

JUSTICE FOR JOE

August 27, 2022

Letters to the Editor



Illustration by Gabriel Willow

To the Coop Community:

There is a pandemic. People get infected and stay home. Some continue to work from home; others take sick leave. I have not heard of someone being “punished” a month

after an illness, by having their salary docked for 30 days. Until now.

From what I understand, the Personnel Committee decided to punish General Manager Joe Holtz for coming in to work on May 26, as he has done for close to 50 years, after receiving a negative rapid test for COVID. He was wearing an N-95 mask. Supposedly the rules, which he forgot, say that he should have stayed home that day while waiting for PCR test results. As soon as he got a positive test result that evening, he notified the Personnel Committee and remained at home.

The Personnel Committee decided to “punish” Joe for his transgression of not staying home that day by suspending him for 30 days without pay in July. During this month he would not be able to access his email or enter the Coop for any reason—even to shop as a member once he retested and subsequently received a negative PCR test.

The Personnel Committee made an unprecedented unilateral decision meting out this punishment and needs to:

1. Reimburse Joe for the month of July
2. Keep in mind that we are running a cooperative, not a gulag

Joe would be the first one to speak up if another staff member were treated like this, or about any kind of unfairness in our community and in the world. Now it is up to us to speak up. Remaining silent is like being complicit with the decisions of the personnel committee, which are not in keeping with our cooperative values.

In Cooperation,
Cynthia Blayer