

September 15, 2014 Board Meeting

present Annelies Lottmann, Haley Bradley, Christa Zufelt, Sarah Kopper, Jared Dillard, Lesley Williamson Belle, Rick Herrera

called to order 6:32

Member Open Time/Agenda Review

Rick Herrera from TRCC (Texas Rural Cooperative Center) introduced himself

correction to Sarah's last name, vote change to reflect official tally, eliminate the vote for fundraising charter

Christa motioned to approve consent agenda with minor corrections to minutes to be made by Haley, fundraising committee charter, and policy c-1 rewrite, seconded by Annelies- 5-0-0

Fundraising Committee Update presented by Jared

focus on raising funds to pay managing director and other staff

focus on growing membership to grow sales

information available online

Annelies and Christa went to a Backyard Bounty meeting and met with the organizer, Annelies will be giving a talk on how to make money with your garden in the near future

Hiring a Managing Director/Grants

Discussion with Rick Herrera re grants

Q - are we able to use grant funds to pay wages?

A - yes in some cases, person paid needs to be putting hours toward value added production processes/marketing directly related to your work

Q - are we value added?

A - yes, because we aggregate and open new markets for local food

Q - hypothetically, if I need a grant to hire marketing person, and intend to add hours to my own schedule / hire myself with those funds, is that ok?

A - not sure, there is often a matching funds requirement of varying ratios - typically 75% needs to be in the bank, 25% can be in kind (equipment, goods, etc) must have the cash on hand to be eligible for grants. If you get VAPG (value added producer grant) must show progress they prefer to give to coops and other group situations vs individuals.

Q - are there grants that don't require matching funds?

A - mostly research style grants

Q - can we use equity?

A - in some cases for some grants, but our member equity can more or less always be counted since it's \$ that sits in our account - have heard of cases where people contribute funds just to meet the matching requirement temporarily but can't advise to do so. don't miss things, good applications get turned down for minor issues. some grants are more stringent at checking than others

not many applications from texas, they want more. about 1/2 of the submitted grants don't hold water for various reasons (incomplete grants, not really eligible, etc)
priorities now are on local food, healthy food, etc etc, good for us.
as long as you can show that you are producing and generating revenue you should qualify for most 'farm' grants, don't have to have a designated farm in a rural area
small minimums for grants (and thus matching funds) are available
must show exactly what you will be using funds for
want proof that you're spending your matching funds towards these objectives
need sound data on funds/use
deadlines have been moved around due to farm bill, we should be looking to next cycle

Q - should we be looking to market to customers or new farmers with grant funds?

A - show how new members benefit you/how being a member benefits the grower - works for you because it shows you are helping more farmers - need to be able to prove that could happen (letters of intent from buyers would help a lot here)

Specialty crop block grant has no matching requirement

NEED TO TALK ABOUT HOW PEOPLE CAN MAKE MONEY WHEN TALKING TO POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

Q - can we get research grants to teach other people how to form a producers co-op?

A - maybe

having more demand than supply is a great and rare thing

Member Engagement Committee Update presented by Haley

newsletter will start going out every other week

why no people at potlucks?

founding party in November - larger than a potluck, possible fundraiser, invite customers?

possible dish and a dollar fundraiser at potlucks?

creating a potluck cookbook, could share recipes at farmstand/eventually collate into a book for members/sale

Ends Policies Discussion

At the Sept. potluck we discussed with a few members what values are most important for the co-op:

- organic food
- simplification of sales for both seller and staff
- reducing costs for gardeners
- reaching out to various ethnic/socio-economic groups
- instilling pride in growers/recognizing farming as a valuable skill for home and community
- building a community of people who are excited about sharing knowledge/making the coop better

conversation should continue with input from more members, perhaps via online survey
need to keep the conversation going

recess 7:24

recommence 7:32

C.4 Policy Monitoring by Annelies to be done next month

Internal Session - invited Rick Herrera to sit in

Christa moved to enter internal session, seconded by Sarah, 5-0-0

entered internal session 7:37

*monitoring of B.4 and B.5 presented by Lesley
minor typos need to be ammended (to be voted in as changes at next consent agenda)*

Operations Update/Financial Reports presented by Lesley

*updates/corrections made to last report
discussion of when loans will be repaid/how to go about asking if people want to renew
why are jan-june sales \$0? Discrepancies in record keeping from then to now don't retrofit the new system
maybe create an easy way for members to keep account of their individual expenses? useful for grants/taxes
any data we need captured for grant purposes need to alert Lesley ASAP so those streams can be captured for analysis
Lesley will review first quarter data to answer questions about profit/loss*

Annelies working with Rick to get financial projections, appear to be matching initial steering committee estimates but coming from different sources (HOPE v online)

need to create a budget for the coming year, now have the capabilities to have the data we need to do that, will also help us prepare for grant applications

B.1 next policy for MD to monitor, focus discussion with Lesley around that for her next meeting

exited internal session 7:58

Haley motioned to approve policy monitoring reports for policies B.4 and B.5, seconded by Jared, 5-0-0

Calendar Review

next meeting Oct 13 @ 6:30

Action Items

Annelies

- send ends goals list out to board
- C.4 policy monitoring
- loan renewal process

Christa

- contact John Vinson's brother in law about grants
- re-monitoring C.3
- send reminder for board packet material

Lesley

- typo corrections for B.4 and B.5

Sarah

- monitoring C.5

All

- any board packet info due to Christa by Sept 29th
- committees should meet if applicable

Christa motioned to adjourn, seconded by Annelies, 5-0-0

adjourned 8:05

