



**WILLIMANTIC**  
**FOOD CO-OP**  
a community market

# 2025 Annual Report

## **INSIDE** **>>>>>**

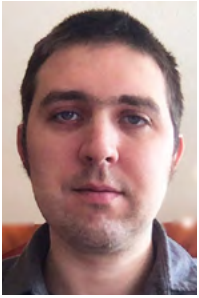
**Board Chair Report page 2–3**

**General Manager’s Report page 4–10**

**Treasurer’s Report page 11**

**Global Ends Policy page 12**

# Board Chair Report: Finding Our North Star



**Matthew  
Coolbeth**

**For the Board at the** Wilimantic Food Co-op, last year brought to a close the final terms of some of our longest-serving and most impactful Directors, and left us with a relatively new Board in terms both of membership and leadership. The newest of us have had to acquaint ourselves with the paradigm of Policy Governance, and learn how to participate in all of the Board's routine processes, while the Board as a whole has worked to clarify

the direction along which we will continue the work begun by previous Boards. Ongoing initiatives from previous years include:

**Reincorporation** – Three years ago, the Co-op's membership voted to pursue the legal designation of Co-operative (we are currently incorporated as a nonstock corporation) by reincorporating under an updated version of Connecticut's cooperative statute. Shortly after members approved the legal change, it was discovered that our reincorporation plan was not possible due to obscure business corporation rules. Later, other problems with the language in the updated statute were discovered by a Connecticut attorney that needed to be addressed. Finally, this year, as a result of years of work by Co-op management, retired Directors Joanne Todd, Kathleen Kridler, and Linda Brock (who have generously continued to help shepherd this process along), other partners in the cooperative and legal communities, and our representatives in the state legislature, HB123, a bill to modernize state statute regarding the incorporation of cooperatives was introduced and, just this month, was voted into law. Given this development, our Co-op is now free to resume the reincorporation project by approving new bylaws and initiating a new conversion.

**Determining Member Benefits** – Over the past several years our General Manager, Patty (and before her, Alice) has done a lot of hard work thinking about how to best serve our membership, and a big part of that is how to structure the exclusive benefits (including both discounts and opportunities) provided in return for being a member of the Co-op. After communicating at length with the membership through surveys, holding information sessions, and doing much analysis, Patty has been able to bring some ideas to the Board about how to increase member value without compromising business sustainability, and the Board has spent much of its time this year supporting and advising her with respect to those plans, thinking about what types of benefits programs will best serve the Co-op's Ends

and mission, as well as its members. We expect to share more about this with all of you later in the year.

**Expansion** – In years past there has been a lot of discussion, planning, and activity around what has been called "expansion" – acquiring more working space for the staff, retail space to place products, and the provision of additional services to customers. This has included the acquisition of the property across the street from our store, as well as countless hours spent by Co-op management assessing needs and exploring possibilities for the utilization of the space available to us. This year, management, with the Board's support, has continued to survey and cultivate those possibilities, making sure that no opportunity to advance this project passes us by.

**Strategic Planning** – Our Co-op has an Ends statement, which purports to be our reason for being, and describes the Co-op's mission – the impact it is supposed to have on its members, its community, and the world. The job of the Board is to remain focused on those Ends, to ensure that a long-term strategy targeting them is maintained, and to monitor and assess the Co-op's progress toward them – to have a vision for the future, a map covering the terrain between here and there, and an ongoing assessment of where we are on the map.



## Board Chair Report *continued*

The above projects that our Board has inherited have come to us largely as isolated bits of work – not directly related to one another, not parts of a unifying long term strategy, and not explicitly framed in terms of our Ends. These are valuable, important projects, and this board has chosen to focus on framing all of this work within a long-term strategy for advancing the Co-op's mission. Therefore, the focus of our work over the past year has been to organize these initiatives into a coherent plan oriented toward a common “north star”, i.e. our Ends.

