

Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

October 2017 Meeting

Decision: The Board approved the September minutes

Monthly Board Meeting, WSM Admin Center, Hillsborough, NC on October 11, 2017, 6:15 pm to 9:30 pm

Directors present: Ruffin Slater (general manager), Alicia Altmueller (consumer owner), Hank Becker (consumer owner), David Bright (consumer owner, secretary), Jon McDonald (chair, worker owner), Linda Stier (consumer owner), and Charles Traitor (worker owner).

Others attending: Andy Sachs (facilitator), Brenda Camp (notes).

1. Preliminaries

Owner Input: There was no owner input.

Agenda: , "Open Board Time" was added to "Closings," and "Next Month's Agenda" was changed to "Board Calendar."

Minutes: The minutes from the September meeting were approved.

Decision: The Board approved the September minutes.

2. Owner Survey Results and Action Plan

Ruffin Slater, General Manager, presented the Owner Survey results, which was completed by 2,352 owners. Respondents received a 10% coupon. He reported that the Net Promoters Score was down three points. The number of owners who took the surveys from each store aligned closely with the sales distribution among the three stores. He noted quality, local, community, and friendly service continue to be the most important reasons cited by Promoters.

Slater observed that it is most important to understand what owners like, so that we can do more of that. When respondents responded to the new survey question—"What's the most important change that WSM could make?"—lower prices ranked at the top. Slater described a plan to extend WSM's advantage in quality and local and to develop sufficient price parity.

Board Directors offered the following observations about the survey results and the proposed plan:

- The population responding to the survey may have less of a categorical notion of what good eating is as evidenced in quality being ranked higher this year than healthy and organic.
- Respondents also appear to associate produce with quality, particularly freshness.
- Promoters appear more likely to endorse the co-op's mission and to be willing to pay more for local and for better quality, while passives are okay with getting something cheaper outside the co-op.
- It would be good for the Board to monitor progress toward price parity and for management to provide price comparisons with other stores. On a follow-up survey, a question could probe owner perspectives on trade-offs around lower prices and their perception of prices on product categories.

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- It also appears that owners care about prices more than selection.
- It's important for WSM to be a lens for owners into the food industry—to decode it and then pass on the knowledge.
- It's also important for the Board and operations to use the same language when talking with consumers and with workers.

3. Board Business

Board Process Survey on Policies C, C1, and CS

Jon McDonald, Board Chair, clarified that all of the Board Policies are reviewed each year according to the Board Calendar. The GM recommended that it would be helpful to include on the Board Calendar a list of goals from the January retreat. The Chair led a discussion about the Survey Policies:

- Hank Becker observed that the structure of the Board does not feel like the structure promised in C1. He questioned whether the Board “acts as a Board” when it is heavily dominated by the expertise of the General Manager. He noted in particular the GM’s role on the agenda committee.
- Dave Bright described the Board as “the initiator of policy.” He noted that the Board spent 1.5 years creating the policies and that the Board structure comes from the policies.
- Ruffin Slater pointed out that the policy says the agenda is the Chair’s job; the GM and the Board consultant make it easier for the Chair to the job.
- The Chair noted that the system is designed to keep things efficient so the Board can hear about and discuss important topics.
- Linda Stier noted that how the Board orients toward a discussion from Ruffin is unique, that no one else will provide this perspective and engagement.
- Becker recommended a Board report to owners other than the formal meeting minutes.

GM Compensation RFP

The Chair presented the GM with a Request for Proposal template to be used for GM Compensation. He noted that the broader goal of the RFP is to make what the Board is already doing more formal. Charles Traitor suggested that the compensation scale include all employees not just managers, or to have two scales—one for managers, one for non-salaried.

4. October 2017 GM Reports

October 2017 GM Report

The General Manager answered questions on his monthly GM report. Highlights from the report include:

- **Sales Growth:** Sales growth for the quarter ending in September was 3% overall, with Carrboro up 1%, Southern Village up 2% and Hillsborough up 5%. Sales growth in Southern Village was up 6% in the final month of the quarter, a nice improvement following completion of the remodel.

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- **Curds and Crafts a Success:** We had a great Curds and Crafts event that was very highly rated in a survey of both attendees and vendors.

Linda Stier asked why the Co-op standard went up. The GM said he was not sure—it could be that a co-op moved or added another location. Charles Traitor observed that it could also reflect store closings that would affect the average by being removed.

Monitoring Report B5: Treatment of Consumers

The General Manager answered questions on Monitoring Report B5: Treatment of Consumers. The Chair observed that there were more responses from owners each year. The GM attributed that increase to the new website feedback form, which makes providing feedback easier, and to having staff who communicate with the owners sending in responses.

Decision: The Board accepted Monitoring Report B5: Treatment of Consumers.

Monitoring Report B6: Staff Treatment and Compensation

The General Manager answered questions on Monitoring Report B6: Staff Treatment and Compensation. The GM noted that worker's compensation had increased after an accident in pastry. He also clarified that the pay scale ranges changed last year, and the minimum pay was increased.

Decision: The Board accepted Monitoring Report B6: Staff Treatment and Compensation.

5. Closings

- Decisions and Tasks
- Board Calendar: Elections Committee Reports; RFP response from GM; Hank's report in December.

Tasks: Hank will look through the survey data for potential Board directions to management at an Ends level or reporting requests from management.

Decisions: December meeting moved to Thursday, December 14.

- Meeting Evaluation

6. Executive Session: Real Estate