

PFMA ANNUAL MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2024 6:00 pm VIA ZOOM
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Meeting began just after 6 pm. Those present:

Caitlin - Alewives Brook Farm
Cathy - Fairwinds Farm
Cindy - Meadow Ridge Perennial Farm
Glenn & Maggie - Maggie's Farm
Kelby - Olde Haven Farm
Jaime - Market Bookkeeper/SNAP Program Coordinator
Mike - Uncle's Farm
Austin - Green Spark Farm
Heather & Doug - Balfour Farm
Hanne - Cornerstone Farm
Lisa & Mark - Gracie's Garden
Beth - Dandelion Spring Farm
Erin & David - Tiny Acres Farm
Carolyn - Snell Family Farm
Ethan - Fruit of the Forest
Emily - Emily's Oysters
David & Jessica - Good Shepherd Farm
Tom & Andrea - Tom's Honey & More
Daniel - Thirty Acre Farm
Jan & Carl - Goranson Farm
Lauren - Lost & Found Farm

Caitlin started at the top of the Agenda, with **Officer Elections**:

She began by asking if anyone would be willing to take over her position of Chairperson. She also noted that Cathy is resigning as Secretary, and we will need someone to fill that position.

Ruby, who is the Treasurer, is not at the meeting...therefore it is unknown if she wants to continue to hold that officer position. Hanne will try to reach Ruby during the meeting.

Election of the above officers was put on hold until later in the meeting.

The following people agreed to continue with their current positions:

Cindy: Membership Coordinator
Mike: Wednesday Mkt. Manager
Doug: Saturday Mkt. Manager
David: Winter Mkt. Manager
Beth, Hanne, Carolyn: Steering Committee

Next, reports were presented:

Saturday Market: Doug reported the season went well. No major problems, and the Park Rangers were very helpful with taking care of any problems which arose. He recommends that the spaces be marked at the start of the season so there is no confusion as to where vendors are to set up. Carolyn offered to mark the spaces at the start of the season.

Wednesday Market: Mike said the market went well...nothing eventful happened. He also noted the Park Rangers were helpful.

Winter Market: David said the season is starting out well. He is working with SCCC Management to arrange more customer parking. He noted we seem to have reached a plateau of vendors...he has a new proposal that he will bring up during the Business portion of the meeting.

SNAP: Jaime noted it was a strong year for the SNAP Program. She said there was a lot of help from Farmers filling in as needed, which she greatly appreciated. The total dollar value redeemed was lower this year as the extra benefits given out due to the pandemic have ended...however, the program was still very strong. See chart below, which shows a breakdown of the program over the last few years:

	SNAP Redeemed	MHB Redeemed	Total	Admin Cost to operate	Admin percentage	ROI for every \$1 in admin
2023	\$51,781.00	\$34,977.00	\$86,758.00	\$33,704.00	38.85%	\$2.57
2022	\$73,595.00	\$42,912.00	\$116,507.00	\$36,735.00	31.53%	\$3.17
2021	\$73,470.00	\$64,674.00	\$138,144.00	\$32,000	23.16%	\$4.32
2020	\$46,278.00	\$44,246.00	\$90,524.00	27350	30.21%	\$3.31
2019	\$34,498.00	\$35,978.00	\$70,476.00	28682.53	40.70%	\$2.46

Harvest Bucks is returning to a 100% match this year, which will increase the amount redeemed for that program.

Jaime says the program is in a good place with staffing. Sarah, who has been running the booth, will stay on through the summer. SNAP will allocate a couple more hours per week to Sarah this year.

The market will be doing an online fundraiser for the programs...she asked that vendors please share this on their own sites.

The Dept. of Ag. is exploring a market-wide Senior Farmshare Program, using vouchers similar to Bumper Crop. Jaime checked with the individual farms that participate in the SFS Program to

be sure there would not be perceived competition...those who responded to her welcome the addition. Paperwork for the market-wide SFS Program will be done at the Info. Booth.

