

2026 COOP BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

December 30, 2025



**MARCH 1
2026**

ILLUSTRATION BY EVA SCHICKER

December 30, 2025

Serving on the Coop's Board of Directors is a meaningful way to deepen your engagement with and service to your Coop. There is one open Board position to be elected in 2026 for a three-year term. Members are invited to nominate themselves.

Nominations are due on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 5 p.m.* Candidates will be elected at the 2026 Annual Meeting on June 30.

BOARD STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Park Slope Food Coop is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five members elected by Coop member-owners. All elected members serve three-year terms. In addition, the senior General Coordinator present at the General Meeting serves in an *ex officio* capacity.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Regularly attend monthly General Meetings, the Annual Meeting and any other meetings as necessary.
- Thoroughly review all meeting materials in advance to participate responsibly at General Meetings.
- Follow the Seven Principles of Cooperation, the Coop's mission statement, the Coop's bylaws and the Guide to the General and Annual Meeting.
- Uphold fiduciary duties on behalf of the Coop and its member-owners. Board directors have legal and ethical duties to:
 - Act carefully: Make thoughtful, informed decisions and exercise the same care and concern for board responsibilities as any prudent person would in managing their own affairs. Avoid actions that could reasonably jeopardize the Coop's financial stability or its ability to operate.
 - Act loyally: Place the interests of the Coop ahead of personal interests, disclose

all conflicts of interest and avoid using Board service as a means for personal or commercial gain.

- Act lawfully: Ensure the Coop complies with all applicable laws and regulations and doesn't engage in illegal or unauthorized activities. Carry out the Coop's mission in conjunction with its purposes as stated in the Coop's governing documents.
- Act prudently: Exercise reasonable business judgment in managing financial resources and investments.

For more information about Coop governance, please see The GM and the Board of Directors and Amended Bylaws of Park Slope Food Coop.

BOARD DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND MEETINGS

The Board of Directors is the legally required decision-making body of the Park Slope Food Coop. The Board convenes monthly at the Coop's General Meeting, to which all members are invited. The GM is the portion of the Board of Directors meeting during which members meet to discuss and vote on agenda items to provide advice to the Board of Directors on those items.

The GM has been an integral part of the Coop's decision-making body since our inception. Members play an active role in decision-making by submitting agenda items, attending General Meetings, voting on proposals presented at the GM and electing the Board of Directors. Members' votes on proposals are considered advice to the Board. At the end of the General Meeting, the Board will either accept or reject the members' advice. The Board's role doesn't overshadow or replace the member initiative, discussion and advice expressed through voting, which are at the heart of the General Meeting.

If you have never attended a General Meeting and are interested in a Board position, we encourage you to attend the upcoming GMs on January 27 and February 24.

HOW TO APPLY:

Submit a candidate statement of up to 750 words that includes your responses to the following questions. Your statement will be published in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*, posted in the Coop Corner and distributed to all member-owners.

1. What inspired you to consider serving on the Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors?
2. Share any skills, interests and experience you would bring to the Board. Examples may be drawn from any personal, educational, work/professional or volunteer experience.
3. Describe your PSFC work slot experience briefly.
4. **At the time of application, are you aware of any endorsement of your candidacy by any Coop member-run group, or do you expect to receive any endorsement or organized support from such a group, including groups advocating for or against boycotts?***
5. PSFC is “good food at an affordable price for working members through cooperation.” What does that mean to you?

Send your candidate statement and photo to gazettesubmissions@psfc.coop or drop off your application at the Membership Office. Please include your name and member number. If submitting electronically, attach a Word document or paste your statement in the email body. Include a head-and-shoulders photo if available; otherwise, your member ID photo will be used.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY

1. Submit your statement and the optional photo by **Monday, March 2, 2026, at 5 p.m.***
2. Attend the March 31, 2026, General Meeting, where you will introduce yourself and answer questions from members during the candidate presentation portion of the agenda.

KEY DATES:

Candidate Applications Due: **March 2, 2026***

Candidate Presentation at GM: March 31, 2026

Election Period: June 1-28, 2026

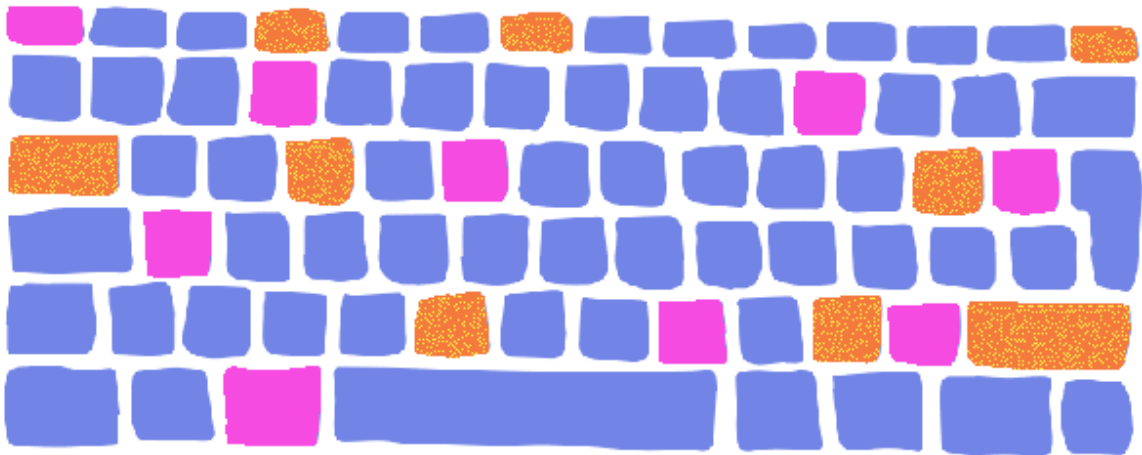
Annual Meeting: June 30, 2026

*** As of February 28, information above indicated with an asterisk has been updated. These updates are reflected in Question #4 and in the deadline date, which has been changed from March 1 to March 2.**

OCTOBER 28, 2025

December 30, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CARRYING OUT THE WILL OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Dear members,

I write as an individual board member, not on behalf of the Board.

During the September General Meeting, a majority of the Board voted to enable hy-

brid General Meetings to fulfill our mandate to carry out the will of the membership while remaining in legal compliance.

Here is the background: Members discussed the proposal for hybrid meetings (#884) in September 2024, sharing enthusiasm, support, concerns and technical questions. While many proposals are voted on shortly after they're discussed, this vote was delayed. General Coordinators claimed they needed a larger venue and couldn't secure one. They ignored recommendations by Agenda Committee and board members, including holding a meeting virtually. In an unprecedented stalemate, the Board was unable to receive the will of the membership through normal mechanisms. Joe Holtz called this a "governance crisis."

At the April 2025 GM, the Board voted to enable all members to vote on Hybrid via electronic ballot (a referendum). Holtz told the authors of #884 that their measure must be a bylaws amendment, which requires a two-thirds majority to pass. However, the legal team determined that was unnecessary. A strong majority—66.43% of members—voted for hybrid GMs. The Board had a clear legal duty to carry this out, despite the circuitous route.

I sincerely regret that this process has left some members feeling blindsided. In the future, when board members have discussion items, I recommend we publish them alongside the rest of the GM Agenda, as we did in September.

When normal protocols fail, we must bring our creativity and collaborative ethic to bear. Proving we can work across differences is increasingly important in this political and cultural climate. I hope and believe the Coop can be a rare example in this regard.

In cooperation,

Tess Brown-Lavoie

Vice President, PSFC Board

General Manager Joe Szladek Responds to Brown-Lavoie:

I want to clarify a few points from Tess Brown-Lavoie's letter about hybrid General Meetings (GMs). I appreciate Tess's engagement and commitment to open dialogue.

Tess wrote that the General Coordinators "claimed they needed a larger venue and couldn't secure one." The need for a larger space was not a claim but a practical reality we communicated to the Agenda Committee for months. The proposal became linked to a boycott of Israeli goods through emails circulated by a member group, *PS-FC Members for Palestine*. In one such email, the group wrote: "*Hybrid GMs will also let us finally vote on boycotting Israel.*" Based on experience with previous contentious topics, we knew our regular meeting space could not safely or fairly accommodate the expected turnout.

We did secure two larger venues—City Tech and a church auditorium in Sunset Park. City Tech later canceled after receiving messages from individuals outside the Coop, and the church withdrew after learning of the topic and possible demonstrations. We kept the Agenda Committee informed and continued searching for alternatives.

Tess also wrote that the GCs "ignored recommendations... including holding a meeting virtually." We did not ignore those ideas. The GCs simply do not have the authority to move a GM online outside of a declared public health emergency. That authority rests with the GM and Board, and we have always respected that boundary.

Finally, when the Board voted on April 29, it did still believe a bylaw amendment was required for hybrid GMs. However, on May 23, Joe Holtz informed members that legal counsel had since advised otherwise and that only a simple majority was needed. The Board then had about ten days to adjust the referendum before it was mailed but did not do so.

PROTECTING THE COOP

Dear Coop members:

At the September GM, four of the five elected directors voted to authorize hybrid meetings, tasking the Chair Committee—apparently without its consent—to figure out implementation. This action violated established procedures as well as the trust of the membership. That they have now done this twice should concern all of us. They appear increasingly emboldened to act independently of the General Meeting and at their own discretion.

This situation arose because a group of Coop members believe it is appropriate to exploit the Coop's reputation in support of a movement that seeks to end the existence of the State of Israel.

I suggest three actions to end this quagmire and refocus on what the Coop does best—food.

1. **Hold a referendum** asking the membership:

“Do you want the Coop to continue using its resources to discuss joining the BDS movement?”

Responses: Yes or No.

Issue this referendum without any further explanation or commentary.

2. **Hold a referendum** on the 75% supermajority for boycotts, combining the two related items currently in the agenda queue. Each side may submit a statement of up to 200 words. The arguments have already been published in the *Gazette* and can be restated succinctly.

3. **Hold an open discussion** to brainstorm how to protect the Coop when highly contentious issues are introduced. We currently have no process for vetting agenda

submissions or requiring opposing sides to meet. Our discussion format is inadequate for complex issues: there is no opportunity for a prepared counter-presentation, no control over who speaks, no mechanism to verify information, and no opportunity for rebuttal.

Let's make the Coop fun again.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mazor

IN PROTEST OF BOARD POLITICAL ACTIVISM WITHIN THE COOP

To the Members:

I have been a member of our Coop for 35 years. My current workslot is serving as secretary. My primary activity as Coop secretary is recording General Meeting minutes. Effective upon my submission of the September GM minutes to the Coop office for member circulation, I will resign as secretary in protest of the uncooperative, self-seeking and destructive actions of our current board of directors.

This Board is using the Coop as a political tool and a resume-builder. These people are blind and uncaring about the havoc they wreak. They think they have the right, but they are wrong. We don't have a board to set Coop policy. Membership along with the coordinating staff are sufficient for this purpose.

I will also be suspending my Coop membership.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tobier

JULY 15, 2025

December 30, 2025

Letters to the Editor



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

DON'T DISENFRANCHISE ME

Greetings:

Now that we know nearly two-thirds of member voters want remote access to the general meetings, and that we are free to have hybrid meetings without a change to the bylaws (legal advice received by senior staff after the referendum was happening), can we please reopen meeting access? Since it's not a boycott or a bylaw change, all we need is a simple majority to approve, if we even need a vote.

For reasons of work/childcare/medical/mobility and room capacity, we can't all participate otherwise.

Sincerely,
Lisa Guido

DEMOCRACY, GENERALLY COORDINATED

Greetings:

As recently noted by outgoing General Manager Joe Holtz, Coop members have the right under New York State law to participate in our democratic processes virtually. But our bid to enshrine that right into our bylaws has failed, winning 66.45% of a vote that required 66.67%. That slim margin is a testament to how critical the General Coordinators' fearmongering was in defeating a commonsense proposal rooted in a desire to expand access and maximize participation at the Coop.

The GCs will tout the PSFC's commitment to democracy and member input. They'll invite you to General Meetings where you can "have your voice heard." But after a year and a half of obstruction, obfuscation and the blatant misuse of their bully pulpit, I speak from experience when I say they'll only let you participate if they think they'll still be in control at the end of the day.

Sincerely,

LOOKING FORWARD WITH OPTIMISM

Fellow Members,

This summer I will turn 70 and will have been a member of this Coop for more than two-thirds of my life.

As I move into the next decade, our Coop moves into a new phase of its life, with Joe Szladek in the role of General Manager. Welcome and congratulations, Joe.

As a clear-eyed optimist, I imagine the possibilities and work as hard as I can to achieve it. At this moment, I have great hope for what our Coop can achieve under the leadership of a forward-looking General Manager.