This is itself still a work in progress. We are still solidifying the collaborative framework within which the Board and the General Manager can create and maintain a Strategic Plan targeting the Ends. In the past four months we have completed a crucial first step: reviewing and updating our Ends policy. This spring, our excellent Board Secretary, Tomasyn Goode led an ad-hoc subcommittee charged with refining the policy language with a couple of objectives:

1. The Ends should efficiently and unambiguously articulate the identity and values of our Co-op.
2. The Ends statement should express our mission in terms of outcomes rather than actions, in order to more naturally provide the target for a Strategic Plan.

The committee did its work quickly and effectively, and I am pleased to say that, at our May board meeting, the Board voted to ratify the following new Ends statement:

*The Willimantic Food Co-op exists so that its members, shoppers and the greater community have access to a cooperatively-owned, financially viable grocery store.*

*Because the Co-op exists:*

- *Our community has increased access to quality food that meets their needs.*
- *Our community has an inclusive and accessible space to shop and gather, where everyone is welcomed, respected, and valued.*
- *Employees earn a livable wage in an equitable and safe environment in which they can thrive.*
- *Our local, regional, and global food systems are more resilient, sustainable, and ethical.*
- *Environmental impact is reduced through conscientious business practices and sustainable consumer options.*

This is our latest expression of the Co-op's mission. Any project taken on by the Co-op, whether new or ongoing, ought to be done because it moves us closer to these Ends. In the coming year, we look forward to carrying forward all of the important work started by previous Boards with a renewed focus on this core mission. We expect to build out a more concrete Strategic Plan tying it all together and clarifying the timescale over which we plan to advance these goals. Being able to eventually hand such a plan down to our successors may be the greatest gift we can give to future Boards and future memberships at the Co-op. ♣



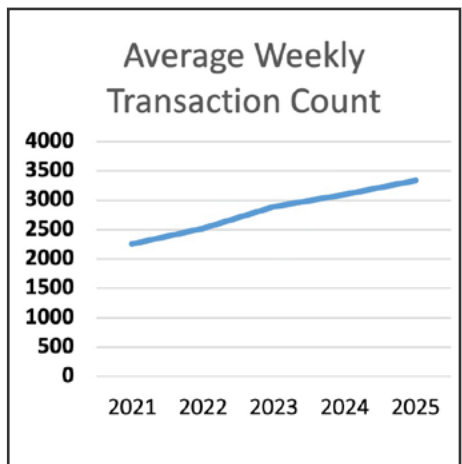
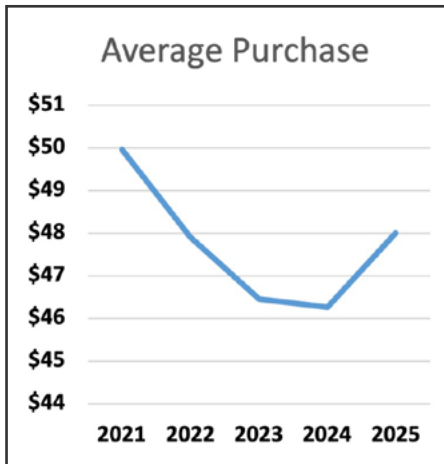
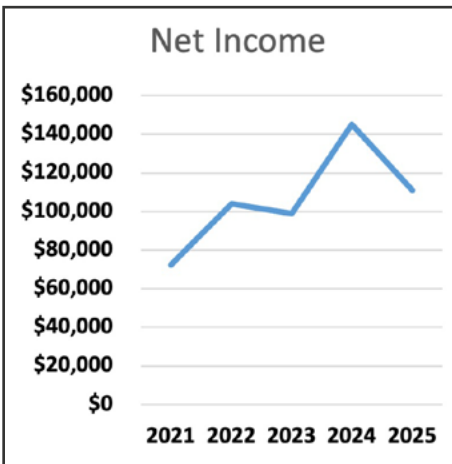
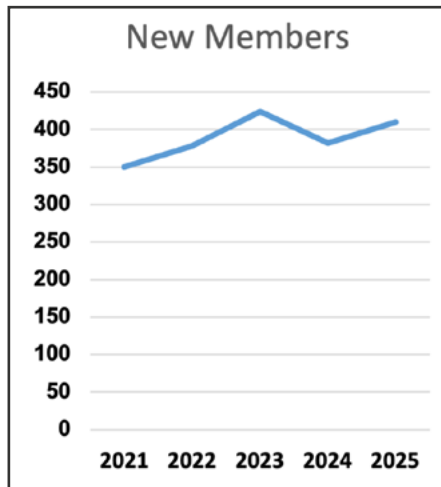
# General Manager's Report



