

**YELM COOPERATIVE**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
 Phoenix Rising School  
 January 16, 2013

**Next meeting is Thursday, February 14 at 6:00 pm at Rosemont Retirement Center**

**Members present:** Bill Wyman, president; Beverly Wright, vice president; Marilyn Reardon, secretary; Tom Dewell, treasurer; Terry Kaminski, director; Aaron Rodriguez, director

**Staff present:** Barnaby Rintz, general manager; Geana Henkes, former Farmers Market program manager

**Guests:** Lisa Geier, member; Valerie Rogers, member

Meeting was called to order at 4:41 pm by Bill Wyman.

**Open session**

Lisa expressed her dissatisfaction with working members paying a \$20 annual fee. She felt retention would be greater and working members would feel more valued if there is no charge. She proposed that it be eliminated. She also felt that incentives are important to “vested” working members – those who had served the Co-op for over 3 months. She also felt that not enough appreciation was shown to working members. Lisa gave the Board a written letter explaining more in detail.

**Meeting minutes**

December 13, 2012 Board minutes were approved.

**Store manager report** - Barnaby

Barnaby was welcomed as the new General Manager. He noted that he had prepared and sent to the Board ahead of the meeting a comprehensive 30-60-90 day plan, but reiterated the key items he would focus on in the near term.

- 1) Improve customer service – build on current strengths; 10 % surcharge has been removed for non members; develop promotions to bring new customers in
- 2) Improve margins – the industry standard for co-ops is 35-36%. The YFC's is 31%. He gave a brief explanation of how margins are calculated.
- 3) Improve the product line; identify best sellers; introduce new products through UNFI and other vendors; keep products coming in until customers can count on the store having it available; increase produce deliveries to 3 times per week
- 4) Create standardized training manuals

The Board reviewed the 2013 budget developed by Barnaby. The assumptions for building this budget were: 11% growth in sales by year end; 25-50% growth in wine sales; expense costs increase of 5%-11%.

**Wine Shop**

Anne is picking the most popular grape varieties and wine regions to stock the shop; is updating prices; is working with distributors; is planning for the outfitting of the Shop once funding is available; wants to pursue more advertising. A \$3000 personal loan has been made available for the outfitting of the shop.

Valerie is the marketing person for Wilcox Farms and at our request, offered her comments: Who are you serving at the Wine Shop? Who are your customers? Make available a wide range of price points. Promote both wine by the case and individual bottle sales. Re: the fundraiser, the cost of the event is extremely important. If high cost, people will want to know “What am I getting in return?” Typically, high cost events provide cocktails, fine foods and entertainment as well as wine.

A motion was made to create a wine fundraiser committee to formulate a proposal for the event for Barnaby with tickets within the \$50-\$55 range. Motion was seconded. Passed. The wine fundraiser committee is Bill, Terry, Valerie, Marilyn, Anne and perhaps 2 other volunteers. Valerie will share her more comprehensive comments at the first meeting.

**GM assessment**

There will be performance assessments at the 90 day point and annually thereafter on the hire date anniversary. The assessment will have 3 parts: 1) performance on key store success metrics; 2) staff feedback on GM performance; 3) customer feedback on customer service.

- Tom and Barnaby will design the draft of the key store success metrics.
- Marilyn has designed the staff feedback form and will send to Barnaby and re-send to the Board.

- Barnaby will develop a draft of the customer service survey.

The document needs final approval before March 18 when Barnaby's 90 day assessment period ends.

#### **Farmers Market – Geana**

- The 2012 venue for the market was a good one but the city is doing extensive renovation to the streets and park. Consequently, the site will no longer be available. At this time, the city has not offered alternatives.
- Glen Schorno has been in conversation with Tom re: the use of his large farm property to hold both the Farmers Market and the Educational Garden. It is an ideal place for the Educational Garden. It will be important for the YC to ensure it is clearly understood it is our market. The best scenario is that the YC rents the land.
- Geana has many people interested in becoming members of the steering committee.
- The program manager can be paid via sponsorships. The steering committee would be available to expand the reach of the program manager. Careful negotiations would need to be made and legal review of any agreement would be required to ensure clarity and fairness for both parties.
- Most Farmers Markets are organized under a 501c4 or 501c6 designation which does not allow for tax deductible donations.
- Motion was made to set a goal to hire a FM manager in 2013 to develop a budget and sponsorship package that supports program operations. Motion was seconded. Discussion ensued. Passed.

#### **Logos – Valerie**

- Logos are extremely important. Hire a professional to design. Once they are done, they never change.
- Don't get involved in trends. Be certain you differentiate yourself from other brands.
- Clearly know who your audience is for your products and services.
- Research other local logos to ensure differentiation.
- Using vector graphics is best. It allows for the picture and words to be two separate files. Ensure the words and picture can both be identified as the Yelm Cooperative.
- Adobe Illustrator is best because it translates well to social media.
- Keep the logo *simple*. It needs to be able to be recognizable at all distances – close, far or mid-range.
- Be aware that the logo will be used for letterhead, Internet, Twitter, as well as signs.
- Font and color establish continuity between programs.
- The current logo has value. It is simple and represents what the YFC provides.

#### **Financial report – Tom**

- The YTD P&L statement was reviewed. There is a need to increase revenue. Many of Barnaby's actions will assist with this.
- A loan policy needs to be created.
- Bill will contact Breckan Scott to draw up a loan document to receive the loan from Ron Reid. It is a \$3000 loan at 8% interest. Ron is not concerned about the payback date; however, a date will be written into the loan document.

#### **501c3 update – Aaron**

- Aaron consulted with a pro bono non profit lawyer. She recommended that we not make any donation policy or receive any donations that require a tax deduction until we hear from the IRS on our application.
- Tom will contact the IRS re: status of our application.
- Once the IRS responds, a non profit tax attorney will be consulted regarding how the monies should be handled to comply with legal requirements and how the programs under the YC need to be structured to gain the greatest benefit for both the community and the YC.
- It will be beneficial to contact Sandra Burnett, as well, for her consultation.
- Member fees go to the Yelm Cooperative, not the YFC.

#### **Educational garden/community food education program – Tom**

- Tom and Bill have met with Lynda Miller. She is an excellent candidate for the program manager position. She has both knowledge and passion for the garden. She currently works for Timberland Bank. Lynda shared her resume with Bill, Tom and Marilyn.
- Lynda and Andrea Levanti will get together to share information.
- A job description and scope of work needs to be created for the PM position.
- There are grants available for educational gardens. Lynda has a person in mind for grantwriting and grant review. Lauren Rodriguez is willing to assist, as well, although has very limited time.

- The Board needs to develop our mission for the program and our vision for it over the next 3-5-10 years.
- The strategic planning committee needs to define the structure and relevant policies for the program.

**Closed session held**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 pm.

Submitted by Marilyn Reardon, secretary

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Bill Wyman, president

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Beverly Wright, vice president