



## Elections Committee Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2026 Zoom

### **Present**

**Board:** Jon Haumeder (EC Chair), Layla Richardson (EC Member), Lizzy Gahm (EC Member), Hayley Simera

**Staff:** Emily Walter

**Owners:** Roger

**1. Welcome and Review** - The meeting commenced at 5:08pm by Jon.

**2. Approve March Minutes**

Approved by consensus.

**3. 2026 Election Timeline**

The committee reviewed the 2026 timeline.

**4. Qualifications**

The committee discussed additional qualifications for candidates that were brought up at the March Elections Committee. Updates to qualifications would be part of the Board Policy Manual Section K and need approval by the Board.

Additional qualifications would be used as an additional tool for the committee in creating a slate of candidates. They would not be added to the bylaws, and thus if the committee and the board did not approve an applicant, that person could still run as a write-in candidate, as long as they meet the qualifications in the Bylaws. The committee would like to address the write-in candidate system, potentially creating a self-nomination system like many other co-ops use. Self-nomination will be discussed at a future meeting.

Proposed Language:

The following are preferred qualifications the Elections Committee will take into consideration when creating a slate of candidates.

- Applicant is available for board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:00-9:00PM.
  - Applicant has the ability to regularly read and respond to email correspondence.
  - Applicant has the skills, and willingness to attend meetings by Zoom if needed.
  - Applicant agrees to be interviewed by the Elections Committee.
  - Applicant submits one professional reference.
- Roger - I don't like that we're screening out candidates with these additional qualifications, including considering use of email as a qualification. Someone like me, who doesn't use email, could be screened out of running for the board. Someone might not use email because they think it's taking us away from meeting in person.

- Someone might want to run on that platform, and this wouldn't let them. I don't think we should move this direction unless it's been a problem.
- Lizzy – I believe it has been a problem. It is hard to run a board when another board member doesn't have email. In the interest of smooth-running board I feel it is a requirement to use email.
- Roger – I know the board existed before emails. There will be people that feel a better future is one where we communicate by phone and not email. I think owners should know about this when they join. Running for the Board should be a right for all owners.
- Hayley – We aren't requiring an applicant to own a computer. They can be provided with computer access at the Co-op to check emails, as well as attend Zoom meetings at the Co-op. We want board members that are willing to communicate in these ways.
- Layla – Being on the board there is a lot of email correspondence. I think it's an important requirement.

**Recommendation to the Board:** Approve the updates to Section K of the Board Policy Manual (See Attachment A).  
Motion by Lizzy, 2<sup>nd</sup> from Layla. All in favor, motion passed (3/0/0).

## 5. Applicant Interview

The committee discussed requiring applicants to do an interview as a way to meet the applicant, make sure the applicant is able to commit to and attend an interview, as well as to make clear what it means to serve on the board and to answer any questions the applicant may have.

The committee discussed that the interviews will need to take place prior to when the committee meets to review applications.

CONTINUED: The committee will continue discussing how they will conduct interviews, including set questions they will ask and set information they will relay at the next meeting.

## 6. Application Packet

The committee reviewed a draft application packet and revised it (See Attachment B).

The committee continued discussion from the March meeting to require an electronic submission of applications to ensure typed applications and decided that applications should be submitted using an online form on the Co-op website. Online submissions will automatically go directly to the Elections Committee.

AGREEMENT: Candidates will be asked to submit one professional reference.

**Motion:** Approve requiring online submission of applications.  
Motion by Jon, 2<sup>nd</sup> from Lizzy. All in favor, motion passed (3/0/0).

## **7. Election Process**

Tabled to the May meeting.

## **8. Recruitment**

The committee discussed wanting to have a meet-and-greet at the July Board meeting to encourage those interested in running for the board to have an opportunity to ask questions as well as attend a meeting.

The committee discussed getting the word out at local Chamber meetings. They would also like to make short social media videos for Marketing.

