

BRANDON WEST: BOARD CANDIDATE STATEMENT

March 8, 2022



My name is Brandon West, I have been a member since 2009, when I first moved into the neighborhood, and soon after became a squad leader for stocking and receiving. I also recently ran for City Council in the community in 2021. For a career I'm currently a labor organizer for local journalists and have worked in voting rights and organizing. I have always been very close to the Coop and its mission. It is incredibly challenging

to maintain large membership led organizations. I have experienced that fact, not just as an active member of this Coop, but in other collective processes and while working in government.

As the pandemic put an incredible strain on the Coop, and some challenging decisions were made about how to plan for the present and future, I wished I had an avenue to be more directly involved with the Coop. Not just as a way to be more directly connected in a community important to me during a time where “community” is harder to find, but also so that we can bring more member input into some of the seriously important decisions this Coop will have in the future. My goal and intention of running for this position is to mainly focus on decision making, and helping work to build participation in the general meetings, which were once much larger.

We all remember the more contentious, but better attended meetings in the past 10 years. While we have progressed a lot in this time, I think the challenge our Coop faces as being large but also democratic is critical, especially when our membership numbers have dropped in light of the pandemic, and that we are in a more vulnerable state financially as we were before it started. I also pledge to work to make sure that members are more brought into major decisions in the future and support in developing a process for how we rethink our democratic processes in the face of so much change to the Coop. Our leaders made several tough decisions quickly, and I believe the Coop is much better for it, but I think more tough questions are ahead, and there are a lot of unknowns. I think it's important to try to bring as many folks into these decisions as we can, and make more members aware of the challenges we face as a Coop.

I think our mission is strong and widely felt and believe the next few years in the City will be challenging with a shift towards living with the pandemic. What that does physically, and financially to the Coop remains to be known. Making sure that our members who are most negatively impacted, and who struggle financially, should be centered as much as possible.

In addition to this, I think the fiscal health of the Coop is incredibly important, and I will also work to make sure that the relationship between coordinators and staff is always a focus and highlighted. The Coop needs to be a great place to be a member and to work, and will use my background in conflict negotiation to help mediate any issues if they come up, and contribute to mitigating conversations if needed.

JANUARY 2022 GENERAL MEETING AGENDA TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 7:00 P.M.

March 8, 2022

Meeting presented on Zoom. You must register for the General Meeting to receive the Zoom invite:

- You must be a Park Slope Food Coop member to attend.
- Times in parentheses are suggestions. The Chair has the discretion to change the order of the agenda or the time allotted to each item.

I. Meeting Warm-up and Chair Committee Introduction (7:00-7:15)

II. Open Forum (7:15-7:30 p.m.)

Members will have up to one minute to briefly present questions regarding the operation of the Coop. Appropriate staff or committee members may respond and a brief follow-up may be taken.

III. Treasurer's Report (7:30-7:45 p.m.)

IV. General Coordinators' Reports (7:45-8:05 p.m.)

V. Committee Reports (8:05-8:15 p.m.)

Committees who notified the Chair in advance of the meeting will have up to 5 minutes to make a report.

VI. AGENDA (8:15-9:15 p.m.)

Item 1: Committee Requirements (60 minutes)

Item Sponsor: Rachel Porter

Proposal: The PSFC routinely depends on and creates new committees. This proposal is intended to improve the way these committees function for and report back to the membership. The proposal includes requirements for existing committees and new committees. Where there is an overlap with the existing document “Structure & Reporting Requirements for New Coop Committees,” the language in this item will take precedence. Importantly, the proposal is intended to increase the ability of committees to reduce staff work.