A motion was made by Carolyn to move forward with the SFS Program. Cindy seconded it. Motion approved unanimously.

Bumper Crop Program continues to grow with more employers participating each year.

2023 is the first time over \$50k was redeemed in SNAP tokens since 2013, outside of the pandemic years!

Promotions Committee Report: Austin read the following report on Mary Ellen's behalf.
Happy New Year everyone~!

The Promotions Committee advertises through WMPG radio, Press Herald online ads (company name is Maine Trust now), paper posters and handbills, as well as Facebook paid advertising.

We came in under budget for 2023, as we were expecting a bill from WMPG but haven't seen it yet, the December bill for Maine Today came this week so it will be included in 2024 expenses, and printing costs were a lot less than we expected.

The Press Herald online ads, which we used to do monthly, were limited to six months in 2023 due to increase in cost. So being able to market more with and increased budget by Press Herald or other channels will be a celebrated improvement in 2024. To their credit, Press Herald had us automated in error and did advertise online during July and August, and Jaime and I negotiated that error and the PFMA was reimbursed for those months.

After paying for 2023 promotions expenses of WMPG and December's Press Herald online ads, we will have a total \$4108.50 for 2024. With the increased budget, Jaime has suggested we might use some of it towards professional photos and/or towards some merch design work.

If any of you are interested in making a difference promoting the market, pursuing professional photos or merch design work, doing social media posts or contributing poster artwork related to the farmers market, please join us! I will be in touch this month with our committee to discuss and allocate the budget for promotions.

Thank you especially to Jaime having her finger on the details, Jessica for managing the local printing and distribution of posters, and our social media contributors Cindy and Kathy (and others?) for your hard work promoting the market! If you'd like to get involved, please reach out!

If I haven't mentioned your name and you are volunteering many hours of your time to improve the market: Thank you!

Austin will read this at the meeting since I'll be with the kids.

Thanks again,

Mary Ellen

Social Media Update: From Cindy: Emily, Jaime, Carolyn and Cindy will continue with posting on social media. The market currently has 21K followers on Facebook (77% are women).

A huge thank you was given to Jaime for working so diligently to get our Facebook Page back after it had been hacked earlier this year.

A discussion took place of possibly finding someone with design skills to help with a marketing push. Heather and Jaime are looking into a Grant that is available for this.

Finances: Jaime went over the finances with the membership. She started with the [2023 Profit & Loss Report](#). PFMA received a large grant from MFFM this year. MFFM will now be administering SNAP Payroll. This will reduce some costs (such as workers comp.) to PFM. Jaime now works for MFFM...and continues her positions at PFM.

Hanne made a motion that we accept the P & L; Beth seconded it. Motion passed.

Jaime then went over the [Proposed 2024 Budget](#). The increased dues which went into effect in 2023 have given the market more money to work with.

Jaime went line by line over the budget. Hanne made a motion that we accept the budget, with \$1000 additional allocated to the Promotions Committee; Carolyn seconded it. Motion voted on and passed.

Official Advertised Dates for 2024 Market:

First Sat outdoor April 20, 2024
First Wed outdoor April 24, 2024
Last Outdoor Nov. 27, 2024
First Winter Dec. 7, 2024
Last Winter April 12, 2025

Motion made to accept dates; motion seconded; Motion voted on and passed.

New members for 2024?

Cindy noted that all vendors are returning to the Saturday outdoor market
16 Vendors are returning to the Wednesday outdoor market

13 Vendors are currently at the Winter indoor market.

Plenty of room for more vendors at the Wednesday and Winter Market.

Discussion took place as to whether or not there is room for any additional vendors at the Saturday market. It was noted by Carl that there are often empty spaces due to vendors being absent. The attendance rule was reviewed.

The concept of having a list of guest vendors to fill in during the absence of regular vendors was discussed. It would require a rule change. Any vendor can submit a rule change. Cindy talked about the amount of work that would be required by the Membership Coordinator to organize guest vendors; she noted she would rethink, and probably give up, the position if Guest Vendors should be allowed.

