

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

December 9, 2025



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By Oluwakemi Aladesuyi

Since the Coop began offering work credits for meeting attendance, General Meetings

have been well attended, and the October 28 meeting was no exception.

Open Forum

The Open Forum session focused on how the Coop could support the community as SNAP benefits faced expiration during the government shutdown. A small discussion group was proposed to address this concern. While it appears that SNAP benefits have since been extended for at least another year, the discussion raised important questions about how the community can continue supporting its members through ongoing economic challenges.

Reports

General Manager Joe Szladek made a financial report for the last 36 weeks. Several one-time expenses contributed to higher personnel costs, including a retirement party for Joe Holtz, consulting fees to help recruit a new general manager and IT support.

Other trends of note:

- Debit transaction fees have increased, though the Coop will be switching vendors soon and will charge lower fees.
- Healthcare expenses are growing faster than inflation each year, becoming an increasingly large portion of personnel costs.
- Sales per member have declined since the Coop switched from a four-week to a six-week work cycle (that is, post-Covid).

On a positive note, sales in the prepared foods section continue to expand.

Looking ahead, the Coop is considering hiring another receiving coordinator as well as staff with significant financial expertise.

One member questioned whether the Coop could rely more heavily on member-led squads rather than hiring additional staff, noting that some coordinating roles had previously been handled by members. The response to that question emphasized that work remains in members' hands, with staff primarily helping to speed up processes.

General Coordinator Matt Hoagland reported on the recurring shift system. Popular positions like office work and checkout fill quickly, but early morning lifting shifts have been difficult to staff.

The International Trade Education Squad (ITES) then presented information about how current tariffs are creating uncertainty across the supply chain.

Elections

Several elections took place during the meeting. The first was for the Hearing Administration Committee, which hears disciplinary issues. The vote tallies were as follows:

Irene Bunnell: 123 YES 2 NO

Stephen Klein: 80 YES 23 NO

Sam Klugman: 121 YES 2 NO

Members also voted to fill several open seats on the Agenda Committee, which reviews items proposed for discussion at General Meetings. Since the October 7, 2023 attacks in Israel and the subsequent war in Gaza, what is and isn't allowed to be discussed at Coop General Meetings has been particularly contentious, especially regarding whether the Coop should support the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement.

Dominique Bravo explained that those who had spoken publicly about "political issues" were not considered eligible candidates for open seats on the Agenda Commit-

tee, a criterion that was decided by current committee members. Agenda Committee vote results are below:

Dominique Bravo: 94 YES 29 NO

Matt Cecil: 99 YES 20 NO

Robbie Gottlieb: 126 YES 3 NO

Alice Procter: 125 YES 2 NO

Finally, Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones was elected Corporate Secretary, a result which met with boisterous applause.

Member Presentations

The pandemic served as a revealing moment for the Coop, exposing fundamental questions about how the Coop operates and how members engage with one another. One of the most significant issues that emerged was the question of how members should meet and participate in decision-making processes.

Yejia Chen presented a proposal to introduce online asynchronous voting, a system that would allow members to review agenda items in advance and vote on them remotely.

Chen gave a robust presentation arguing that this approach would increase participation by making the voting process more accessible to members who might not be able to attend meetings in person as well as for the neurodiverse.

Following the presentation, the proposal sparked a lively discussion that touched on several practical and philosophical concerns. Members raised questions about the costs of implementing voting software and what post-pandemic communication

should look like within the Coop more broadly.

A central concern centered on the Coop's parliamentary procedures: how would on-line asynchronous voting accommodate the spontaneous amendments and adjustments that typically occur during live meetings? In traditional in-person elections, members have the opportunity to comment and make slight modifications to proposals in real-time. Would an asynchronous system allow for similar flexibility? Some suggested that voting software could enable discussion forums and commenting features, though this raised additional questions about whether such forums would require moderation.

Members also expressed concern about potential drawbacks of a hybrid voting system. Would early voting actually disincentivize attendance at meetings, causing people to miss important discussions? If votes were tallied both asynchronously and in person, would this create equity concerns between different voting methods? There was uncertainty about whether asynchronous participation would truly increase engagement or simply fragment it.

Overall, the discussion revealed concerns that the proposal felt somewhat haphazard in its approach to timeline and synchronicity. While the intention to increase accessibility was clear, questions remained about how to preserve the deliberative, collaborative nature of the Coop's decision-making process in a hybrid model.

Oluwakemi Aladesuyi is a journalist, yoga teacher and potter.