

FIDDLEHEADS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of Board Meeting of August 15, 2017

105 Huntington Street, New London

(Approved by the Board on September 5, 2017)

I. CALL TO ORDER, ATTENDANCE, ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Call to Order

Helene Bardinet called to order a monthly meeting of the Fiddleheads Board of Directors at 6:31 p.m. on Tuesday, August 15, 2017 at 105 Huntington Street, New London, CT.

B. Attendance

The following Board members were present:

Helene Bardinet, Vice-President

Danny Spurr, Secretary

Susan Zimmerman, Treasurer

Ellen Clinesmith

Kelleen Giffin

Rachel Black

Paul Reid

Katie Blanchard (arrived 6:48 p.m.)

The following Board member was absent:

Susan Phillips, President

The following additional persons were present:

Lexa Juhre, General Manager

Elisa Giommi, Board Administrator

C. Check-In

Executive session minutes still need to be approved from the Board meeting of May 16, 2017. Ellen brought eggplant and tomatoes to share.

D. Agenda Review

An item was added to discuss the Co-op Cafe to be held in Keene, NH on Saturday, November 4th and who might be available to attend.

Rachel asked when the Board would like to invite Brigaid to attend a Board meeting. The September of November meeting were seen as possibilities.

Elisa asked when all Board members would be in attendance for a Board photo to be taken. The October meeting was a possible time, or a separate photo party date could be arranged at the Co-op.

Paul and Helene signed the Board Code of Conduct. All Board members have now signed.

II. COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE (6:37-6:49)

A. Annual Meeting Committee

One of the items discussed at the last Annual Meeting Committee meeting was moving the date of the Annual

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Meeting to an earlier time, perhaps as early as March. Final financial number would probably not be available, but Lexa would be able to compile rough numbers to report on the state of the Co-op. Earth Day was also suggested as a possible date, perhaps even having the event tented in the parking lot. The Board was not opposed to moving the Annual Meeting to an earlier date. There was a suggestion to conduct a small survey of owners on when they would like the meeting to be. This suggestion was met with approval.

The Annual Meeting Committee will meet again before the September meeting to discuss an Annual Meeting budget proposal, as the Treasurer will need this information in compiling the Board Budget.

It was decided that the Board would examine the Board Committees (Nominations and Annual Meeting Committees) next month, both to re-approve the charters and establish committee membership for the upcoming year.

III. MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2017 (6:50-6:51)

Motion to approve the Board minutes of June 20, 2017 as presented:

Motion: Susan Zimmerman

Second: Ellen Clinesmith

All in favor with Paul and Helene abstaining

VI. GM MONITORING REPORT (6:51-8:45)

A. Executive Limitations A- Ends

The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding both the Ends monitoring report and the Co-ops Ends in general. Some of the issues discussed included:

1. How ownership education could be improved regarding the co-op and co-ops generally. Some suggestions included improved signage illustrating co-op principles, Fiddleheads Co-op Ends statements, and the Fiddleheads story, emphasizing the bold and revolutionary aspects of the co-op movement, improving the co-op's newsletter, conducting regular co-op introductions/trainings for new owners, conducting an owner survey to assess owner's knowledge of co-ops and what they are.
2. Staffing issues and how the co-op deals with the challenges of paying and retaining qualified employees.
3. How robust were the GM's interpretation and operational definitions of the Ends and did these met the Board's expectations.

Global Policy: Fiddleheads Natural Foods Cooperative exists so that Southeastern Connecticut is a healthy, robust and inclusive community.

There was question regarding translating Fiddleheads literature into Spanish (and potentially Arabic), as this was a goal from the previous year. There was a suggestion to seek volunteers from Fiddleheads ownership to help in this effort. Board members were encouraged to contact people they might know who would be interested in this.

1) Food Justice- Fiddleheads exists so that Southeastern Connecticut is a model for achieving food justice for all.

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Fiddleheads has shown strength in it's support of local agriculture and producers.

The Pantry program providing staple products at low prices will be overhauled and Fiddleheads implements it's NCG pricing, but this should ultimately increase the number of lower priced products.

Sales to SNAP (EBT) have not increased proportionally to overall sales.

Future potential goals include implementing a Food for All program and partnering with FRESH New London on the edible landscape project.

2) Thriving Local Economy- Fiddleheads exists so that Southeastern Connecticut is a thriving locally based economy.

Sales of local products continue to increase. It was noted that the operational definition of purchase from local vendors increasing year over year to sales of local products increasing year over year as this was an easier metric to track. Fiddleheads continues to participate in local economic planning and marketing groups.

3) Sense of Community- Fiddleheads exists so that shoppers and members have a strong sense of community.