**Patty Smith**

**2025 was another active and** successful year for Willimantic Food Co-op. Sales topped \$8.3 million, year-over-year sales grew at a rate of 7.6%, 410 new members joined, and we showed a modest but adequate positive net income of \$110,998, or 1.4% of sales. We grew our workforce by 15%, and Co-op employees earned an average hourly rate of \$23.78. Five employees were promoted into leadership and administrative roles! We increased the amount of paid time off (PTO) available to staff by adding paid sick time to our existing PTO accruals. We invested

some of our cash in upgrades to our store – a brand new bulk department, new smaller shopping carts, energy efficient overhead lighting, and our hot soup program. We invested in our community by raising and donating over \$43,000 to local organizations, including Covenant Soup Kitchen, Grow Windham, Willimantic Renaissance, Project Hope, and our local chapter of the NAACP. We partnered with local organizations such as CLiCK, Windham Community Food Network, and Willimantic Renaissance to host, sponsor, and attend numerous events and activities that brought people together to strengthen our community. We did all of this and maintained our ability to deliver savings to members totaling over \$220,000 – in the form of discounts, special member coupons, and member-only deals such as Wellness Wednesday.



## General Manager's Report *continued*

### Expansion Planning

We continued our expansion feasibility work, which included:

- completing financial models for a variety of expansion scenarios
- forming a committee that priced out landscaping, fencing, lighting and other ways of improving the 87 Church St. lot for various uses
- making plans for minor re-models in the store to optimize our current square footage to be completed in 2026

### Employment Statistics

Average Hourly Rate	\$23.78
Average Merit Pay Raise	1.06/hour
Total Profit Share	\$34,000
Total Average Pay Raise (merit + profit share)	\$1.83/hour
Paid Holidays	\$31,794
Paid Sick Time	\$25,191
Paid Vacation	\$85,398
Number of Promotions	5
Turnover Rate	20.6%
Average Tenure	5.4 Years

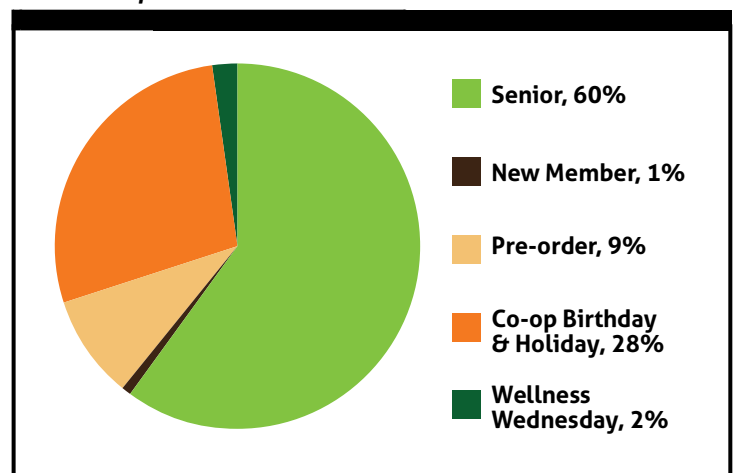
We addressed some of our space needs by renting additional office and staff breakroom space next door at Workmode, which alleviated some pressure on our tight back-office quarters and improved our ability to work comfortably and effectively.



