

**Minutes for the Potsdam Food Co-Op Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 17, 2015**

1. Call to Order
  - The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Potsdam Food Co-Op was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, above the Carriage House Bakery, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.
2. Attendees
  - Voting members in attendance included Joseph Andriano, Laura Cordts, Robin McClellan, Abby Lee, Eric Ochraneck, Mary Egan, Maggie McKenna, Erica LaFountain, Pam Maurer, Rajiv Narula,
  - Members not in attendance included Vanessa Bittner, Marie Richards
  - The general manager, Eric Jesner, was present.
  - No guests in attendance.
3. Approval of Minutes
  - A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on October 20, 2015 was made by Laura Cordts and seconded by Pam Maurer. The minutes were approved as amended.
4. Member Comments
  - Eric J reported that people like the seating area.
    - i. Joe commented that a garbage pail would be good there
    - ii. Erica commented that napkins would be good there.
  - Joe reported that a member commented that a member asked that the co-op be opened at 6 or 7 AM.
  - Rajiv reported that a member thinks that the sesame sticks are too salty. Erica agreed.
  - Laura reported that she was at the little grocery store in Madrid, and they sell a lot of products very similar to co-op products at a much cheaper price point than the co-op.
    - i. Pam commented that she thought they have much lower overhead than the co-op does.
    - ii. Eric reported that they go through different distributors and that their bulk selection is very different than ours.
  - Abby reported that she got a comment that people were missing some products that had used to be the co-op pack (e.g., sundried tomatoes, pasta)
    - i. Eric reported that a lot of the pastas that we used to co-op pack have been discontinued. If something in co-op pack is going away is because it either is not selling (going bad before it can be sold) or because it has been discontinued by the supplier.
  - Robin reported that he was charged for \$17.00 worth of allspice that he did not buy--Robin thinks that it happened when he was buying kombucha, the UPCs

might be similar. Anyway, Robin ended up with a bigger refund than he should have gotten.

- i. Eric reported that this was a training issue, and that if Robin could tell him who is was, he could address the training issue.
- ii. Robin also asked about ginger kombucha, that it was not pouring effectively.
  - 1. Eric said he would look into it.
- o Robin commented that the coffee price sign is out of date and should be removed.

## 5. Reports

- o General Manager's Report was presented by Eric Jesner
  - i. Buildings and Grounds
    - 1. Nothing
  - ii. Personnel
    - 1. John is no longer with us--he got a full time job. However, starting this saturday he will be a core worker in stocking the united order and at the register.
    - 2. Dave was hired to replace John. He's doing a great job.
  - iii. General Stuff
    - 1. One little poster up by the seating area about how co-ops rock. If anyone has ideas of what to put up near the seating area, let Eric J know.
      - a. Abby suggested that a comment card box would be good there.
      - b. Erica suggested something for upcoming events.
      - c. Abby suggested salt, pepper, membership brochures, and napkins.
      - d. Erica also suggested something that could clean the area, also a "remember to like us on Facebook," and newsletters.
        - i. Eric thought about paper towels
    - 2. New magazine rack came in a set of 2, so now we have a second one with a set of recipes from the Stronger Together Co-Op Website. Eric will be keeping that seasonal.
    - 3. We worked out a deal with UNFI with Field Day UNFI brand. We get a 15% discount from them. Since we'll be lowering the prices and we want the membership to be aware, there will be tags to show that these products across the board have gone down 15%. Also, when new items come out, we get the first case free.
    - 4. Next Newsletter due date is December 7.
      - a. There was discussion of how the contested election would be represented in the newsletter, and what the procedure will be for the elections.

#### iv. Sales Report

1. Sales down 3.27%
2. Jayne looked at the 4 departments trending most negatively. Eric has not reviewed them yet. He will be trying to figure out the changes.
3. There was some discussion that the report had 1 less day on it than last year, Eric reported it's a typo and will be fixed.
4. The bakery is doing great--their labor percentage is down and it is becoming more profitable than it was before more quickly than expected.
5. Significant drop in core hours worked. Two reasons:
  - a. we were helping the church, and so that was decreased significantly
  - b. Some core workers fail to record their hours when they work, and so this can create "peaks and valleys"
6. 4 department down
  - a. co-op pack
    - i. trending down for awhile
  - b. packaged grocery
    - i. newly trending down
  - c. produce
    - i. trending down for awhile
  - d. frozen
    - i. newly trending down

