

Approved Minutes

FALL OPERATING COMMITTEE MEETING

VIA ZOOM Dec 17, 2023

INTRODUCTIONS

Michael Foley, President; Julie Apostolu, General Manager; Angela Harney, Office Manager; Scott Miller, Secretary; Gloria Harrison, Treasurer; Christine Wagner, Mendocino Market Manager; Allegra Foley, Market Match Director; Amanda Fairall, RV Market Manager & Vice Pres

APPROVE AGENDA

Proposed Agenda for this meeting approved unanimously by consensus.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM LAST OC MEETING- April 2, 2023; See minutes from Annual Meeting

No amendments, Minutes from last O.C. meeting approved unanimously by consensus.

OFFICER REPORTS: President; General Manager **Michael/Julie**

Michael reflected on the requested resignation of Robert Ayers at the end of June when he handed over everything from the Ukiah Farmers Market Account. Individuals were invited to submit applications for the position of Ukiah Farmers Market Manager. MCFARM is pleased with the selection of Autumn Rain.

Julie reported the Ukiah Market was badly disorganized. **Julie** provided the organizational structure of the Fort Bragg Market to the Ukiah Market to assist new manager Autumn Rain in getting started.

Julie noted that she is answering a number of requests from individuals who are inquiring about participation in MCFARM.

The Spring Membership Drive was smooth and successful. **Julie** encouraged all Market Managers to insure that all vendors complete the membership application. **Julie** reported that she has assisted vendors at various Markets with the MCFARM application.

With Regard to WIC, SrWIC Programs **Julie** noted that WIC checks are not being accepted by banks. **Michael** commented that checks from the federal government must be accepted and that persistence with the banks is required. **Julie** concluded that in the end the vendors got paid and the people got food, so it's all good.

MARKET MANAGER REPORTS

Redwood Valley – Amanda Fairall

RV Market did well this year with consistent vendors attending. The use of EBT was up significantly. However the cell service for the machine is unstable at times.

Mendocino – Christine Wagner

Getting to know the vendors. Noted that the Mendocino Market is smaller now than it was before COVID. The vendors are consistent and hopes to grow the Market. However there are 3 Farm Stands in the area that negatively impact the veggie sales at the Mendocino Market.

Considering changing hours and even the location and may extend the Market hours by ½ hour.

Julie observed that the tourist demographics favor gifty things and prepared food.

Laytonville – Gloria Harrison

The Market is doing great, sales are up 20% over last year. The closure of the local grocery store has had a positive impact on the Market.

Ukiah – Autumn Rain

There was a lot of disorganization and the vendors were tense, however there is much more harmony now. The organizational help from **Julie** has really helped. Noted in mid-November a slight drop in sales.

Willits – Micheal Foley

Market moved indoors to the Grange in mid November. Irene's Garden, a vendor, has dropped out for the winter. The Market is experiencing the usual winter downturn.

Fort Bragg – Julie Apostolu

The Market sales approached \$600,000 this year. EBT was \$75,000 of the total.

The health inspector is a decent guy tasked with enforcing the rules and he helps vendors succeed.

AG CFD walk through occurred. The issue of the drop down menu on website was raised.

Market hours are 230-430 in winter staying outside when sunny and inside during inclement weather.

Market hours are 230-530 in May.

This year we lost Terry, the Market helper for years here in Fort Bragg, he is sorely missed. The Market has retained his brother to do the set up and break down of signs and barricades.

Michael teased **Julie** that there is no time off, noting she will be on vacation the first two weeks of January 2024, missing the 3 and 10th of January.

Autumn noted that Ukiah will be closed December 30 and January 6 for the Holidays noting that term is inclusive beyond merely Christmas. The vendors were on board with the closures.

Willits Manager, **Michael**, noted Willits will close between Christmas and New Year for the Holidays.

