

**Mississippi Market Cooperative, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

Date and place: Tuesday, August 27, 2024, 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. hybrid meeting

Directors present in person: Roy Berger, Roderick McCulloch, Taylor Mitsch, Noel Nix, Jon Olson, Molly Phipps, Daniel Ramos-Haaz

Directors present on Zoom: Tamara Downs-Schwei

Directors absent: Devona Wells

Staff present: Catherine Downey, CEO; Leah Oliver, Marketing Director; Madeline Summers, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Directors

Commented [MP1]: Should this just be staff present?

Member-owners present: Rowan Garrigan and Abigail Sengendo

1. **Call to order.** President Molly Phipps called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. There was a quorum present.
2. **Check in question.** Directors took turns answering a check in question.
3. **Reading the ends:** Jon read the ends statement. [A -Ends](#)
4. **Member welcome and questions:** Rowan introduced themselves. Rowan mentioned that they submitted a BOD application and were interested in learning as much as possible about Board work before the election.
5. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed.
6. **Consent Agenda: Noel moved, and Taylor seconded to approve the items on the consent agenda, which included the acceptance of new member-owners (74), the approval of the minutes from July's board meeting, the CEO FYI Report, and the approval of membership repurchases (6). The motion passed.**
7. **Education:** Leah Oliver, the Marketing Director, led a presentation on storytelling. Mississippi Market has created a Storytelling Team comprised of Marketing, HR, and Operations staff. She emphasized storytelling's ability to emotionally engage audiences, simplify complex information, build brand identity, differentiate from competitors, and strengthen organizational culture. Leah outlined six key deliverables of the Storytelling Team: the internal newsletter, staff spotlights, "Talk and Taste" trainings, HR benefit spotlights, visual storytelling initiatives, and a staff recognition guide. She also highlighted the potential outcomes and metrics associated with each deliverable.

The presentation also addressed questions about incorporating pictures and videos into storytelling, emphasizing the importance of finding creative ways to highlight the board's story and deepen its connection to the community. Additionally, the team discussed the importance of engagement surveys and quarterly monitoring to assess and enhance the effectiveness of their storytelling strategies.

Leah led a generative discussion on what key messages the directors would like to convey using storytelling. The storytelling team will review and report back to the board with some recommendations.

8. **President's Report:** Molly submitted a president's report, which included a discussion on policy monitoring. Thane suggested using a survey prior to the September meeting to guide the board's questions related to C and D policy monitoring. Molly will distribute the survey after the Board Meeting, and directors are asked to complete it by September 12th. Additionally, directors discussed the coordination of in-person versus virtual attendance, agreeing to a default attendance option with the ability to notify the board if changes are necessary. A hybrid model with both in-person and virtual options will remain in place.

Further, the board agreed that members will be invited back to in-person meetings, having conducted virtual meetings during the pandemic. The directors suggested trying different approaches and gathering feedback afterward. The creation of a meeting code of conduct and outline was also considered. Lastly, directors discussed scheduling committee meetings, agreeing that committees would handle their own scheduling and reservations, with Madeline invited as needed.

9. **CEO Monitoring:** Catherine acknowledged that Mississippi Market's Customer Experience survey scores are currently below NCG's benchmark, and Operations is actively working to improve them.

In response to directors' inquiries about score variations between stores, Catherine explained that scores fluctuate due to staffing shortages and leadership changes. She noted that leadership creates targeted plans around key survey items each month, which has led to improved scores. Additionally, Catherine shared that the new promotional program, 'Loyalty Bot,' has launched, with a detailed update to come once more data is collected.

Jon moved, and Noel seconded to approve the CEO Monitoring Reports on B4 Membership and B5 Customer Experience. The motion passed.

10. **DEI Committee** Taylor provided updates on quotes from three consultants for the IDI process. Directors discussed the purpose behind the initiative, Directors discussed

goals as a board to further develop future DEI work and trainings that fit our needs. Taylor and Catherine will coordinate to use one consultant if possible.

11. **Meeting Evaluation:** Directors evaluated the parts of the meeting that went well and what could be improved.

12. **Executive Session:** The board was briefed on updates on the cooperative opportunity presented at the July meeting. After the update, the CEO and any board members up for re-election were excused for the remainder of the board to approve the slate of candidates for the upcoming election.

13. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be Tuesday, Sept 24 at 6:30 p.m. The location for directors and co-op staff will be announced shortly before the meeting. Member-owners and guests are invited to attend both in persona and virtually

Respectfully submitted by Tamara Downs Schwei, Secretary

Date: _____