

Yelm Cooperative
Annual General Membership Meeting
September 8, 2012
Yelm Adult Community Center
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Number in attendance: 40

GM food educational event

Marilyn Reardon, Board secretary, encouraged members to attend the September 15 educational event co-sponsored by YC and the South Sound Seed Stewards. Sandra Lee, presenter, was trained at the Institute for Responsible Technology. Complimentary tickets can be picked up at the store prior to the event. This is the first community educational event since the adoption last January of the YC's new mission.

Voting on new Directors

Bill Wyman, Board president, explained the process by which Board members are nominated for the ballot. This includes an application, a resume and a skills matrix which are reviewed by the Board. This is followed by an interview with two Board members. There are 3 names on the ballot this year.

Members vote on each of the 3 names. Ballots are only given to those members whose names are recorded on the membership list. The ballots must not leave the room; they need to be placed in the ballot box before leaving. A quorum number of 10% of membership must be reached. As of today, this number is 115 ballots. The voting will continue at the store until the quota is reached.

What has the Yelm Cooperative accomplished this past year and where is it going? (PowerPoint presentation by Bill Wyman)

- In January, membership voted to restructure the organization into an educationally mandated, community service non profit organization with 3 separate businesses under its umbrella – the store, the Farmers Market and the educational garden (still In process).
- The store was moved from its former 970 sq.ft space to Gordon's Garden Center with 3630 sq ft.
- In the 5 week process of renovation and moving, 104 members stepped forward to help. The move occurred on April 27, the 5th anniversary of the Yelm Food Co-op. Bill showed many photos of the people who helped. It was inspiring to see the great outpouring of support for the store!
- Bill acknowledged Kellie Peterson and her staff at Gordon's for their tremendous support during and after the relocation.
- Media recognition has increased. There were 4 articles in the Nisqually Valley News and 1 on Thurstontalk.com.
- Financials for the store have been holding steady, a remarkable achievement. Typically, after a store moves, sales drop significantly for up to 6 months. The only drop in sales for the store were in January during the ice storm and during the 5 days the store was closed due to the relocation. Virtually all costs for the remodel were paid out of cash flow without incurring debt. This is also exceptional.
- The Co-op's annual Gift of Gobble charity provided 38 local families with food baskets of complete Thanksgiving dinners.
- The store is currently purchasing from 16 Western Washington farms and processors – 9 from the Yelm area.
- An October wine and cheese fundraiser raised \$4000 and was a rousing success.
- A Military Health Day was held at the store and Farmers Market in August with prizes, discount coupons and tastings to bring military families in touch with the Co-op store and Farmers Market. It was organized by Geana Henkes, Farmers Market program manager and Florence Vincent from the store.
- The Board is currently advertising for a general manager for the store to take it to the next level. It's hoped the person can be in place by January 2013 or before.
- We are committed to moving to more locally/regionally sourced foods, depending less on corporate distribution systems for increased food security for our area.

Farmers Market

- Geana Henkes, program manager for the market, was acknowledged for her outstanding professionalism and efforts in bringing the market into being. In addition, the city of Yelm sent a letter of recognition to Geana in praise of her professionalism and achievement.
- Photos were shown of the market and its vendors and customers on opening day in May.

- Vendors so far are pleased with the market. Next year even more vendors will be contacted, and this will be done earlier in the year.

Financials

- There has been steady membership growth. As of 8/30/12 there were 1140 members.
- 2012 projected annualized sales is \$762,000.

Member question and answers

- An idea was put forward to create a collective of local meat producers to provide the store and Farmers Market with healthy, local meats.
- Senior discounts would be nice for those 65 and over.
- Much more produce is needed at the store.
- Could we make a presentation to the city of Yelm regarding how they can be more supportive of local small business growth?
- A cooperative distribution system could be created for local people with gardens to share produce.
- Meat and seafood display needs proper chillers to make them look inviting and to increase sales. There needs to be a fundraiser to raise the money for this chiller.
- The variety of items at the store has dropped – for example, cheeses and vitamins. Suggestions from members for what to carry at the store can be placed in the suggestion box. Or store staff could put out a questionnaire inviting feedback re: items to carry.
- Winter season is coming. There should be a good supply of immune support items on the supplement shelves.

Time to eat!

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm and members enjoyed socializing and a variety of tasty treats in the activity room.

Submitted by Marilyn Reardon, secretary

Bill Wyman, president

Aaron Rodriguez, VP/treasurer