SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

November 10, 2026



November 10, 2026

By Rosie Nisanyan



The September General Meeting was attended by 98 members at the Picnic House and by 170 members virtually. The meeting covered reports from the general coordinators and the International Trade Education Committee; a proposal for an online, asynchronous system for discussion and voting; and a proposal for a new version of the GM participation shift.



Ninety-eight members attended in-person at the Picnic House.

OPEN FORUM

Retired member Marita Downes and member Mina Jones (on Zoom) both expressed frustrations with the technical issues that occurred during the vote about boycotting Israeli goods at the May GM, which prevented some people from voting, and questioned the integrity and security of Zoom voting. Member Flavio Coppola (on Zoom) said that even if everyone online who wasn't able to vote had indeed voted against the boycott, it still would have passed, given the number who voted in favor of it. Additionally, a Point of Information was raised on Zoom stating that the Coop does have registration information for those who vote virtually (Matt Hoagland, General Coordinator of Membership Operations, expanded on this later during the general coordinators' report; see below).

On Zoom, members Barbara Mazor and Julie Kay each commented on the state of member participation during GMs. Mazor argued that hybrid meetings "cut out de-

bate, and democracy counts on debate," while Kay expressed support for expanding means of participation and said, "It's difficult to attend these meetings because of work and caregiving responsibilities."

Member Damien Neva (on Zoom) asked why unsweetened soy milk hasn't been stocked at the Coop in a while. General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky later responded that no distributors had it available for two weeks, but it was once again in stock as of that day.

GENERAL COORDINATORS' REPORT

Hoagland reported that General Manager Joe Szladek was not at the GM, as he was attending the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) Conference. Szladek wanted Hoagland to share that the NCG allows co-ops to combine purchasing power "to get better pricing from distributors and manufacturers, developing shared deals programs, providing resources and support for things around operations, finance, technology, marketing, staff development." Due to Szladek's absence, there would be no financial report at this meeting (though it was emailed to the membership), but there will be one at the next meeting, on October 27.

Hoagland reminded members that the last GM of the year will be on December 1, the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

He also called attention to the new membership lottery system launched in August as a way to give more people a fair chance at getting into the Coop. Staff are keeping an eye on how it's going, as there have only been three new member orientations so far, but several more are scheduled through mid-October.

There are also new shift opportunities for experienced workers who want to take on more responsibility: Cashiers, who handle all forms of Coop payment (require checkout experience); Front End Operations, supporting the shopping floor (requires experience in checkout, cashier, flex work, entrance cart return, etc.); and Receiving Team

Leaders (requires experience with Receiving operations, how things move around on the floor, etc.).



Susan Bockenhauer asked if her husband needed experience to become a checkout person.

All three opportunities are “restricted” shifts, meaning that only members who have been trained can see them on the calendar. Members interested in pursuing the Cashier or Receiving Team Leader roles can reach out to the Membership Office for more information and to schedule training. Those interested in learning Front End Operations can email FrontEndSupport@PSFC.coop.

Hoagland also publicly responded to Yejia Chen’s question from last month’s GM about Zoom poll auditing and verification. He explained that although the Zoom poll is anonymous, attendees have to register ahead of time. In order to register, you have to be a member and can only register one way, either in-person or virtually. For virtual registration, the Member Services sign-up email address has to match the

Zoom account email address when logging in.

As Hoagland explained, “If we know who’s in the meeting and control who’s in the meeting, we can be confident that only members are voting in the meeting…and we can allow there to be some privacy in how people vote. To this point, including that massive May GM, we haven’t found any nonmembers logged in.”

INTERNATIONAL TRADE EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT



Coop members watch Bart DeCoursy on Zoom giving his report from the Trade Education Committee.

On Zoom, Bart DeCoursy of the International Trade Education Committee provided an update on President Trump’s ongoing feud with Canada, which now includes a 50% tariff on over $27 billion of Canadian goods. Canada vowed to retaliate dollar for dollar, but the impact on the U.S. economy is likely to be minimal, since the tariffs are only on a small percentage of total trade between the two countries. For the first time since 2015, President Xi of China recently visited the White House, where it was announced that most tariffs were eliminated, rare earths are now available for

purchase, and Chinese exports of toys would be back on track in time for the holidays.

