



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2025 • 6 – 8pm

Arcata Community Center, Arcata

Present at meeting:

Board Members: Roger (President), Mike Connors (Treasurer), Brenda Harper, Elizabeth Gahm (Vice President/Employee Director), George WinterSun, Mimi Smith (Secretary/Employee Director)

Absent Board Members: Layla Richardson

Co-op Employees: Emily Walter, Sean Nolan

Member-owners: Pat Bitton, Joanne McGary, Alan Sanborn

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 by Roger and introductions were made.

2. Agenda Review and Approval

The agenda was reviewed.

3. Approve April 10, 2025 Board Minutes

April 10, 2025 board minutes approved by consensus.

4. Member Comment Period

- Joanne – I want businesses to participate in promoting the reduction of greenhouse gasses. My main focus is bicycles. I would like the three parking spots in front of the Arcata store dedicated for bike parking during the month of May (bike month). The Co-op needs to be visible and promote alternative transportation to their shoppers.
- Mimi – comment from member that they miss the outside kiosk in Arcata for posting.
- Roger – I'm still noticing that after the sale for plastic packaged applesauce that the applesauce in glass that were displaced to the bottom shelf never made it back up to the more visible spot. I find this discouraging.
 - o Lizzy – I think the best thing to do is to talk with the Department Head about this, which would be Mike. I will contact Mike about this.
 - o Alan – I feel like packaging and where we place certain products is an ongoing discussion. When talking about our shopper's values you have to question what their values are. Some shoppers value purchasing a cheaper product. You can say that the Co-op does address packaging concerns in terms of offering the widest variety of options, including a large bulk section. You have to ask what will happen if the Co-op decides to be the leader in restricting plastics? Would shoppers be willing to pay more or would they shop elsewhere?
 - o Roger – I think it would be a mix of losing and gaining shoppers. Is our purpose to serve everyone in the community? Or do we need to start another Co-op dedicated to ideals?

5. Board Correspondence – reported by Roger

None

6. Guest Speaker – Alan Sanborn (past board member)

I was an original member/owner of the Co-op. Back then everything came in bulk, and it was about getting whole foods without packaging. Back then the only other store was Safeway. I'm not sure what the Co-op is anymore. It's no longer an alternative to other stores, it's very similar to other stores like Wildberries and ENF. I always read the Co-op newsletter. I was on the Co-op Board during a very tumultuous time. I think sponsoring and having events around the Co-op was helpful. It's important for people who come from out of town to make big purchases every couple of weeks to have close parking spaces. My advice to the Board is to always ask questions.

7. Annual Membership Meeting – reported by Roger

Should the annual meeting be a party, business meeting, or hybrid?

- Mike – I would like a celebration. We conduct business at monthly board meetings.
- Sean – I think we could lean into a celebration and still include updates and information to the membership.
- Lizzy – It needs structure. What is the purpose of the meeting? To celebrate members? To inform the members about the Co-op?
- Roger – Originally, it was a way for members to get together and poll them on ideas. Sometimes there was a lot of brainstorming. I don't see any big issues that need to be addressed this year.
- Lizzy – I like it being a celebration without public comment. We need to highlight messaging of how members can communicate their concerns and ideas.
 - o Mike – This is what makes the Co-op different, and we should highlight that.
- Sean – This event in recent history has been organized by staff. I think it's helpful to have the Board set the vision for the meeting and have staff plan and implement it.
- George – I would like to see a presentation on the Strategic Plan.

8. Strategic Planning Update – reported by Mike

The Strategic Planning Committee continues to meet once a month. At the last meeting each committee member submitted their own three statements based on past discussions. The facilitator is now taking all that input and seeing where there is overlap and converging them into four statements.

9. Elections Committee – reported by George

At the last meeting we discussed having the Board table at the stores to help recruit Board members. Alex also reached out to the Board about tabling during June for the Membership Drive.

- The Board discussed who would table and will work to coordinate days and times together.

ACTION: Reach out to George to work on tabling coordination.

- George – The Elections Committee also discussed ranked voting. I haven't thought of a way to make it feasible with our method of hand counting.
 - o Mike – I don't believe our bylaws would allow ranked voting. But I too agree that ranked voting is best.

10. GM Report – reported by Sean

- The pipe in the Arcata store is set to be fixed tonight.
- The Eureka generator is now fully functioning.

- Mike - How does membership purging work? Does it happen annually, monthly?

ACTION: Sean will contact Margaret about this.

- Mike – Why is prepared foods sales down in Arcata?
 - o Sean – We've had some challenges with the pipe that is being prepared. I do need to follow up on this.
- There was discussion about electricity expenses, use and batteries.

11. Member Comment

- Roger - Pat and I are going to meet about the newsletter. Others can join us. We need to discuss what a Co-op Newsletter is. What content should be included. What is being made right now is not a newsletter. It's more advertising than anything else. It shouldn't be called a newsletter. EcoNews, Sr. News and Food For People have printed newsletters that are highly circulated.
- Sean – Alex and I decide on the format. We switched to the current Co-op News when I first started because the other newsletter cost a lot and we also scaled back staff in the Marketing department.
- Mike – A lot of organizations put out newsletters because they are also asking for money, which makes it more fiscally feasible and needed to do so.
- Roger – I would like to continue this discussion next month because the current News had drifted from what Sean and Alex originally created. For example, there is no longer a General Manager report.

12. New Business (items for next agenda):

- Quarterly Review of the Strategic Plan
- Strategic Planning Update
- CDCC Conference Report
- Co-op Newsletter

Consensus reached to adjourn the May 8, 2025, meeting at 7:47pm and move into Executive Session.

Minutes by Emily Walter

**North Coast Co-op
Board of Directors Executive Session Minutes
May 8, 2025**

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Board Members: Roger (President), Mike Connors (Treasurer), Brenda Harper, Elizabeth Gahm (Vice President/Employee Director), George WinterSun, Mimi Smith (Secretary/Employee Director)

Absent Board Members: Layla Richardson

Co-op Employees: Sean Nolan

No reportable action.

Executive Session ended at 8:48pm