

THE COOP'S TEN COMMANDMENTS (A.K.A BYLAWS)

September 4, 2024



By Anita Bushell

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In the 26 years I've been a member of the Coop, here's something I'd never stopped to do: sit down and read the bylaws.

Last spring I was covering a General Meeting for the *Gazette*, and the bylaws came up. Apparently, they said that the Board of Directors of the Coop had to meet once a month. I wondered what else it stipulated. So I decided to get my hands on a copy of the bylaws, and find out what else they said. These regulations dictate the way the

Coop is run. Embedded in the articles were answers to some of my greatest Coop-related questions. (PSFC bylaws can be read [here](#), on the Coop's website.)

I've often heard Coop members refer to the Coop as a "grocery store." Is that accurate, though?

No. At a grocery store, one simply trades money in exchange for groceries. At the Coop, one becomes a member, makes a monetary deposit and investment and agrees to trade labor for the ability to shop for groceries. (See Article One)

Am I truly a "member/owner"?

Yes. Article Two states that the terms "member" and "owner" are interchangeable and mean the same thing. (See Article Two)

Does The Coop have a Board of Directors?

Yes. The Coop has a Board of Directors, consisting of five members. They are elected by the members of the Coop at the Annual Meeting in June. (See Article Three)

Does the Coop have Officers?

Yes. The Coop has a President, Vice-President, Secretary and a Treasurer. (See Article Four)

Does the Coop have paid employees?

Yes. The Coop employs paid staff members who belong to one of two tiers. General Coordinators are responsible for overall management of the Coop, and Area Coordinators supervise Receiving, Membership, Bookkeeping and Information Technology. (See Article Five. This information is also found in Section Eight of the Membership Manual.)

Does the Board of Directors meet regularly?

Yes. The board of directors convenes at least ten times annually. (See Article Six)

Are board of directors elected and if so, when?

Board of directors elections take place at the Annual Meeting in June. An election can be held at a monthly meeting if a position becomes vacant before term's end. (See Article Seven)

Are officers elected and if so, when?

Elections for officers take place at the GM in June, which includes the board of directors elections. (See Article Eight)

Are the board of directors in charge of how the Coop is run?

Yes. The board of directors is ultimately responsible for the operation and administration of the Coop. (See Article Nine)

Can the bylaws be amended?

The bylaws may be amended (in whole or in part) so long as they receive approval of two thirds of Coop board members and two thirds of members at the GM. Written notice must circulate before such a meeting takes place. (See Article Ten)

I'm really glad I read the bylaws. It didn't take much time—after all, there are only ten of them—and it gave me a sense of history, context and a much better understanding of this amazing organization that I've been a member of for 26 years.

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