NHMPA 8/2/22 Monthly Meeting Minutes

7pm via Zoom

Members Present: Andrew Chisholm, Alisha Powell, Darrell Fisk, Doug Byam, Kelly Byam, Dave Kemp. Charles Hunt joined later.

Members Absent: Nathan Adams, Chris Olsen, John Kenney

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm by Andrew Chisholm

1. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes/Upcoming Meeting Dates: 7/12/22, Summer meeting minutes: Motion to approve by Doug Byam, second by Darrell, All in favor.
2. Next Monthly meeting date?: Weds Sept 7 works for everyone.
3. Fair Update: North Haverhill fair just ended, next up is the Cheshire Fair. The outcome of the North Haverhill fair wasn’t great for us. The total gross sales was only $2418 over 5 days. Candy, popcorn, nuts and maple cream were the best sellers. Total for syrup sales was $400. We only made about 15% of what we expected. Vendors next to us also didn’t do very well in sales. Across the board the feeling for vendors there wasn’t great. Andy talked to John Aldrich, the VP of the North Haverhill fair; He said it was beyond disappointing, and he doesn’t know of any vendors that recovered their cost of going there this year. We aren’t sure if it was a fluke, or a sign of things to come at other fairs. Our expectations for Cheshire are a little low because of the poor weather forecast.

We are hoping that the Big E and Deerfield will be ok, but overall it is concerning for the other fairs.

The loss to the association was right around $1300 unfortunately. The only good thing is that at North Haverhill there is a really nice maple museum with some really nice artifacts in there. The fair officials have been talking about having us set up a vending area in there next year if we go back. They were overall pretty welcoming about having us there in the future; so one good outcome is that we gained some good relationships there.

1. Summer Meeting wrap up and feedback:

Alisha shares that she has reached out for feedback from various producers about the meeting this past weekend, with overall good feedback. Darrell thought that Glenn did a good job, Darrell really liked the second part over at Harding Hill, the presenter there was very knowledgeable and informative. Andy shares that Glenn had good feedback on the meeting; Glenn was happy with the turnout, and overall engagement of the producers who came. Glenn has agreed to be our speaker for the winter meeting at the Common Man. Andy is hoping to book two speakers, to be “bookends” for a great maple topic. More to come as we plan for the winter meeting.

Dave enjoyed the venue and felt that the Patches were great hosts. Dave also enjoyed Glenn’s talk. Dave was also happy to see many young faces at the meeting, rather than just the “older crowd”. There were a lot of new faces at the meeting which was also encouraging for the level of new engagement for the association. We also got a few people that volunteered to help at Deerfield.

1. Promotions Update: Andy shares that we are under budget on promotions from the spring, we had $28,000 spent of a $40,000 budget. We have a positive balance with Town Square Media, and we are planning to use that for promotions with Town Square for the Deerfield Fair. There will be radio ads in the area. We are also having a station takeover on either Friday or Saturday of the fair. WOKQ will be conducting live interviews of maple producers at the fair, too.

This morning the Merrimack County Conservation District contacted Andy about spending some grant money to get professional photos done for maple promotions. We may be able to use this to do some of the photography to make some of the educational materials that are part of the other grant award that we have and we are pursuing working with them on this.

Container prices: Andy has been talking a lot to Mike Moore recently. He has noted that the prices have been creeping up and he is no longer making the margin that he was told he was going to get on containers with inflation and the price increases that have been taking place. Mike did some math on these issues and came up with the following proposed pricing:

Case of Gallon jugs 68.75

Case of Half gallons: 110.65

Case of Quarts: 148.75

Case of Pints: 172.50

Case of half pints: 158.75

Case of quarter pints: 290.00

These reflect an increase of about 3-6% on each of these, calculated by Mike Moore.

Dave Kemp suggests that Andy reach out and talk to Sue Folsom about this, because he believes she will remember how the pricing structure worked in regards to different distributors. Darrell thinks that the wholesale pricing is supposed to be the same across all distributors, but Dave believes that the Mike Moore had a slightly different pricing structure because he also acts as a warehouse for us. Mike was getting a 20% cut, which was a little higher than other distributors. Andy thinks that he needs to sit down and go over the pricing a little more with Sue, MAC, and Mike Moore to figure out a pricing structure that will reflect something fair for everyone, and uniform prices across the board for producers as well.

At this point, we will shelf this topic while Andy looks more into the details on everything. Dave shares that in the past, we put this forth before the board for vote before making any pricing changes, which we plan to do again.

Andy will make this high priority and we will likely call another board meeting within the next 1-2 weeks to figure this out and vote on it.

Misc: Kelly will get the postcards out to the Felker participants soon, likely by the end of this week or next. Dale Smith did a great job running it this year, and the kids did a great job overall with their projects. It was great to see that there were so many people who came out for the award presentation to the summer meeting as well. We will be using some of their content on our social media.

Kelly also brings up that we had been talking about getting a set of postcards made for the association to use for these purposes in the future. Alisha wonders if we could somehow work this in with our grant award and promotional materials, and keep the branding of all new promotional materials cohesive. Andy agrees, stating that our NHMPA logo is truly what we are known best for and what we need to design this all around.

Andy also mentions that we are looking into another size of candy box with Rice packaging. Andy feels that we own the logo and packaging for that, and feels that we should go through Rice Packaging directly and that we shouldn’t go through a third party that isn’t the association but a private producer. Andy feels that from a company point of view, we need to protect our logo, and that we should probably move toward trademarking our brand and logo.

Andy and Darrell discuss these types of candy boxes, weights, how various candy fits in the boxes and how they are labeled based on weight. Darrell thinks the weight should be on the package, Andy agrees. Andy is planning to reach out to the department of Ag for guidance for them. A producer that recently discussed the issue with Andy felt that the weight didn’t belong on the boxes, and that they should be considered sold by the package. Ultimately, Andy will discuss with the Dept of Ag and we will discuss more in the future.

Dave notes that Nick Kosko spent a lot of time making the sugarhouse logo and tried to change it on the jugs, and there was a lot of opposition to changing the logo on the jugs. Dave thinks it was about 3 years ago that the membership voted at an annual meeting to keep the current logo on the jug rather than change to the other logo we use on letterhead (as seen above.)

Andy spoke with Nick Kosko recently, and they talked about the logo being open for use for any members; but the thinking now is that the use of the logo should be only used by the association or by others with written permission only.

Charles and Teresa Hunt will volunteer to help out for Cheshire, they can come to help set up tomorrow. Doug and possibly Kelly will also come help out later this week as well. Alisha shares that today she and Bud worked on clean up inside the sugar house at the Cheshire fair. Andy will also try to come out to Cheshire on Saturday.

Next meeting planned for Wednesday, Sept 7.

Motion to adjourn by Darrell

Seconded by Doug

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:07pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Alisha A. Powell, Secretary