### Roundups

Organization	Month	Amount Rounded Up
Polar Plunge - Covenant Soup Kitchen	Jan-25	\$1,600
Windham Community Food Network/ Mesa Communitaria	Feb-25	\$1,400
Meals on Wheels - TVCCA	Mar-25	\$1,600
Willimantic Farmers Market - Double SNAP	Apr-25	\$1,300
Grow Windham	May-25	\$1,275
Out CT	Jun-25	\$1,800
WAIM	Jul-25	\$1,625
First Baptist Church - Community Supper	Aug-25	\$1,600
The Neighbor Fund	Sep-25	\$1,625
Project Hope - No Freeze Shelter	Oct-25	\$1,900
WAIM Walk for Warmth	Nov-25	\$1,925
Access Community Action Agency	Dec-25	\$1,775
		<b>\$19,425</b>

### Membership Discount Breakdown



## General Manager's Report *continued*

### Local and Sustainable Agriculture

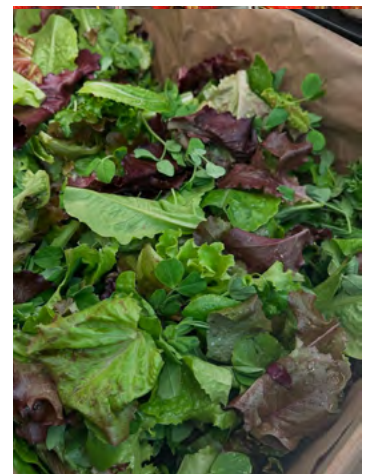
We supported local agriculture and food production by continuing to prioritize purchasing from 134 local farmers and other producers, offering these items at a lower margin than commercial goods to ensure reasonable prices for customers and fair prices for farmers. Members and shoppers did their part by purchasing over \$1.3 million in local products, which totaled 16.4% of total Co-op sales! Organic, fair trade, and inclusive trade products continued to populate our shelves, as did WFC-branded items, which are high-quality lower-cost alternatives to name brands.

#### Local & Sustainable Agriculture

	2023	2024	2025
Sales of local products as a percentage of total sales	16.5%	15.8%	16.4%
Sales of local products	\$1,158,598	\$1,225,790	\$1,320,840
Number of local producers purchased from	136	135	134
Number of local SKUs sold	980	1015	1053
Grow Windham Support	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$5,000
Number of Fair Trade SKUs sold	628	607	589
Sales of organic products as a percentage of total sales	32.7%	33.0%	32.0%

#### Local Food Statistics

<b>Local Eggs</b> • 8124 dozen sold • Wholesale \$5 – Retail \$5.99
<b>Local Meat</b> • 10 providers • 48 Unique Items
<b>Local Dairy</b> • 3 Farms in Mansfield, Woodstock, and Canterbury • \$108,854 in sales
<b>Local Produce</b> • 24 Small Farms • No Till, Integrated Pest Management, Unsprayed, Pesticide-Free
<b>Local Bakery &amp; Prepared Foods</b> • 17 Providers • 120 Unique Items



## General Manager's Report continued



**TagBack**<sup>®</sup>

\* Limited Availability. Not Recyclable in California.



Partnering with five companies, we collected over 60 lbs of Late July chip bags, Acure body care packaging, Tom's of Maine toothpaste tubes, Lundberg rice cake wrappers, and many, many GoMacro bar wrappers in 2025.

TerraCycle guarantees to recycle all of the accepted waste sent to them through all recycling stream solutions. External and internal audits of their supply chain are performed on an ongoing basis. 98.3% of the waste TerraCycle receives is recycled, which accounts for all compliant waste.



### Environmental Sustainability

In February 2025, we signed a contract with Earthlight and Eversource to install energy saving fixtures throughout the store, including all new LED overhead light fixtures, water-saving devices, and cooler controls. We continued all of our established practices toward reducing waste and energy use, including:

#### Reuse and Recycle

- Recycling as much as possible by separating our trash and recycling, and utilizing commercial recycling programs such as Terracycle & Tagback, which collect wrappers and produce ties for recycling.
- Customers are offered a 5 cent rebate for every reusable container they use when shopping as an incentive to buy in bulk. Customers used 53,746 reusable containers in 2025.

#### Diverting Food Waste

- Almost all of our food waste (produce trimmings, expired product, coffee grounds, etc.) is picked up by a local farm, composted, and used to enrich their soil.
- Unsellable but still edible food items are donated to Covenant Soup Kitchen for their pantry or to be made into meals.

