



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2026 • 6pm

Arcata Co-op & Zoom

Present at meeting:

Board Members: Mike Connors (Treasurer), Elizabeth/Lizzy Gahm (Vice President/Employee Director), George WinterSun, Layla Richardson (President), Hayley Simera (Secretary), Jon Haumeder, Michael Cahill (Employee Director)

Absent Board Members:

Co-op Employees: Emily Walter, Sean Nolan, Alex Villagrana, Kiya Villarreal, Shiann Cochrane

Member-owners: Kyle Finger, Roger, Pat Bitton, Kathleen Kelley

1. **Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 by Layla and introductions were made.

2. **Agenda Review**

The agenda was reviewed.

3. **Approve January 8, 2026 Board Minutes**

Minutes approved by consensus.

4. **Owner Comment Period**

- Roger – People are asking about being called owner. We talked about what it means to be an owner and participating at meetings. We also talked about communicating with owners. I really like the energy from Paul and Bailey in the Arcata store. Curious about how the voting went for Seeds for Change. I think we should put signs up in front of the store a couple of days before board meetings. I found a store that carries bulk tofu and am looking to see if this Co-op could carry it.
- Kiya – I overheard a conversation between an owner and a neighbor. The neighbor was explaining how cheap things are at Costco and the owner responded that they'll never shop there. That they prefer buying the exact amount of food they need from bulk at the Co-op. It felt good to hear a Co-op owner explain their shopping values aren't based on prices.
- Kathleen – I have lots of pennies that I'd love to give to the Co-op to use.

5. **Board Correspondence** – reported by Layla

- We received correspondence that we'll discuss at a later agenda item.

6. **Board Retreat Recap** – reported by Layla

We had a board retreat in January. It was a great way for new board members to get to know each other. The board decided they are no longer interested in pursuing Policy Governance. We are looking forward to having a board and management retreat in June.

7. **Advertising Strategy** – reported by Alex

Current advertising strategy is very promotions focused. That's letting people know about sales and campaigns at the stores and why they should come to the Co-op. We are also involved with branding, which is essentially working on our reputation. We are working on expanding branding this year and communicating the cooperative model to our owners and highlighting the good the Co-op does.

Branding:

- General branding with our logo and our new tagline. "Your food. Your community. Your Co-op."
- We love local campaign – the co-op is the best place to shop for local products.
- Owner campaign – communicating what the co-op model is to our owners.

We will be expanding our advertising channels, including on buses and in digital spaces.

- Pat – I think it would be good to work with Humboldt Made.
- M. Connors – What branding efforts will there be beyond advertising?
 - o Alex – We are planning community events of our own as well as attending other events to represent the Co-op. We are also planning to increase our sponsorships of local events.
 - o Sean – We plan on promoting our community partnerships more.
 - o Kiya – We just launched our Business Partner program. It's a strategic way of strengthening our ties with local businesses and strengthening our economy. We provide the business partners with a complete promotional packet with posters and outreach materials.
- M. Connors – Are their advertising efforts targeting people who have just moved to Humboldt?
 - o Alex – Branding is an awareness marketing strategy.
 - o M. Connors – What about partnering with realtors?
 - o Pat – There is a Home in Humboldt program through the Chamber of Commerce.
- Lizzy – How do we measure the success of our marketing?
 - o Alex – the only measurable advertising is in the form of people using coupons from advertisements. For promotions/campaigns we can measure increase in sales. You can't measure a lot of it.

8. Finance Committee – reported by M. Connors

The Finance Committee met earlier this week and reviewed the Q3 financials. There were a few unexpected operational issues in Q3 and we were still able to come in with a positive bottom line. The committee recommended the Board accept the financials.

Motion: Accept FY26 Q3 Financials.

Motion by M. Connors, 2nd from Hayley. Motion Passes (7/0/0)

9. Employee Guest Speaker – Shiann Cochrane

I've been working here for almost 16 years. I recently was promoted from Assistant Store Manager to Store Manager in Eureka. I love working at the Co-op.

- Sean – Shiann is a great Store Manager. She was a great Assistant Store Manager, and it was great to be able to promote her.

10. Fiscal Year 2027 Draft Board Expenses

We received board correspondence related to the travel budget.

- Kiya – Why is such a steep jump for travel expenses? That's a lot of groceries to be sold to pay for that. I want to understand this as an owner.
- Lizzy – These travel expenses are for the board to travel to the CCMA conference in Tacoma, WA. I've had about four people come up to me about this issue. I think it's great for our board to be able to attend CCMA. As board members we should be educated about co-ops in general, not just our co-op. Some people were confused and thought the board was getting a raise.
- Emily – Is this budget to cover the costs of the board who is attending CCMA this year? Because most of that cost will be coming out of this year's budget, not next years. I've seen that other co-ops have policies about board travel. It might be good to the same for this Co-op. Perhaps have a discussion about how often a board member should have their expenses covered to attend these conferences.
- Emily – I want to suggest that the money that has previously been budgeted on the food line to provide an employee meal be removed. This doesn't represent a true expense of the board. If the board wants to see that employees get a meal, that should be a discussion with Sean so that it can be properly budgeted to an accurate GL.

The board will continue discussing this budget during executive session and will put it back on the March board meeting agenda.

ACTION: Sean will look into Co-op University to see if the Board can access it for training.

11. Final Strategic Plan Review 2021-2025 – reported by Sean

The strategic plan that just completed was broken into five goals. I created a final report on the plan that was included in the board packet. It was a fun exercise to review all that we accomplished towards this strategic plan.

12. GM Report – reported by Sean

January was a good month for the Co-op. It's a time to recover from the holidays and start working on our new strategic plan. We were named the extraordinary business of the year at the Eureka Chamber and presented with an award at their annual gala. We've started our transition of using the term owner instead of member. This week we did our new all staff customer service training which went great and it will now become an annual training.

- Jon – I think getting that award is the answer to the question of how do we measure our marketing success? This is great feedback!
- M. Connors – I notice there are more reported injuries in Arcata than Eureka.
ACTION: Sean will look into why there are more injuries in Arcata and report back to the board.
- M. Connors – Where are things with the Arcata bulk drainage pit issue?
 - o Sean – There's only one local company that can do the repair work that we need. We've been having a hard time getting them scheduled. If we don't get a response soon, we'll start looking outside of the area, which will cost more.
- Lizzy – I think we should review the new strategic plan with department heads.
 - o Sean – I will make sure this happens.

13. Owner Comment

- Roger – I think it's cool that the new Store Managers were both promoted from within the store. With good staff we can reintroduce the idea of getting more staff to board meetings.
 - o Kiya – We inform all new employees to how to get paid to attend a meeting.
- Roger – Maybe for the Annual Membership Meeting you can think about something exciting to discuss at the meeting that would get people interested in being on the board. I've seen that Arcata High and the University have articles about food and being plastic free. We might want to collaborate with them.

14. New Business (items for next agenda):

Agenda Items:

- Board Expense Budget
- Elections Committee

Consensus reached to adjourn the February 12, 2026, meeting at 7:35pm and move into Executive Session.

Minutes by Emily Walter



North Coast Co-op
Board of Directors Executive Session Minutes
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Absent Board Members:

Co-op Employees: Sean Nolan

No reportable action.

Executive Session ended at 8:52pm.