

Oneota Community Co-op
Minutes for Regular Board Meeting
January 21, 2025, 6:00pm, Co-op Classroom

Board Members Present: Brennan Allsworth, Hannah Breckbill, Nathan Dietzenbach, Carl Peterson, Piper Wood

Board Members Absent: Bee Lutz, Bill Iverson

GM Present: Nate Furler

Co-op Staff: Niki Sanness

Member/Owners Present: Amy Grinna (Candidate for 2025 Board Election)

Wood called the meeting called to order at 6:01 pm.

Agenda Reviewed. Dietzenbach added discussion about voting methods. *Motion by Allsworth, second by Petersen, to approve agenda.*

Note to Wood to amend times on agenda for new meeting time.

Board Learning. Review D, L5, L9.

No comments on D.

Discussion to amend L5.6 to say “Acquire (through purchase, lease, or gift), encumber or dispose of real estate with board approval.” Interpretation of the by law states as such already, so the board found the current language acceptable.

Similar discussion for L5.5. Discussion about whether this needs board approval. The board decided to keep the language, but adjust our interpretation.

No comments on L9.

Director Finance Training

Not all board members have been able to send in availability for director training. Wood suggested we have a time with the new board to watch the training. *Motion by Dietzenbach, seconded by Petersen, to table the discussion until the new board is in place.*

Wood would like to collect educational resources into a board folder. *Dietzenbach and Wood will establish a folder in the drive.*

Member Comments

Amy Grinna discussed moving here relatively recently and is searching for volunteer opportunities. She is running for the board of directors in the upcoming election.

Motion by Petersen, seconded by Allsworth to approve minutes of December's meeting.

GM Report

Motion by Petersen, seconded by Allsworth, to report compliance on G2.

Motion by Allsworth, seconded by Dietzenbach to report compliance on L8 report. Peterson requests that it be known that Furler does an outstanding job preparing these reports and communicating clearly.

The leadership team held a planning session. A business plan was constructed and work is being done on a 3-year strategic plan. Petersen recommends the incoming board members review the planning prepared by the leadership team.

Motion by Petersen, seconded by Dietzenbach, to report compliance on L6.

2024 saw consistent sales increases, rates of which were consistent with other NCG stores. Produce, Bulk, Wine & Beer, Grocery all fell short of budget. Meat & Fish, Deli, Supplements, Cheese all exceeded their budget.

The change to allow stackable discounts was well received and reflected in the sales numbers.

The annual financial review will take place on January 21 with Hacker Nelson.

We saw a strong Q4. January and February are typically slower months.

Staff switched from Simple IRAs to 401ks. 3% match from day 1, with a vesting period of 2 years. Tax credits for the Co-op help offset the earlier contribution date. Contributions to the Simple IRA started on year 3 of employment and required \$5,000/year. Benefit sign-up is now electronic, not paper.

Video created with a Travel Iowa grant is on the Oneota Co-op YouTube

Nate will be out of office from January 24 to February 4.

Board Calendar

Dietzenbach had prepared a calendar for the board based on previous years. It lists policy to be reviewed every month, as well as actions that the board needs to complete each month. It was suggested having new board members view the board calendar to get a sense of how the year is structured for the board. *Motion by Allsworth, seconded by Petersen, to approve the 2025 board calendar.*

Motion by Dietzenbach, seconded by Petersen, to table the 2024-Year End Board Treasurer Report until the February meeting.

Board Election

Members in Good Standing as of January 2025: 3,608 in good standing, 447 have no contact information on file. The vast majority of those in good standing are paid in full. Electors for election season are 3,161. Email: 1,918, Mail: 1,243.

The mailing would include a message encouraging members to register emails to reduce mailing. It can be challenging asking for emails at the register because people assume that we are sending them marketing emails.

We will be moving to email as the primary method of voting for the upcoming election. Breckbill had a blog post regarding the changes to election ballots. The board unanimously supported the passage of the change. State law requires that the notification of the election must be published in the newspapers.

Furler brought up a concern about what to do if a registered email bounces? Should we try to mail or expect the correct emails to be in the system? There would be a considerable amount of work involved in sending out a paper mailing follow up. Maybe we can have an acceptable number of bounces based on previous emails and election years? This year, we will be able to see how many people who received the paper mailing voted.

It was proposed to put an ad in the newspaper about updating member information. Trying to make sure information is updated. Hoping at least 200 people update their emails.

Dietzenbach mentioned that we make paper ballots in the store more obvious. Wood emphasized that we are making a great commitment to making our process democratic and fulfilling the requirements set out in the by laws. We have to consider how much time and money the co-op is willing to spend on trying to reach people with outdated or incorrect contact information. We will make a great effort to advertise the election as much as we can.

Board Nomination Committee

7 nominees. The board approves of all the candidate applications.

Discussion about how communication should be handled between candidates and marketing for public candidate statements. Ask for confirmation for use of statements for public statement and ask for photos

Motion by Petersen, seconded by Allsworth, to nominate all candidates for election.

Peter Vanderlinden and Peter Kraus will receive the 4% discount for volunteer work of being on the board nomination committee.

Audit/Financial Review Update

Hacker Nelson will be here next meeting to present the report of the audit.

Member Linkage Committee Updates

Grow the Good grant applications are open. Info is on the Co-op and Iowa Food Hub websites. The National Young Farmers Coalition is contributing money to support a celebration for the winners of the grant. Gather the Good is the name of the event. Some potential sponsors have been reached out to. \$1,217 raised at round up at the register.

Looking for hosts for a Co-op potluck on Thursday, Feb 20.

Board Development Committee

Allsworth sent out notes from the first visioning meeting. They propose that we have a second and make more concrete plans. Peterson is open to us using his house. Allsworth will schedule the meeting.

Voting Method

Dietzenbach brought up concern about voting. Proposed approval voting.

4.5 in by laws defines voting method. So any change would require updating the by laws.

Dietzenbach suggested tabling until the next meeting due to time concerns.

Adjournment

Next meeting on February, 25 at 6:00pm

Motion by Allsworth, seconded by Peterson, to adjourn at 8:32pm.