1. Committees will be listed on the PSFC website with a brief description of the purpose and activities of the committee. Updates should include the names of committee members. These entries will be behind the firewall, should be updated at least annually, and are the responsibility of the committee members.
2. Committee members may report 13 shifts per year. Any additional shifts must be approved by the PSFC staff liaison to that committee or by a PSFC General Coordinator. Unapproved work beyond 13 shifts/year will not be given work shift credit and will be considered volunteer work.
3. Committees must report to the GM at least 1/year and no more than 3/year. Reports should not last longer than 3 minutes unless they are part of a proposal or election. Committees that are essential to PSFC functioning will be required to report to the General Meeting at least 2/year.
4. Committees will provide updates on their activities in the LWG at least 2/year. The LWG will create a committee update column where updates can be published.
5. Committee membership selection will be made transparent in the committee proposal. Criteria for membership will be specified in writing in the committee’s entry on the PSFC website.
6. The term for all non-retired committee members will be 3 years. All committee appointments and renewals must be approved by the General Meeting.
7. This proposal will create a committee oversight committee (of working members) to supervise committee reporting requirements including scheduling updates and tracking work credit.

VII. Board of Directors Meeting (9:15 p.m.)

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

March 8, 2022



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURINK

By Sara Ivry

November's General Meeting kicked off with the persistently pressing question of new member recruitment, key to the Coop regaining financial stability in the wake of pandemic-related losses.



BOTH MEMBER + SHOPPER, NOT EITHER/OR

March 8, 2022

PSFC's mission reads: "The Park Slope Food Coop is a member-owned and operated food store ..."

At the 7/28 GM, members were asked to be our Better Selves in considering and approving the Black Lives Matter statement. Then, the Coordinators asked us to consider a markup increase to help PSFC's economic recovery. This proposal felt like an austerity measure asked of me as a shopper-customer.

We each are both a member and a shopper. As "an alternative to commercial profit-oriented business," our PSFC challenge is to hold and practice Both aspects vs. Either/Or. At the GM, a small yet significant symbol was that the Coordinators remembered the dollar amount of fresh MOEI recently infused into PSFC but not how many members/member-households made those investments.

I cherish PSFC as a nugget in our collective endeavor towards Another Future that is Possible. At a time when many are receiving packaged food distribution, the psychological and nutritional value of even a modicum of fresh produce cannot be overstated. So, when Coordinator Joe S characterized the proposed markup as affordable

since folks are no longer going to restaurants, I asked myself: How many members who currently don't shop at PSFC or shop infrequently might be receiving boxed food distributions and/or standing in a food-pantry line?

Money is critical for PSFC to operate as a store. At the same time, PSFC would have lost its soul if certain members could no longer come to the Coop or afford to shop in it.

I am a Chinese-Asian American, self-identified as POC. A member since 1988 and a Park Slope resident for 18 years (until 2004), I have experienced many phases of PSFC.

Proposals:

- Immediately re-institute the member-labor arrangement in whatever manner feasible.
- The first order of business should be an Audit (not a survey) to look into the well being of each member in each Squad/Committee as well as unattached members, prioritizing those who have not shopped since early March.
- An Audit will show members who have transitioned, recovering from COVID-19, grieving losses, or struggling to cover rent, food and other necessities. It likely find Black and Brown members who have not shopped recently residing in clusters/areas due to Brooklyn's segregated housing.
- Since the PSFC process requires two GMs to approve a proposal, the audit should be started by a team of volunteer members with pertinent skills and necessary staff support.
- PSFC proactively uses its vendor relationships and buying power to join forces with mutual-aid groups, pantries and smaller food coops. By leveraging PSFC capabilities, we can expand collaborative buying and allow fresher produce to be more accessible.