### **ACTION:**

- Emily will ask Marketing to submit Election Marketing ads to local chambers.
- Add agenda item to the May board meeting to discuss a July meet and greet.
- Add agenda item to the May board meeting to possibly not have a June Board meeting and instead require board members to table/recruit instead, as well as attend a half day retreat.

Tabling: The committee would like to have stickers, membership materials, a Co-op banner and application materials kept in a box for easy access when tabling.

## **9. Next Agenda Items**

Next meeting Tuesday, May 19, 5pm at the Arcata Store and Zoom

- Review application packet
- Board recruitment and materials
- Minimum votes discussion continued
- Candidate interview process discussion
- Self-nomination discussion

Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm

*Minutes by Emily Walter*

# ATTACHMENT A

## Board Policy Manual

### K. Qualifications for Board Candidates

The following are the **basic minimum** qualifications for candidates for the Co-op Board:

- Candidates for Directors shall be members of the Corporation and residents of California.
- Any Director of the Corporation must be eligible to vote in the election for which they are a candidate.
- Has no record of shoplifting at the Co-op and is not currently barred from shopping at the Co-op.
- If previously employed by the Co-op, was not fired within the past twelve months.
- Any actual or potential conflict of interest, including any potential conflict relating to previous employment at the Co-op, is disclosed and there is no overriding conflict of interest.
- Any past felony conviction is disclosed and there is no conviction which in the judgement of a reasonable person precludes service on the board.
- No two directors of the Corporation shall share a single membership, nor shall they reside in the same household.” Additionally, any two or more Family Members must disclose this fact when running for an election. In this context, “Family Member” means spouse, domestic partner, child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or first cousin.
- Any Director of the corporation must be at least 21 years of age by the first day of the term they are to serve (November 1 of the election year).
- Individuals serving in management positions of the corporation shall not serve on the board of directors while they occupy such positions. “Management positions” are defined as the General Manager and employees having management and administrative responsibilities and who report directly to the General Manager.
- **Must meet California state requirements for individuals involved with businesses licensed to sell alcohol. Must agree to background check and fingerprinting if elected as a Director.**

**The following are preferred qualifications the Elections Committee will take into consideration when creating a slate of candidates.**

- **Applicant is available for board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:00-9:00PM.**
- **Applicant has the ability to regularly read and respond to email correspondence.**
- **Applicant has the skills, and willingness to attend meetings by Zoom if needed.**
- **Applicant agrees to be interviewed by the Elections Committee.**
- **Applicant submits one professional reference.**

The Elections Committee shall use these qualifications to determine whether a candidate is excluded from candidacy. Should the Elections Committee exclude a candidate, the full Board may reconsider the exclusion provided the candidate chooses to contest it within 72 hours.

## Attachment B

### Application Packet Content



*(example outreach image)*

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Thank you for your interest in running for the North Coast Co-op Board of Directors. Member involvement in a member-owned co-op is what sustains our business and makes it possible to do great things in our community. There are two general seats and one employee seat open in this election.

Running for the board is both an exciting opportunity and challenge. This guide will help you understand the process of running and what your roles and responsibilities will be if you are elected.

On behalf of the entire 2026 Board of Directors we wish you good luck!

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** While in past years submission of the application form was generally sufficient to place an interested person on the ballot for election to the Board, for this year's election the Board is implementing additional application requirements, including candidate interviews and submitting one professional reference, aimed at ensuring that applicants have a solid idea of how the Board operates and the amount and types of work and expectations they will have signed up for. These requirements will also allow newly elected Board Members to begin their term on the Board with a good understanding of the way the Board works.

To qualify as a candidate for the Board Directors, you must be a Co-op owner by August 17 and participate in a screening interview with the Board Elections Committee to check for basic qualifications and potential conflicts of interest. The Board Elections Committee will read all applications and schedule interviews with candidates prior to August 20 (July 29 for employees). All candidates who are forwarded by the committee will be notified and officially entered into the election process. Should the Elections Committee exclude a candidate, the full board may reconsider the exclusion provided the candidate chooses to contest it within 72 hours of receiving notice.

