**Sugar Beet Food Store Co-op Meeting Minutes**

7:00PM

**Board of Directors Meeting**

Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Oak Park Library, Main Branch

**Board of Directors:** Bill Gee, Brian Hammersley, Peter Nolan, Monica Chada, Dan Beach, Judy Klem, Chris Dowsett, Greg Marsey, Maureen Spain

**GM:** Chris Roland

**Public Agenda**

**Meeting called at 7:05**

1. Items for Approval
   * Meeting Minutes Approved from 8/25/15
   * General Manager’s Report Approved
2. General Manager's Report

* Slower sales during weekdays; weekend sales picking up
* Pick up in sales and traffic over the last week or so
* Improving in following areas: Refrigerated case – organic milk and egg prices; getting more fresh meat; more bulk liquids (bulk sales up); deli and produce improving; continuing to enhance produce signage
* New meat freezer will improve meat sales and free up freezer space
* Supplemental sales are increasing – these are relationship driven
* First Wellness Wednesday was great
* Working with Jen to figure out accounting processes
* Under budget on inventory; $70k under budget on FF&E;
* Ownership count – 1311 owners
* We are at 75-80% of what we want based on our pro forma

1. Marketing Initiatives

* Budget is low, but we have a lot of goodwill
* Keeping owners and customers informed through newsletters
* Will improve on signage, telling stories of farmers, pricing
* Strongest push is connecting with community, educating people about the co-op
* We need owners to do grass-roots marketing
* B2B partnerships; Core Yoga is most recent
* Coming up for in-store demos, get them in store on a more regular basis; Wednesday and Sunday workshop; October 7 – talk about immune support
* We will do another survey before the end of the year

1. Finance & Membership

* CCLF loan closed

1. Supplemental Parking
   * We have a hearing before Zoning Board of Appeals re satellite parking. We are requesting relief from the Village parking lot requirements – instead we'd like to make the lot just asphalt. If Board of Approvals is successful, then we will go before Village Board. Asphalt paving would cost around $30k. Discussion about pros and cons of expanding parking ensued.
2. Owner Comments

* Wednesday Journal article re changing discount structure; what are our thoughts? She thinks it's a good idea; Chris would be open to it, he's never heard of it (but doesn't mean can't work); co-ops have been moving from discounts to patronage rebates; our goal is to provide; it's ours to do what we want with it; we're in limbo and whether or not it's sustainable; Cheryl said we have owner specials; "what's in it for me?" is not the culture we're trying to build, but we want them to feel
* Laura re WF article, what's made TJ's successful. She bought a package of cheese curds with an expired date, orange was moldy. We need to focus on curating and what we want to offer. She likes the lip balm
* Stephanie says to have the demos there – she buys more when they are there, like the green onion cheddar. Chris said our demo program is great, and we now have a full-time person working on it. Judy Klem suggested that ambassadors could do the demos when the farmers/vendors can't make it.
* Stephanie also said she wants to buy her Thanksgiving turkey from Sugar Beet. Chris confirmed there will be turkeys!
* Robin really wants local; she doesn't see anyone in the store that is the local forager; someone needs to work the phones and build relationships with local farmers, educate the staff. Chris loves the idea, but it's a bigger job right now than the grocery or produce manager can do. It's something we'd like to do eventually. Brian thinks it's very important that we do this soon. This is the way we differentiate. Judy suggested that we share this role with Dill Pickle and up-and-coming co-ops.
* How important is it that the Sugar Beet card gets used? Important because it makes our information better. How come they don’t ask for it? We don't want non-owners to feel pestered, so be sure to tell the cashier you're an owner.
* Laura suggested that a box that would include ingredients and a recipe could be a good thing to do. Bill said we could use the survey to find out what the majority of owners will
* Five more weeks of farmers' markets – will we get more traffic once the market closes? Let's be prepared for it.
* Stephanie is most interested in organic, and will choose organic before local.

1. Closing
   * Confirm upcoming meeting dates
     + Tuesday, October 27
     + Tuesday, November 24
   * Meeting adjourned 8:22 pm