

Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2019  
East Lansing Food Co-op Board of Directors

- Meeting called to order at 7:10
- Attending:
  - Board members: John Reich, Marshall Clabeaux, Michelle Bridges, Stephen Gasteyer, Steve Andre
  - SHC Vista Volunteer: Anbo Shefa
  - Staff: Peggy Cunniffe
- Agenda approved
- Minutes for 12/10/18 Board meeting approved unanimously
- Staff Update
  - Current Bank balance – \$102,750
  - We have a \$4,000 outstanding bill as part of VISTA payment to MSU Student Housing Cooperative as ELFCO's share of Ingham County Health Dept's charge to MSU Student Housing Cooperative for hosting Anbo Shefa, Vista volunteer.
  - Weekly expenses report
  - Consider Comcast proposal to replace TDS phone and AT&T Internet services
    - We currently pay \$45/month for phone to TDS, and \$61/month for internet to AT&T
    - Comcast says they can do it all for \$81/month
    - Board suggested that we not do this right away, especially since the TDS phone contract will end in March 2019
  - Complete form for new City of East Lansing employee income tax withholding
    - East Lansing Payroll withholding – Peggy has filled out the paperwork, but needs to meet with the accountant to complete.
    - 1% of Peggy's salary will be withheld
    - City may want home phone, date of birth, social security number, drivers' license, home phone, of all owners, members, etc.; Peggy will call, but we expect that they *really* only will want the information of some of the members (e.g. President and Vice President) of the Board of Directors
  - MIFFS (Michigan Family Farms) conference is Feb 9 at KVCC in K'zoo
    - People may go, all agreed that the conference was worthwhile, but we have to think about the budget.
- HFFI (Healthy Food Financing Initiative) grant
  - Deadline for applying is Feb. 14
  - Required webinar is Jan 8 at noon
    - Peggy is signed up to attend
    - Also at <https://www.investinginfood.com/>

- The grant would be beneficial for us for many reasons: 1. Gives us something to ask for from partners; 2. We meet many of the conditions, e.g., innovations in fresh food retail – staples and produce; availability of public transportation; support of innovation in local food delivery; 3. Would help to rework our budget; 4. Offers an alternative option of applying for technical assistance and building capacity; 5. There is no pre-determined grant amount, but they generally award between \$25,000 – and – \$250,000; 6. Will allow for partnerships with university and other entities. We will need to raise money to show in-kind and actual income. We could consider crowd funding.
  - Challenges include being able to answer several questions – We must know who we are going to serve, and how the money will be used to serve underserved populations. We will need statistics to talk about students, residents on the East Side, residents on the North Side, etc. We will need demographics, income, statistics, etc.
  - Will need to create a timeline showing when we need to meet various project goals. They also want information about key personnel and staff trained in retail.
  - We will need to have a place in mind to sell – segue to 541 E. Grand River (Campus Town Mall).
  
- Proposal to rent premises at 541 E. Grand River (in Campus Town Mall)
  - Related issue of the E. Grand River market
  - There are advantages: it is a space that is available for a reasonable cost; it could serve as a point from which to deliver bulk produce – flour, milk, eggs – for SHC 17 houses;
  - The space, however, is small – and would not be a long term solution; insufficiently large for long term produce sales;
  - Concern about having the food space on the second floor. It is not a good space for retail. Would refrigeration be allowed? Permissible according to MDARD regulations? Would need to be set up with new sinks, other equipment, food handling training;
  - It will be a place to organize; Anbo & Marshall suggest cost would be \$800-\$900/month. Peggy found an online brochure advertising the space which, extrapolating from the figure of \$14/SF/year for 1,050 feet would put monthly cost at \$1,225. It may be, however, that SHC's good relationship with the property owner would lead to the lower rent cost suggested by Anbo & Marshall. We could look into other arrangements -- could maybe have SHC let ELFCO use the space.
  - Leads back to the question of the vision → retail space; how do we tailor what we want to do... We can have this be a startup...
  - Maybe move to 1306 Michigan Ave. as a starter location – for bulk and produce – working with local farmers -- and bulk producers...
  - We should inquire about a cheaper rent for the first year for the 1306 Mich Ave site. We will offer to pay taxes, insurance, utilities.
  
- Anbo will tabulate how much SHC houses spend on food purchases.

- Potential partnership outreach: updates from board members
  - Peggy will start calling people representing partner organizations; she will contact Board members to accompany her on any visits to potential partners.
  - We need to emphasize our vision of an Argus Farms-like model, a distribution outlet for the community; with partnerships with
    - a) community organizations; b) academic institutions; c) farmers
    - Sell to: Retail; Bulk for the Food Coop; other businesses; underserved communities?;
  
- Prep for annual meeting & elections: Spring 2019 – need to start considering:
  - Date – by April 30 – possibly April 28, 2019 (which is Eastern Orthodox East)
    - Likely on the Hannah Center -- Pot luck meal; Board members will supply food.
  - Recruiting for board positions will be necessary because we have open seats, and David Reyes-Gastelum's and Marshall Clabeaux's terms expire in April. Stephen suggested that opportunities for doing this will arise as we meet with potential partners.