Like all Coop leaders, a GM needs to be even-handed and open, fair in their treatment of every Coop member and constituency. They can help us become a truly democratic organization that uses all available tools, so that 17,000 members have the best possible chance to engage in policy- and decision-making. At a moment when a literal majority of Coop members want the opportunity to attend General Meetings online (while the still undecided Hybrid Referendum leaves that up in the air), they can help us transition to hybrid, fully virtual or asynchronous decision-making.

This means leaving behind an overly nostalgic and often unhelpful “we’ve always done it this way” perspective, choosing instead a more analytical stance. It’s time to review how well things actually worked before and consider what needs to change to meet the current moment.

During my 30-plus years working in NYC public education, I learned from and with ev-

ery child I taught, every teacher and principal I coached and every parent who trusted their child with me. As Joe Szladek assumes his important new role, I look forward to his willingness to learn from and with all members and his commitment to our mission: food, social and environmental justice.

*In solidarity,
Alyce Barr*

THE COOP HAS CHANGED—EXCEPT FOR THE LEADERSHIP

Dear Coop members:

“The city has changed,” said NY-7 Rep Nydia Velázquez on Democratic Primary night. “Zohran knew it. The other candidates didn’t see it. And that is why we are here celebrating this beautiful moment.”

The Coop has changed. Everyone knows it, especially younger people, disabled people, members targeted by racism and Islamophobia, shift workers, supporters of Park Slope Food Coop for Palestine and so on. The Coop leadership doesn’t see it. And that is why it’s not hard to imagine the Coop’s eventual fade.

Kerry Carnahan

MORE DEMOCRACY AT THE COOP: ONWARD!

How disheartening to read that the referendum for hybrid meetings failed to pass. The odds were stacked against it though and I believe that the majority of members do care about greater access to the decision-making process. So...let’s forge ahead!

My co-worker Jason Weiner drafted a robust proposal last year. Member Yejia Chen also came up with a solid plan this Spring. The original hybrid meeting proposal, from CJ Glackin & Morgan Võ, has good recommendations too.

I hope that the General Manager, the Agenda Committee, the General Coordinators and the Membership at large will agree to quickly usher these forward. There is always a lot to do, we are all pulled left and right, but this is urgent. With proper planning we can come up with proposals to vote on in the not so distant future. We have to be agile and steadfast about this. We also have to be transparent, accountable and stop the on-going back-stabbing, slandering and other shenanigans.

The above proposals and ideas could be fully discussed at the next GM; small committees of members and/or staff can be organized to generate ideas and research feasibility with regular reporting, clear timelines and deadlines. The Coop can perhaps postpone other projects to focus on this issue. This is not rocket science. It's a business decision related to priorities and allocation of resources.

I encourage all members to push for this in the coming months, and not let it be buried under other priorities or by institutional inertia, nay-sayers and pushback. If we don't stand behind reforming the system to allow greater participation, the Coop will only pay lip service to a core principle: "Democratic Member Control." And skeptical members will have a point: The Coop is just another "glorified buyers club" with performative democratic values.

In solidarity,

Delphine Selles-Alvarez

Membership Coordinator at the Coop

NEW DEMOCRACY 2.0

Dear Coop members:

We best serve the democratic process when we allow everyone to come to the table. Regardless of technology enhancements, our biggest accessibility limitation will always be time. If we continue to only allow members to participate in discussion and voting on Tuesdays at 7 p.m., we disenfranchise anyone unavailable then. Whether it's the inability to travel, log on or simply focus due to other constraints like family, location or just life, those members can't participate.

We need a system that won't require someone who lost the affordable connectivity program to be pressured by personal cost to participate. We need to give parents and people who work nights time to digest information and not be forced to divide their attention. We need ways that give members with different learning styles and accessibility needs the same info as those at the GM.

I believe it's important to recognize that nowhere in the principles of cooperation does it say that members must agree with each other. Cooperation is finding common ground. The Coop is not meant to be a cookie cutter of anyone's beliefs. That's what makes it beautiful, messy and home to us all. Conflict is inherent in this space. Discourse is a necessity to allow these different opinions a voice. Our current system does not give time or ability to receive, process and respond. It limits participation, it limits engagement, it limits understanding and most importantly it limits factual information and transparent communication.

It keeps us from properly hearing each other. It makes us react and not engage in the best ways. It keeps us from making as much progress as we could.

It's time for **a new Coop democracy**. Please attend the July General Meeting to discuss my agenda item.

Sincerely,

Jason Weiner

Membership Coordinator at the Coop

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR HOLTZ?

Dear Coop members:

In his June 6 email, Joe Holz says that “I’m speaking today only for myself and not on behalf of the staff or General Coordinator team.”

If Holtz is speaking only for himself, as one member equal among many thousands of other PFSC members, how is it that he was authorized to send his email to all members on the PFSC email database? Are all members, speaking only for themselves, able to send emails to the entire PFSC email list when they wish?

Sincerely,

Erich Hahn

JOE HOLTZ’S ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

Dear member owners,

Joe Holtz’s abuse of authority in using the Coop’s mailing list to send a message to each of us about how to vote in the upcoming election is outrageous. I’ve been an active member of our beloved Coop for more than two decades, so I have heard Joe’s opinion on many things over all these years. But this is next level, to use our member directory to send a personal message about how to vote.

Joe Holtz's intervention is straight up election interference and an egregious abuse of his power and privilege. Not only is it outrageous that Joe did this himself, I would like to understand which General Coordinators allowed him this access and which General Coordinators knew about this email before it went out and didn't have the judgment to see this as an inflammatory smear campaign against our own members? Please explain.

*Sincerely,
Kathleen Sullivan*

IS THE COOP LOSING ITS PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT?

Folks,

I'd firstly like to congratulate and welcome Joe Szladek to his new role. It's tough taking on a leadership role from a set of founders, as I know from my experience advising many startups and nonprofits around the world.

I joined the Coop because good food is good politics—if not, why buy organic or biodynamic? But the recent developments at the Coop have left me feeling insulted, condescended to, and frankly, unwelcome. The spate of missives from the GCs was bad enough, but Joe Holtz's email decrying board candidates was the height of paternalistic hypocrisy. If the candidates aren't allowed a similar platform to rebut any smears against them, is this really a democracy?

The contrast with Brooklyn, and the rest of the city—in light of the mayoral primary—couldn't be more stark. The recent elections have proven that the electorate has uplifted candidates such as Mamdani, Hanif, Lander and others who have espoused justice for Palestinians and a variety of progressive causes. This begs the question: Has the Coop become a conservative institution with a set of ossified principles and

bound by inertia? What happened to the kind of spirit that led to Chilean products being boycotted (under Pinochet)? Are we going to be so out of step with the community around us?

Maybe I should give up expecting better and go somewhere else.

I was honestly expecting Joe Holtz to email us all urging us to vote for Cuomo. Perhaps he still will?

*Regards,
Jayanth Eranki*

SEEKING ANSWERS ABOUT ALL-MEMBER EMAIL

Dear Editors:

I'm confused—how and why was an overly political and biased email on the Board elections from Joe Holtz sent to all members using the Coop's official 'no-reply' mailing list? I do not consent to my email being used by the Coop in this manner for any political and/or campaign message, and have never received one until now.

Additionally, was Holtz's letter meant to coerce, convince and/or rationalize in some way that Coop members need to agree to carry even one single product, let alone several, from a country openly and defiantly committing genocide in front of the entire globe with full U.S. support of funding, intelligence and weapons? Again, confused and would like an explanation.

*Sincerely,
A.L. Steiner*

MOURNING FRIEND'S FAMILY, CALLING FOR BOYCOTT

To my fellow members,

I have a good friend who is Palestinian and grew up as a farmer in a village called Khuza'a, southern Gaza. I mentioned him in a letter early last year (a letter that was originally refused for publication by the Gazette).

In the last month, I learned from him that his entire village was completely erased by Israel (there is no other word for it). Over 50 of his relatives were killed. The fate of the rest of the over 15,000 residents is by and large unknown, a tragedy in itself.

Khuza'a's population was not that far off from the size of the Coop's membership.

Among false narratives from the General Coordinators that a mere boycott of Israeli goods would destroy the Coop—narratives then used to prevent discussion and demonize members—I make the same appeal as in my previous letter: Let's keep our focus on the real destruction happening in Palestine.

*In cooperation and solidarity,
Abdi-Hakin Dirie*

FROM TAIPEI TO PARK SLOPE: IN SUPPORT OF THE COOP'S VALUES

To the Editor:

I've been a proud member of the Park Slope Food Coop for 15 years and have always

valued its spirit of cooperation and commitment to providing high-quality, sustainable food to our community.

However, since the attacks in October 2023, I've been troubled by what feels like a shift in the Coop's atmosphere. A vocal minority has pushed rhetoric that feels out of step with the inclusive and cooperative spirit that has long defined this community.

As someone who grew up in Taiwan—a place where democracy and civil liberties were hard-won—I'm deeply unsettled by the selective moral outrage directed at Israel. Though imperfect like any democracy, Israel stands alone in the region in offering meaningful protections for women, minorities and LGBTQ individuals. Yet it is often the sole target of intense condemnation, while regimes like China, Russia and Egypt—whose human rights abuses are well-documented—escape similar scrutiny. Criticizing a government's policies is one thing; singling out an entire nation and its people as uniquely immoral is something else entirely.

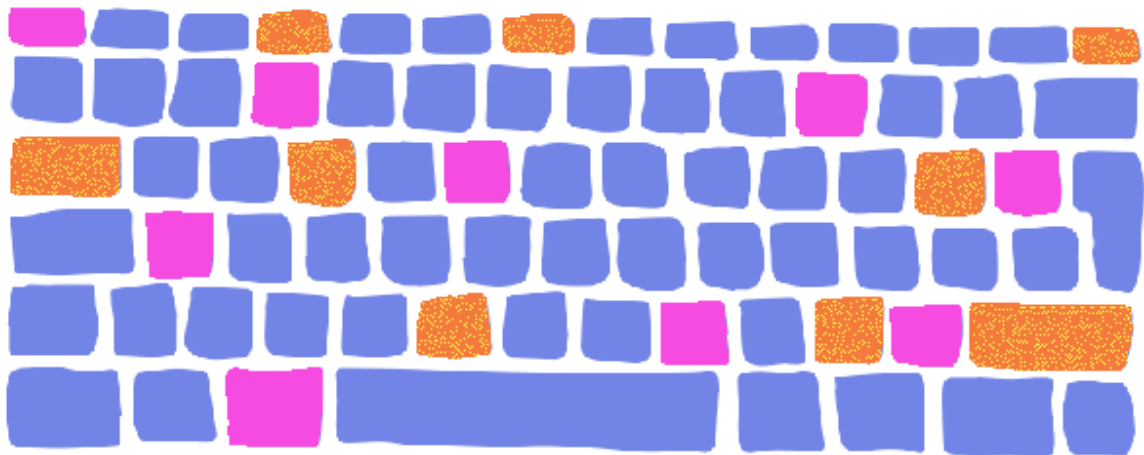
Regardless of where one stands on this complex and emotional issue, it is crucial to preserve the Coop's core values: cooperation, inclusivity and a focus on good food and community. I greatly appreciate the dedication of our General Coordinators, whose hard work reassures me that the Coop's spirit can continue to thrive. I want to thank Joe Holtz for his decades of service to the Coop and for his recent letter—a voice of reason and moral clarity from someone who has long embodied the values of the Coop. As Joe steps back from his role, I believe his words serve as a timely reminder of what this community stands for: cooperation, respect and a shared commitment to the Coop's founding principles.

Sincerely,
Linda Wong

JUNE 3, 2025

December 30, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



REQUEST FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Coop members:

I am a long-standing Coop member and urge the Coop to put in place hybrid general meetings.

A large percentage of Coop members are simply unable to attend in person meetings due to family and work obligations, and long distances to travel. I currently care for my elderly parents in Maryland and am in Brooklyn infrequently and randomly, but I still shop at the Coop and fulfill all my work obligations. Many members are in similar situations. Not to mention elderly or disabled members who may have health or physical issues which prevent them from attending in person meetings easily. Hybrid zoom meetings have become standard throughout both the public and the private sectors in this country. The Coop has embraced the digital age in many ways, far too many to list here. Hybrid GM's make common sense in 2025 and would allow more members to participate in the Coop's democratic process.

I have read the Jan. 7 Coordinator's Corner article *Our Coop at Risk* in the *Gazette*, encouraging members to oppose the hybrid meeting proposal. I find this baffling. Only offering in-person meetings essentially disenfranchises all but a handful of our many thousands of members. It flies in the face of all common sense. With regard to the BDS boycott, lowering the boycott threshold to 50% is unacceptable. No boycott of any kind should be enacted without at least a two thirds consensus of Coop members, and in-person meetings should be allowed to proceed in a hybrid fashion. This would be a good compromise and uphold the democratic values of the Coop. But discouraging a more democratic, easily accessible GM process is not a good look, and gives the appearance that the general coordinators and the board are against member participation on controversial topics.