Downes asked, “How does this affect Coop goods?” DeCoursy noted that the objective of the committee is to educate members on what’s happening in big trade deals and many of these things have a ripple effect that can impact the Coop.

Astrinsky added, “I’m in charge of the facilities of the Coop and everything that we’re buying from plywood to conduit to BX cable—anything that would help in improvement—those prices have pretty much doubled in every way.”

CHARLIE ROGERS TRIBUTE



Charlie Rogers, who is retiring, was praised for his many years of outstanding service as GM chair.

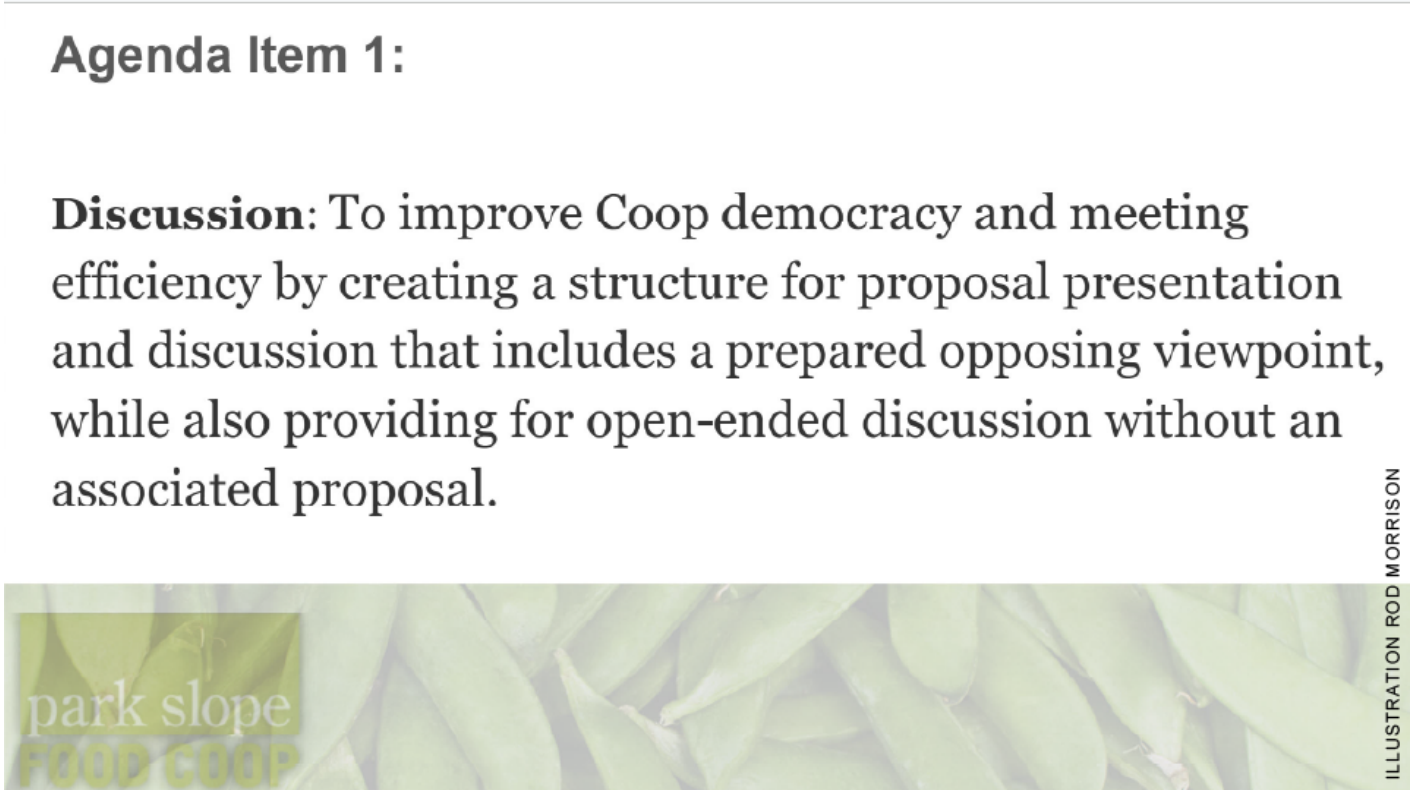
While the slides for the first agenda item were being set up, Charlie Rogers of the Chair Committee announced this would be his last time chairing a General Meeting, as he earned enough credits to retire.

