

Approved



Council Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2016
Facilitator: Marci Young
Note Taker: Lené Gary

In Attendance: Council Members: Ashley Hill, Tyler Strange, Carl Etnier, Steven Farnham, Marci Young, Alex Brown, Scott Hess (by phone), Rita Ricketson

Staff: Kari Bradley, Michal Duffy

Guests: Lené Gary (note taker), Bertil Agell, Mark Simakaski, Barbara Burnett

Meeting called to order by Marci – 5:30pm.

1. Agenda Review – No adjustment needed.

2. Community Comments – Barbara Burnett presented the Council with a copy of her letter dated August 27, 2016 to Cary Giguere, Department of Agriculture, concerning the recent mechanical removal of weeds that has occurred along the railroad right-of-way through downtown Montpelier. She shared her continued frustration with the railroad's insistence on chemical vegetation management strategies and the state's willingness to permit the use of glyphosate along this stretch. Member Bertil Agell introduced himself, explaining that he has interest in running for council, and then told us where he has lived over the years, and his that connection to co-op reaches back to Plainfield in 1973.

3. Consent Agenda – Marci: Reviewed June 27, 2016 minutes. No significant changes suggested. Kari explained that a spike in July equity refund requests is not unexpected, as July is the time period in which new payments come due. Members who have relocated out of the area or for other reasons are not interested in continuing their membership often notify the Co-op at this time.

Carl moved to approve the consent agenda. Rita seconded the motion. All were in favor. Approved.

4. Rules Committee – Carl: Discussion concerning G4 proposal and G1 interpretation ensued. Michal suggested a slight edit to the sentence structure of G.4.6 to ease readability. Alex expressed her belief that one's role as Council meeting facilitator should not prevent that Council member from also being able to vote. Tyler offered two options to resolve: 1) facilitator may vote to break the tie or 2) president breaks the tie. Shifting facilitators within a meeting to allow all members an opportunity to vote on particular topics was also offered as a solution. Steven suggested the Council remain close to traditional parliamentary procedure.

Approved

Carl moved to amend G.4.6 as discussed. Rita seconded the motion. Alex requested further discussion. Vote continued. Scott opposed. Alex ineligible to vote. All else in favor. Approved.

Ashley Hill arrived (late).

Carl moved to approve G.1 “One Voice Policy” interpretation. Ashley seconded the motion. Steven requested further discussion.

Discussion ensued regarding the appropriateness of interpersonal communication between Council members and community members about the Council’s decision-making process once a decision by the Council has been made and presented to the community.

Carl clarified for concerned members that the motion he had made was for approving the interpretation of existing policy, not for rewriting the policy.

Two themes emerged during the discussion: 1) a desire to provide community members with transparency regarding various perspectives that inform Council discussions in particular regarding proposals submitted by the Council to the membership for approval, and 2) a desire to assure community members that their Council works strongly as a whole.

Voting continued. Rita and Alex opposed. Ashley and Tyler abstained. Steven, Carl, Scott approved. The motion passed. Approved.

Action Item: Carl encouraged people to look at G.4.7 by the next meeting.

5. Finance Committee – Scott explained that under the committee’s proposal employees will be automatically enrolled at 5% (which the Co-op matches at 4%) in the 401k plan when they hit eligibility unless they determine to opt out. Kari said the Co-op currently has 72% participation, which is about the national average.

Scott moved to approve this amendment. Carl seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Approved.

6. Loan Request – Kari requested the Council approve a \$5,000 unsecured loan to the Morrisville Food Co-op. This is a member loan, as HMC is a member.

Scott made a motion to loan Morrisville Co-op \$5,000 at 1.5% for 5 years. Rita seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Approved.

Action Item: Kari will look up how long the Morrisville Co-op is allowed to keep the loan money during their fundraising efforts before needing to repay it if they don’t meet their fundraising goal.

Scott signed off/left the meeting after this topic.