#### v. General Merchandise Expansion

1. We got a lot of general merchandise in for the holiday season. It is all ethically produced, most certified fair trade, most recycled or upcycled. Looking as to things which you can't get elsewhere. However, our stuff is different--we aren't looking to complete directly. Very good margins with this merchandise.
  - a. E.g.
    - i. Wrapping paper
    - ii. Upcycled saris
    - iii. Recycled gift bags
    - iv. Glass water bottles made from recycled glass
  - b. Maggie commented that it would be cool to have a gift basket
    - i. Eric reported it's hard to create a basket that would be appealing to a lot of people
    - ii. Erica asked if it made sense to sell the basket and then people could fill it themselves. There was some discussion on this issue.

1. Erica and Pam volunteered to try this out. Robin pointed out that this needed to be done through the GM since he is the manager.
- Membership & Marketing Report was presented by Erica LaFountain
    - i. Business Partner Program
      1. Currently calling our current partners and asking for feedback.
        - a. ½ of calls done so far.
        - b. Will have results compiled by next meeting.
      2. Next Steps
        - a. Develop changes to program
        - b. Call business partners and see if they want to be part of the new program
        - c. More advertising for business partners in the newsletter (business card sized)
    - ii. Abby asked about the planning for the Annual Meeting
      1. The Committee will work with the staff on this.
      2. Abby suggested promoting this at the baking festival
  - Governance Report was presented by Laura Cordts
    - i. Seeking an attorney to do a review of the BPM
      1. So far, all the attorneys we have approached have declined to help.
      2. The committee may need to seek funds from the board to get this done.
    - ii. Board Recruitment
      1. Have met with and provided information to two people. We are waiting for confirmation from them that they do indeed want to run.
    - iii. Board Self Evaluation
      1. Sometime between now and the end of the year this will be sent out to the board.
    - iv. Utilization of the Board Calendar
      1. Looking into how to make this tool as effective as possible.
      2. Robin asked for feedback
        - a. Robin said that we are thinking about adding this to Google, but this is part of IT, so we'll talk about that during the IT Report
  - Outreach & Education Report was presented by Pam Maurer
    - i. Baking Fest
      1. A sign up sheet was sent around.
    - ii. Baking Classes
      1. There may be baking classes--stay tuned
    - iii. Participating in the Small Business Saturday
    - iv. Sponsorship from the St. Lawrence Health Initiative

- v. Holiday Passport Event
- vi. Participating in Museum Remington event.
- vii. Questions
  - 1. Abby brought up a question about the newsletter.
    - a. During the executive committee, there was a discussion that there were a number of reports that did not make it into the newsletter. This led to a bigger discussion regarding the purpose of the newsletter.
      - i. It's the recommendation of the executive committee that the IT committee and the outreach committee should work together to figure out how to best bring together the website and the newsletter.
      - ii. Lots of notes that Eric J has about the issues with the newsletter.
    - b. Eric J said that this was the first iteration and we learned a lot.
    - c. This was referred to the IT and Outreach Committees
- o Finance Report was presented by Robin McClellan
  - i. Reviewed the budget
    - 1. A number of suggestions that will be reviewed by Eric and then talked about at the next Finance Committee meeting. Then there will be a vote at the next meeting
  - ii. Patronage Dividends
    - 1. Discussed, nothing news
  - iii. Some changes to the financials of shifting things between departments.
  - iv. Work Plan
    - 1. Working on profitability by department
      - a. all ok except:
        - i. co-op pack
          - 1. probably due to the overhead w/r/t that and the co-op pack sales going down
            - a. currently -57%
        - ii. produce
          - 1. losing -70%
          - 2. we can't be a co-op without a produce department. but 70% is huge
      - b. carriage house doing quite well
      - c. Laura asked about co-op pack, was it traditionally 2 people?
        - i. Eric J reported that it is now 2 people instead of 3, even though the hours have not changed
          - 1. these are core workers who work for a total of 30 hours a week.



- i. Laura asked us to start thinking about who would be a good facilitator for the board retreat
- ii. Some discussion occurred on this point.
- iii. The board decided that we need a retreat a committee, which will be made up of the Executive Committee, Erica, and potentially other board members.

8. Adjournment

- o Mary Egan moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Robin McClellan and this was agreed upon at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joseph Andriano  
Secretary, Potsdam Food Co-Op