Black Lives Matter because not everyone has mattered under the euphemistic "All

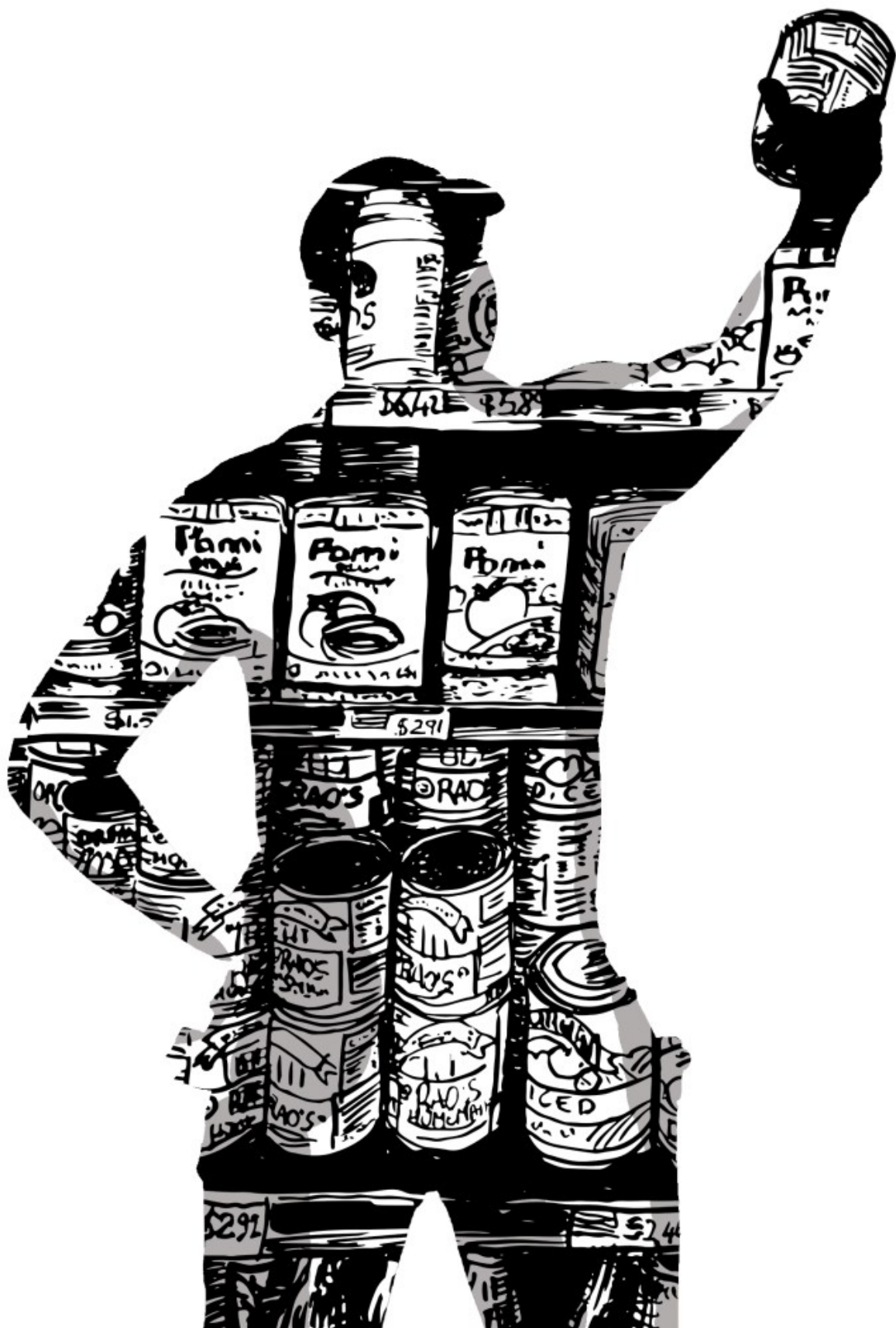
Lives Matter” approach to which the business and institutional sides of PSFC have often succumbed too easily. However, PSFC has too much history and potential for us to give up. Let’s actively work towards Both aspects in a wholistic PSFC.

Respectfully,

Marion Yuen

STOCKING THE COOP SHELVES PANDEMIC STYLE

March 8, 2022



Valeria Trucchia Illustrator

By Leah Koenig

From extended entrance lines and plexiglass checkout stations, to paid staff temporarily replacing member work shifts, the Coop has seen its share of pandemic-induced changes. But one change that flies under the radar for some members is the herculean effort it takes to keep the shelves adequately stocked during these unprecedented times.