Sincerely,

Becky Burrows

ISRAEL OBSESSION

Dear Coop members:

I'm a long time Coop member and I joined to be part of a cooperative workplace devoted to healthy food. The idea that the Coop should be a place to fight the problems of the Middle East is simply not an appropriate or fair use of member time and resources. I think that the discussion of Palestine and Israel should be banned from the agenda of the Coop and people who cannot leave this alone should have their membership revoked.

*Sincerely,
David Sher*

ARE COOP STAFF OUT OF TOUCH?

Dear *Linewaiters' Gazette*:

I have been watching the evolution of the issue of hybrid meetings. I feel like the staff is trying to do what they think is right for the Coop, but they are out of touch with the democratic process and the actual will of the members. Blocking votes and overriding the board's attempt to reinstate the membership's voice is a sign that you're doing it wrong.

*Sincerely,
Bill Beckler*

UPHOLDING DEMOCRACY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN OUR COOP

To the Editor,

As a longtime member-owner, I am deeply concerned by the ongoing delay in issuing a referendum on hybrid General Meetings, despite a clear directive from the Board. The Board, elected by and accountable to the membership, has called for this referendum to give members a voice on an important issue of accessibility and participation.

The continued postponement—now stretching to 18 months—prevents us from exercising our democratic rights as members and undermines the cooperative values of openness, equity and democratic member control that are foundational to the Coop. Seeking further legal opinions at this stage appears to be an unnecessary barrier, especially given the Coordinators' previously stated opposition to hybrid meetings. As member-owners, we expect our paid staff to respect the decisions of the Board and the will of the membership.

I urge the General Coordinators to follow the Board's directive and issue the referendum by the end of May. Anything less is a disservice to our Coop's principles and to the rights of its members to participate fully in our governance.

Sincerely,

William Clark

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Dear Editors,

Many thanks to the Board members who listened to the requests of the membership expressed at the April General Meeting and voted to move the long-delayed hybrid

meetings proposal to a referendum.

For me the General Meeting was a hopeful exercise of democracy. The chair committee extended the open forum time enabling more voices to be heard; a Board member, a member of the agenda setting committee, and many members shared their perspectives. The lively response to a member's motion to provide a path forward engaged the whole room in thinking about how Coop decisions are made and who makes them.

I came away with a new understanding that every General Meeting is a portion of a Board meeting "that is devoted to receiving the advice of the members" (Coop's Bylaws, Article VI, 2). Soon we will all have the chance to vote on a proposal to allow more members to give our advice to the Board through hybrid meetings.

*In cooperation,
Kathy McCullagh*

REMOVE ROGUE DIRECTORS

Dear Members:

The April 29 General Meeting was an exercise in mob rule and a rejection of the rule of law, a fundamental principle of democracy.

The Coop is a corporation governed by the laws of New York state. It operates under its bylaws and governing documents, including the Guide to the General and Annual Meetings, which states:

When the Coop incorporated, the members decided that the Board of Directors (BOD) would be required to meet openly and vote only on issues that were taken up and vot-

ed on by the membership.

The Guide affirms the role of the Agenda Committee:

IV. Agenda of the General Meeting

A. The Agenda Committee impartially sets the agenda of the General Meeting.

C. The Agenda Committee will assemble the items, prioritize them, and submit them for publication in the Linewaiters' Gazette 5 to 12 days prior to the General Meeting.

The bylaws further state:

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

The membership shall be given notice of each such (Board of Directors) meeting prior to such meeting. The directors shall inform those members who shall be present of the nature of the business to come before the directors and receive the advice of the members on such matters. The portion of the Board of Directors meeting that is devoted to receiving the advice of the members shall be known as the General Meeting.

On April 29, Directors Tess Lavoie-Brown and Keyian Favai conducted a board meeting that violated these governing rules. Without proper process and member input, they authorized a referendum to change the bylaws. Director Tim Hospodar voted in support of this breach.

These Directors failed to uphold their fiduciary responsibility and violated members' rights.

They must resign—or be removed.

Voice your opposition. Please sign the recall petition.

Barbara Mazor
coop4unity.org

FINDING “VALUE” IN THE COOP’S COLLECTION AND AGGREGATION OF PERSONAL DATA AND OPINION

To the editors:

Why take the Coop’s demographic survey?

I oppose efforts like this and think them unlawful.

The PSFC survey email reads: “organizations like our Coop regularly find value in collecting such information in order to assess needs.”

What needs?

Where is the need for “value,” if that value works to divide us?

It’s needless surveys like this and the hunt to gather, aggregate and mine “value” from intrusive data collection among individuals in voluntary community like ours, of race, sex and the like that speak of identity, that trouble me. All this surveying has divided us, has got our country into the hands of an alliance of clever despots who feed on occasions like this, in organizations like ours, to denounce voluntary communities who accrue social data from individuals, without inner aim, without clear purpose. And it’s intrusive, divisive and needless. Of what value then?

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Tobias

A BIG THANK YOU

Dear Coop Members:

Because there were so many members wanting to speak during Open Forum, I never got a chance, so here goes: I'm 71 years old, and my husband is 76. We're both immunocompromised but make it to almost every GM (wearing masks) because we love our Coop and want to participate in democratic community gatherings. We risk our safety every month so that we can attend.

It was enormously gratifying to learn that the Board authorized a vote by our ENTIRE membership online about finally ratifying having monthly GM's online and in person!!

A big thank you to those who helped make this vote possible after 17 months of delays!! Democracy is messy but it works!!

*Sincerely,
Carol Wald*

THE TRUTH COMES LIMPING AFTER

To the editor:

I could give you my legal perspective of the April 29 Board of Directors meeting (I'm an appellate attorney well versed in corporate governance disputes), but I will let the Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine speak for themselves. Here is their Instagram video and email telling you exactly what happened: PSFCM4P were so angry that they took over and ended the meeting; Directors Tess Brown-Lavoie and Keyian Vafai discussed an issue that was not on the agenda; and they decreed that the Coop will issue a referendum on hybrid meetings because the PSFCM4P demand hybrid

meetings now.

The General Coordinators implored Tess and Keyian to stop because their action was illegal under the Coop's bylaws. The bylaws are the rules the Coop follows when making decisions as a cooperative corporation. Why was their action illegal? The word "illegal" means against a law, and bylaws are laws.

Our bylaws require Directors to make decisions at a Board meeting, but the PSFCM4P ended the scheduled meeting. Our bylaws also require that the entire membership be informed of "the business to come before the directors." Our Guide to the General Meetings (rules clarifying our bylaws) require a minimum five days advance notice of an agenda item so all members can decide whether to come "give advice to the directors."

Tess and Keyian, leaders of the campaign to boycott Israel, gave **no** advance notice of their agenda—not even to their fellow Directors Imani Qryn and Joe Holtz. PSFCM4P proclaim their takeover was "democracy" in action. It was great political theater, but not democracy. Democracy requires following laws. The PSFCM4P letters here are also not democracy. They are words of an *activistocracy* taking totalitarian control—over you and our beloved Coop.

Sincerely,
Zara Watkins

OUR RIGHT TO DECIDE

Dear Coop Members,

I am a longtime Coop member who has occasionally dipped a toe into PSFC governance. When I did so, I experienced firsthand the undue influence that the General Co-

ordinators often exert. Thus, I appreciate the way in which the group Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine has worked alongside other democracy-minded members to make our General Meetings hybrid.

I was angry when I read the GCs' latest column, where they try to argue that caring about the fate of people who are being bombed and starved by a country heavily supported by our own government somehow equates to being the vessel of an ideology, driven only by a single issue. *Even if* PSFC4Palestine's only motive for supporting hybrid meetings was to make it easier to vote on a boycott, wouldn't that still be a good thing? But that's not all they care about, as I know from conversations with a few of them. It's just that they reject the GCs' effort to define "cooperation" in narrow, apolitical terms.

In the most recent *Gazette*, I read that the General Coordinators have refused to say whether they will issue the referendum on hybrid meetings as directed by the Board at the April GM. Now I find out that Joe Holtz says they are getting legal advice about next steps. Once again, employees of the member-owners are acting like bosses or corporate CEOs who can do whatever they please. I am grateful to those on the Board who stood up for the membership and our right to decide this question via referendum.

Sincerely,
Winston McIntosh

PETITION TO RECALL MEMBERS OF THE COOP'S BOARD

Dear Coop,

We are collecting signatures for a recall of three members of the Coop's Board of Directors: Tess Brown-Lavoie, Keyian Vafai, and Tim Hospodar. These board members

voted “yes” when Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine illegally forced through a referendum on hybrid voting at the April GM. They did so without notifying membership, as required per our bylaws, thus stealing yours and everyone else’s vote.

Please add your name to the Recall Petition [here](#).

Sincerely;

Jesse Rosenfeld

BDS VS. COOP(ERATION)

Dear Coop members:

I understand why BDS wants to isolate Israeli companies from selling their wares in the US and elsewhere, like I understand why Hamas exists. Without a doubt, Israel’s war on Gaza is horrendous beyond words, as has been violent aggression toward the Palestinians since even before the founding of the state of Israel.

However, what I don’t understand is that BDS is spending its time and efforts on achieving the goal of getting Israeli products boycotted from the Park Slope Food Coop of all places. You don’t resolve a severely polarized conflict by sabotaging the essence of a non-political entity that actively strives for inclusivity and diversity, and has done so successfully for 50 years, with great effort by many.

Take your fight to the corporate world of commerce instead. That’s where your fight gets the ROI on your time and efforts you’re looking for by upping reach and scale. And if a difference can be made, it’s on the scale of corporate profits.

So again, don’t pick on a Coop that embraces, models and nurtures cultural unders-

tanding and collaboration. Taking the BDS fight to the Coop defeats BDS's purpose on two fronts—fighting a fight where it shouldn't be fought, and not fighting the fight where it could make the difference BDS seeks. Fighting the Coop is a waste of many people's time and energy, not in the least of those who support BDS and its mission.

Thank you!

Erik Schurink

BDS IS TOO TOXIC FOR EVENT SPACES—AND FOR US

Dear fellow Coop members:

I was one of dozens of members who couldn't get into the April general meeting due to capacity constraints. It was a frustrating but enlightening experience, as it became clear in talking to fellow members on the line that many are missing the plot. There was anger about the cancellation of our contract for the theater at City Tech, and rage at an apparent move by an unaffiliated NGO that led to City Tech backing out, but zero reflection on why City Tech would take such a push seriously.

Why such drama about a process issue at the Coop? For anyone not following along, the animating force for the push for hybrid meetings is to make it easier to vote on boycotting Israel at the Coop in alignment with the BDS movement. No matter our feelings about the wars in the Middle East and the terrible plight of people there, the BDS movement is widely perceived as toxically antisemitic. It is so toxic that many city institutions want nothing to do with it, whatsoever. That's why it's been hard to schedule large venues to hold such meetings, and that's why Coop BDS activists are pushing so hard for virtual meetings instead.

So, I pose the question to my fellow Coop members: if even a whiff of association with BDS is considered too toxic for public spaces in the city, why isn't it for us? We would-

n't—and certainly shouldn't—tolerate affiliation with racist and hateful outside groups of other sorts; why are we putting up with this? There are many ways to support the Palestinian cause without aligning with outright anti-Semites.

I can only hope that my fellow Coopers don't realize who they are trying to get in bed with. Time to wake up.

Sincerely,

Josh Suskewicz

THAT “OTHER” ISSUE

Dear Coop members:

Why has there been such controversy over the hybrid meetings proposal? It's a virtual no-brainer that such meetings would be a boon for greater participation in the Coop's democracy, so why has the proposal been on the table for so long without a vote? But of course we know *why*; we know that the reason has nothing to do with the subject of hybrid meetings itself, but rather that such meetings might facilitate a vote on that *other issue*—the proposed Israel boycott, and the drive by certain Coop factions to prevent that vote from ever happening, lest it succeed. All else has become secondary to that goal, come hell or high water. Larger venues have been difficult to find, and when one has been found, it has been mysteriously sabotaged and called off. Thus, the hybrid meetings vote has become a casualty to that *other issue*.

But a solution is evident, and easy to implement. During the COVID years, when in-person meetings were thought to be dangerous, meetings were held online. The coordinators are responsible for arranging General Meetings, and simply interpreted online meetings to be the equivalent of in-person ones. Thus, meetings continued to take place. Nothing in the bylaws prevents that. By the same logic, controversial pro-

posals judged to demand larger venues can simply be held online. Coordinators need not spend time and money searching for a large in-person venue, only to see it cancelled, victim to specious arguments and dirty pool. They can simply notify the membership via their normal email announcements of the coming General Meeting, that it will be held online, and send along the links announcing the agenda and setting up the voting. So why is this charade that a venue cannot be found going on?

