

**Agenda**  
**MMFC Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, September 18th, 2022 4:00pm**  
**Farmers Market Pavilion, Menomonie**  
**Becca Schoenborn, Emcee**

- Item#1: Call Meeting to Order
- Item#2: Approve Minutes of September 13, 2022 Meeting
- Item#3: Read Ends Statement
- Item#4: Last Call for Candidates
- Item#5: President's Report
- Item#6: Ballot Box Closes
- Item#7: General Manager's Report
- Item#8: Introduction to Grant Recipients
- Item#9: Public Comments
- Item#10: Announcement of Election Winners
- Item#11: Adjourn

**MMFC Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Sunday, September 18th, 2022**  
**Becca Schoenborn, Emcee**

**Headcount:** approximately 110 adults and 10 children

**Call to order:** Meeting was called to order at (4:03)

**Motion carried** to approve the meeting minutes (Wallin, Meicher)

Schoenborn **called for additional candidates.**

**President's Report** (Rick Remington)

- 1) Welcome and thank you for coming out to spend the evening with us.
- 2) Review of merger. Personal thank you to everyone who shared the vision. Our co-op is known nationally for coming together as two strong co-ops to create one stronger organization.
- 3) The Board's main tasks are completed through monitoring, both internally and by third parties. Policy governance allows for the board to represent the owners in a clear and supportive manner.
- 4) This year the Board changed the Ends Statement to include the word "Communities". The reflects both Eau Claire and Menomonie, our farmers, producers, shoppers, owners, and staff.
- 5) Thank you to all staff for the hard work, especially during a pandemic, supply shortages, and labor issues.
- 6) Thank you for all of the owner support who has gotten the co-op to where it is today and is sharing our excitement for the future.

- 7) Karlee Wallin, previous president of the JLF Board and member of the Collaboration Committee gave her reflections on the merger.
  - a) There was a large amount of work being done to collaborate between the two stores before the vote and approval to officially merge.
  - b) After merger the new Point of Sale system, rebranding, merger between two staffs and cultures, all while contending with a global pandemic and labor shortages is to be commended. Thank you to Crystal and her staff.
  - c) Expansion could not be possible without the merger and the owners who have invested. Class C shares will allow the co-op to have a lower amount of debt for the project.
  - d) Recognition of volunteers who made over 5000 calls to owners; especially Karen who made over 1000 calls and Gary who made over 750 calls.

Schoenborn **closed the ballot box.**

**General Manager's Report** (Crystal Halvorson)

- 1) Thank you to Becca for organizing the event. This is our first Annual Meeting since merger; thank you to those who drove from Eau Claire. Next year we hope to have our Annual Meeting at the corner of Barstow St. and Galloway St. at the site of our new building in Eau Claire.
- 2) We are approximately 30% of the way into our most recent 5 year plan. Merger and COVID have simultaneously sped up and slowed down our progress.
  - a) New technology includes an integrated Point of Sale system, ecommerce, curbside pick up, and deliveries to Eau Claire.
  - b) We have given 7 rounds of pay increases since COVID began, moving us toward our goal of a \$15 starting wage.
  - c) Our local partners continue to face challenges. We have renewed our attention to our core value of supporting local.
  - d) We continue to work on sustainability, DEI, and reducing plastic in both stores.
  - e) Our finances are strong but inflation is intense. We are working to keep our margins steady to reduce sticker shock for our shoppers.
  - f) Merger brought together two very different cultures and operations. There has been higher turnover and work has been exhausting. Thank you to everyone who has worked over the last two years.
- 3) We have undergone an assessment of readiness for expansion and we are in a unique position of owning the stores vs leasing property. This means a higher investment upfront, but advantages of owning our own buildings.
  - a) It is time for us to call in the purchase of Class C shares. Those who have signed a subscription agreement will be getting a mailing shortly.
  - b) Our business plan focuses on retail basics and planning for Eau Claire. This includes kitchen improvements in Menomonie, fresh beverage availability in our deli, a facelift of our bulk department, staff training, and readiness to triple our staff size.
- 4) Our Round Up programs include a Co-op Community Fund. This year's recipient of this award is the Eau Claire Children's Museum. Not only will they be our neighbors in downtown Eau Claire, but their new programming features sustainability, nutrition, and food systems.
  - a) Michael McHorney, Executive Director of CMEC, accepted the \$2000 award and shared his excitement to be neighbors in our community.

**Discussion of** and introduction to the Fund Our Foodshed Grant recipients. (Schoenborn)

- 1) Joe from Sacred Blossom:
  - a) Sacred Blossom is a tea farm located in the hills of Mondovi. Joe was MMFC's Merchandising Manager for over two years before joining Sacred Blossom.

- b) Their focus is on medicinal herbs and loose tea. The farm owner, Tony, and Joe are the only two employees to do everything on the farm and related to the business and everything involved in the process is done on the farm.
  - c) The tea packaging was originally plastic bottles, but Tony wanted to find a more sustainable way of packaging and marketing.
  - d) The grant from the co-op allowed Tony and Joe to hire a third party designer for their packaging. This allowed them to focus on the product and the business, saving them time and energy.
  - e) The new packaging has kept over 500 lbs of plastic out of the landfill and the new packaging is compostable.
  - f) The grant has affirmed and validated partnerships between the co-op and local producers and has allowed the farm to work in collaboration with their Amish neighbors.
- 2) Drew from Kaiserson Bees
- a) Drew and his wife Ellen have been beekeeping for over 10 years. They started beekeeping at UWEC. The City of Eau Claire told them they could not keep bees within the city limits. This started a petition to the City's Sustainability Commission. An ordinance was passed unanimously by the City Council to allow for beekeeping within Eau Claire. This has since spread to numerous other cities in the area.
  - b) Last season, Kaiserson had 30 different bee colonies in 8 different locations in the area. Honey is harvested in single origin, small batches to emphasize the variability in honey, much like wine or cheese.
    - i) The grant from MMFC has allowed them to buy a shipping container which will give them more space to store materials and expand their colonies.
    - ii) This also allows them to work with more CSA farmers, increase pollination, and diversify crops. It has also allowed them to offer more products and for Drew to make this his full time career.

**Call for public comments:**

1. Question: Is the groundbreaking scheduled for Eau Claire yet?
  - a. Answered by Crystal Halvorson: Not yet, but very soon we will be putting in the geo-piers to offset the large amount of sawdust under the property.
2. Question: Why are we going with geo-piers instead of excavating the property?
  - a. Answered by Crystal Halvorson: This is based on the architect's recommendations.
3. Question: Will the new store be updated for sustainability?
  - a. Answered by Crystal Halvorson: Yes. Our partners at NCG (National Co-op Grocers) do monitoring for sustainability such as refrigeration. Our new store will be built with Green initiatives in mind.
4. An owner is working on a Food Hub for farmers and growers in the region to help with centralizing products and distribution etc. He is happy to answer questions after the meeting.
5. An owner would like to thank the staff for their continued service and kindness.
6. The Friends of the Library would like to thank MMFC for their partnership. Sales of books in the store funds different programming by the Friends of the Library.
7. It is noted that Crystal Halvorson and Rick Remington received the national Cooperative Achievement Award this summer.

**Barb Button and Joey Meicher were reelected to the Board.**

**Motion carried to adjourn at (5:13) (Remington, Lehman).**