Other ideas were tossed around...(for example, could guest vendors be required to already be a member of one of the other markets? The City of Portland may have to approve a market change such as this...).

Hanne made a motion that we accept applications for the Wednesday and Winter Markets. Kelby seconded the motion. Discussion was held about allowing applicants for Saturday too. Doug is in favor of admitting new vendors if everyone agrees to squeeze in. We currently have 28 Saturday vendors. Austin thinks we have room to admit more.

Discussion took place of the size of the vendor spaces. Carolyn noted that marking out spaces is a bit of a puzzle, due to the shape of the space, etc.

Beth noted that our current rule states a vendor cannot miss more than two markets per season. Should we hold people to the rule???

We have two vendors that currently sign up seasonally (Olivia's and Maple Spring...and one that comes sporadically (Swallowtail Farm)..

There was also discussion about the way some vendors set up...and when some arrive, which can cause difficulties. Cindy suggested a simple conversation between vendors can go a long way to solving a problem. Doug said he would talk with Swallowtail about changing spaces since they do not come each week.

Caitlin said that we need to wrap this conversation up and move on. Vote was made on the original motion: 16 in favor. Motion passed to accept applications for Wednesday and Winter Markets.

Join a committee??

SNAP Committee members agreed to stay on.

The Promotions Committee now consists of Jessica, Mary Ellen, Jan & Erin. The Social Media Committee consists of Jaime, Cindy, Emily and Carolyn.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Feb. 3rd Membership Meeting at 6 pm

March 2nd Buy-In Meeting at 6 pm

Vote on Provisional Members:

The two provisional members are not returning so there are none to vote on.

Proposed New or Adjusted Rule Change:

David, Winter Market Manager, made the following proposed rule change:

Discussion of Proposed Rule Change

Winter Market [Summer Market – Discussion?]

6. Products.

e. The following value-added items may also be sold at the Farmers' Markets, provided the product is produced, processed, or manufactured in an establishment licensed by the Department of Agriculture to produce the item and that the seller had produced, or processed, or manufactured the item...

9. Additional value-added items may also be sold at the Winter Market, only, not to exceed [10% or 25% - Discussion?] percent of the overall Winter Market vendors / products.

All must be produced, processed, or manufactured complying with all current Market rules and State regulations. Specific additional products are

[See Below Listing Of Proposed Items – Discussion?]

provided they are processed, transported, stored, and displayed in compliance with state law.

Proposed Items:

Pasta

Coffee

Prepared Foods

Pre-Made Heat and Eat Meals

Baked Goods / Pastries

Candles

Agricultural Artisans [Potters, weavers, woodworkers, blacksmiths, glass artisans]

David noted this would allow us to broaden the types of vendors we could admit to the market, which would lower the fees and potentially increase the foot traffic to the market.

Hanne noted we would need to check with the City to see if we can get the list of types of vendors allowed removed, as the City is the one that came up with the list. Cindy has a call into the City Clerk but has not had a call back.

If the City removes the list, it would be a change for all markets. Carl expressed concern that it could potentially push out farmers. Caitlin reminded that the market decides who gets voted in, even if the rule changes.

Caitlin proposed that the rule change be investigated with the City, and with reports back by next Meeting.

Meal Train:

Jan informed the membership that John Barnstein's wife passed away last Sunday (Mainly Poultry). She will bring a cooler to market next week for anyone who would like to put a prepared meal into it for John.

Memorial Service will be held on Jan. 22nd at 2pm.

Cindy made a motion that the market allocate \$100 as a donation for John and family; Hanne seconded it. Motion voted on and passed.

Back to Officers:

No one was able to reach Ruby to confirm if she wanted to continue as treasurer, so Hanne agreed to take on the position of Treasurer.

Lauren Bruns agreed to take on the position of Secretary.

Carolyn made a motion to approve the slate of officers as proposed; Cindy seconded the motion. Vote taken; motion approved.

Carolyn made a motion that we adjourn. Cindy seconded; motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Karonis
Secretary