Approved

7. Annual Meeting Committee - Carl suggested introducing the candidates running for Council. Kari suggested that happen in the first section of the annual meeting. Steven asked if the speaker is still TBA. Kari said yes. He emphasized his desire to have someone from the Food Pantry there. The Council voiced support of the proposed annual meeting agenda.

8. Communications Committee – Alex went through communications calendar, asking for volunteers for both the video topics category and Full Scoop article of 500-700 words.

Kari summarized his Share our Story themes and talking points and discussed the value of consistency in messaging. He specifically mentioned the Co-op being a “triple bottom line company” and that “change is becoming a constant for us.” He also talked about promoting member participation within the community. Marci suggested allowing customers and members to write articles as a way of engaging them.

At approximately 7:09PM, Bertil Agell departed, briefly sharing that he thought the council should focus less on parliamentary procedure, and more on true governance.

9. Other Committee reports- None.

10. Staff Rep Report – Michal: The union dropped the recent kitchen arbitration. There is an active Step 2 grievance from the Wellness Department.

The Driscoll Boycott is on employees’ minds. Some co-ops, such as the River Valley Co-op, are proudly supporting the boycott. This topic will be further discussed in the General Manager section. The employees have reported that the management has been responsive when it comes to safety concerns, including emergency lighting. Grocery staff appreciate the morning stretch break and check in.

Staff morale continues to be an issue. Some staff members report feeling pushed around. They also cite that older members being “pushed out” the last 2-3 years is concerning. The staff likes the “parking lot” meeting that happens once a month in the staff gathering.

Tyler raised the question about whether some of these issues are the effect of a policy violation. He then suggested that perhaps a mechanism for triggering policy action needs to be developed.

Michal emphasized the strengths of staff knowledge and their desire to be better utilized in their fields of expertise by management. The Green Team has not met lately.

Action Item: Steven suggested that the role of staff rep in the council be examined.

11. Break: 7:28pm / Reconvened: 7:40pm

12. Council Self Evaluation – Alex: The Council discussed minor edits to the self-evaluation form that will be provided to each member next week. They will have two weeks to complete it.

Approved

13. Council's Role in Business Plan – Kari laid out three parts of the new plan for Council and management to work on together: member engagement on topic of member discounts, enhancement of member participation opportunities (including the annual meeting), and the Share Our Story communication themes.

14. Financial Report – Kari reported that the audit starts August 30. After 5 years decline in sales growth, the Co-op saw improved sales growth in fiscal 2016. The Co-op had a profitable fourth quarter which included a gain share for employees. Kari reminded everyone to remember that the determination about patronage refund and taxes in October will influence the final financial statements.

15. Monitoring Report – Kari updated the council that L9 is still not in compliance. Right now, there is no other staff member with the expertise that Tim has.

Kari clarified that the Co-op is not fully PCI compliant. They are trying to figure this out so that they can process electronic payments.

Alex moved to accept Kari's monitoring report. Rita seconded the motion. All were in favor. Passed unanimously. Approved.

Action Item: Kari will check on timeline for PCI compliance and be back in touch with the council.

16. GM Report – Kari reported that after a long spell without employee injuries, two occurred recently. On September 10, 2016 from 8:30-noon, volunteers from the Co-op will be cleaning up the Winooski River and Kari encouraged others to join. Other conversations touched on: the Co-op severing ties with Champlain Orchards, upcoming solar array proposals, and whether the Co-op should boycott Driscoll's. No decisions were made.

17. Roundtable Discussion- This item was rescheduled for the October 2016 meeting.

18. Wrap up- There are two meetings left this year: October 2016 and the annual meeting.

19. Council or community comments- None

20. Other business- None

21. Adjourned 9:03pm

Action Items:

Carl encouraged people to look at G.4.7 by the next meeting.

Kari will look up how long the Morrisville Co-op is allowed to keep the loan money during their fundraising efforts before needing to repay it if they don't meet their fundraising goal.

Steven suggested that the role of staff rep in the council be examined.