Astrinsky commended Rogers, saying, “Charlie has been an unbelievable chair for so many years and so helpful and so giving…Charlie was our savior through the pandemic when we had to switch to Zoom right away…I just want to say thank you so much, really, from the bottom of our hearts. You’ve done a tremendous job.”

There was applause, to which Rogers smiled and responded, “Normally, I’d say, ‘No applause please.’ ”

ONLINE, ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION AND VOTING PROPOSAL (VOTING ITEM)

On Zoom, members Yejia Chen, an accessibility engineer, and Tyler Yandrofski, a public health data analyst, presented a proposal to create an online forum to discuss GM agenda items and vote asynchronously. In addition to the forum, the proposal would also create a Forum Moderation Committee (of three to 12 members) and a temporary Asynchronous Alternatives Implementation Committee.



Members expressed gratitude at the level of detail included in the proposal and supported the idea of expanding ways to participate in the democratic process of the Coop. But members also expressed concern about the amount of work that would fall on Coop staff and the big responsibility of forum moderators. Some members suggested amending the proposal to include a trial period. One member asked, “How, in real-time, does moderation actually work to keep the forum a safe space?” Chen said that

they would bring moderation up at a future GM so as to have more time to discuss how it would work. Viren Mehta (Zoom) added, “This is exactly what the Coop needs, but as many of the questions have pointed out, there are significant issues that need to be sorted out.”

After about an hour of presentation and discussion, there was a motion to postpone the vote on this proposal. The motion passed, 100 votes to 85 votes. Members can share proposal feedback or suggested amendments directly with the sponsors.

GM PARTICIPATION SHIFT PROPOSAL (DISCUSSION ITEM)



Sun Yu proposed replacing GM workslots with a yearly participation shift.

Member Sun Yu, author of *Park Slope Food Coop: 50 Years of Cooperation*, presented a proposal to replace the current GM workslot with a yearly participation shift. The proposal would make the GM participation shift a rolling one-year term, with ten members added to the shift each month, resulting in 120 members regularly attending GMs.

Members asked if the shift would require in-person attendance and expressed concern about the capacity of the Picnic House. Yu responded that in-person attendance would be mandatory. Members also questioned what the proposal would actually be

solving for and whether having the same people attend the GMs would decrease the diversity of attendees. Millard “Mitty” Owens (Zoom) asked, “Can you elaborate on the benefits of stability and continuity?” Yu said that continuity among GM attendees is a good thing. By having the same people attend the GM month after month, the Coop would avoid having the same discussions over and over again.



Elinoar Astrinsky stressed that Picnic House seating at 255 limits in-person attendance at GMs.

Astrinsky added that there was a time when one person from a squad would attend the meeting and then report back what happened. Pre-pandemic, members could sign up for credit twice per calendar year. However, when the Coop moved away from a squad system and to a six-week work cycle, credits for working in-store had to be re-balanced with credits for GM attendance, committees, etc.

There was no vote on this proposal, as it was only a discussion item.



Numerous Coop members came to the podium with questions and comments.

CLOSING

There were no minutes to be presented. The Board of Directors voted to accept the advice of the members in attendance.

Charlie Rogers banged the gavel—his first and last time doing so—and adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Rosie Nisanyan has been a Coop member since 2024 and is the Arts & Culture Multi-media Correspondent for The Armenian Weekly*.*