There was a question as to whether the GM's operational definitions were robust enough. It was determined that they were.

Fiddleheads continues to support community non-profits through the Neighborly Nickels program
Fiddleheads continues to host a number of owner events to help build the community. Attendance at these events could stand to improve, particularly at the Annual Meeting which was not well attended and at which quorum was not met.

In April 2017, trainings were conducted with managers and staff, that incorporated themes of stewardship and service as well as practical tools to assist us in this important work.

There was a suggestion that a survey be conducted that would include questions to measure how well we are fulfilling Ends

4) Growing Co-op Model Use- Fiddleheads exists so that Southeastern Connecticut has a growing use of the co-op model.

There was another survey suggestion to survey owners about their knowledge of co-ops. It was suggested that further education about the co-op model be conducted before issuing such a survey.

5) Food & Health Knowledge- Fiddleheads exists so that Southeastern Connecticut is knowledgeable about food systems, and personal and environmental health.

Fiddleheads is working on development of depth of product knowledge especially among newer staff. Fiddleheads has had some setbacks in offering educational programming with the loss of several key personnel. Programming became less formal and some key initiatives fell by the wayside, We will continue to offer workshops and classes continued to be offered and tabling continued at area health fairs several times per year.

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6) *Workplace- Fiddleheads exists so that Southeastern Connecticut has meaningful work opportunities in a supportive environment.*

This was identified as one of the main challenges facing Fiddleheads at this time and there was general consensus both from the Board and GM that this End should be a priority at this time. Though progress has been made in increasing compensation, there continues to be a large gap between current wages and benefits and wage and benefit goals. Many of the issues and challenges cited in achieving the other Ends were found to be partially rooted in marketing and outreach challenges. This was partly attributed to the marketing and outreach positions being combined into one position, with the position being focused primarily on marketing and also to an inability at this time to compensate an experienced marketing candidate at market levels. This problem is current exacerbated by the resignation of the current marketing and outreach manager. Lexa is considering dividing the position into separate marketing and outreach positions, but the problem of compensating qualified marketing candidates still exists.

There were issues raised regarding the interpretation and operational definitions provided by Lexa for A6-Workplace. Additional definitions and more qualitative data was sought. Some suggestions included information on organizational learning and developmental training and data on staff retention. It was agreed that to accept the report as presented, and Lexa would provide some additional operational definitions and qualitative data at a later date (potentially when reporting on Executive Limitation B6 relating to staff).

Motion to accept GM Monitoring Report A- Ends

Motion: Danny Spurr

Second: Ellen Clinesmith

All in favor

VI. CONSENT AGENDA (8:45-8:53)

A. Board Budget

Due to time constraints and the fact that Treasurer Susan Zimmerman would not be in attendance at the next Board meeting, all other agenda items were tabled and the Board Budget was presented.

There was a review of the YTD Budget and a discussion of proposed changes. There were some suggested edits to the 2018 Budget. A final version will be presented by the Treasurer to the Board for approval hopefully at the October meeting.

VIII. CLOSINGS

Directors were encouraged to check their availability for the Co-op Cafe on Saturday, November 4, 2017 in Keene, NH.

It was determined that there would not be adequate attendance to conduct a special meeting on August 22nd. September 5th was proposed as an alternate date. Elisa agreed to send a Doodle out the Board with potential dates. The special meeting on August 22, 2107 will be canceled.

A. Review decisions, tasks, and assignments

Determine availability for Co-op Cafe on Saturday November 4, 2017 in Keene, NH. (Board)

Contact Brigad re: coming to talk about their role in Food Justice in September or November (Rachel)

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Annual Meeting Committee meet to discuss budget for 2018 Annual Meeting (Annual Meeting Comm)
Consider service on Nomination or Annual Meeting Committees (Board)
Additional definitions and qualitative data for Ends A6- Workplace
Doodle to determine date of next special meeting (Elisa)
Meeting Agenda (Sue and Elisa)
Annual Meeting Committee minutes (Ellen)
Board Monitoring Report C3 Agenda Planning (Elisa)
Draft Minutes of August 15, 2017 Meeting (Danny & Elisa)
GM Monitoring Report B7 & B8 (Lexa)
Member Equity Refund Request (Lexa, if any)
Draft Agenda for October 17, 2017 meeting (Elisa)
GM Update Report (Lexa) - THIS IS FYI - Not an agenda item!

B. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn:

Motion: Daniel Spurr

Second: Paul Reed

All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

* * * * *

Draft minutes prepared for submission to the board by Daniel Spurr/Elisa Giommi on August 18, 2017.

Minutes approved by vote of the Board on September 5, 2017 and put into final form by Danny Spurr/Elisa Giommi on September 7, 2017.