

# COORDINATORS' CORNER: A CALL FOR ALL MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING BOARD ELECTION

May 13, 2025



Illustration by Erik Schurink

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*By the General Coordinator Team*

As General Coordinators (GCs), we are urging all Coop members to vote in this year's especially important Board of Directors election. Your participation is crucial to the future health of our Coop. Below, we share why the GCs are endorsing four specific candidates who we believe will best preserve our member-driven democracy and serve the Coop as a whole.

## **WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR**

In 2024, a group called Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine (PMP) mobilized over 2,500 members to elect two Board candidates: Tess Brown-Lavoie and Keyian Vafai. These candidates did not disclose any affiliation with PMP in their candidate state-

ments. Meanwhile, PMP encouraged its supporters—through direct emails and other internal communications—to vote “yes” on their slate and “no” on others. Many members were unaware that a coordinated campaign was underway.

This type of organized bloc voting—where an internal group works behind the scenes to influence the outcome—is unprecedented in Coop history. And it’s happening again this year.

## **WHAT’S AT STAKE THIS YEAR**

There are eight candidates running for two open seats on the Board. PMP has again endorsed two candidates, and Coop 4 Unity, a group formed in response to PMP’s organizing, has endorsed two others. These endorsements reflect the presence of voting blocs within the Coop, with each group supporting candidates aligned with their interests.

Based on candidate statements, remarks at the March General Meeting, letters to the Gazette and other communications, it’s clear that several candidates hold strong views aligned with one group or the other. Yet, not all have disclosed those affiliations. Of the four candidates endorsed by these groups, only two—both backed by Coop 4 Unity—have acknowledged the endorsement. The others remain silent, even as PMP, the group supporting them, works behind the scenes to mobilize voters. Members deserve full transparency when evaluating candidates, especially when endorsements may reflect a stronger allegiance to group interests than to the Coop’s governance as a whole.

Below, we outline candidates’ known affiliations:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Coop 4 Unity</b>	<b>PSFC Members for Palestine</b>	<b>No Known Affiliation</b>
Brandon West			<b>X</b>
Dan Kaminsky		<b>X</b>	

<b>Name</b>	<b>Coop 4 Unity</b>	<b>PSFC Members for Palestine</b>	<b>No Known Affiliation</b>
Elizabeth Tobier			<b>X</b>
Lynn Husum			<b>X</b>
Noah Potter	<b>X</b>		
Ralph Yozzo	<b>X</b>		
Serko Artinian			<b>X</b>
Taylor Pate		<b>X</b>	

## **WHY WE'RE SPEAKING UP NOW**

The Coop's Board does not, and never has, initiated policy changes at the Coop. Rather, its core function is to ratify decisions made by the membership at General Meetings (GMs), not to advance personal views or the platform of any internal or external group. That core responsibility—upholding the democratic will of the membership at GMs—is set aside only in rare cases, when following the membership's GM vote would expose the Coop to legal or serious operational risk.

Unfortunately, that traditional role of the Board is being tested. We're seeing increasingly organized efforts by ideologically-driven member groups to capture seats on the Board. When Board members come in with fixed agendas or loyalty to a single-issue platform, they may be less inclined to uphold GM decisions they disagree with—even if those decisions reflect the will of the membership. That shift would undermine our system of direct democracy and destabilize the governance model that has helped the Coop survive and thrive for more than 50 years.

## **WE NEED KEEPERS OF THE FLAME**

We must protect the Coop's 52-year tradition of direct democracy. That means electing Board members who understand and respect our bylaws, and who are committed

to reflecting the will of the membership—not advancing one issue or ideology.

We are calling on members to vote for independent candidates—those not affiliated with any internal group. Those that are not running as part of a slate or with the backing of any group. They've made clear that their focus is on the Coop as a whole.

The Coop has an unusual voting structure. Members can vote yes and no for all candidates. We strongly encourage members to vote **YES** for independent candidates. You may vote for as many candidates as you wish.

## **LET'S NOT LOSE WHAT MAKES THE COOP WORK**

This election is not just about two board seats. It's about protecting a governance model that reflects the voice of all members—not just the most organized or vocal.

The Coop's Board of Directors has just six seats. If a majority are held by individuals whose priorities are shaped more by personal views, or by the views of the groups endorsing them, than by a commitment to the Coop as a whole, it will create a serious imbalance and influence how decisions are made going forward. We believe this is a crucial moment and are urging all members to participate in this election.

Please cast your proxy vote when the email with a unique link arrives by the end of May. And please encourage your Coop friends to do the same. This election matters.

The email ballots will be combined with votes cast in person at the Coop's Annual Meeting on June 24, when results will be announced.

The GCs have a long history of endorsing Board candidates—dating back to the 1990s—at the request of members. While we've stepped back from doing so in recent years, this year we believe it's necessary to return to that practice.