

The Board of Rising Tide Community Market convened upstairs in the new FARMS Community Kitchen and Food Learning Center on January 14, 2014 at 5:32 p.m. Present were

Catherine Walton, President

Kimberly Reed, Interim Vice President and Secretary

Sarah Matel, Treasurer

Board Members: Anna Leavitt, Beth McPherson and Jon Weislogel.

Rising Tide Attendees: General Manager, Twewang "Sherpa" Sherpalama; Wellness Manager and Recorder, Karin Swanson; Front End Manager, Elsa Kevin; POS Coordinator, Dwight Chamberlain.

Guest: Mary Ellen Barnes.

Catherine opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the newly renovated FARMS educational facility. She thanked Mary Ellen for attending her second meeting as evidence of her interest in learning about Rising Tide Board function and its role in the store and the community.

Catherine asked that two agenda items be postponed for discussion at the February meeting: setting the agenda for the Annual meeting in March and finalizing the slate of Board Candidates. The Board VOTED unanimously to move these two items to February for discussion and Board action. After discussion, it was agreed that Sherpa will work with Catherine and Jon to draft an agenda for the Board's consideration at their February meeting.

Re: the Consent Agenda, the Board VOTED unanimously to accept the minutes of the December 17th meeting as submitted.

Sherpa then presented the General Manager's report which included note of the following:

Employees gave a baby shower for Elsa Kevin; her last day until April will be January 17th.

Several new discounts will be in effect—beginning with senior discounts at 10% (formerly 5%) every Tuesday and Thursday. In addition—beginning in February, everyone will enjoy a 10% discount on one "basket" on the first Wednesday of every month. Sherpa also shared a copy of a coupon that will soon appear in several local publications which give \$5.00 off to a purchase of \$35.00 or more.

Despite three early closing days in December, Rising Tide's sales growth was 9.28% over last year with a GPM of 40.9%.

Sherpa noted his satisfaction with the performance of the newly appointed departmental managers in terms of realizing results in a shorter time frame than expected. Consequently, the store is fuller, fronted well, and experiencing a bigger basket size. He has noticed that the majority of managers have a sense of pride for their department's performance and over-all

contribution to the store. He also reviewed the advantages of the Tierra Farms plastic containers over our former option in terms of addressing environmental and safety parameters.

Sherpa attended the CBLD training in Keene, NH recently and will discuss his impressions later in the meeting. His GM report is included as part of the record.

Catherine asked Sherpa to clarify expectations with respect to the product commitment work being done at Rising Tide. Since it is still in draft form, it will not be part of the annual meeting agenda. She encouraged Board members to email one another with thoughts over the next month.

Catherine then asked for an update on the impact of bringing in many new products into the store—especially as it relates to the work of the POS Coordinator, Dwight Chamberlain. Dwight explained that if the information related to product came to him electronically, he can easily enter it into the system; however, if he has to enter each product manually, it takes time. Currently, the work load is manageable at this point.

Beth McPherson presented the FARMS update. She praised the renovation and noted that the first event had taken place yesterday: the “Daisies” (k-1st grade) spent the afternoon in the community space. She also noted that the Kitchen Planning Group meets next week to select appliances and equipment in an effort to complete the design of the Community Kitchen. The goal is to finish the kitchen build-out by August. Beth would appreciate the Board’s assistance in garnering additional financial support for the project.

Beth then noted that Samuel Kaymen would be hosting a film festival in the new space—beginning Friday, January 31 and continuing with a film each week through June 6th. Though there will be no charge, donations are welcome. Other educational efforts include a workshop on creating a nutrient dense local produce smoothie and a gardeners’ open house hosted by Morning Dew Farm to taste test different vegetables in order to determine which variety an attendee might wish to grow.

Sarah Matel, Treasurer, then reviewed the RT Key Indicators for December and year end. Sales were over 5 million for 2013; growth was just under 9% compared to 2012 and there was also an increase in membership. Sarah and Kent, as the Finance Committee, met with Sherpa this past week to discuss his 2104 budget and strategic business plan. She noted that the strategic business plan may not exactly coincide with budget since the plan was formulated before the final budget review will occur. Sarah confirmed that the priority of the Finance Committee is to review debt including member loans—with the hope that Rising Tide will soon be in a position to refinance institutional debt at a better rate than exists currently.

Beth asked Sherpa why he didn’t identify “weaknesses” in his strategic plan; he instead chose to use the term “opportunities ” to address areas that need enhancement.

Catherine then reported that the Nominating Committee had not met since its initial meeting in November; as it stands now, Mary Ellen Barnes is the only candidate to date. Catherine encouraged the Board members to identify other potential members and email their suggestions to her.

Sherpa then took a few minutes to report on his CBLD training. As an introduction, he thanked Sarah and Kent for their assistance with the 2014 budget and he also expressed his appreciation to Candy Bordonaro, Office Manager, for her support in the process. Sherpa feels he will need to further refine his numbers before final submission. As a platform, he has reviewed 2011, 2012, and 2013 store performance along with his direct two months' experience to date; he has also used NCGA standards and those developed by national food experts and himself over his past thirty years in the grocery business. His strategic business plan and budget are prioritized to increase growth while remaining sustainable.

His CBLD session was productive and he feels his and his staff's performance is dependent upon our store interpretation of policy governance principles being consistent with the interpretation held by the Board. Sherpa requested that the 22 issues he has identified in his report be prioritized by the Board over the next few months.

Catherine then reminded everyone that Member newsletter submissions are due by January 20th. So far, Catherine and Beth will be submitting articles.

Finally, the Board discussed possible dates for their Board retreat. Thane, Consultant to the Board, will be present. Dates that might be possible are April 12th, 19th; after Sarah noted a conflict with both dates, a third date was suggested—April 26th. Follow-up emails will serve to resolve the date.

The January Board meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m. An Executive Session followed.