

Minutes of August 7, 2018 ELFCO Board Meeting

- **Call to Order:** 7:05 p.m.
- **Introductions** of all present (Board Members, Staff, Owners, Visitors)
 - BOD – Stephen Gasteyer, Michele Bridges, Marshall Clabeaux, John Reich
 - Staff – Peggy
 - Visitors – Kriss Ostrom (owner), Anbo Shefa (Student Housing Co-op)
- **Approval of agenda** with additions for August 7 meeting
 - John moved to accept, Marshall seconded – accepted without objection
- **Approval of 7/2/18 Board meeting minutes.** (Note: minutes are posted on the website as well as on the Google Drive.)
- **Staff Update:**
 - Weekly Expenses report
 - Credit union balance
 - **Property and liability insurance currently at \$500/year** – Great American Insurance Company – Peggy advises that this is a good deal given the eventual need for natural foods insurer. Board approves this expenditure.
 - **Rental/Lease Agreement renewal for office space:** We turned in the lease signed by Stephen, but are still awaiting finalized lease signed by landlord.
 - **Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Annual Report:** Should ELFCO file this for 2018?
 - We file this report each year. However, NOT filing for two consecutive years dissolves the co-op without a vote of the owners. The Board’s decision to file or not file must be recorded in these meeting minutes.
 - Given our current interest in grant-seeking, we need to file the annual report for 2018 so that non-profit status does not lapse.
 - John moved to file, Stephen seconded, board voted yes unanimously.
 - **2017 Annual Business Survey:** ELFCO was selected to complete this survey. Once selected, completion is required by law. This is in addition to the 2017 Economic Survey which we completed in June. We have filed our responses with the U.S. Census Bureau and have received confirmation of receipt for both surveys.
 - **Photo of current Board needed** for Governance page of website. – Will wait until Fall 2018 to have a full Board complement.
 - **We have an invitation to the Michigan Good Food Summit – OCTOBER 22 –**
 - Peggy will send the link – will be good to have good representation of ELFCO there – a number of us will pay our own way, but ELFCO may cover 1 or 2 to participate.

- **Fundraising: Grants**
 - **Review “Summary of grant opportunities”** prepared by Peggy and sent to Board members on Friday, July 27. Peggy will also send link to this doc in Google Drive.
 - **MEDC grant (“Public Spaces Community Places”) – we need to think about partnerships – with whom...**
 - We need to explore the possibilities of partnerships with non-profits... Peggy will send list of people to partner with. Might look into discussions with ANC.
 - Reach out to Erik Schertzing...
 - Anbo talked about multi-stakeholder co-op options, i.e., “solidarity co-ops” ...with multiple classes... as moving beyond individual co-op members... and addressing the problem of competition with other grocers
 - **Other grant options include:**
 - **USDA: Local Food Promotion Program** – which may provide opportunities for partnerships...
 - **USDA: Farmers Market Promotion Program**
 - **MDARD: Value added grant**
 - **MDARD’s Jenelle Jagmin** has offered to meet with us to discuss grants, particularly the Value-Added grant. The meeting will take place on August 16. Peggy will contact Jenelle Jagmin about the time and location of the meeting.
- **Advisory group planning**
 - **Notes from 2015 meetings of previous ELFCO Advisory Board** were sent by Peggy to all Board members in preparation for this meeting. The advisory group formed in 2015 was helpful despite the store closing.
 - **Potential advisory group members:** We have a brainstormed list of names. Continue to identify who might be in this group.
 - **Letter of invitation:** Work on letter to potential members of advisory group.
 - Peggy will send Board members a letter outline and a draft list of names.
- **ELFCO as student project in an MSU advertising course** – Marshall investigated – Fall semester already has partnerships set up, but advertising prof would love to work with ELFCO for Spring 2019.

- **Possible store location:** Marshall mentioned that the space next to Altu's is still available. Other possible lessee has stalled. Red Cedar Development was just approved, making that area maybe even more desirable.

- **Farmer Survey:** We have one more farmer survey response; info from that response was added to the survey results in the Google Drive. Marshall will bring the paper surveys to the ELFCO office.

- Marshall and Anbo met with Drew Montrie who is College of Ag Farm Market program and runs 10 hen farms...She is excited about our initiative and will put out feelers for potential partners...

- **CCMA follow-up**
 - Anbo asked the Board if they had any responses to her notes from CCMA –
 - Marshall will attend Milwaukee...
 - Anbo said that there was knowledge of ELFCO's situation at CCMA, as well as some knowledge about Argus. ELFCO is not the only co-op experiencing difficulties.
 - A lot of discussion about the future of the grocery business, and what the new co-ops look like:
 - Amazon's new facial recognition technology at Whole Foods
 - Amazon's acquisition of WF leaves niche for businesses who want to work with local producers...
 - Anbo has compiled a beginning list of value-added product vendors.

- **Other matters arising**
 - John asked if there would be interest in extending the "solidarity" cooperative concept to producers as well as consumers. Anbo said there is a lot of interest in "solidarity" co-ops – she will send notes on meetings and discussions... seen as a way to resist the unilateral consolidation...

- **Next Board meeting**
 - ~~Monday, September 10, 7pm, at the ELFCO office~~ – **Note: Due to scheduling conflicts, the September board meeting was postponed.**