Sincerely,

David Barouh

CASTING ASPERSIONS INSTEAD OF VOTES

To my fellow members and General Coordinators who've tried to stop the referendum on hybrid voting:

You tried, but failed, to inhibit our democracy as a way to avoid engaging in an honest conversation and vote on the issues of BDS.

I am a Jewish descendant of Holocaust survivors. In the 1930s, there were Americans who saw my people's plight as their burden, and helped get my grandpa out of Germany. When genocide is happening, neutrality is impossible; we are either complicit or opposed. Today at the Coop, we can do our part by standing in solidarity with the people of Palestine by boycotting goods from Israel, the state committing genocide against them.

Instead of engaging on the issues, I have mostly seen anti-hybrid/BDS campaigns simply cast aspersions on us as a group. There are baseless rumors that we are violent. We have been doxxed. One member in a previous *Gazette* letter wrote that we are "holding the Coop hostage"! At the 4/29 GM, we were even scolded by a Board member for acting dangerously because, the reasoning went, by demanding that the

Board issue a referendum on hybrid voting we were not letting our own voices be heard. We've waited over 18 months for the Board to allow a vote on increased accessibility to voting; I trust everyone can see the rhetorical gymnastics here.

I am proud we won a referendum on hybrid voting. We have a governance that clearly does not wish to have this conversation, but we still succeeded. Ultimately, we need a robust conversation and vote on these issues. For example, does supporting a state that is intentionally starving an entire population uphold our mission to "oppose discrimination in any form"? Don't change the subject; let's discuss and vote about it.

Sincerely,

Rosie Lopeman, artist, teacher and member of PSFC For Palestine

REFLECTIONS ON HYBRID GENERAL MEETINGS

Dear Coop members:

"More people will attend a Hybrid General Meeting than one at the Picnic House."

Surely this is the thinking of members who are vehemently demanding that we establish permanent Hybrid Meetings.

Based on the evidence below, this may not always be the case.

Elizabeth Tobier's April 22 letter gave the attendance at 35 Zoom GMs during Covid. Every Coop member was free to participate in these meetings while eating dinner and doing household chores.

The average attendance from May 2020 to August 2023 was 150. Attendance was highest the first few months but then dropped precipitously.

In September 2023 the GM returned to the Picnic House. Minutes of 17 meetings through March 2025 are posted on our website. They tell how many members voted, when there was a vote.

The average number of votes cast in these elections was 159.

This shows that MORE people have been attending GMs at the Picnic House since we ended Covid Zooming!

Picnic House attendance was greatest in October 2024 when there were Personnel Committee and Masking Mandate votes. Were these members attending a meeting for big decisions?

I am left considering what effect the issue of boycotting Israel is having on the extremely intense Food Coop conversation about whether or not to establish permanent hybrid meetings. In my opinion the boycott issue is the MAIN impetus and this gives me the creeps.

I have no doubt that if hybrid meetings were established and there was a vote on a boycott, a record number of members would chime in, even if the voting system was put in place hastily.

IF, and I repeat IF, members sanction hybrid meetings, we'd better take our time setting up a flawless system free of fraud potential, that will also give members sufficient time for considering issues.

Sincerely,

Andy Feldman

HIDING BEHIND “DEMOCRACY” FOR STAGING A “COUP”

Dear Coop members:

The monthly GM has typically about 200 attendees, or only a bit more than one percent of the membership base. Whatever decisions are made on that day reflect the will of that motivated and engaged one percent; in no way does it reflect the will of the 99% members who do not vote. To call it democracy and the will of the membership is a farce.

The lack of engagement of 99% of the membership is a shame, but understandable, and not unexpected. After all, people lead busy lives, and schlepping to a two-hour evening meeting in the park to discuss the formation of a work-rules or recycling committee is asking a lot.

The lack of participation in our Coop’s governance becomes particularly worrisome, however, when a small group of highly motivated actors coordinate their activities with an outside group to take over the control of the Coop. Indeed, it only takes 100-150 people to gain the majority vote during those monthly GMs.

The Coop must rethink its governance, to protect itself from bad actors!

Sincerely,

Bruno Grandsard

150 MEMBERS LEFT WITHOUT A VOICE

To my fellow members —

An article from the May *Gazette* describes how, at the April GM, board member Imani

Q'ryn spoke to attendees about the risks of the board issuing a Coop-wide referendum on hybrid meetings. She warned that "what we're doing right here is very dangerous... hold your power. Do not give it to us." Sadly, I was among those excluded from the Picnic House due to capacity issues and couldn't hear her statement from my spot near the front of the 150-person long line of members who had hoped to get in. A tall room divider blocked our view of the meeting through the windows, the shut doors prevented us from hearing what was said, and we were told that if we did anything beyond quietly standing in line, someone would call the police.

Respectfully, Q'ryn's statement frustrates me. "Hold your power" rings a little hollow to those of us stuck outside. What power should we hold? The power of the first 250 people who show up to make decisions for the rest of us? If "the Coop is built on discussion" as Joe Holtz says, then why are there over a hundred people waiting in line who can't make their voices heard? I don't see any danger in issuing a Coop-wide mail-in ballot to make a decision, especially on a matter that has already seen so much discussion and faced so many logistical hurdles.

I agree with Q'ryn that the membership should hold our power and not give it away—and hybrid GMs are exactly how we can do that.

*Sincerely,
Robert Lord*

LET THE REFERENDUM ON HYBRID MEETINGS HAPPEN!

Dear Fellow Park Slope Food Coop Members,

I just sent the following message to the Coop General Coordinators:

I am horrified to learn that rather than carrying out the clearly demonstrated will of

the membership of the Coop to hold a vote on whether or not to allow hybrid general meetings, the GC's are hiring lawyers!

This is ABSURD! Let the members vote on the question.

I was at the GM at the end of April and the twisted logic expressed by Joe Holtz and Imani Q'ryn arguing against the decision by the Board to go ahead with a referendum was astounding.

How on earth can stopping a referendum from happening be described as a defense of democracy?

LET THE REFERENDUM HAPPEN!

In solidarity,

Judith Loebel

DISENFRANCHISEMENT IS WRONG

To the editors,

If what has been reported is true, and the General Coordinators are seeking legal advice on how to prevent members from attending General Meetings virtually, then we have truly arrived at a moment of crisis.

To spend Coop resources (our money) disenfranchising members who otherwise can't attend and have their voice heard for reasons like physical disability, lack of childcare and needing to work is an outrageous dereliction of duty.

We should be better than this.

*Thank you for your attention,
Walter Kaplan*

REFERENDUM AS THE ULTIMATE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP?

To the Editor:

It seems reasonable that a vote impacting members incapable of attending General Meetings (GMs) must happen in a way that allows for the votes by those otherwise excluded. Increasing the capacity of an in-person venue by fourfold only responds to one of the myriad factors that prohibit the membership-at-large from deeply participating in the cooperation of this organization. Allocating a new space for only ~6% of membership remains imperfect to survey, respect and understand the thousands of voices that cannot reach our community as easily. Yet we promise each other equal voting rights in principle.

As a data guy, I wrestle with the fact that science can theorize using small samples, but this runs counter to ICA's Statement on the Cooperative Identity (1995) which defines equal voting rights as "one member, one vote." More to the point, why is this clause truncated from the ICA's Cooperative Principles as they appear in the About section on foodcoop.com—who removed it from our website? Honoring that our Coop has a unique governance structure, as a member of the Board of Directors I acknowledge that I require the advice of every member willing to vote in favor of or against innovating the meeting structure in a way that impacts our governance structure. I recognize it is inappropriate to vote on this topic at a Board meeting without first welcoming the voice of every member. Sample size of N, in this case, will not suffice.

In a way, it's ironic the scheduled vote, of which the membership was notified, did not happen at the April 2025 GM. Although I have studied the advice of hundreds of mem-

bers via email, dozens of articles in the *Gazette*, and in discussion and Open Forum at many GMs, only a referendum will provide each member one vote.

Sincerely,

Tim Hospodar, Member of the Board of Directors who accepted the advice of the members present on April 29 to commence the Board meeting without further discussion in an expedited effort to solve this conundrum

DON'T MOURN—ORGANIZE!

Fellow Members,

I grew up knowing the deep and lasting harm of political and identity smear lists. My father was jailed in the US for labor organizing, then captured and locked in solitary confinement in Spain, for fighting Franco. In a deal to gain his freedom, he was forced to silence his political voice.

On a list of Jewish teachers, my mother faced a quota system that prevented her from working in her own town. Her brother was similarly denied access to engineering school.

Fast forward to 2025: the US is again collecting names, lists, and punishing speech. Here at our Coop, General Coordinators—people we pay to lead—are using labels like PMP* to marginalize anyone who speaks in favor of hybrid meetings, condemns genocide or advocates boycotting products from an apartheid state. They publish names of Board candidates to vote for (or not), based on the spurious assumption that members who voice ethical objections to crimes against humanity are “ideologically driven” and therefore unconcerned with the good of the Coop.

In GM comments and Coordinators' Corner editorials, GCs are creating a narrative in

which anyone who advocates for a system that allows more than 250 of us at a time to participate in governance—or condemns forced starvation—is somehow less a Coop member than those who work to avoid a vote on hybrid meetings, block discussion of a boycott or remain silent.

All member-owners have the right to equitable treatment by the GCs. All member-owners deserve respect and a system of governance that enables their ideas and proposals to reach the wider Coop membership for discussions and votes. All member-owners have the right to share individual thoughts and to gather in groups to express support for their ideas. Organizing in this way should not put anyone in the GCs' crosshairs.

*In their May 13 Coordinators' Corner column, General Coordinators used the acronym PMP in referring to Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine

In Cooperation,
Alyce Barr

GCS DON'T APPEAR TO WANT THE MOST QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Fellow Members:

In reading statements from the candidates for our upcoming Board election, I was favorably struck by the following:

Taylor Pate joined the Central Brooklyn Food Coop because she “was interested in organizing with other black folks and creating a grocery store that was built for those that have historically lacked access to fresh food in Central Brooklyn.... With inequality and lack of access to quality food in NYC,” Taylor believes “it’s crucial to keep the

Coop affordable, and for members to have access to information about the food supply chains that impact the food that we buy.”

Dan Kaminsky has “worked on campaigns, in nonprofits and in the office of a state senator” and in addition serves on Community Board 7. Cooperatives have been a central part of Dan’s adult life, including “a cooperative tour company called Social Justice Tours and... Bluestockings, a collectively run bookstore in the Lower East Side.” Dan participated in a cooperative bike messenger company and in housing cooperatives throughout Brooklyn.

In my eyes, these statements reflect cooperative values, period. Yet in the latest post from the General Coordinators, I read that these people represent “ideologically--driven member groups” that they are hell bent on advancing one issue, that they couldn’t give a hoot about the overall welfare of the Coop. It’s as if we were talking about members of some fringe sectarian political group—you know, the kind you see at rallies handing out newspapers dripping with rhetoric that reflects their current party line. What does this caricature have to do with a food justice advocate or a Community Board member?

Let’s maybe set aside the GCs’ (very self-interested—they are afraid they won’t get to run the whole show anymore) scare-mongering and evaluate the candidates on the merits?

*In cooperation,
Annabel Bruno*

COOP LEADERS SHOULD HELP, NOT HINDER, OUR DEMOCRACY!

Dear fellow Coop members:

After reading publications in the *Gazette* casting unfair suspicions on my board candidacy, I'd like to share my response with the membership.

I've valued creating friendships, building relationships with staff and being part of a Coop that aligns with my values, in particular to support an alternative to grocery corporations, encourage democratic decision making and have access to high quality and affordable food. This is an inherently political act. Some of the first cooperatives in this country were instrumental in the Civil Rights movement and the end of slavery. Cooperatives are political institutions by design.

I'm running for the board because I believe in coops as ways to build economic power, create community and effect change. I'm highly qualified to act as a board member to serve the will of the membership, as you can see in my board candidacy statement.

Members have exercised their democratic power, for example, by voting to ban Chilean grapes during the Pinochet regime. I'm proud to echo the thousands of members calling for a ban of products from Israel, a country that is perpetuating a genocide.

I've been devastated by the efforts of a few members to ostracize and harass those who wish to exercise their member power by putting a boycott to a vote. I've received unwelcome emails and threats, and have been publicly doxxed. It's disappointing that GCs have used bureaucracy to hamper members exercising their democratic rights.

All members, including myself, should feel safe in exercising their rights. If certain members—supported by the GCs—continue to suppress efforts to allow membership to vote for hybrid meetings and any form of a boycott, this sets a dangerous precedent by obstructing the will of members to take part in democratic decisions about an organization in which we're all deeply invested.

In solidarity,
Taylor Pate

THE APRIL GM WAS A SUCCESS FOR DEMOCRACY AT THE COOP

Greetings:

I attended the April 29 Coop general meeting. I did not know what to expect after the cancellation of the City Tech venue and the agenda committee decided to strike the hybrid meeting vote from the agenda. Along with the majority of the people in the room, I was outraged that an outside group, with the support of a pro-Israel minority in the Coop, are strong arming the Coop from exercising the right to vote.

