the middle of the store).
 - Several comments about the deli: more vegetarian options, more options in general, a place to sit down and eat, etc.
 - More fresh produce and parking were the primary wants of customers.
 - Phyllis Miller:
 - Spoke with a member that prompted her about expansion, and what was happening with our investigation of it. They were OK with us slowing down and taking a hard look at expansion. They were concerned that if we didn't expand at all, then conventional stores would overtake us.
 - Spoke with a non-member who is a frequent shopper. They want more meat at the store.
 - Spoke with an owner who was adamant about local food; supporting local producers. They want us to expand into Elkhart.
 - Vicki Mast:
 - Spoke with several members. None of them mentioned expansion. Someone mentioned that there wasn't as much 'energy' in the building as before. Everyone wants more parking and more deli options.
 - Takeaways:
 - People are owners for many different reasons.

- It would be helpful to know more about shoppers that shop the market regularly but who are not members.
- In the past, we've sent out surveys via surveymonkey to poll owners.
 - Should we be doing more, varied communications, or one channel of communication (like in-store surveys)? One channel of communication may privilege one group over another.
 - If we want more response, we could incentivize survey responses (offer coupons; offer staff money for completed surveys).
 - The CAFE committee will be investigating this.
- GM Reports
 - State of the Market Report:
 - There were some continued freezer and cooler issues, including issues with the back-up meat freezer. Every time these go down, there seems to be a different issue; it's not the same part breaking over and over. We are investigating what we need in the near future, what we need a couple years down the road and further out. Looking at options for new freezers and coolers. Trying to make it to next Spring before we do any replacements.
 - There are no records on our cooling systems. We don't know when things were installed. The systems are not standard; they have been highly customized.
 - Board requests that Brad and David run a report on cooling systems and deliver it to the board in September 2015. Board wants to know to know how much money we have spent on repairs over the past 36 months, the current age of the coolers, and any other information. Another question to consider: is capital fundraising for this type of improvement the norm?
 - Sales are slightly down month-over-month; also down year-over-year. It is believed that the most recent decline can be attributed to the Martin's on College Avenue. It is possible that Value 101 is also contributing to the drop in sales.
 - We are building out a management team. We need to develop our staff and move them into new or existing roles.
 - Market Study:
 - It has been initiated and we will have information on that in the next one to two months.
- Moving to the community portion of the agenda; will come back to the Updates and Upcoming Events sections.

6:32 pm: New business or comments from the community

- David Gleysteen (owner) discussing the clean, organic offerings in the store. Wants variety and cleaner food at the market. Look inside your current demographic (organic shoppers), and think about how you can get more money out of them. Don't water the

place down. Whole foods has a list of ingredients that don't make it through the door. This is a reasonable assurance that their food isn't going to give you cancer or make you ill in other ways. Something similar for Maple City Market would be great. Food is only as clean as its dirtiest ingredient, and right now, many of the options in the deli aren't clean (for example, the soups).

- Questions or comments from the board
 - Come back in several months and share more insight; let us know if there has or has not been improvement.
 - Sometimes local is not organic; there are many competing interests, and we have to learn how to balance those.
 - Thank you so much for your deep insights and your contribution to the meeting.

6:44 pm: Break

6:51 pm: Discussion (continued)

- Updates:
 - Update on non-profit status: We need to investigate whether we have 'owners' or 'members.' If we can still be a co-op with just members, then we could make the entire organization a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (assuming there are no conflicts with co-op status). Then we would have annual memberships, rather than lifetime memberships. We could have different levels of membership. Brad will investigate this with the other co-op managers at his meeting next week. We will submit a letter of intent to the Elkhart County Community Foundation by October.
 - Expenses finalized for annual meeting: Brad to send to Amanda.
 - GM Evaluation and Compensation Committee: Phyllis has asked Amanda to join the committee, and Amanda has accepted. Amanda and Phyllis will investigate professional development opportunities for Brad, including the possibility of an MBA.
 - CAFE committee update: Wednesday at 10 am with Vicki, David and Robin
 - No calendar changes
 - The Board Orientation is complete
 - Dates for Board retreat: October 2 and 3 look the best. Phyllis will check with Thane to see if those dates will work.
 - Website bios and photos: Phyllis has gotten these from many of us. She may put up bios and then just look for feedback.
- Upcoming Events:
 - First Friday is September 4
 - Phyllis has been working with purple porch and food for change. Nothing new to report.
 - Cooperative Cafe (CDS Consulting Event) in Ann Arbor on October 24.

7:10 pm: Assessing MCM's Capacity for Change, Growth & Expansion: Self-Diagnostic Exercise. Averages of board answers to questions are found below:

1. 2.25	5. 7.75	9. 6.2	13. 4.25
2. 5.25	6. 6.8	10. 7.25	14. 10
3. 2.5	7. 8.25	11. 8.9	15. n/a ('o')
4. 7.8	8. ~7	12. 4.5	16. ~1

Total: 89.7; Average: 5.61

- Thoughts of the board on these numbers
 - The board is confident with these numbers; overall, this is where most thought we would fall.
 - Management feels we need to improve; there is clearly a 'voice of the customer' aspect of customer service that we're missing. For the long-term good of the market and the good of the community, expansion must be in our long-term plans.
 - Maybe our ends need to be refined, or we need to think about our ends in different ways.
 - Think about the disruptive business model.
 - It may not be the best to try to rebrand right now; we may want to strengthen our core before stretching to new areas. If we strengthen our business core, it will enable us to serve new members.

7:54 pm: Break

7:58 pm: Executive Session is Opened

8:33 pm: Executive Session is Closed

8:34 pm: Movement to adjourn