#### Reduce Paper Use

- We continue to reduce paper use in our offices by digitizing as much as possible and loading our printers with used paper.
- Register receipts are printed only on demand, and customers are encouraged

to opt into email receipts.

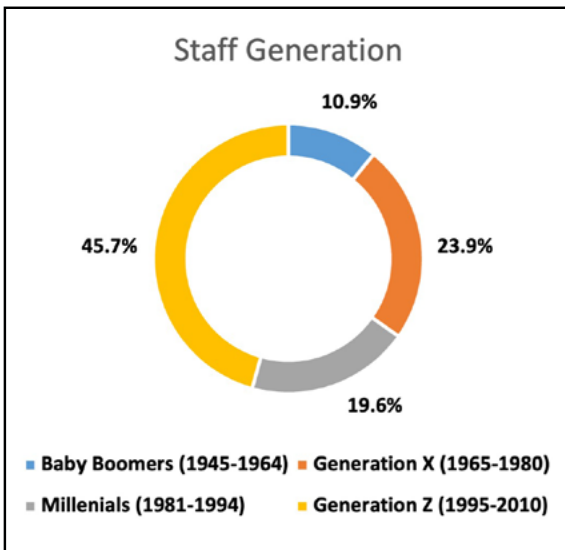
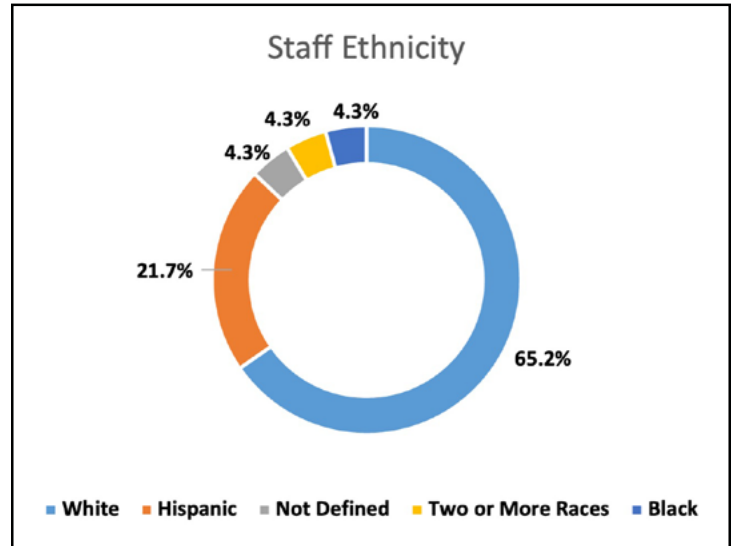
- We have drastically reduced the number of printed newsletters, annual reports, and other member communications by digitizing and emailing them, including the use of online voting for Board elections. (Reminder: please update your email address with your cashier next time you're in!)



# General Manager's Report *continued*

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

On the DEIB front, we focused on increasing the racial diversity of our staff to more accurately reflect our immediate community and make the Co-op feel more welcoming to more people. The racial diversity on our staff increased in 2025 from 29% to 35% (this data is self-reported, optional, and collected in compliance with EEOC guidelines). We used a DEIB lens when curating our social media and event planning, while also reviewing and updating several of our employment policies to minimize unconscious bias and maximize equity across all identities. One significant change here was adding two paid “floating” holidays for each staff member to our list of paid holidays, to ensure that employees have a chance to celebrate the holidays that are important to them without losing a day’s pay. We highlighted “diverse owned” brands by creating displays and “shelf-talkers” celebrating occasions such as Black History Month, Pride Month, and Hispanic/Latin Heritage Month.



