

Wytheville Farmers Market
Meeting Minutes
August 13th 2020

The regular meeting of the Wytheville Farmers Market was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on August 13th 2020 at the Wytheville Farmer's Market building by Emily Davis.

Present

Shawn Boucher, Judy Buck, Alvin Cassell, Emily Davis, Rick Knack, Amy Roberts, DeeDee Thigpen, Greg Smith

Guests: Joanne and Don McNulty, Donnie Buck, Jan Hermansen, Jim Henderson, Logan Morrison, Kym Dunford, Philip Bracken, Bradley Yoder

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The previous month's minutes and the minutes from the July 28th special meeting were unanimously approved as presented. Motion was made by Dee Dee. Seconded by Rick.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer report for the previous month was unanimously approved as presented by Judy. Alvin made the motion, Dee Dee seconded.

Market Manger's Report

Greg reported that vendors and sales continue to be down overall, however vegetable and meat sales are up a bit.

The Foundation for Excellence is a market sponsor at the \$500 level.

Committee Reports

Registered General Membership Speaker

Regarding Summer Market Hour Change:

Joanne McNulty reported that her best sales are from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. She likes that customers can make pre-orders and come pick up their products. She likes the exposure her business gets at a market that is 4 hours in duration and does not want to lessen the hours that the market is open. She said that she would be willing to help with market promotions, etc. as a way to bring in more customers.

Donnie Buck reported that his customers come early. He would like the market hours to remain 8:00 a.m. to noon. He reminded everyone that we need to be mindful of how much money the town has put into the market building – approximately \$750,000 by his estimate.

Jim Henderson thanked the board for their work. He agreed that it would be a bad idea to cut the hours of the market because of the possibility of the Wythe-Bland Foundation pulling the market funding. For that reason, he would like to keep the market hours as they are.

Logan Morrison questioned whether the Wythe-Bland Foundation would actually cut funding considering the circumstances. Logan was glad that produce sales are increasing. He did not think that by changing the market to 3 hours it would make the market too crowded for current COVID guidelines that have been put in place by the governor.

Jan Hermansen does not want to reduce the hours of the market. She read some statistics on the economic benefits of farmers markets. She stated that other markets are open similar hours to the Wytheville Farmers Market. She would like to keep the market to 4 hours and maybe open on a weekday also.

Bradley Yoder said he sensed lots of fear and tension around the market. He felt that everybody worked really well together in the early days of COVID-19 but that doesn't seem to be the case now. He said he feels uncomfortable now.

Philip Bracken encouraged open discussion to relieve any tension. He asked if everyone has to vend the entire time the market is open and suggested letting each vendor set his/her own hours.

Rick Knack made the point that market attendance dropped off when the market moved to the current location. That typically happens when change takes place.

Dee Dee Thigpen suggested keeping the market hours the same but allow vendors to arrive later.

Alvin Cassell stated that vendors need to be at the market in order to sell their goods, therefore he would like the hours to remain as they are.

Jan Hermansen asked if vendors can help each other if someone can't be here when the market opens (i.e. vending for your neighbor until he/she arrives at the market). Emily Davis said that if that was an option then the vendors would have to work that out amongst themselves.

Rick Knack stated that most of the vendors that spoke were in favor of keeping the market hours as they are (because they want the exposure that 4 hours will bring and/or they did not want the market to risk losing funding), therefore we do not need a motion to keep the current hours.

Dee Dee Thigpen asked if vendors could be allowed to arrive at 9:00 a.m. Greg said that customers often don't take well to things like that. They complain when a vendor is late.

Bradley Yoder made the point that we have a similar set up as a mall – 1 building with many stores/vendors. Those stores set their own hours within the boundaries of the mall hours. He appreciated that Dee Dee was thinking about how to better accommodate vendors. Greg said that customers will be bothered by that. We are a customer driven market. We need to make customers happy, not make it harder to make purchases. Bradley suggested that we ask the customers for their input.

Jim Henderson relayed that many customers don't want to come during COVID-19, and many vendors aren't coming because they don't want to be here for 4 hours.

Philip Bracken told of a friend that vends at a market where vendors are free to come and go whenever they want. He claimed that this vendor makes lots of money at the market. Philip believes that less rules are typically better, and in these times we may want to think differently.

Jan Hermansen questioned what the difference was between someone coming late or leaving early when vendors are free to leave if they sell out.

Old Business

Summer Market Hour Change:

Dee Dee Thigpen made a motion to be more lenient with our start time just for the 2020 summer season to better accommodate vendors. The motion was seconded by Amy Roberts. When put to a vote the motion was lost.

The board will review market hours before the Summer 2021 season to see if changes need to be made.

Kitchen renovation: Greg is waiting on the grant to see if we have been given the money for the kitchen renovation.

New Business

Market Manager job description and ad placement: Emily will send the board the job description that Judy wrote. Greg stated that he thought word of mouth would probably be more effective than placing ads.

Agenda for Next Meeting

September 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the WFM building.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Shawn Boucher

Approved by: WFM Board