

General Membership Meeting Minutes Weavers Way Cooperative Association

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Sylvia Carter, Vice-President, called the meeting of the Weavers Way Co-op General Membership to order at 7:30 p.m. on the evening of Tuesday, June 8, 2004, at the Summit Presbyterian Church sanctuary, Greene Street and Westview Street. Sylvia announced that a quorum was met and thanked everyone for attending.

AGENDA REVIEW: Sylvia Carter

Sylvia reviewed the agenda and introduced the Board members.

MINUTES APPROVAL: Sylvia Carter

The minutes from the December 8, 2003, General Membership Meeting were approved.

CREDIT UNION: John Tuffy

John introduced Dorothy Guy as the president of the Weavers Way Credit Union from 1977-87 which later folded into the current Delaware Valley Federal Credit Union. Mr. Tuffy outlined the variety of services now available to its members.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Bob Noble

Bob highlighted the co-op's activities of the last six months: The co-op continues to show excellent results in its bottom line. Equity payments to ex-members have resumed. New General Manager was hired, Glenn Bergman. Many events have taken place such as Staff Appreciation Day, Mt. Airy Day food vending, Fundraiser event and Health Fair. Many more members have become actively involved. The crisis is over and viability of the store has been proven. In May, the Strategic Planning process began, building upon the Vision Committee work started a year ago. Many aspects of the co-op were discussed, such as growth, board governance, store facilities, staff development, membership issues and others with the goals of developing leadership and broadening membership. The biggest issue to emerge was how to deal with the co-op's growth and sustainability. With goals of spreading co-op principles, providing a livable wage and strengthening store programs, the issue of the co-op's growth needs to be faced. The planning committee will seek the advice of other co-ops, consultants and the membership.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Eva Schweber

Eva reported that the co-op ended the third quarter with \$200,000 net income, \$99,000 of which came from the sale of 551. The Finance Committee has conducted an internal audit on financial controls which for the most part had good results. An external audit will be completed in August. The co-op's first Cash Flow budget is nearly finished. Eva suggested that the membership become proficient in reading the co-op's financial statements.

PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES REGARDING AUDITS, THE TREASURER'S ROLE AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE: Eva Schweber

Article VIII – Miscellaneous, Section 3, Auditing

Original language: The Books of the Co-op shall be audited at the end of each fiscal year by an accountant who shall not be an officer or director of the Co-op.

Proposed new language: The books of the co-op shall be audited at least once every three (3) years with no less than a Review in the intervening years by a certified public accountant who shall be independent of the co-op.

Article VI – Officers, Section 4, Treasurer

Original language: The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds and securities of the Co-op. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, in the name of the Co-op, all funds in which depositories as the Board of Directors may designate. The Treasurer shall keep full and accurate records of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Co-op, shall be responsible for establishing all financial systems and procedures, including the administration of members' investment accounts, and shall make reports of all transactions and of the financial condition of the Co-op to the Board of Directors at its regular meetings, or when the Board of Directors so requires. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the preparation of annual operating and capital budgets. The Board may retain bookkeeping or accounting services to assist the Treasurer in the performance of said duties. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Operations Committee. The Treasurer shall appoint a Finance Committee and shall serve as its Chairperson.

Proposed new language: The Treasurer shall monitor the operations accounts on a monthly basis and report to the Board as appropriate. Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee, assist in the preparation of the budget, and advise and assist on making financial information available to both co-op members and the Board. In addition, the Treasurer shall serve as the liaison between the Board and its auditor.

Article VII – Committees, Section 6, Finance Committee

Original language: The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer and shall: a. Assist in the maintenance of financial books and records; b. Be responsible for the preparation of regular reports on the financial status of the Co-op, financial planning and budgeting and audits.

Proposed new language: The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer and shall serve in an advisory capacity to both the General Manager and the Board in the oversight and reporting of the financial status of the coop. The Finance Committee will conduct an annual review of the financial controls of the co-op.

The membership voted to approve all proposed changes.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT: Glenn Bergman

Glenn thanked Norman Weiss for his hard work and dedication as Acting General Manager. Glenn spoke to the idea of expansion of the store, in order to benefit the staff, to spread the co-op philosophy and to make us less of a "closed" establishment. He spoke of expanding current programs, such as taking the Henry School Marketplace idea to other schools, and bringing more of the co-op farm's produce into the store for sale. Grant writers are needed to help with grants to further develop store programs. The Buy Local program started at the White Dog café has come to the co-op, look for signs in the store promoting locally produced items. Charts comparing our prices to other stores will be published in a regular fashion so members can see how our prices compare so they can make their purchasing decisions.

VISION COMMITTEE: Sylvia Carter

Staff Appreciation Day was held in April, sponsored by the Vision Committee. Thanks were given to the donors, vendors and members who gave money and gift items. Over \$900 was raised. The committee is working on a Cultural Moment program, to educate about other cultures through food tastings, recipes, etc. Member help is welcome.

BREAK OUT SESSION: Larry Schofer, Bob Noble, and Alan Dawley

Three groups of members were formed to discuss and problem solve around two topics: 1. What kind of things can we do to get more shoppers into the co-op and keep our core values of cooperative principles and practices? 2. Sound business practices include planning for growth. In what ways should our co-op grow? Real growth in existing store? Prepared foods at 608 Carpenter Lane, etc.?

Are there other ideas that allow us to grow while continuing our commitment to the community and balance our values of cooperative principles and philosophy?

Notes from Group 1: On Recruiting New Members: Call acquaintances. Call neighbors. Call near neighbors of WW – perhaps offer discount (as a way of offsetting inconvenience of having WW on the block). Follow up with phone calls to who express interest. Recruit at local colleges and universities among resident students – Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia U. Henry School parents. On Getting New Shoppers: Allowing non-members to shop. Problem of growing too big. Need to define what the “coop experience” is. Should there be a work requirement? Restricted hours for non-members to shop. Premium to members for off-peak shopping. If non-members are allowed to shop, try to recruit them as members. On Growth: The cafe as we had talked about before the crisis. 2nd location for WW. Self-service checkout using scanners. Home delivery for a fee. On Non-Food Items: Conversation corner (with cafe) for neighbors, members, and non-members. Market ourselves as a place to shop for eating healthy.

Notes from Group 2: More platters. More advertising. Brochure. Make information more available. Use the bulletin board outside. Have information available outside. Make special effort with near neighbors. Retail from 610 to public at higher prices. Press coverage. One-day open house to the public with samples. Allow members to bring non-members to shop with them. Open 559 to the public for a limited period of time and track how many join, etc. Make Shuttle free at WaWa and train station. Expand and maintain better the merchant discount program. Meal-in-a-bag. Other prepared food expansion ideas.

Notes from Group 3: On How to Get More Shoppers: Create different categories of membership-working and non-working. Create different levels of equity. Lower prices for members. Work incentives. Real rebates-should be easier with scanning technology. Open store to non-members. Expand product line. On Should we grow? Don't add to overcrowded aisles and parking problems. Don't lose focus-keep one store. Bigger store in new location. 2 stores-keep the present store and open a branch. More efficient use of current space. Use 608-610 for prepared foods. Shrink the pet store.

ELECTION RESULTS

Bob Noble, President, 2004-06
Sylvia Carter, Vice-President, 2004-06
Steve Hebden, Staff Representative, 2004-06
Stuart Katz, At-Large, 2004-06
Charles Almond Pearson, At-Large, 2004-06
James Peightel, At-Large, 2004-06
Joseph Sullivan, At-Large, 2004-06

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Guy, Secretary