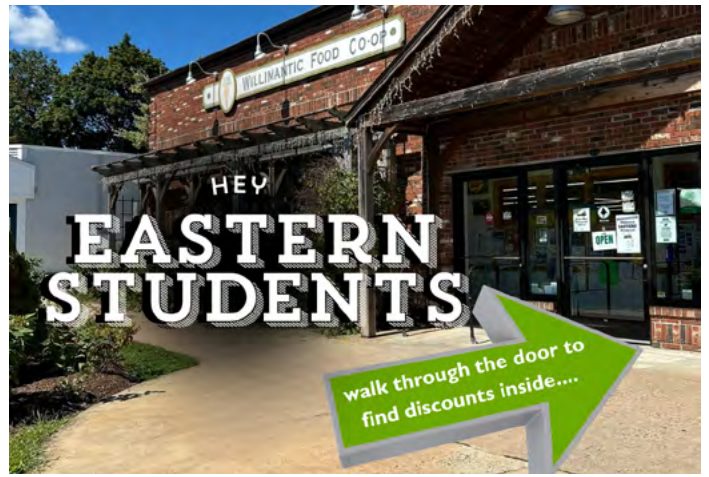
### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

	2023	2024	2025
Racially Diverse Staff	23%	29%	35%
Racially Diverse Leadership	20%	17%	29%
Racially Diverse Board	14%	14%	0%
Staff Fluent or Conversational in Spanish	7	8	10
EBT Sales	\$178,736	\$156,773	132,962
Donations made to organizations with DEIB-aligned missions		\$8,500	\$15,616



## General Manager's Report continued

We also engaged in new ways with students at UConn and ECSU. We worked with undergraduate and graduate students from UConn's Department of Allied Health Services on food security in the Windham community and hired two students as interns to help develop a food assistance program at the Co-op (details forthcoming). We participated in an effort by Willimantic's business community to attract ECSU students to downtown with the new Eastern Passport program. The passport offers discounts to students, encouraging them to frequent local businesses and make them feel a part of the local community.



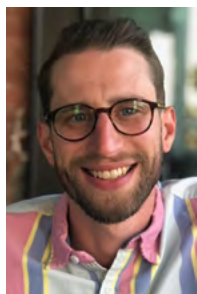
## General Manager's Report *continued*

### In Conclusion

I'm very proud of all of these accomplishments from our 46th year as a co-op, and I feel honored to be a part of it. Our recent successes are certainly things to be celebrated, and we also know that these successes are not ours alone – they have been built on the foundation laid by our predecessors – the members, boards, managers, and employees that came before us who collaborated over the years to create the favorable conditions we now enjoy. We also know that there is still much to be done, and the staff and I are working hard each day to find new ways to increase our positive impact, better meet the needs of members, and make progress toward our Ends. The world continues to change and we are lucky that our co-op continues to thrive. It is our job as current stewards of the Co-op (board, staff, and members) to ensure that we remain adaptable and agile in the face of new challenges and needs, while preserving and nourishing the core values and purpose of Willimantic Food Co-op, so that future generations of members and workers can benefit at least as much as we have. There is so much power in cooperation! ♦



# Treasurer's Report



**Brock Alosky**

## Hello fellow Cooperators!

Another successful year of the Co-op has concluded and been finalized and I'm happy to share that we had yet another strong financial year. Some of you might notice that we did have a slight decline in total net income this year. This is still considered an adequate net income and does not necessarily signal that there is anything wrong with the operations of the Co-op. The primary driver of the 'dip' in net income was related to payroll expenditures and our investment in staff (increased headcount, merit raises, increased PTO, etc.).

### Balance Sheet Analysis

Total assets are up \$379k (11.6%) which indicates that we are slowly reinvesting into our existing operations and infrastructure. Most of the new assets include the bulk department 'reset' and abatement of the Church St. property under the property and equipment line (\$244k). Even though our cash has slightly decreased we have decided to start funding growth internally rather than continue to hold onto cash for longer than we should/need to.

Our liabilities have also increased to leverage and fund future growth. Our debt to assets ratio is still extremely healthy at 22.5% (look for less than 50%) and does not indicate any incurred risk to the Co-op. Our equity is incredibly strong. The total equity ratio is a whopping 77%. This means that over three-quarters of our total assets are financed via shareholders which help the Co-op from assuming any debt. This time, look for a ratio above 50%. Overall, the Co-op remains well-capitalized despite our rising liabilities.

