

Valley of the Moon Certified Farmers Market
Board of Directors Minutes
February 17, 2016
The Palms
Sonoma, CA

Meeting was Called to Order by President Bill Dardon at 6:09 pm.

Board Members Present:

Bill Dardon – President

Mark Curtis – Vice-President

Jane M Bell – Secretary

Pam Larson – Treasurer

Penny Byrd

Absent:

Lisa Pidge

Guests:

Chris Petlock, CSEC

Seth Dolinsky, Farmers' Rep.

David Cooper, Oak Hill Farm

Paul Wertz, Paul's Produce

Chris Welch, Market Manager

Emily Fitzpatrick, Market Administrator

Oscar Mooneyhan, Music Manager

Minutes Approval:

Jane M Bell made a motion to approve the Minutes from January 20, 2016. Pam Larson seconded the motion. Motion passed without opposition.

Agenda Approval:

An agenda item, New Board of Director Member Suggestions was added to New Business

Pam Larson made a motion to approve the updated agenda for February 17, 2016 meeting, Mark Curtis seconded. Motion passed without opposition.

A representative from Sonoma Valley Teen Center's Lovin' Oven (Vendor Applicant) dropped off samples for the board/ selection committee to try.

Guest Presentations and Issues –

Seth Dolinsky, President of the Sonoma Valley Grange attended the meeting, along with Paul Wertz from Paul's Produce and David Cooper from Oak Hill Farms.

Paul expressed concern that due to the increased number of ready to eat food vendors and music the complexion of the Market is not as Farmer Focused. Some of Paul's Produce customer base has expressed to them that they can't get to them at our market.

David Cooper explained that in the last 8 years the amount of money netted at our market is down. Our market net income is currently about 2/3 of what they net at the Friday Morning Market, and 1/3 of what they net at their farm store. They have considered ending their market attendance starting in September for the market year.

David suggested setting aside 30 parking spaces on the north side of the square exclusively for those shopping the for produce.

Both farmers have explained that since the increase of prepared food vendors at the market,

their sales have decreased. They feel that this is in part due to the fact that there is no easy access to the markets. They also feel that this is due to them having to compete with other vendors.

Seth Dolinsky of the Sonoma Valley Grange suggested that it may help if the farmers started earlier anywhere between 1 pm and 4 pm.

VOMCFM Board and Staff relayed to the concerned farmers that the market has put in place an EBT Market Match Fund Program. We are planning on promoting this more this season through the Index Tribune, Sonoma Sun, and Social Media.

It was suggested that other local markets in the area offer a Veggie Valet for patrons who want to make bigger purchases, but are hindered by carrying their purchases all the way to their vehicles. Perhaps we could get volunteers from the local 4H, FFA or Grange to help with this.

The Farmers suggested that they could start their own market independent of our market behind the barracks.

While starting the market early could be helpful, in the height of the summer heat, being behind City Hall, on black top in the high heat of the day would not be best for the farmers.

The Market staff will consider moving the farmers behind City Hall starting in September to see how and if it would work with a start time of 4 pm. Logistically we couldn't start the test until then.

It was suggested that lights when the days get shorter would help extend their sales time as days get shorter.

The farmers felt that a 4 pm start just for the farmers would be helpful so their customers could shop without the competition of all the other market vendors.

They would like to see incentives to businesses to shop the market, like a pre-sale time.

It was explained with the farmers that their businesses weren't the only vendors that saw a significant decrease in sales from September through October. The board would discuss and consider ending the market before the end of October.

President's Report – Bill Dardon

–Sponsorship Program

–Bill will be approaching G&C Autobody about becoming a Platinum Sponsor. Whole Foods would like to move from being a Platinum Sponsor to a Gold Sponsor. Sonoma Clean Power and The Palms Grill, Crista Graton Insurance Agency will be our Silver Sponsors.

Vendor Selection Committee –

– The Vendor Selection Committee will meet on Tuesday February 23, 2016 at Bill's to make final selections for the 2016 market season.

March's Board Meeting will be Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 6:00 pm at The Palms.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane M Bell, Secretary
VOMCFM**