OFFICE MGR REPORT- SEE BOOK KEEPING AND REPORTS **Angela**

Angela reported that Gross Income was up 8% overall for the period January through October 2023. Further, Gross Stall Fees was up 4.2%

Bookkeeping to date shows no deviation from the adopted Budget. The bookkeeping shows the bottom line of each Market. As a non-profit MCFARM must spend all profit or pay 25% tax on retained earnings.

Thanks to **Julie** for filling in while on vacation, and to **Gloria** for traveling to Fort Bragg for the signing of the checks.

Last year's Membership cards were Blue, this coming year the cards will be Goldenrod.

VENDOR LIABILITY INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

Angela/Julie

Discuss/VOTE

Michael reported that following an incident with a vendors windblown umbrella that injured someone, the MCFARM insurance company at the time required vendors to have their own \$2M liability insurance with MCFARM named as additionally insured. **Angela** reported the new MCFARM insurance company doesn't require that vendors carry insurance. A survey of other Markets found that they either strongly encouraged vendor insurance or required insurance but only \$1M not \$2M. A discussion ensued.

Julie observed that California is a "deep pockets" litigious state. **Julie** recommended that MCFARM not require vendor insurance but "strongly encourage" it, commenting that for food vendors the Food Liability Insurance Program (FLIP) is \$299 per year.

Amanda stated that she has gotten lots of blow-back from vendors about insurance requirement. If MCFARM does not require vendor insurance then vendors must sign a Release of Liability to MCFARM.

Michael and **Julie** commented that a Release of Liability does not hold up in Court.

Angela reported that MCFARM currently pays \$1,500 for Directors & Officers and \$2,000 for General Liability insurance.

Michael proposed MCFARM include a Release of Liability in the Membership Application. Proposal was approved unanimously by consensus.

Amanda volunteered to publish a list of insurance options in the MCFARM newsletter for those vendors who do want to insure themselves and MCFARM.

MARKET MATCH PROGRAM- Allegra Foley

Allegra announced that 2023 was another successful year with the Market Match Program.

The program awarded \$140,000 across all Markets which is down \$20,000 from last year.

The program was able to give some stipends to Market Managers for the administrative duties connected to the program. Next year the program will give the larger Markets, those dispersing \$1,000/month or more, a monthly stipend of \$75/ market and the smaller Markets \$25/ market per month.

Allegra also announced the program is transitioning from wooden tokens to paper tokens and they will be on nice paper.

VENDOR ISSUES THROUGH THE YEAR

Julie

Julie observed that the vote for Ukiah Market Manager was a bit stressful.

Autumn stated that a vendor sets up early even before Market hours and is resistant to relocating, often being rude to other vendors. **Michael** stated he has had the same problem with the same vendor.

Autumn also reported that other vendors are wondering if the Ortiz Family Farm grows everything that he sells. Should we tell other vendors we are looking into it?

Julie suggested that we talk to Dept. of Agriculture about Ortiz and volunteered to ask Ag to investigate, its their job.

Allegra remembered that Scott Cratty a former MCFARM General Manager did go down and verified that indeed they do grow what they are selling.

ANNUAL MEETING PLAN- Where or via Zoom; Date; Agenda; Officer Elections

Michael

Michael questioned if the Annual Meeting should be Zoom or in-Person?

There was unanimous agreement that the MCFARM Annual Meeting should be in-person.

Michael wondered about a catered lunch to encourage members to attend. There is \$250 leftover in the budget but he thought the amount should be closer to about \$400. **Angela** agreed to look at the budget to find the money to add to that line item. It was further agreed that the Little Lake Grange, a central location for both inland and coastal farmers, would be the location. It was further agreed by unanimous consensus the date would be March 3, Sunday from 10 am to 2 pm.

Officers up for election are: President, Treasurer and Coastal Representative.

Julie offered to create a postcard Notice for the Meeting.

Amanda offered to include the notice in the e-newsletter by January 5, 2024.

It was unanimously agreed that **Amanda** will cook lunch for the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scott announced he will be traveling from January 10th to February 10th.

Adjournment

Michael called the question for adjournment.

Autumn moved to adjourn.

Christine seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously by consensus.