

Addison County Maple Sugarmakers Association
Minutes of Directors Meeting
January 28, 2025

Meeting was called to order by President Moe Rheume at 6:10pm

In Attendance:

Moe Rheume	Barb Rainville	Brad Clark
Mike Christian	Andrew Rainville	Ken Button
Maurice Trayah	Don Gale	Jim Rowe

Absent:

Dave Folino
Trent Roleau
Steve Willsey

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Barb gave her last Secretary's report on the July 28, 2024 meeting.
Barb has updated the Secretary of State information with the new officers information

Barb also presented the Financial statement she put together for the end of the last calendar year.

There are still some outstanding Meal tickets to be paid on, and some outstanding Blake Roy checks that have not showed as cashed: Checks were to Laurie Hathaway, Ken Hastings, Blake Moulton

Our insurance through Co-op insurance increased because of the addition. Insurance is now \$1,364, due in November.

Memorial \$50 donation was in memory of Dave Folino's stepdaughter, Megan Thomas.

Moe made note that Mike Christian's mom passed away.

A round of applause was given to Barb for her many years of being secretary, and a thank you for staying on as treasurer. She made note that she will be getting both knees replaced in a couple weeks, so will be ready for Field Days!

Field Days update - Andrew Rainville.

Andrew advised Friday at Field Days was our 25th best Friday in history. For Field Days as a whole, we actually made the most ever by \$600. All days, other than Friday, were the highest. Net Income was \$22,834.91

A few things that were run into this year:

Bakery did not make anything for us on Thursday. Amanda made a trip for doughnuts from Bakery in Rutland. Had to pay a premium to get these, but they were good doughnuts.

It was the 50th anniversary.

Having the new walk-in cooler was a great improvement.

We plan on putting in a new electrical panel in the sugarhouse this year.

Some new trim also needs to be done inside.

Probably needs about \$5,000 more of work in the sugarhouse total.

Need a cleanable surface in the walk-in cooler, and more insulation. There was a discussion on the insulation, and what our options are for that.

Make the small old storage room into an office.

Mike mentions he brought up some more Medium size leaf molds we can use.

Coming up in 2025:

Rethink how we do the coffee. May use the large pump pots.

Explore getting some glass fronted mini fridges for water. Probably have 2. This would reduce our ice expense. This will also get rid of the wet bottles getting the counter all wet.

Use an idea from the Chittenden County Sugarmakers with “Paid” stickers to be used if a customer pays for items at another register.

Maple contest display. 81 entries last year was a very large amount. Will be looking into an overhaul of the syrup lights, with more storage area under the syrup for the value-added entries. Andrew will be looking into a few options for what could be used.

Put 2 more fans up in the cupola. Brad mentioned the additional fans would make it noisier in the building.

Will be switching over to liquid sugar for the slushies.

Webstaurant store is becoming one of our major suppliers.

Move Maple Sugar to being sold in shaker bottles instead of the bakery bags.

Overall last year the help signups were okay, but were a little thin on Friday.

Note that Field Days is a week earlier this year, July 29 – Aug 2.

Do not anticipate any change in pricing.

We transacted a total of \$2,619 on credit cards.

From the kitchen:

Worked well to put ice in the freezer the night before, so we could use less ice.

Mike helped last year by making 80 lbs of Maple cream before the fair.

Field Days board – Ken Button

Ken Button reported from the Field Days board. One of the reasons for the changes of dates for the 2025 fair is due to the schedule for Dreamland Amusements is now moved up a week due to Franklin County Fair ending.

The fair gets about 2000 uses at the ATMs on the grounds.

Big focus has been emergency traffic, with a fair amount being spent on the roads & access.

Gate prices are the same, except Saturday which will go to \$20 from \$15.

The fair qualifies for the storm water runoff funding. They worked with an engineer to treat all of the grounds at 50%, or part of the grounds at 100%.

The estimate on the construction needed for the treatment is estimated at \$500,000.

Through Chris Bray, they found \$2,000,000 that is available at the department of Agriculture, but they do not know in what portions that money is going to be disbursed, and what amount would be for Addison County.

Ken spoke of the capital campaign Field Days is taking on to raise funds for improvements to Field Days, with hope our association would consider donating.

Moe advised we do have funds available, and we can take some time to think on it or do something tonight as this is a year-long campaign.

It was mentioned that based on the number of people coming through the gate, the Sugarhouse takes in about \$1.50 for each person.

Mike Christian gave a thought on doing some amount tonight, then maybe give more for each of the next 5 years.

Barb was thinking we could put up \$10,000, but Moe suggested the Directors can decide to put up \$2,500 now, and bring it up at the annual meeting to see if they want to supplement that donation.

Motion made by Maurice Trayah to donate \$2,500. Seconded by Barb Rainville. Motion passed.

Ken attended a Vermont fairs meeting. A big problem for many other fairs is the amount they pay for Sheriff's coverage. Addison county is fortunate to not have that as a large expense.

State Association – Mike Christian

Big E report:

They went through:

20,000 baby ice cream cones

30 dozen donuts per day, and running out every day

Coffee is a big seller - \$3500 cups. Speeder & Earls Maple French Roady

One of the problems was the Medium amber shipped loose on a pallet

Starting with next year's fair, they will be paying 15% of the gross sales to the Department of Ag, which will be more than the Vermont association will take in.

Will be having gift boxes next year. (borrowing an idea from Addison County)

Mike & Ken Hastings made 2,675 lbs of cream, and ran out, so will make 3,500 next year.

Attendance was high every day.

Mike & his wife will be down there for all 22 days this year.

Regarding the State association:

Just barely getting by financially again this year.

VMSMA takes \$26,000 net from the Big E.

Had a really good maple school in Randolph Center. Still a lot of talk from people about wanting to have the Addison County school come back. Some said we need to have more at a school for the smaller sugarmakers. The maple school got a lot of funding from some of the large sugaring equipment suppliers.

Ellie Palmer is phenomenal. She was the food safety specialist at Runamok Maple and is now the Sugarhouse Certification manager, and is doing a lot of the certification inspections. They will do a preliminary inspection with what is needed and you can get money from the state to help cover the expenses to make some of the necessary improvements.

VMSMA is working on a Maple brand coffee that will be available for VMSMA members.

Now have a quality committee. This last year, the syrup contests had many samples that were rejected due to using a refractometer that was not calibrated.

Something to consider for Field Days would be to have a report card each person fills out, and test the grade and check with a hydrometer when they drop off their sample. Champlain Valley fair uses this to help eliminate some of the bad samples.

VMSMA has started traveling around the state for the meetings. Last one was at Jason Gonyea's in Highgate and Ken Hastings may host the meeting this fall.

The big thing right now is concerns with the quality.

D&G is now the supplier of association jugs, and had been doing a great job of making sure jugs are available.

State has a brand new, unused labeling machine possibly for sale.

Ted Young from Glover received the Sumner Williams award. He passed away in his sugar bush.

Jason Gonyea got Sugarmaker of the year award.

New Business

Discussion on having Addison County host a maple grading school. Mike will contact Maine to get us on the list.

Need to set a day for the annual meeting. Bylaws states it shall be held May, June or July.

Thoughts are that we should have it at the sugar house at Field Days Saturday June 7, or June 28th as an alternative. Brad found out that both Middlebury and Mt Abe High School graduations are on the 7th. So we'll go with June 28th.

Adjournment

Mike Christian made the motion to adjourn. Motion seconded and carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

A couple reminders:

Dues are still \$10 and can be sent to Barb Rainville, 598 Browns Rd, Lincoln, VT 05443

Scholarship application is due on May 1.