The Board's vote to issue a referendum reflected members' will and it was only enabled by active participation in the April's General Meeting. The membership is fed up with 17 months of delays on this important issue. Hopefully, the General Coordinators, the Agenda Committee and Joe Holtz will not drag their feet or, worse, overturn the decision to have a direct mail-in vote on a hybrid vote meeting. Let us sustain the Coop's tradition of membership democracy by facilitating, instead of resisting, a membership vote on the right to boycott Israeli or foreign companies that profit out of Palestinian oppression.

Sincerely,
David Diaz

IS THIS WHAT “DEMOCRACY” LOOKS LIKE?

Dear Coop members:

My partner and I hired a babysitter at \$25/hour for four hours to attend the GM on 4/29/25. Usually, one of us stays with the kids when attending meetings and working shifts because we can't afford childcare otherwise. One must give up our right to vote so the other can attend, since proxy voting isn't allowed. We both planned to vote for hybrid so both of us could finally vote and not waste \$100 on childcare. Since City Tech was forced to cancel, we attended the meeting anyway. Here are my experiences:

- I approached the chair committee to request that the proposed motion to adjourn the GM be rephrased in accessible terms because it was very confusing for many members. The chair responded very condescendingly. He should have known to present the vote in a neutral way.
- The chair and staff weren't honest that City Tech was sabotaged by “End Jew Hatred.”
- A group of people in the rear alcove loudly heckled speakers. No one silenced them. An older white woman from that group approached a Black mother to ask her to quiet her toddler's laughter. I called her out on her racism since she never once told her white friends to quiet their shouting, which was far louder and angrier.

As a Black woman and a mom, I felt unwelcome and unsafe and left the GM in tears. I have no time for haters. I'll only attend future GMs when they're hybrid. At least the Board agreed to a referendum so we can finally vote on hybrid. But why do we even need to vote? Why can't all GMs be hybrid so that we can all vote? The Coop should be an example of what democracy can look like, not emulate our dysfunctional two-party political system.

Sincerely,
LaShaun Ellis

SOME QUESTIONS FOR PSFCM4P

Dear Coop members: Explain to me how it works, Part 1

Members 4 Palestine wants the Coop membership to join the BDS movement. I've tried communicating with M4P about how the BDS agenda will bring about resolution to the "Israel-Palestine conflict" but the BDS belief system seems to prohibit dialogue with anyone who asks questions.

Here are some questions I'd like to discuss with M4P concerning the three main BDS demands:

1. Ending Israel's occupation and colonization of all Arab lands

Focusing only on the West Bank:

Does BDS expect that Hamas will take control when the Israeli military leaves?

What will happen to the Palestinian Authority?

What is necessary to prevent a State of Palestine in the West Bank from destabilizing Jordan?

2. Full equality for the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel

What categories of inequality need to be addressed?

Does BDS support organizations that are fighting discrimination in Israel?

Does BDS propose reform legislation?

3. Right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties.

What's the number of people who want to return?

If Israeli law does not provide a procedure for transferring property title from current owners to returners, does BDS propose legislation?

What if property was in a town that was razed and is now under a national forest or a new neighborhood?

How long will this process take and who will pay for it?

Some general questions:

If you support a secular democratic State of Palestine, do you repudiate Hamas?

What kind of Israeli coalition government could implement the BDS agenda?

I've seen no indication that the BDS movement offers serious policy proposals.

I've seen no indication that anyone in M4P has thought through how the demands they want the Coop to adopt can be met. Maybe that's why they refuse dialogue.

Sincerely,

Noah Potter

HELP FEED PEOPLE IN GAZA

Dear Coop Members,

If you are Jewish and are at all bothered by the atrocities Israel is committing against the people of Gaza, you might want to sign this statement by Jews for Food Aid for People in Gaza:

It's obviously no substitute for the long-obstructed vote for BDS at the Coop, but it is a little something.

Thanks,

Robert Rosen

LET US VOTE!

To the Editor,

Let us vote!

I want to thank the Board of Directors for voting to issue a referendum on hybrid General Meetings. It should never have taken this long. Member-owners shouldn't have to fight this hard just to participate in our Coop democracy.

Which begs the question: When did voting become so controversial at the Coop?

This April, after an outside harassment campaign targeted (and thereby canceled) the venue secured for the hybrid GM vote, Coop leadership moved the meeting to a smaller space and quietly removed the hybrid GM vote from the agenda. This vote had been secured for this GM after more than 15 months of member democratic efforts.

At the meeting, there was no explanation, no accountability and no mention of the disruption or the agenda change in the General Coordinators' report. Again, where is the accountability for our member democracy?

If we want accountability and a stronger Coop democracy, then we need better visibility of member voices. One way to do this is by restoring the Coop Bulletin Board—a physical space where members could share ideas, stay informed and engage. That board was essential for transparency and connection.

Since its removal during COVID, we've been pushed into isolated conversations—just those on our shifts or whoever we happen to bump into in the aisles. That's not a community—that's a silence. And with that comes apathy, confusion and a loss of accountability.

We need hybrid meetings. We need a bulletin board. And we need leadership that represents, not overrides, member voices.

Vote YES on the referendum. This is about access, accountability and whether we still have a member democracy.

*In cooperation,
Rosa Palermo*

BOARD CANDIDATES: WHO THEY ARE AND WHY THEY'RE RUNNING

December 30, 2025



March 11, 2025

First some background on the Coop's Board. The Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors plays a crucial role in running the Coop. Board members make their decisions based on the advice of Coop members who attend the monthly General Meetings. There are five seats on the Board, and each term lasts three years. Members submit their applications to run for open seats in March of each year and candidate statements are published in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*. Nominees will have the opportunity to introduce themselves at the March 25 General Meeting. All members can start voting online via a Coop-wide email that will go out in late May, and results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on June 24.

This year there are seven candidates for two open seats. Here are the 2025 candi-

dates and their statements (in alphabetical order):

SERKO ARTINIAN



My name is Serko Artinian, and I'm running for the Board of the Park Slope Food

Coop. The Coop is a second home to me, and the primary reason I moved to Brooklyn in the first place! I've been a devoted member for over 10 years and have a near perfect attendance record. Growing up in my Armenian immigrant family's restaurant gives me a unique perspective on the world, one that translates into humility, compassion and equality for all. I love eating, and feeding [others], after having first realized the power of good food while watching my master chef mom's cooking as a kid.

Joining the Coop in June of 2014 has been one of the best decisions of my life. I was fortunate enough to be a squad leader for a handful of months ahead of the pandemic. That experience taught me real the resiliency of the Coop, which after 50 years is stronger than ever! Eternally grateful to the Board of Directors for their wisdom, hard work and leadership to get us through those dark times.

Cooking and photography are my favorite forms of artistic expression, which naturally transitions to the Coop given our more recent foray into featuring members who are chefs. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in film & video production from Drexel University. This life experience helps inform and make me a valuable asset as a Coop Board of Directors member when it comes to envisioning the future of our web, social and real world presence.

My partner and I moved in Park Slope in 2023 for two reasons: living within walking distance of both the Coop and Prospect Park! My dedication to the Coop grows by the day, and I'd be incredibly honored to be given the opportunity to serve our community as a member of the Coop Board of Directors!

LYNN HUSUM



As a dedicated member of the Park Slope Food Coop for the past seven years, I have experienced firsthand the power of cooperation, community and shared responsibility. I am running for the Board of Directors because I believe in the Coop's mission and want to contribute my experience and passion to its continued success.

For 21 years, I owned and operated a business that employed up to 15 full-time staff and collaborated with third-party teams across manufacturing, warehousing and

sales. This experience has given me a deep understanding of organizational leadership, financial responsibility and the importance of fostering a strong, collaborative workplace. I know what it takes to balance efficiency with ethical business practices, and I believe these skills can help strengthen our Coop's operations and governance.

Beyond my business background, I am an active member of our broader community, regularly volunteering at Chips, where I find fulfillment in service and connection. The Park Slope Food Coop is more than just a place to shop—it is a model of what is possible when people come together with shared values. I love being a part of this cooperative world, and I would be honored to help guide its future.

If elected, I will be committed to transparency, inclusivity and ensuring that our Coop continues to thrive as a member-driven institution. I would love the opportunity to bring my leadership experience, cooperative enthusiasm and dedication to service to the Board of Directors.

I appreciate your support and look forward to serving this incredible community.

DAN KAMINSKY



Hi! My name is Dan Kaminsky, and I am excited to run for the Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors. With the impending change of leadership, it is important to have a board that embodies a cooperative outlook and prioritizes democratic participation. I have significant experience with cooperatives, participatory democracy, community organizing and food justice. I also have a Master's degree in Social Innovation, for which I focused my studies on worker cooperatives.

In my professional life, I work as an adjunct professor, teaching NYC politics at Manhattan College, as well as a pizza tour guide (pizza is among my greatest passions) with Scott's Pizza Tours. I am also pursuing a masters in social work and have been training to be a therapist at a low-income clinic.

Much of my work over the last decade has been in local politics. I have worked on campaigns, in nonprofits and in the office of a state senator. In addition, I currently serve as a board member on Community Board 7. This work stems from my deep love and dedication to Brooklyn, the place where I was born and raised and have essentially always called home.

Cooperatives have been a central part of my adult life. I founded a cooperative tour company called Social Justice Tours and was involved with Bluestockings, a collectively run bookstore in the Lower East Side, for more than six years. I participated in the Cargo Bike collective, a cooperative bike messenger company, and have founded and lived in housing cooperatives throughout Brooklyn.

I joined the PSFC in 2018, and one of the reasons I did was because the Coop embodies the ethos that larger change stems from people organizing in their community contexts. This philosophy has been a core driver of my life choices. For example, while in graduate school, I took a job as a tour guide on a double-decker bus to help pay my way through school. I began talking to my coworkers about organizing a union to fight back against severe mistreatment. Over the next year, I helped lead the union campaign. We went on to organize all the other double-decker buses in this city. What started as a few workers at a single double-decker company spread across the country with every worker of the Big Bus company (a national corporation) now under union contract.

I care deeply about PSFC because it aligns with my passion for food justice. In 2009, I moved to New Orleans to help organize a youth-led urban farm in the lower 9th ward in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. My commitment to community work deepened, but in this experience, a food system analysis was added; sensitivity to the realities of

food deserts, waste streams, food system inequities and structural racism and the importance of local food amidst the context of climate crisis became ingrained in my fundamental outlook. I brought this lens back to Brooklyn, where I helped found a small rooftop farming coop on top of the Pfizer building. These experiences continue to inform my commitment to the Park Slope Food Coop today.

PSFC is a profound example of the powers of cooperation, and I hope to join the board to help keep the Coop rooted in the democratic, cooperative principles it was founded upon, and to uphold the voice of the members. For these reasons, I look forward to applying my experiences working, organizing and managing cooperatives to the PSFC.

TAYLOR PATE



As a member of multiple food coops in NYC, board member of my housing coop, a nonprofit board member and food policy and food procurement professional, I feel excited to contribute to the Coop community as a board member. My interest in running and serving on the board of PSFC stems from my commitment to building and creating resources for the communities that I'm part of. I believe that worker coops are a critical part of the solidarity economy that can be used to build community power. I believe that making decisions about the types of food our communities consume is in-

credibly important, and that cooperative decision making builds stronger participatory democracies.

When I moved to New York City eight years ago, I knew that I wanted to become a member of a food coop as a way to create community and connect with where my food was being sourced. I first joined the Greene Hill Food Coop and volunteered my member labor by purchasing cheese and other dairy products from local producers. When I learned about the Central Brooklyn Food Coop, I joined because I was interested in organizing with other black folks and creating a grocery store that was built for those that have historically lacked access to fresh food in Central Brooklyn.

In my professional life, I work in food policy and food procurement where I've built many relationships with farmers and producers, some of which we carry at the Coop (such as Lancaster Farm Fresh Coop, Blue Moon Acres and Hepworth Farms). I have managed large budgets and managed procurement projects for e-commerce grocery store Farm to People and restaurant group Dig. Additionally, I've participated in hiring processes and managed employees of my housing coop. I've learned about the importance of supporting sustainable and small-scale producers for building resilient supply chains. By spending our dollars on values-aligned producers, we are contributing to sustaining our local economies and enabling small farmers to create the infrastructure necessary to feed our communities. This has a direct impact on the quality of the food we eat, the climate and the prices that we pay at the coop. With inequality and lack of access to quality food in NYC, I believe that it's crucial to keep the Coop affordable, and for members to have access to information about the food supply chains that impact the food that we buy every day.

