

Willimantic Food Co-op  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2026 6:00-8:00 PM

WorkMode Office Space, 109 Valley St Suite B, Willimantic

**Directors attending:** Matthew Coolbeth, Hannah Moore, Patty Smith, Peter Kirk, Brock Alosky, Kathe Gable, Stephanie White, Tomasyn Goode, Katherine Gavin

**Others attending:** James Cashmore-Everton, Destiny Hollis, Monica Van Beusekom

**Call to Order – 6:08pm**

**Board Check-In (Kirk)**

- Next month: Brock

**Agenda Amendment**

Action: Add discussion of annual meeting to agenda after monitoring reports. (Motion: Coolbeth, Second: Kirk. Motion unanimously approved.)

**Consent Agenda**

Action: Approve minutes of December meeting with corrections. (Motion: Goode, Second: Alosky.)

- Minutes of December Board meeting
  - o Guest name correction
- Committee reports
  - o Board Perpetuation Committee tabling session at Co-op café – January 31<sup>st</sup> 12pm-2pm

(Motion unanimously approved.)

**Monitoring Reports**

- GM Monitoring Report B.2 Financial Planning (Smith)

Action: Approve B.2 Monitoring Report as compliant. (Motion: Alosky, Second: Moore, Abstained: Smith.)

- o Running a tight ship financially – GM, finance manager, treasurer all working together
- o Consider explicitly expanding focus from “financial planning” to general planning

(Motion approved by all others.)

- Board Monitoring Report C.1 Unity of Control (White)

Action: Approve C.1 Monitoring Report as compliant. (Motion: Gable, Second: Coolbeth.)

- o No evidence of lack of organizational cohesion

(Motion unanimously approved.)

### **Annual Meeting Planning**

- Planning timeline located in Cloud9
- Date & time
  - o Ideal date June 3<sup>rd</sup> – backup date June 4<sup>th</sup>
    - *Action item:* Patty will check with church to see if either of those dates is available
  - o June Board meeting will occur on the 11<sup>th</sup>
  - o 6pm to 8pm – consider a slightly longer meeting this year?
- Catering
  - o Angeles Mexican Food – same as last year
  - o Wait for people to sit down with their plates before starting presentation
  - o Consider adding labels/ingredient lists
- Location
  - o First Congregational Church of Willimantic – same as last year
- Two new board seats will be open

### **Store Report (Smith)**

- 2025 numbers – not finalized yet, but initial data says:
  - o \$8.3 million in sales
  - o 7.6% sales growth, exceeded budgeted sales growth of 5.5%
    - Sales growth slowed towards end of year – reflected nationwide/sector-wide trends
      - Holiday season still successful despite slowed growth – December sales grew 7% over 2024
- Well-staffed over the holidays – not always the case, noticeably less chaotic than usual
- Bulk reset in December – almost finished, will be done before birthday party
- Birthday party on Feb 7<sup>th</sup> – co-op turning 46
  - o 50<sup>th</sup> birthday coming up!!!
    - *Action item:* Create a planning committee for 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party
  - o Samples, live music, may not do 46 member cakes – logistically a struggle – getting sheet cakes this year instead

- Same day as Fiddleheads birthday celebration – may affect attendance?
- 10am-5pmish, 10% birthday discount
- 410 new memberships – only 382 in 2024
- Two new store positions open – assistant grocery manager, merchandising and promotions coordinator
- Tomasyn working with Marissa to create training materials for front end

### **Update on Member Benefits programs**

- No longer have 5% non-member surcharge, so need to add new member benefits – board approved Patty create proposal and share when she has details – here they are
- Overall expansion of member benefits – contractions in certain places to support expansion in others
  - Considering removing senior discount, replacing with loyalty points program available to all members
  - Add community discount/Food for All program – needs-based everyday discount & subsidized membership
    - Help with price perception/affordability issue – make co-op more accessible
    - Many co-ops have a similar program
  - Reducing preorder discount
    - Many preorder sales have negative margins
- Co-op has been operating at almost double the recommended amount of discounts
  - Profitable despite this, but cannot afford to add any other member benefits without taking something away, especially during expansion
  - Won't be saving much money at all – just moving money around by moving discounts around – spreading discounts over the membership body more equitably
    - Goal is to get discount % of sales to 3% - still too high, but hopefully can be profitable through expansion
- Board supports general direction of member benefit adjustments
- Communicate with front end staff for messaging to new/prospective members
- Timeline needs more consideration – possibly July of this year?
- How to assess how much current discounts are driving sales?
  - Diminishing returns – determine what effect removing discounts will have on sales

### **Board Holiday Gathering**

- Pick a date in February – email Matt with availability
  - o Maybe do something after board meeting next month depending on agenda

Action: Adjourn meeting. (Motion: Gable, Second: Alosky. Motion unanimously approved.)

**Adjourn – 7:51pm**