

**Frederick County Consumer Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting
December 10th, 2020
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Board members present: Megan Schneebaum, Annie Marshall, Stephanie Walker, Evan Rosenberg, Bob Wolpert, Sibylle Mangum, John Beutler, John Clarke, Alecks Moss

Board members absent:

Staff members present: Román Diaz, Sarah Lebherz, Susan Schulman, Libby Nuss, Ashley Pilahome

Owners present for meeting: Barbara Conelley

The meeting was called to order at 6:09pm by Megan Schneebaum via Zoom.

“Food for Thought: A Speaker Series”

Lavon Sajona

Approval of Agenda

Agenda is approved.

Consent Agenda

Refunds are approved. Minutes are approved.

Owner Comment Period

Barbara Conelley brings up how places are no longer recycling plastic bags and if we are going to have any solutions to this. Román has stopped all use of the plastic shopping bags within the Common Market but Barbara wonders what we can do to help it as a community.

Expansion update

Expansion Finances/proforma monthly update

- There is about \$8k pending in equipment credit. We prepaid for a lot of equipment from SuperValue and we overpaid a little so we might be getting some credit back. We are currently over in budget a little but those credits from SuperValue might cancel that out.

Sales Update

Last week was one of the slowest weeks that we have seen in a while. The café is struggling with not being able to have the hot bar and salad bar open. We are also seeing some struggled in the Produce departments as well. We are looking at initiatives to add some volume and sales back into these departments. Grocery is still steady with Wellness and Meat just behind. Román does believe that at times we might have customers where they buy in different stores, however, with COVID, if you are not the main shopping place for that customer, then you are missing any of the possible sales that this person might have bought otherwise. We are still working on our value image and looking at having specials every day. Our customer count is not where it needs to be but are basket size is doing well. Stephanie says that while it may not look well compared to budget, it looks good compared to year-to-year growth.

COVID Update

We did not have cases for the first 8 months and we unfortunately had 9 cases over the last few months. We are continuing to take measures and continuing to put safety measures. Owner, Barbara, mentioned that compared to going

to other stores in the community, that the Common Market is above other stores and the service that we continue to offer, is noticed in people by the community.

Produce Product Guidelines

Román is interested in sharing with the Board the operational decision to start bringing in local conventional produce. In today's economy, not every customer can afford the organic product prices. While this is a part of who we are, we also have a bigger mission which is to give support to our local community and farmers. They all aren't organic, but they grow the products in a good way and provides us with fresh, clean, local ingredients; some even working towards that certifications. This initiative would give us a more diverse base with a competitive price range that adds value to the market and is a good social initiative. We will never deviate from what we are doing, and our organic options will still be 70-80% of our produce mix. We are planning to put out the idea behind this initiative to the owners and welcome feedback. Román has been working with NCG and looking at surveys. John C. ask what percentage of produce comes from local farms currently and what would the local farmers due to the current organic local farmers that we carry already. Román believes that it will drive more sales and focus to the products; he does not see them competing too much. Alecks ask what standards will you require and how will you vet the farms? Román responds that we are going to research the produce, just because you are local does not mean that you will be able to be in the market. Before we made the change in 2016 to become only organic, we were mostly local before that and we are going back to our roots by doing this. Libby adds that we are going to be transparent throughout this process with the owners and staff. We are still working on bringing the farmer's market to our parking lot and the goal is at the end of their day, we would buy their final products and be able to sell them in our store. Megan agrees about local however also expressed that like with any business, there are individuals who are honest and there are individuals who are not, so we just really need to ensure the consumer sees what the standards and criteria area. Román says that he will ensure that there are some great filters.

BOD Calendar 2021

John updated the calendar and reflected the most up to date information.

Executive Committee Nominations & Election

Stephanie nominates Megan as President, John C seconds.

Annie nominates herself as Vice President, Evan seconds.

Megan nominates John C. as Secretary, Stephanie seconds.

Megan nominates Stephanie as Treasurer, Evan seconds.

All are in favor of this slate of candidates for the positions.

Board Monitoring

- C4 – Monitoring GM Performance – all votes comply. Last question has partial compliance for the timeline as it does not line up when the new GM was hired.

DEI Update

- Co-op Conversations: A Discussion Group – there has been no meeting since the last meeting. The next meeting is the week of the 16th. The book will be *Kindred by Octavia Butler*.
- Upcoming Food for Thought speakers – the next speaker is Román!

Odds and ends

- Green Committee
- Lunch with Leadership - postponed
- Good of the Order
 - In between the last meeting and this meeting, Sarah got a notification that there was a good service release grant available. Sarah jumped on it to see if we were eligible and we were! We have not received the funds yet, however, they can be used towards payroll, PPE, sanitation services, equipment for outdoor dining. Alecks ask what it would be spent on and Sarah says that it would help with payroll with sales being so low lately.
- Follow up work/next steps

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm