

❖ Welcome to the 2026 ELECTION for our BOARD OF DIRECTORS ❖

Below are our candidates' information and instructions. We have 2 open seats and 3 candidates.



**Matthew
Coolbeth**
(incumbent)

Matthew grew up in Ashford and Mansfield and first became acquainted with the Co-op while living in Willimantic as a student at the University of Connecticut, from which he holds a BS and MS in Computer Science. He has been a professional software engineer since 2009. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Co-op since 2020, and as the Board Chair for the past year. Matthew believes the Co-op is an important institution that helps define the character of the Willimantic Region and serves the local community in myriad ways. He also sees community-scale organizations and local, small-scale agriculture as crucial means of building a more ecologically-friendly global society.



**Stephen
Rouse**

As a community-owned entity, I have been impressed with the Co-op's focus on providing healthy, organic, and local produce in a community-based setting. I feel I could contribute my more than 40 years as a business owner, whose management skills have always centered on wellness and operational efficiency. I have served on administrative boards and community-focused organizations, including Eastern and UConn. I also created and managed three medical offices during that period of time, and I would like to use this experience to contribute to the continuing success of the Co-op, a fine institution.



**Monica
van Beusekom**

I have been a member of the Co-op since 1997. I have relied on it to provide my family and me with healthy, sustainable, organic food for many years. Having recently retired, I would like to give some of my time to the Co-op and the community it nourishes and sustains.

Through my work experience in the non-profit and higher education sectors, I have developed strong organizational and communication skills. I have also served on volunteer boards and committees where I have learned about the nuances of nurturing collaboration among volunteers. I have most enjoyed both the paid and volunteer work settings where folks listen and value each other's ideas and contributions and are ready to work through disagreement or conflict with a generous spirit.

I would be honored to be part of the team that helps guide the Co-op through the challenges and opportunities it may face in the coming years, including the ongoing consideration of expansion. I also welcome the opportunity to serve as a bridge to members and to nurture greater knowledge of and participation by members in the life of the Co-op.