

**Minutes of the
Marquette Food Co-op
Annual Meeting of Owners
NMU Northern Center
March 8, 2024**

Start time: Meeting began at 5:45 p.m.

Roll call: M. Augustyn, M. Dewar, N. Frischkorn, R. Kochis, M. Kramer-Rabine, M. Linck, T. Rulseh, E. Sally.

Absent: None.

Staff: GM Matt Gougeon, Sarah Monte.

Public: MFC owners, staff, and members of the public.

- I. **Welcome (Sarah Monte, Outreach Director):** S. Monte thanked everyone for attending and introduced Betsy Rutz from the Marquette Regional History Center who encouraged everyone to visit the current exhibition about the history of cooperatives in the Upper Peninsula.

- II. **Report from the Board of Directors (Michelle Augustyn, Board President):** M. Augustyn thanked everyone for attending and thanked MFC staff and Outreach Director Sarah Monte for all of their work coordinating the Annual Meeting. Board members introduced themselves. M. Augustyn thanked departing board members Mary Kramer-Rabine and Mary Pat Linck for their service on the board. Incoming board members Maria Danz, Olivia Kingery, and Ashley McGrath were introduced. M. Augustyn invited attendees to join the board for the annual Earth Day cleanup on April 20.

- III. **Report from the General Manager (Matt Gougeon, GM):** GM Matt Gougeon recognized the board's work over the past year. GM reported that the MFC had another profitable year. GM noted the growth that the MFC has seen over the past four years and reported on profit that has been returned to MFC owners. GM also recognized MFC members in attendance that have been a part of the Marquette Food Co-op since the early years.

- IV. **Q&A:** GM welcomed questions from attendees.
 - a) *What's the status of the Marquette Baking Company?*
GM responded that it has been difficult to make the bakery profitable and that the MFC has been making adjustments in bakery operations. GM discussed efforts to continue bringing down costs.

 - b) *How does the MFC determine the amount of space allocated to non-food products in the store?*
GM responded that the MFC has begun reviewing the store's purchasing policy and strategy. GM reported that non-food products sell very well all year.

 - c) *MFC owner expressed gratitude for the MFC bringing back the cafe seating area in the store and also noted that cooking classes have been filling up very quickly.*

Monte responded that cooking classes are offered at an affordable rate that covers the cost of ingredients but brings in very little profit. Monte explained that private cooking classes are priced so that the profit can go toward keeping costs down for the public cooking classes.

- d) *Is the MFC planning to open an additional storefront since it is no longer opening a store on Third Street?*

GM reported that the MFC has been contacted by other groups in the UP that have inquired about the MFC's interest in expanding to other locations.

- e) *Did the MFC purchase the space on Washington that was formerly Velodrome Coffee?*

GM reported that the MFC did not purchase the space but is now leasing office space in the former Velodrome location across the street on Washington, which has allowed the Outreach Department to move across the street, opening up additional office space at the MFC.

- f) *How did the first full year under the new Ends Policies go?*

GM provided background information about the policies that govern operations at the MFC. It was noted that the board is not involved in operations but does drive the development of policies. The Ends Policies are the stated values of the members of the MFC. The GM interprets policies and provides data to the board to demonstrate whether operational performance is in compliance with policy.

- g) *What do you think the greatest challenges will be in the future and how can MFC owners help?*

GM responded that competition from Aldi is a challenge he anticipates in the coming years. GM noted that there was an impact on sales when Meijer opened, however the MFC bounced back. Climate is another factor that may pose challenges and could potentially impact seasonal tourism.

- VI. Closings:** Sarah Monte invited guests to check their seats for the door prize from Peace Pies. Monte thanked Discovery Central for childcare and Cold Springs for providing music for the evening. Monte thanked the Northern Center for working hard to source local ingredients for the dinner. Monte also introduced an interactive activity for guests to add words to a collaborative word cloud.

Sarah Monte invited attendees to enjoy dinner. The menu for the buffet was curry arancini, lamb meatballs with harissa, chickpea biryani, local vegetables with sour pesto, pork meatballs with garlic sesame glaze, gochujang cauliflower, dulce de leche sandwich cookie with maple syrup, and sticky rice with pineapple. Attendance for the event was approximately 200 people.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Emily Weddle
Board Recorder