**OVFC Board Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 12, 2020**

**Via Phone Call**

In attendance: Cheryl, Marshall, Joanne, Kelly, Sarah, Perri-Rae, Lydia, Ashleigh (minutes)

Regrets: Dwight, Chris, Gregg

**1. Administration**

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the July 2nd meeting were approved with adjustments.

**2. Review of July Sales Cycle**

Cheryl presented July sales report. Sales were $9,697.24 compared to $5,283 for July 2019. There were 97 customers who ordered from 33 producers.

11 new sign-ups, out of which 2 ordered. Of those 2, 1 paid membership fee voluntarily, despite test drive. 28 customers who ordered in July were among the new members who signed up since March 2020, when test drive was implemented for ‘state of emergency.’

The customers who signed up and ordered this month found out about us:

0 – booth

0 – online

2 – Facebook

0 – news article

0 – word of mouth

**3. Financial**

Joanne presented the financial report for the 2nd quarterly period, ending June 30th, 2020. The co-op is doing much better this year than previously, the sustained sales over the summer period which are not reflected in this report are very positive for our needs of generating funds for future expenditures.

* + Along with our increase in sales this period came expected increase in expenses. With more volume of sales there is more work but we are net positive currently.
  + Some producers left due to COVID19 difficulties (eg. Bryson-as primary vegetable producer; up to 25% of total sales in past). Despite this, the co-op has done very well and has filled in many gaps, the addition of a fish supplier accounts for the greatest increase in sales categories.
* Suggestions made for future:
  + Record the ratio of costs to sales for a better sense of how the co-op is faring as costs increase relative to our sales
  + Additional use of charts; to show where money is being spent, quarterly/seasonal bar graphs for recognizing trends
  + Reach out to Bryson to determine if/when they might begin offering products through the co-op again

**ACTION**- Cheryl will contact Bryson

* Joanne offered to answer any board members’ questions that may arise from the statements if contacted.

**ACTION-** Joanne will prepare some additional information charts next month

* Cheque signing authorities have been successfully updated. Joanne expressed her gratitude for this.

**4. Re-location Committee**

Ashleigh detailed the progress of the re-location committee

* + Few viable options; privately owned space preferable than community space for accessibility during ‘pandemic;’ basement of Allan Studd’s building at 210 Queen St. in Eganville only current option
  + Very good potential with a few shortcomings: exterior door is small, interior space at the entrance is limited (will create a bottleneck for moving products), currently no way to bring dollies into the basement (sole access is down approx. 8 stairs).
  + Would not be a lease agreement with Allan and as such would be offering us a substantially lower fee ($225/month), compared to cost to lease it exclusively
  + Ashleigh is waiting to hear back from Allan if he is able to grant access on upcoming delivery day (Tues. Aug 18) to determine viability of altering the space to either a) build a permanent ramp, b) install a dumbwaiter (est. cost of $4000 to be shared between OVFC and Allan), or c) to install a temporary ramp over current staircase. Several carpenters were contacted but were unresponsive or unable to help out with their current workload. Al Cashin requested we be in touch come winter if work is not done.
  + Ashleigh still has further questions for Allan for clarification of the proposed agreement when it comes to alterations, and sharing the cost of installation/materials of ramp and/or dumbwaiter, as well as potential for reimbursement if a long term lease with another occupant is obtained
* A floor plan or group visit to site of 210 Queen St. has been requested for better understanding of issues
* Adam Johns who coordinated the Algonquin college carpentry program was suggested as a good contact in case an agreement can be worked out with some of the students

**ACTION-** Ashleigh will contact contact Adam Johns re: carpentry students

**ACTION-** Ashleigh will research further the cost of purchasing a dumbwaiter and materials for ramp

* Corrie from ‘I Like Chocolate’ offering new location to co-op, unclear on extent of full offer; potentially as retail space, or sorting site

**ACTION-**Lydia will inquire further about what is being offered

* Update (08/31/20) via email: Lydia erroneously attributed an offer made by Sarah Bennett of Burnt Bridge which is covered in item No. 5 of the minutes.

**5. Burnt Bridge**

Sarah presented offer to co-op for use of Burnt Bridge location in Petawawa for retail space or as an alternate pick-up depot (insufficient for sorting site). Open to suggestions for details of arrangement if OVFC determines the space to be useful. Size of space offered is unknown.

* Suggestion made to focus on e-commerce and deliveries rather than retail
* We now have two similar offers for potential retail space (I like Chocolate-Cobden, Burnt Bridge-Petawawa, can this allow for more frequent sales than current model
* Need to work on co-op’s direction, and make a business plan as e-commerce
* Sarah has joined Mrs. Grocery online, designed to move product faster than co-op’s design, more condensed order cycle. Customers will get orders faster with other competitors systems
* Co-op needs to catch up to new models, perhaps moving away from doing its deliveries (ie. as food distribution business) and determine its role; perhaps no longer only improving accessibility to local foods, but working with community groups (not-for-profit designation of co-op allows access to grants not available to for-profits). Suggestion of workshops etc. to promote local economies and community building projects falls to not-for-profits

**6. Membership Suggestion**

Lydia brought forward a suggestion from a producer member to remove $50 lifetime membership.

* + Fee dissuades potential members from joining
* Concern raised over financial loss to co-op for doing so. Question raised whether there is more loss from missed membership opportunities that would generate more sales. Co-op should be generating income through product sales rather than membership sales.
* Questions raised in regards to legal complications for members who have paid lifetime fee already. How do we legally make policy changes to current by-laws?

**ACTION-** Lydia to investigate current by-laws and process to make policy changes in co-op model

* COVID19 period shows increase in memberships when fee is eliminated
* Co-op should be replacing membership fees with volunteer involvement (skills/availability requested on application)

**7. E-Commerce Platform**

Not discussed due to timing

**8. Developing a Vision: Business and Marketing Plan**

1. Wednesday, August 26th, from 2-4:30pm selected for meeting with Kent Tubman who has offered the OVFC a free Q & A consultation on E-commerce, pay gateways and Guidance on Building a Marketing Plan

* Lydia to attend virtually

**ACTION-** All attendees to prepare questions for Kent

1. Marketing by Building Community or invitation to David Wybou not discussed due to timing

**9. Review of Resilient Communities Fund**

Marshall offered a brief introduction to Trillium Foundation grant “Resilient Communities Fund” aimed at strengthening communities in response to the impact of COVID19.

* Possibility of a Q&A (ZOOM) session to learn more, suggestion that minimum of 2 board members attend to ascertain whether worthwhile for OVFC to apply
* OVFC impacted by closure of community center
* Partner with others to solve issues associated with COVID19 such as isolation
* Suggestion made to contact Megan Conway who had previously offered her skills for grant writing to the coop

**ACTION-**Cheryl to send Megan’s contact info to Kelly

**ACTION-**Kelly to contact Megan as potential grant committee member

**ACTION-**Lydia to continue discussions with Child Poverty Network on food security to build community relationship

* Discussion on differences between ‘for’ and ‘not-for’ profit business models for co-operatives and pros and cons of each to plan for best direction for OVFC

**ACTION-**Lydia to look into differences between for-profit and not-for-profit co-op models

**10. Other Business**

No other business discussed

**11. Next Meeting -** Wednesday, September 16, starting at 7:00 pm via phone call.