### Income Statement Analysis

Overall, the Co-op produced \$111k in net income for the operating year of 2025. This was due in part by very impressive sales growth of 7.6%, which outperformed the budgeted amount even after all the economic uncertainty that the market is experiencing. To that point, as many of you are aware the cost of goods is very volatile and unfortunately has been for quite some time. We always try to keep the retail prices as low as possible and I want to highlight that we don't always pass 100% of the increases to our customers which squeezes our already tight margins.

The discounts are a new line item included in the report this year. The goal is to highlight the financial benefit that members can receive throughout the year. As you can see, discounts have been relatively steady over the past two years and close to 4% of sales (for financial sustainability, the recommended upper threshold for discounts as a percentage of sales is 1.5%). As Treasurer, it's my duty to be objective in providing financial oversight and balance the Co-ops financial health with our mission. Ultimately, we may need to consider reducing discounts as a percentage of sales in order

## Balance Sheet

	2025	2024
Cash	1,675,835	1,749,302
Inventory	392,019	340,553
Property and equipment	975,051	730,131
Other assets	611,397	455,288
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>3,654,301</b>	<b>3,275,274</b>
Liabilities	823,874	591,394
Members paid in equity	1,220,169	1,184,623
Retained Earnings	1,610,258	1,499,257
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>2,830,427</b>	<b>2,683,880</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>3,654,301</b>	<b>3,275,274</b>

## Income Statement

	2025	2024
Gross Sales	8,339,284	7,753,431
Discounts	(313,693)	(313,404)
Net Sales	8,025,591	7,440,027
Cost of Sales	5,332,861	4,897,889
Gross Profit	2,692,729	2,542,138
Expenses	2,608,339	2,413,701
<b>Income from Operations</b>	<b>84,390</b>	<b>128,437</b>
Other Income	80,742	82,947
Income Before Income Tax	165,132	211,383
Income Tax	(54,132)	(66,185)
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>111,000</b>	<b>145,198</b>

2024 & 2025 numbers from Quickbooks reviewed & finalized by CPA

to keep our financial condition sound and sustainable, especially if we are to commit to a capital-intensive expansion project. This does not mean eliminating discounts entirely, but rather finding ways to provide the greatest member benefit while also maximizing the revenue of the Co-op for continued success.

Because of the additional payroll costs that I mentioned above, you'll see that we also spent a bit more this year in the expenses line. However, compared to 2023 expenses, which were \$2.54M, it is not out of the ballpark by any means. This left the Co-op with \$84k of income from operations which, when dealing with the small margins of a small, community-owned cooperative grocery store, is quite good. Our other income is earned mainly through the certificates of deposits (CDs) that we have through various local banking institutions and credit unions. Although it's less than 2024, it is still trending upwards as we only earned around \$45k in other income in 2023. I'm quite pleased that we are generating additional income from our liquid cash, especially when it almost matches the amount of income from operations! However, we need to pay our fair share in taxes, and we must ensure we are playing by the rules to continue providing our goods and services to our members.

All in all, a great year and cheers to many, many more! ♦

# Global Ends Policy

## **WFC Global Ends Adopted 2019**

The Willimantic Food Cooperative strives to provide its members, shoppers and the greater community a retail food store which:

- Supports and increases sustainable agriculture, locally, regionally and globally, with a strong emphasis on local and regional agriculture and food processing.
- Works towards reducing our environmental impact. This includes showcasing our coop as a model of sustainability in the retail food world, with aspirations for zero waste.
- Ensures inclusivity and represents our diverse community.
- Demonstrates the economic and social value of the cooperative model by maintaining financial sustainability and viability.

## **WFC Global Ends Adopted 2026**

The Willimantic Food Co-op exists so that its members, shoppers and the greater community have access to a cooperatively-owned, financially viable grocery store.

Because the co-op exists:

- Our community has increased access to quality food that meets their needs.
- Our community has an inclusive and accessible space to shop and gather, where everyone is welcomed, respected, and valued.
- Employees earn a livable wage in an equitable and safe environment in which they can thrive.
- Our local, regional, and global food systems are more resilient, sustainable, and ethical.
- Environmental impact is reduced through conscientious business practices and sustainable consumer options. •

