

**YELM COOPERATIVE**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
 Phoenix Rising School  
 February 14, 2013

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

**Members present:** Bill Wyman, president; Beverly Wright, vice president; Marilyn Reardon, secretary; Tom Dewell, treasurer

**Excused:** Terry Kaminski, director; Aaron Rodriguez, director

**Staff present:** Barnaby Rintz, general manager

**Guests:** Tammy Hanna, Farmers Market vendor and FM committee member

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Bill Wyman.

**Open session**

Tammy offered her comments regarding the potential relocation of the Farmers Market to the Glen Schorno property. She felt it would be beneficial to be part of the larger vision for the property for which Ryan Rutledge, the manager of the development project, would be doing a lot of promotion. Tammy generously offered her assistance in making the Farmers Market a success. She will research which days of the weekend Centralia, Chehalis and Tumwater hold their markets. Maybe some of those vendors would want to participate in our market.

**Meeting minutes**

January 14, 2013 Board minutes were approved.

**Store manager report - Barnaby**

- Income from January sales averaged \$15,400 per week. Inventory fluctuations are making it somewhat difficult to accurately calculate profit.
- The contract with Washington Inventory Services will be canceled. An inventory will be completed by Barnaby and Debbie. Marilyn offered to assist, if needed.
- Two paid cashiers were laid off to reduce payroll, as well as reductions in hours were taken by all other staff, including Barnaby.
- Product loss is an issue that Barnaby will be addressing via training working members and staff about proper merchandising and rotation on the shelves.
- Barnaby's proposal for reducing credit card expenses was reviewed and discussed. It would require a \$1100 expense paid to Wisconsin Merchant Services. The ROI would be approx. 6 months for this purchase.
- Barnaby will be preparing an employee personnel manual and send to Marilyn for review. He has already developed a training manual for cashiers.
- Barnaby asked for \$500 to cover costs of store materials and labor used to promote the Yelm Cooperative umbrella organization. Motion made and seconded. Passed.
- So far, no viable alternatives have emerged for replacing or supplementing UNFI as a supplier. It will continue to be researched as time goes on. We continue to desire to forward the Yelm Cooperative mission of greater food sovereignty by not depending heavily on one distributor.
- March promotional "Spring Cleaning" specials will be developed.
- Barnaby wants to increase staff and working member knowledge of how to create great customer service. Marilyn has conducted many seminars on customer service and offered to conduct one or more for the store.
- An in-store reference library is slowly being developed. It is important that the books in the library do not compete with books Gordon's Garden Center is selling.
- Promoting through social media has been good.
- A task force of working members and staff will meet to address member issues surrounding the new fee structure. Members to include Barnaby, Annegret, Frank Debbie and Marilyn. Tom suggested that focus groups be held with customers who regularly shop re: what would make their shopping experience better.
- The Board wants to see wine sales tracked from month to month, since time and money has been invested in that part of the business.

**Farmers Market** - Tom

- Geana will not be able to participate in the Market. It is a high priority to find a replacement program manager. The goal is that the revenue generated by the Market can eventually pay the person.
- Tom will develop a job description for the FM program manager.
- Geana recently attended the Farmers Market conference and will share that information with us.
- There was a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of accepting the offer of Glen Schorno to use his farm – the “Nisqually Springs Farm” - as a venue for the Farmers Market. Glen wants to develop the part of the property in front of the tree line as a tourist farm destination: corn maize, U-fish, hayrides, pumpkin patch and their own veggie stand. They would not open their stand on our Market days. They will develop power, parking lots, hot water and honey bucket. They would split the monthly costs with us. The goal of our market will be to have happy vendors, cover expenses and stay financially in the black. There will be further conversations between Ryan Rutledge and Bill. Tom will gather the financial data needed to develop a business plan for the Market.

**1023 application** – Tom and Bill

- The IRS is currently processing applications submitted in March, 2012. We submitted in January 2013.
- A potential exists for an expedited 1023 application. If the IRS is presented with a letter that shows a significant donation will be made to the organization under the condition that a tax benefit exists, the IRS can choose to expedite the application. There is a potential donor for the YC.

**Educational Garden** - Tom

- The Board reviewed a comprehensive budget for the Garden developed by Lynda Miller.
- Bill and Tome have challenged Lynda to prepare a plan for how to acquire the needed funds.
- Grants are available. JoAnn Hegemann has shown interest in researching grants. Marilyn will arrange for Tom and Bill to meet with JoAnn. Lynda has a friend who is experienced in writing grants. Lauren Rodriguez has offered to review the grant once it is written.
- Marilyn will create a job description for the Educational Garden program manager's position by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**2013-14 Organizational goals and program objectives**

- Aaron created a comprehensive draft document outlining the goals and objectives for the YC. This was reviewed item by item. Some goals were noted as already having been reached.
- Tasks were assigned for other items: Exploring re-branding was set for a committee to be completed by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2013; a task force will be formed to develop benefits for new members and how to communicate the vision and mission of the YC to members.
- More discussion and planning is required for implement the goals on this important document.

**Board retreat**

- The Board recognizes the need for continuing Board development. Last year Victoria Wartborg offered to lead a half day Board retreat pro bono. Perhaps the Board of the Phoenix Rising School will join us. Bill will send Marilyn Victoria's contact information. Marilyn will contact Victoria.
- The retreat should occur by the end of June.

**Policies**

- A policy re: allocation of member funds needs to be written. Beverly has taken on the task of policy writing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Submitted by Marilyn Reardon, secretary

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Bill Wyman, president

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Beverly Wright, vice president