Three years ago, I joined the Park Slope Food Coop because so many of my friends shared how much they loved all of the amazing food that they had access to, as well as the importance of the Coop as a space to build community. Several years later, I moved into a housing coop, where I served as the vice president. Beyond my experience with food coops, I've also held leadership roles on the board of Slow Food NYC and Slow Food USA, a global organization that works towards good, clean and fair

food for all. All of these experiences have given me the financial literacy and community building skills necessary to serve as a board member at the Park Slope Food Coop. My participation in various cooperative communities has given me the experience of developing values-aligned policies in community with other members and shareholders, and amongst those with varying opinions. As PSFC faces a transition with the retirement of a founding-director, I hope that I can contribute these skills as the Coop moves through this change.

As a member of the PSFC board, my job would be to represent the voice of other Coop members. I've made many friends at the Coop and I've gotten the opportunity to learn about what matters to them most, whether it be prices, sourcing or plastic use. I've enjoyed getting to know the staff at the Coop, as well as learning more about Coop operations through working various shifts. I plan to use that same sense of curiosity as a board member and to actively listen to what Coop members are most excited and passionate about. It's more important than ever for us to gather as a community and strengthen this institution that has fed us for so long.

ELIZABETH TOBIER



Fellow Coop members: My name is Elizabeth Tobier and I am interested in a seat on our board of directors.

I joined the Coop in 1990 and my workslot assignments have included cashiering, receiving squad and office cleaning. My current workslot is Coop secretary. I previously served on the board from 2003 - 2010. I regularly attend the monthly General Meeting.

I earn my living as Assistant Controller at the Episcopal Church Foundation. I live in the Bronx.

The reason I wish to serve on our board again is I feel there is confusion at the Coop at this time on the role of the board.

The reason we have a board is to fulfill an obligation required by the state of New York. New York State law needs decision-making to be in the hands of a board. Previous to our becoming incorporated, Coop members just met, discussed issues, voted and made decisions without an overseeing authority. In order to carry on legally, our General Meetings became the place in the monthly board meetings where members talked about things and voted on things, as usual, and this was then termed "advice" for the board members, who then held their own vote on whether to accept the "advice" of the members. Unless that "advice" involves illegal activity, we expect the board to accept it, whatever their personal opinions are concerning it. So, the whole having a board thing is just theater, from our point of view.

It is important for PSFC members to bear in mind that in order to retain our culture of cooperation, we must never permit the election of members with any type of outside agenda that they intend to implement as board members.

I am not talking about members who have opinions, criticisms, or hopes, in addition to wanting to serve as board members. It is only dangerous if they use their platform as board members to try to change things at the Coop that way (even if you agree with what they want to do as board members).

I actually don't think anyone consciously is trying to take over the Coop in this way right now, but because of the way the board election notice is worded, "Candidates will have the opportunity to present their platform," it seems to invite candidates to develop a "platform." And, we really only want board members who are experienced in being Coop members, have attended many General Meetings, and understand our structure.

Today, all of us members are lucky enough to enjoy one of the most amazing, resilient, strong cooperative organizations in the world. Although many members are frustrated or critical about certain aspects of our Coop (including me), it is very important for the Coop's survival that all of us remembers to communicate our concerns using a cooperative mindset, not an activist one.

In my view, being an activist is extremely important and valuable in the larger arena of the outside world. But members who neglect to communicate cooperatively at all times in Coop spaces in favor of promoting an activist cause, risk destroying our organization.

[Editor's note, 3/13/25: The above statement has been amended to include the first three paragraphs, which were erroneously omitted from the version that was originally published on 3/11/25. The Gazette apologizes for the error.]

BRANDON WEST



Hi everyone, I am the current president of the Board of Directors, and I am running for reelection. I have been on the Board since 2022, joined the Coop in 2009, and became a squad leader soon after. In my current role, after Imani's departure, I will have the longest amount of experience on this Board, and I believe that institutional memory is important. I want to thank Imani for her long leadership and commitment to helping build this institution. At times the workings of the Coop are opaque and I try in my role to share and communicate about process and direct members to where

they might best advocate for what they want.

I have a lot of ideas and thoughts about the Coop—it is an institution that I love and have invested so much time into. But I also believe that the current intent is for the member democracy to lead in decision making. So if the role of the Board were to change, I think that discussion should happen at the member democracy level. I don't think Board members should unilaterally change the process without there being a conversation broadly about it. That said, I think there is a lot of work to be done to improve our member democracy and internal systems and I hope members take that on.

Process is important to me. I serve on two other nonprofit boards and serve on the local Community Board 6. I also have a masters in Public administration with a focus on management. I currently work in labor organizing, mostly in the media industry, but also have a background in voting rights organizing and coalition building. I also ran for City Council in the community in 2021. I've seen the good, the bad and the ugly of democratic processes, and I hope we can move collectively to a Coop that feels more democratic, easier to understand and less volatile. I have seen the vibes at the General Meetings become more confrontational, and I think there are a few different sources to that. But I believe we can and must push for making this not an institution dictated by a few who can withstand conflict the most, but one that is welcoming to a wider set of people and managed fairly and consistently. Also I have a background in government budgeting and have some fluency in finance. I hope we can continue to prepare well for the future, and bring progressive cooperative ideas into our business, and workplace, as much as possible.

To state the obvious, we are an atypical Board, where the expectation for many years is to have the role only serve the minimal legal requirements and have the guidance and direction of the institution be done at the member level. At times, I've seen this rule bend a bit. I think it may warrant a larger conversation if we should reconsider this, and maybe it makes sense to have it when we find a replacement for Joe Holtz. While the Board can step in to protect key fiduciary decisions and veto the member-

ship, I think we as a board should try to do that as infrequently as possible, and instead, have better processes to make important decisions. We have had many far reaching decisions made as a large body, and the Board did not intervene, and I think we can continue to do that but only if members are engaged and informed to do so.

I'm always happy to grab a coffee or a zoom with anyone who wants to talk more about the Coop. I hope the *Gazette* can share my personal email with anyone who requests it. I would love your vote and to have the opportunity to continue to serve in this role. Thank you!

RALPH YOZZO



My name is Ralph Yozzo, and I'd like to contribute to the Coop by serving the members as a member of the Board of Directors.

First, I'd like to thank the Coop founders and members for the now five decades of service to the community.

I've been a member for more than two of those decades.

I've served as a general meeting crew shift member and attended many, many general meetings.

As the Coop bylaws state the general meeting is "devoted to receiving the advice of the members"

Over the 20 years, I've served in many phases of the food service business thanks to the Coop. From checkout, to walker, to office, to lifting. I have to say that walking is my favorite.

As a director I would mostly listen to the membership and it would be my honor to serve. I would also promise to only serve the minimum term to give everyone a chance.

PSFC ANNUAL MEETING

December 30, 2025



By Travis Hartman

The Park Slope Food Coop held its Annual Meeting on June 28, 2022. In a meeting that lasted almost three hours, the Coop reviewed the audited financial report and elected two members of the Board of Directors and four officers of the Coop.

The audited financial report was presented by Salvatore Vicari and Zanna Masko, certified public accountants and advisors, of the firm Cornick, Garber & Sandler. Vicari went through every page of the report, analyzing where numbers were up and where they were down, while noting that cash is up from 2021. “The driving factor behind that is the PPP loans,” said Vicari. Inventories were consistent from 2021 and prepaid expenses and other assets have risen since last year, as has total member equity. “It’s a healthy balance sheet, it looks great,” said Vicari.

Board member Bill Penner noted that without the PPP loans the Coop would have been operating at a loss, and Masko said, “That was the purpose of those federal

grants—to help businesses to survive in those difficult situations. A lot of businesses went out of business, but the Coop was able to survive.” The audited financial report was accepted, and it was decided that Cornick, Garber & Sandler would produce the audited financial report next year as well.

“A LOT OF BUSINESSES WENT OUT OF BUSINESS, BUT THE COOP WAS ABLE TO SURVIVE.”

—ZANNA MASKO

The second order of business was the election of two members of the Board of Directors. According to foodcoop.com, when the Coop was incorporated in 1977, a Board of Directors was legally required. The Board’s role is not to overshadow or replace the member initiative, discussion and decision-making; that is the purpose of the General Meeting. Board members are elected once a year, for terms of three years on a rotating basis, at the Annual Meeting, which is always held on the last Tuesday in June.

Members were able to vote for the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting or by using the advance ballot that all members receive by email. Each of the candidates present were given one minute to speak and three minutes to answer questions posed to them by members attending the meeting. In the end, Imani Q’Ryn was elected with 495 yes votes, followed by Brandon West with 317 yes votes.

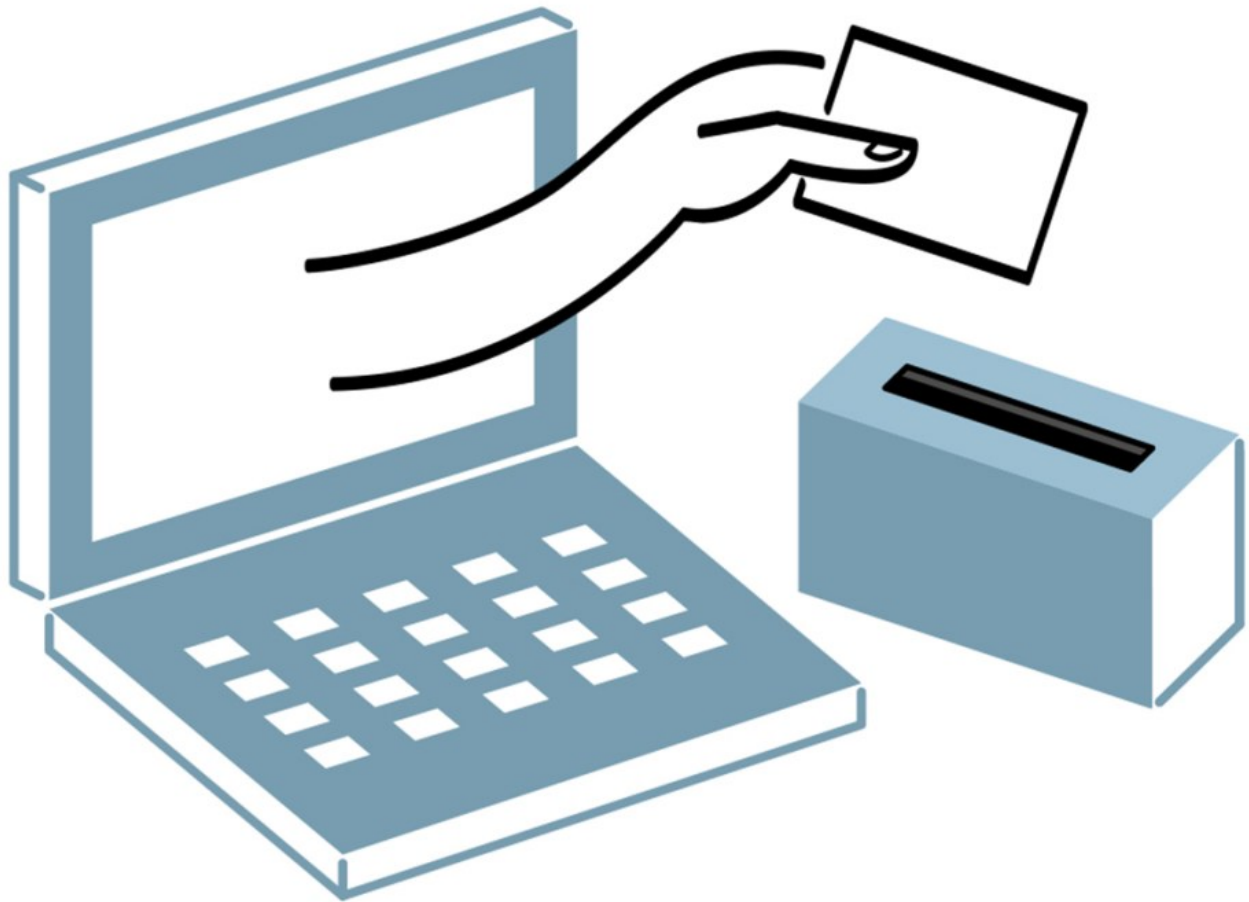


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

During the tabulation of the votes, which included both online voting and paper ballots, several committee reports were delivered. Members in attendance learned that the International Trade Education Squad will be issuing their findings between four and six times a year via their YouTube channel. It was also announced that the Committee Oversight Committee is looking for new members.

There was also a lively discussion about potentially granting credit to members who

attend General Meetings via Zoom, and discussion about uncovering what member labor is actually worth in financial terms. David Moss of the Chair Committee spoke about the impact of the pandemic, and of new hires to the Coop. “I think it’s safe to say that everyone on the Chair Committee believes that we should probably start offering credit to people for attending the Zoom meetings—that the numbers of people attending are too low—obviously someone could attend and not participate, and some people will do that, but we’ll get a lot more participation if we invite people at the cost of losing a few shifts. I’ll throw that idea out there for others to consider,” Moss said.

