

## Leadership development – board training for better governance

### The Situation

The Orofino Farmers' Market began in 2009. The market was initially set up and run by Extension, including an Extension Educator serving as market manager. Although there was staff turnover at the county Extension office, Extension continued to play a major role in organizing and overseeing the day-to-day running of the market.

While the market had a nominal board, they were very informal, and had no bylaws or officers. Research conducted on farmers' markets shows that lack of effective governance is one of the top reasons markets fail (Stephenson et al. 2008).

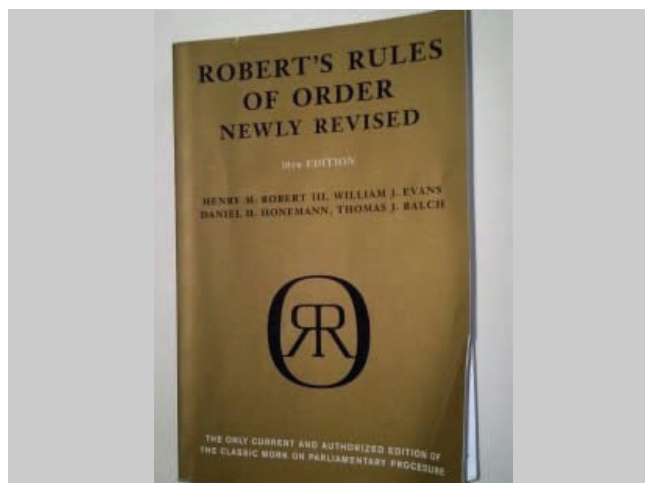
In the interest of promoting the long-term viability of the market, as well as the opportunity to build community capacity through leadership development, Extension launched a program in 2012 to train board members and volunteers in market governance, and create a stand-alone organization separate from Extension.

Such an endeavor carries out one of the primary goals of Extension's state-wide community development initiative in building local capacity and human capital through leadership development.

### Our Response

Extension scheduled a series of four group trainings, individual coaching and consultation. In addition, Extension provided assistance with drafting bylaws, position descriptions, and linking with resources for the farmers market board, vendors, and any member of the public who were interested in being involved to help run the market.

Volunteers and board members were given basic instruction in how to run an organization and conduct



meetings, including adoption of bylaws, basic parliamentary procedure for the conduct of meetings, formal election of board members and officers, formal job descriptions for volunteers and appointment of volunteers, setting up postal and email addresses, as well as basic instruction on what it takes to grow a farmers market and make it more successful. This instruction included assistance with drafting bylaws, bringing in guest speakers, providing instructional materials on farmer's market governance, and the creation of an instructional guide on how to conduct meetings.

Participants in the program included the former farmers' market board, vendors, and interested community members who wanted to volunteer.

### Program Outcomes

Participants in the program reported an average increase in their knowledge of farmers' market man-

agement techniques of 64%. Participants were successful in developing and approving bylaws for the farmers' market board, formally electing the board, electing officers of the board, developing and approving volunteer position descriptions for market volunteers, establishing their own postal and email addresses, successfully amending market policies, learning and modeling appropriate protocols for the conduct of meetings (making motions and voting on motions). This learning experience resulted in the farmers' market board and volunteers successfully running the market – soliciting vendors, gaining permits, advertising, financial management, managing correspondence, site management on market day, etc. – for the entire 2012 market season.

It is hoped that the board members, volunteers, and other community members interested in the market will continue this momentum in 2013, with Extension assistance in exploring the benefits of formal incorporation, liability insurance, and new initiatives that can help the market grow and become more successful.

### **The Future**

The Clearwater County Extension office will continue to support the Orofino Farmers' Market through assistance with developing their governance and management skills. Further development of instructional materials that help community groups form stand-alone governance and legal structures, as well as on-going assistance with leadership development training, will be an important part of Extension's community development program in Clearwater County.

### Literature Cited

Stephenson, Garry, Larry Lev, and Linda Brewer. 2008. When Things Don't Work: Some Insights into Why Farmers' Markets Close. Special Report 1073-E. July. Oregon State University Extension Service.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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