

**Minutes of the Springfield Food Coop**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Thursday, January 24, 2008**

**Board Members Present:** Judi Becker, Pam Goldman, Rich Leavy, Raven Mueller, Anne Nordstrom, Christine Speidel

**Ex Officio:** Cindy Phillips

**Guests:** Hallie Whitcomb

**Call to Order:** 6:05 PM

**Executive Session:**

**Motion:** Christine made a motion, seconded by Pam, authorizing Susan Dunning to engage a lawyer for a professional opinion to clarify condominium issues particularly in regard to common space at 335 River Street. Motion approved unanimously.

**Open Session:** 6:25 pm

**Minutes:** November 27, 2007

The Minutes were accepted with the following correction: Under **Budget**, change the word "income" to "sales."

**Manager's Report:**

Cindy reported that calendar year sales for 2007 were \$588,165 with a bottom line of \$11,593 net income. Cindy and Anne will attend an all day meeting of CVNC in Putney on January 26 as well as a Retailer's Workshop in Albany on February 7.

Cindy has created a permanent gift department consisting of items such as candles, pottery, Chico bags, etc. following the successful sale of those items during the holidays. The Coop has rented an outside storage unit to make more efficient use of Coop space.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Profit & Loss (Oct – Dec 2007) statement indicates an overall margin of 36.09% against a target of 37%. Fiscal year to date sales are \$458,951 with an expectation that sales will be \$630,000 at the end of the fiscal year (3/31/08).

The interest-only payment has been submitted to USDA for February. Beginning March 15, 2008, the principal and interest payment will be withdrawn automatically from the Coop checking account.

Cindy has submitted the application for membership in the NCGA. David Fowle, Assistant Development Director for the Eastern Corridor of the NCGA, acknowledged receipt of the application and will guide us through the review process. David has requested that the Coop submit a Business Plan outlining strategies to achieve our 1-3 year goals. Cindy expects to forward a Board-approved Business Plan as soon as possible.

Cindy outlined the following goals: 1) Assess department structure and margins; 2) Eliminate the use of plastic bags at the Coop; 3) Promote Heart Health for February; 4) Estimate the time needed by staff to price merchandise; and 5) Assess the viability of the Body Care Department and make appropriate changes.

## **Committee Reports:**

**Personnel:** Anne indicated that the annual review and evaluation of the Coop Manager's performance is due by the end of March. The areas for review include 1) Interpersonal Relationships with the Board, Staff and Community; 2) Leadership of Staff and Volunteers; and 3) Management Skills in Operations and Systems and achievement of Goals. Anne requested the formation of an "ad hoc" Personnel Committee to evaluate the General Manager in the above-mentioned areas. Judi Becker and Christine Speidel volunteered to be members. Hallie suggested that it might be helpful to recruit some non-board members for the Personnel Committee who might be able to bring a different perspective. Anne will contact two suggested Coop members to see if they are interested. Anne will provide a copy of last year's evaluation.

**Promotion:** Anne reported that the Agency of Transportation Coop signs have been installed. Anne and Christine asked the Board for brainstorming ideas to promote the Coop. Some suggestions were 1) New Member Package, 2) Membership Drive, 3) Staff Name Tags or Aprons, and 4) Films or Workshops to promote Community Outreach. Raven suggested better use of display space at the Coop and the use of bags and t-shirts with the Coop logo. Christine indicated that we might be able to do a comparison shopping article or video to be presented as an educational piece, i.e. "How to Shop for Bulk Products." Cindy is hopeful of promoting membership by creating signs within the store listing the top 10 reasons to join the Coop.

Cindy suggested selling green bags and string bags at the Coop and using the profit to create a scholarship fund for high school seniors interested in studying agriculture or environmental studies. Cindy will look into this matter further and contact Springfield High School to find out if they would be interested in administering such a scholarship.

**Volunteer Coordinator Report:** Hallie Whitcomb reported that volunteer hours have decreased over the past year and advised that it may be simpler to have just a few reliable volunteers on a regular basis. She indicated the need for a system to track the volunteer hours of Board members.

**Vote on NCGA:** Christine made a motion, seconded by Raven, to approve the submission of the application for membership in the National Cooperative Grocers Association. The motion passed unanimously.

**Charter – Promotions Committee:** Anne presented the proposed charter of the Coop Promotions Committee consisting of 1) Overall goals and scope, 2) Membership requirements, 3) Status as a permanent committee, 4) Responsibility as an advisor to the General Manager and 5) Frequency of reporting relationship to the Board.

**Motion:** Raven made a motion, seconded by Christine, to accept the Promotions Committee Charter as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

## **New Business**

**Newsletter:** Anne advised that the next Coop Newsletter will be distributed at the end of February. She requested articles to be submitted during the first week in February. One suggestion for an article was a Profile featuring a Coop employee.

**Annual Meeting:** The Coop Annual Meeting is tentatively planned for Sunday, May 18, at the Unitarian Church. Cindy will confirm this and notify Board members. We will need to send a post card to notify members of the Annual Meeting.

**Insurance:** Cindy reported that she has been able to save money on Coop insurance coverage. An insurance agent specializing in Coop insurance has been able to offer the same coverage at more competitive rates. As a result, the Coop recently changed the policy covering Directors and Officers to the new insurance company. A change in the General Coop policy and Workmen's Compensation will be considered when these policies expire later in the year.

**Farm Share:** Christine suggested donating a percentage of Coop profits to the Farm Share program once a year. We will discuss this further at a future meeting.

**Next meeting:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, at 6:00 pm.

**Adjourn:** 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judi Becker