“EVERYONE ON THE CHAIR COMMITTEE BELIEVES THAT WE SHOULD PROBABLY START OFFERING CREDIT TO PEOPLE FOR ATTENDING THE ZOOM MEETINGS.”

—*DAVID MOSS, CHAIR COMMITTEE*

This topic was discussed by many of the attendees, and suggestions were offered on how members could potentially get credit for attending meetings virtually. One person suggested limiting shift credit to twice a year, as was the case with in-person meetings.

Susan Metz then asked about the possibility of tallying up the financial value of member labor. “We understand that 75 percent of the work in the Coop is done by members, and that member labor keeps prices down, and yet we never have a monetary value of what member labor is in any audit report, and I find this very disturbing,” Metz said. “What is the amount of money that member labor represents?” Metz then asked the auditors if it would be possible to create a system to report what member labor is worth.



Coop members at an earlier General Meeting, in 2019.

Joe Holtz responded, “It’s a good question, but varies from every single member depending on what they buy. There are some who love the Coop but barely ever shop, so how much do they get paid, quote unquote? It’s hard to monetize that. Members should each figure out what the Coop means to them, and figure out if it makes sense. If it does, they should tell their friends to join the Coop. The accountants have no basis to do what you’re asking.”

The meeting then moved on to the last item on the agenda: the election of the Board of Officers for the Coop. After a series of nominations for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, the voting was engaged. Imani Q’ryn was elected President, Shayna Moliver was elected Vice President, with Elizabeth Tobier elected Secretary and Joe Holtz to serve as Treasurer. After the last round of voting the meeting was adjourned.

BOARD CANDIDATES: WHO THEY ARE AND WHY THEY RUN

December 30, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

From the Editors

The Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors plays a crucial role in running the Coop. The Board makes its decisions based on the advice of members who attend the monthly General Meeting. There are five seats on this Board, and each term lasts three years. Members submit their applications to run for open seats in March each year, and then candidate statements are published in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*. Thanks to the pandemic, members will now have the chance to start voting online via a Coop-wide email that will go out in late May, and results will be announced at the

Annual Meeting in June.

There are six candidates for two open seats. Here is the 2022 slate:



IMANI Q'RYN

I was elected to the Board of Directors nearly 17 years ago and have continuously served in this capacity. I have served on the Board longer than any other elected member. I am also a member of the Chair Committee and have been so throughout my service on the Board.

Our Board of Directors is not a typical board. It was required by state law that the Coop have a Board of Directors. As a co-operative we liked our town hall style of governance, that every member has a say, every member has a vote. We wanted to continue that tradition. The Coop's attorney at that time came up with the idea that the Board should take the advice of the members on all subjects as a means of limiting the powers of the Board. It was written into our bylaws; most of the Board members that we've had since the Board was instituted decades ago have accepted this policy.

"I take the mandate to trust the membership and take their advice as a sacred duty. It's not my opinion or my position on an issue that is important. It is vital that I respect and trust the voice of the membership. The membership guides my vote."

I wrote those words three years ago in my bid for candidacy letter. I take the opportunity to state that again. These last three years have been the most challenging for me as a Board member and most dangerous for our form of governance and possibly the Coop in general. We had to do things as a Board that we had never done. We never meet outside of the General Meeting. During the beginning of COVID so much changed for the Coop and we were in uncharted territory. We got advice from our general counsel. We not only had to meet but we did so every week for hours! It was exhausting. We wanted the membership to have their voice, to weigh in and decide the direction that we would go as a co-operative. It is in crisis times like those that we could have lost what we had worked over 50 years to protect.

I was so proud and honored to be with that group of Board members: Bill P., Allen Z., Rachel A., Sukey T. and Joe H. We went through that fire and kept our word, our

promise to the membership.

I ask for your vote one last time. I hope that more members will step up and choose to participate in our form of governance. It's easier now to come to our meetings—they are on Zoom! All the Coop laws are made here. I also hope that those that really understand our kind of board will consider running next time we have an opening.

I love the Coop and hope that it exists for generations to come!



TIMOTHY HOSPODAR

In October 2020, when our Coop introduced a new phase of member labor, we met with an online scheduler deployed to support it. I showed up on that very first day to contribute in a way different than I had ever worked before—on a truck-unloading shift. Despite advance scheduling, a hiccup in the system prohibited me from working that first morning. And so, I showed up again on the very next morning, as scheduled,

and I worked on the sidewalk at 5:30 AM. I was surprised to like the shift, as there was a reason that I had never tried the shift before, counter to my history of working a variety of FTOP shifts, from CHIPS to childcare to cashiering. Well, here's an inconsequential fact about me: I greatly detest predawn roll calls, not to mention my distaste for cold outdoor activities in general. Be that as it may, I made truck-unloading shifts a weekly practice and showed up 27 times across the eight months before the broader phase of member labor began in July 2021.

There's an analogy here as it relates to one thing fatherhood helped me learn. Early morning hours, before the babe awakens, are sometimes the only chance to devote one's free time to the things that matter most. The Coop—as a market and as a community—has mattered so much to me, since joining 12 years ago and certainly in the last two. And its future, following these complicated times, is of grave importance. While my optimism helps me trust that survival is a given, I expect that our future state features exciting changes. I'd like to pledge my work shift to the Board and our membership at large, because I understand the General Meeting (as a whole) comprises the stewardship of change.

If granted the opportunity to serve our community in this role, I commit to employing several fair tactics I have learned in other roles. In the effort to mitigate bias, I'll exercise sensitive feedback tools of active listening, to ensure that the Board clarifies and validates as appropriate in addition to echoing the majority message. I'll help the Board identify any unsatisfied concerns to acknowledge disagreement around consensus. My prior work as a facilitator in decision-making sessions for executives has prepared me to promote a diversity of voices while encouraging dissenting opinions be taken into consideration. I respect that any upcoming changes can only result from an array of debate, and I am equipped to support the process. The timing is right, I believe, for me to support the Coop in this capacity.



AMY CAO

Fellow member-owners, my name is Amy Cao, and I humbly submit my candidacy to the Coop's Board of Directors. My growing passion for good food—its origins, its impact, its accessibility—I owe to the Food Coop. I was drawn to the Coop for the promise of delicious, affordable food, and over the years, I find myself becoming more and more attached to the less tangible aspects of what makes our community a true

collective—and how to nurture this spirit to help ensure its lasting success.

In my professional life, I am a communications strategist for nonprofits, schools, professional organizations, and public and private companies. This often positions me as an advisor to executives, faculty administration, public officials, and even board directors, to help them plan for growth opportunities, manage crises, and minimize risks. Previously, the City contracted me to work alongside social workers as a financial empowerment counselor. This brought me face to face with struggling New Yorkers, as I helped them navigate scarce resources in unforgiving situations.

These experiences have exposed me to unique and diverse challenges at all levels of an institution. This formed an inclusionary perspective that informs my daily life. As a liaison to stakeholders at many levels, I am a good listener. I do my best to understand differing points of view, encourage dialogue to solve problems, and respond thoughtfully and decisively when the situation commands it. As a Board Member, I would do this by leaning heavily on my member community.

I believe an elected Board Member has a duty of responsibility to the membership. Over the years, I've had the privilege to speak with many of you over the course of countless shops, while stocking shelves, scanning your IDs, and walking your groceries home with you. I am immensely proud of the Coop community, and I am committed to working together with you to secure its financial health and future sustainability, in service to our founding Cooperative principles. With your confidence in my ability to take your lead by heeding the advice of the membership to act in the best interest of the Coop, I hope to earn your vote.



BRANDON WEST

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 chal-

lenging 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 when “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 than we were before it started. I also pledge to work to make sure that members are brought more into major decisions in the future and support 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. We must make 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 I will use my background in conflict negotiation to help mediate any issues if they come up, and contribute to mitigating conversations if needed.



GEORGE SARAH OLKEN

I knew the Park Slope Food Coop was magical when I saw the red sign-in books at La Louve Coopérative in Paris, which is not only built on our model but copied our store down to the color of the binders. There is a special pleasure in our rituals: calling out over the intercom “What are those little mushrooms in miso soup?” (enoki); the line painted on the backyard wall to indicate how high to stack compost buckets; walking a member and their cart up Seventh Avenue and learning how they came to New York in the 1960s—or last month. The Coop is my happy place, I’ve made friends there, I run into friends there, I want it to flourish.

I would like to join the Coop Board of Directors to be a voice for that flourishing. I believe Board members, like coordinators and committee members, can use their position to influence discussions and decision-making in a positive direction, especially because the Board is our one elected leadership body. With a mandate from the membership, I will use this position to emphasize working together and building community.

Recently the Coop has had to make difficult decisions: How to run the virtual GM? How to re-organize member labor? How to support members struggling from the pandemic? There is no abstract entity “The Coop” to address these questions. We must address them through cooperation as members.

We need to re-educate ourselves about how our Coop functions and re-imagine our role within it. As we become more reliant on technology (goodbye red binders), we must find ways to make that technology accessible so that every member can learn how it operates. As our finances fluctuate due to unforeseen crises—the next pandemic or future supply-chain breakdowns—members need to take an active role in the decisions of how we react.

This is work I’ve tried to do on an individual level as a squad leader, by bringing items to the GM, by joining with members of the unofficial Coop Study Group, and by speak-

ing with staff and community elders: What was the Coop like before we owned the building? How do we resolve disputes? How do you pick the perfect melon?

Since joining in 2007, I've worked on the shopping floor, in the basement, and in the office. In 2018, I became a shopping squad leader. I was heartbroken when the pandemic severed the relationships with my fellow squad members and with the members of the Coop staff who supported us. These relationships are as important as the smooth operation of our grocery store—they are what make the Coop what it is! I believe the GM and management should be guided by the goal of fostering greater connection among cooperators.

Outside the Coop, I drive the Bookmobile for Brooklyn Public Library, bringing library service to communities all over the borough. I live just south of Prospect Park with my partner, Jenny, and our cat, Tahini (who never does her work shift). I look forward to answering questions at the March 29th GM and I hope I can continue to serve the Coop as a member of the Board.



JESSE ROSENFELD

A member since 2004, I have worked as cashier, cheese and olive bagger, FTOP stock boy, babysitter, and in second-floor guest registration. My paid profession is that of Addictions Counselor on the Lower East Side. My free time has been galvanized by the 2016 elections; I have joined Get Organized Brooklyn and regularly do phonebanking to support voter-expansion drives.

Demonstrably supporting our cooperative goals of shared success, I have brought products to our shelves and successfully brought a proposal to the approval stage at our GM. Pre-pandemic, my work slot was Secretary for the General Meeting and I took the minutes every month. Our meetings are one special set of gears in the whole enterprise, and I was proud to have been re-elected yearly for eight years straight. I consider myself very familiar with the GM and AM processes.

I love it at the Coop. I meet people here I wouldn't usually encounter and discuss things I wouldn't ever know about. I shop every couple of days because of its warm familiarity, and I like being part of an organization that is a standard-bearer for food and environmental justice. The Coop is my chosen community and I feel a part of it every day when I walk down Seventh Avenue, seeing fellow members on their way to and from the store.

With a proven record of support for the health of our enterprise, I am running for the Board of Directors because I see the Coop as a business first. As such, the Board is obligated to remain alert to the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the Coop rather than maintain advocacy for any particular issue. Members at the coming election will likely ask a version of, "How will you improve the Coop as a member of the Board?" My answer will be, "There is nothing that a Board member should do outside of taking the advice of the membership on how to vote for proposals, which they have always done."

For any proposal that is problematic, I will ask myself the same questions as any Board member: Will a proposal ratified by the General Meeting put the financial and legal health of the Coop at risk? Does the proposal violate the spirit and letter of the Coop's own bylaws or NYS articles of incorporation, and our own mission statement?

Thank you and I look forward to your vote.

BOARD CANDIDATES: WHO THEY ARE AND WHY THEY RUN

December 30, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

From the Editors

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BOARD CANDIDATES: WHO THEY ARE AND WHY THEY RUN

December 30, 2025



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FEBRUARY 22, 2022, GENERAL MEETING

December 30, 2025



February GM Covers Hearing Committee Election, Explores Child Care Proposal

By Frank Haberle

On February 22, approximately 110 PSFC members gathered by Zoom for the February General Meeting. The agenda items included voting for Hearing Administration Committee candidates, and discussion of a proposal to allow one member of a two-parent household to suspend membership in order to take care of children. Several brief committee and coordinator reports rounded out the events. With two items on the agenda, a smaller February crowd, and seasoned veterans running the event the meeting wrapped up in a crisp 90 minutes.

Electing New Hearing Committee Members

The first agenda item invited attending members to vote on two members who sought to join the Hearing Administration Committee (HAC). As explained by Committee member Dominique Bravo, the HAC acts as part of the PSFC's Disciplinary Committees, playing the role of organizing hearings by scheduling the events, calling in Coop members for hearings, and making sure that all procedures are followed. Bravo invited the two candidates, both 20-year members of the Coop, to speak about their qualifications. Only one of the two candidates, Israella Mayeri, was in attendance.

"I joined the Coop when I moved to this neighborhood," said Mayeri. "I joined the Coop because I liked the people and I liked the idea of joining a cooperative. I want to join this committee to make a greater contribution to the Coop."

Several attending members asked questions, including: "The Disciplinary Committee seems like such an important committee that does such confidential work. What is your experience and what makes you qualified to serve on this committee?" Bravo, who is a lawyer, clarified that there are a number of committees and that this committee does not manage the actual hearings. "I'm a retired lawyer," Mayeri added. "I'm very good with working with other people in a team. I want to contribute to this effort."

Allowing Parent of Young Children to Leave Membership

The second agenda item was a discussion item that allows one member of a two-adult household with a child or children under school age to leave membership. As presented by Ryan Snelson, a member of the Coop since December, the agenda item stated, "The Coop needs to better accommodate pandemic parents—allowing one partner to leave indefinitely so the other partner can care for their child or children under school age."

"Being a parent right now is extremely difficult," Snelson said, opening the discussion. "What makes it more difficult is being a parent and being able to meet shopping and work shift requirements. All we are asking for is that the Coop allow one parent to

take care of their child. I've brought this up a number of times with the membership office. I keep hearing, 'This is the way it has always been done.' I'm asking for one household partner to not have to work shifts."

Members weighed in on the proposal. One asked for clarification: "Would one member be exempt from the work requirement, or would they be placed on leave?"

Another added, "We could make an effort to restart child care, which would be a better way. I am somewhat opposed to keeping people out because we need member labor but also because it's an important part of building the bond in the community."

Questions were raised about how to accommodate single-parent households and people who are taking care of elders and sick family members. A recurring concern focused on drawing from the pool of member workers we need to keep the Coop fully functioning.

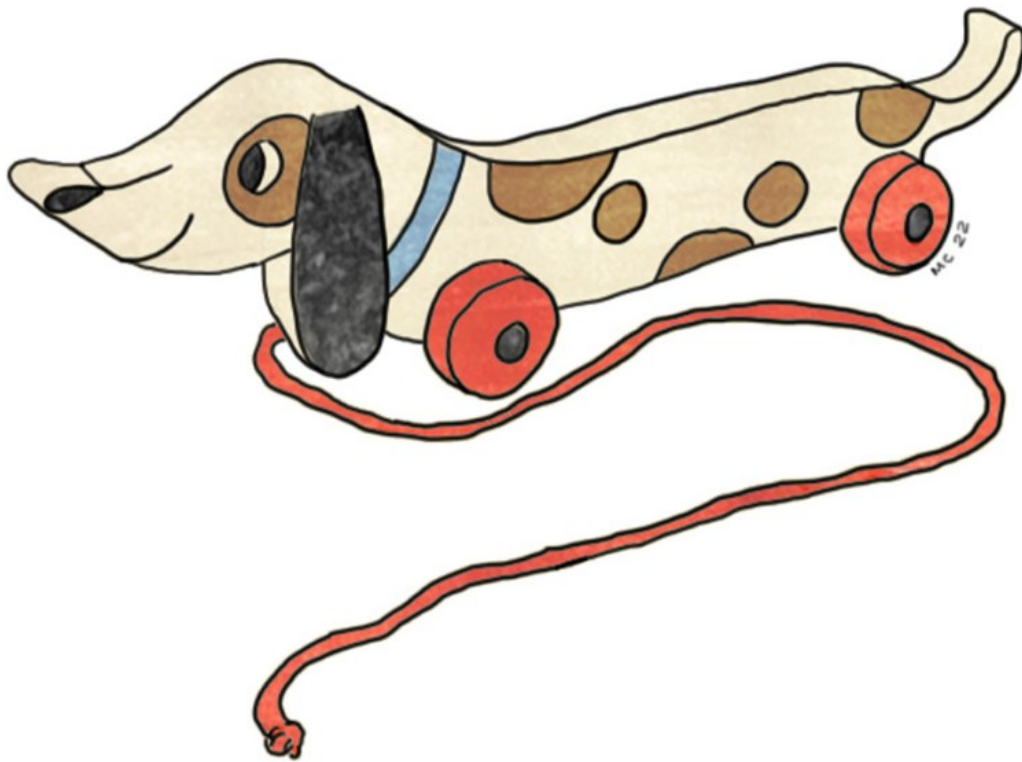


ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

As one member noted, “As a new member you may not understand how the Coop works. When you say, ‘Half my household is not working,’ you’re doing something that is non-Coop. We need all our labor. There are other things we can be doing. If parents decide to opt out it undermines our model. Very few coops can do our work. Honestly, you just joined the Coop. Why do you want to mess with our model?”

“Nobody’s trying to undermine the Coop for this model,” Snelson responded. “I’m just

asking for us to look at this from the perspective of parents with young children. Do we want to look at the way we do business? Is the end game for the Coop to make more money, or increase labor?"

One member added, "I think child care is a really important part of the Coop. If people aren't in favor of this proposal, then we should consider bringing back child care." Another responded, "This may be part of a larger issue that concerns other members who are caring for people right now. I don't see how taking back child care can be done right now. I think this is a non-issue."

Snelson wrapped up the conversation by thanking everyone for their consideration. "I appreciate this, but I'm not asking for child care," he concluded. "I'm asking for a policy where one parent can leave the Coop for child care responsibility. All your points about how the Coop worked in 1973 are good points, but this is not 1973."

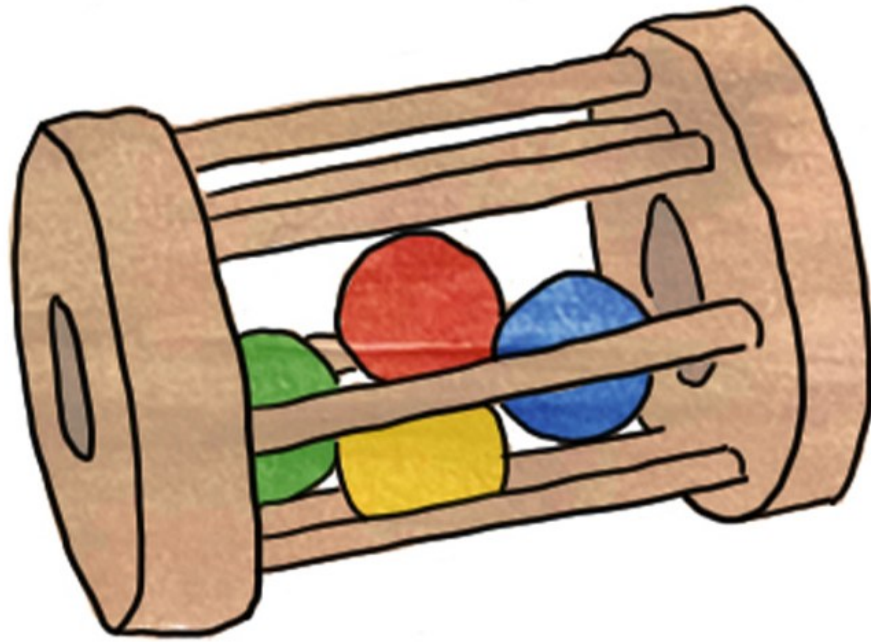


ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

Committee and Coordinator Reports

Prior to the agenda items, there were a number of reports. Joe Holtz, General Manager, General Coordinator and Treasurer, reported on Coop finances, underscoring that there were indicators that the first four weeks of the 2022 fiscal year were off to a slow start, but that we are finally close to a cash flow break-even. “The advent of adding new members is important,” Holtz said. “We lost 4,500 to 5,000 members during

COVID. We are building back. We are now at about 13,000 and adding 100 or so a week.” When asked what the optimal enrollment would be, Holtz said “we had 17,100 members when the pandemic started. Right now, we have a goal of 15,000. Let’s get there first.” Other members asked about how long price markups and fluctuating prices (which reflect price fluctuations and increases passed on by suppliers) would last. Holtz added that when member labor returns to 100% and the temporary worker system is sunsetted, the Coop will be able to look more closely at lowering prices.

General Coordinator Ann Herpel reported on the return of the member workforce and enrollment. “We are now reintroducing the food processing in the basement. If you are interested in olives and cheese work, you can find those shifts now. We have planned for the temp people to be here another two months.” Regarding enrollment, Herpel stated that “we have new member enrollment sessions four times a week now with over 100 appointments to enroll. We have 1,000 new members since we started enrollment on December 5. Staff and members are reporting that the new members have been really enthusiastic.” A very brief report on several international labor events in the news was reported by Bart DeCourcy of the International Trade Information Squad, rounding out the committee and Coordinator reports. In comments just before the reports, Imani Q’ryn, Board member, encouraged members to consider running for Board membership. “I’ve been on the Board 20 years. I want to encourage others to join the Board, especially people of color. If you love the Coop, help us protect the voice of the people.”

JESSE ROSENFELD: BOARD CANDIDATE STATEMENT

December 30, 2025



A member since 2004, I have worked as cashier, cheese and olive bagger, FTOP stock boy, babysitter and in 2nd floor guest registration. My paid profession is that of Addictions Counselor on the Lower East Side. My free time has been galvanized by the 2016 elections; I have joined Get Organized Brooklyn and regularly do phonebanking to support voter-expansion drives.

Demonstrably supporting our cooperative goals of shared success, I have brought

products to our shelves and successfully brought a proposal to the approval stage at our GM. Pre-pandemic, my work slot was Secretary for the General Meeting and I took the minutes every month. Our meetings are one special set of gears in the whole enterprise, and I was proud to have been re-elected yearly for eight years straight. I consider myself very familiar with the GM and AM processes.

I love it at the Coop. I meet people here I wouldn't usually encounter and discuss things I wouldn't ever know about. I shop every couple of days because of its warm familiarity, and I like being part of an organization that is a standard-bearer for food and environmental justice. The Coop is my chosen community and I feel a part of it every day when I walk down 7th Avenue, seeing fellow members on their way to and from the store.

With a proven record of support for the health of our enterprise, I am running for the Board of Directors because I see the Coop as a business first. As such, the Board is obligated to remain alert to the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the Coop rather than maintain advocacy for any particular issue. Members at the coming election will likely ask a version of, "How will you improve the Coop as a member of the Board?" My answer will be, "There is nothing that a Board member should do outside of taking the advice of the membership on how to vote for proposals, which they have always done."

For any proposal that is problematic, I will ask myself the same questions as any Board member: Will a proposal ratified by the General Meeting put the financial and legal health of the Coop at risk? Does the proposal violate the spirit and letter of the Coop's own by-laws or NYS articles of incorporation, and our own mission statement?

Thank you and I look forward to your vote. ■

IMANI Q'RYN: BOARD CANDIDATE STATEMENT

December 30, 2025



I was elected to the Board of Directors nearly 17 years ago and have continuously served in this capacity. I have served on the board longer than any other elected member. I am also a member of the chair committee and have been so throughout my service on the Board.

“Our Board of Directors is not a typical Board. It was required by state law that the Coop have a Board of Directors. As a co-operative we liked our town hall style of governance, that every member has a say, every member has a vote. We wanted to continue that tradition. The Coop’s attorney at that time came up with the idea that the Board should take the advice of the members on all subjects as a means of limiting the powers of the Board. It was written into our By-Laws; most of the Board Members that we’ve had since the Board was instituted decades ago have accepted this policy.”

“I take the mandate to trust the membership and take their advice as a sacred duty. It’s not my opinion, or my position on an issue that is important. It is vital that I respect and trust the voice of the membership. The membership guides my vote.”

I wrote those words three years ago in my bid for candidacy letter. I take the opportunity to state that again. These last three years have been the most challenging for me as a Board Member and most dangerous for our form of governance and possibly the Coop in General. We had to do things as a Board that we had never done. We never meet outside of the General Meeting. During the beginning of COVID so much changed for the Coop and we were in uncharted territory. We got advice from our general Counsel. We not only had to meet but we did so every week for hours! It was exhausting. We wanted the membership to have their voice, to weigh in and decide the direction that we would go as a co-operative. It is in crisis times like those that we could have lost what we had worked over 50 years to protect.

I was so proud and honored to be with that group of Board members: Bill P, Allen Z., Rachel A., Sukey T. and Joe H. We went through that fire and kept our word, our promise to the membership.

I ask for your vote one last time. I hope that more members will step up and choose to participate in our form of governance. It’s easier now to come to our meetings, they are on zoom! All the Coop laws are made here. I also hope that those that really understand our kind of Board will consider running next time we have an opening.

I love the Coop and hope that it exists for generations to come!

Imani Q'ryn

March 1, 2022