**INSERT QUALIFICATIONS** – once approved by Board

## **ABOUT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

North Coast Co-op is a member-owned organization run by a board of directors. There are seven board members, five member-directors and two employee-directors. The primary responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to provide overall direction and ensure the long-range security and viability of the Co-op, and to develop policies necessary to carry out the duties of the board and the functions of the cooperative.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is essential that board members be responsible to the ownership as a whole. We are looking for people of good faith and sound judgment willing to work cooperatively within our process and board culture. As a part of their overall responsibilities, all board members must:

- Commit to a three-year term.
- Attend monthly board meetings (second Thursday of the month) and other special meetings as they arise.
- Serve on at least one committee (Finance, Elections, or Policies & Procedures)
- Stay informed about committee matters, prepare well for meetings, review and comment on minutes and reports. etc. (10-20 hours per month, monthly stipend provided).
- Build a working relationship with fellow board members.
- Disclose social security number, live-scan and other personal documentation to local, state and government agencies, as necessary.
- A board member has the duty to exercise reasonable care when making decisions for the Co-op. Reasonable care is what an “ordinarily prudent” person in a similar situation would do.
- A board member must never use information gained through their position for personal gain and must always act in the best interest of the Co-op.
- A board member must be faithful to the Co-op’s mission. They shouldn’t act in a way that is inconsistent with the Co-op’s goals.

## **MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

It is strongly recommended to attend a board meeting prior to the start of elections/board service. Board meetings take place on Thursdays at 6pm July 9, August 13, September 10 and October 8. All meetings are listed on the North Coast Cooperative website calendar (<https://northcoast.coop/calendar/>). Email the Administrative Assistant Emily Walter ([emilywalter@northcoast.coop](mailto:emilywalter@northcoast.coop)) if you want to be on an email list that receives agendas and packet materials one week in advance of meetings.

- Board Meetings - The Board meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, 6 pm to 8:30 pm. One to two hours of reading is required to prepare for each meeting, generally in a combination of emails and a board packet provided prior to the meeting.
- Committee Meetings - The Board has three active committees: Finance, Elections, and Policies and Procedures. Directors are expected to serve on at least one committee. Committees generally meet once a month. Additionally, new Board members are required to attend at least three Finance Committee meetings in their first year of service and it is recommended that they attend all Finance meetings.

- Annual Retreat/s. A one-day (or two half day) retreats are held each year. Directors are expected to attend.
- Annual Owner Meeting - The Annual Owner Meeting takes place every October. This year it will be held Saturday, October, 10. All candidates are invited to speak at this meeting and all Board members are expected to attend.

**COMPENSATION, TRAINING AND OTHER BENEFITS**

- Monthly stipend.
- A Board discount on products purchased at North Coast Co-op.
- Professional training.
- Opportunity to provide meaningful service to the local community and economy.

**2026 ELECTIONS TIMELINE**

EMPLOYEE ELECTION		GENERAL ELECTION	
June 24 (WED)	Applications available for 1 seat	June 24 (WED)	Applications available for 2 seats
July 22 (WED)	Employee applications due	Aug. 12 (WED)	General Applications due
July 29 (WED)	Elections Cmt. reviews apps	Aug. 20 (THR)	Elections Cmt. reviews apps
July 30 (THR)	Employee notified of eligibility	Oct. 1 (THR)	General election begins
Aug. 5 (WED)	Employee voting begins	Oct. 10 (SAT)	Annual membership meeting
Aug. 19 (WED)	Employee voting ends	Oct. 21 (WED)	General election ends
Aug. 20 (THR)	EC counts employee ballots	Oct. 24 (SAT)	EC meets to count ballots
		Oct. 29 (THR)	Election results posted
		Oct. 29 (THR)	Board Orientation
		Nov. 12 (THR)	First Board meeting

**HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT SERVING ON THE BOARD?**

Email the elections committee at [elections@northcoast.coop](mailto:elections@northcoast.coop).

**TO APPLY**

Owners who are interested in joining the board must apply by completing an online form found at (web address/QR code).

- Employee Applications are due Wednesday, July 22.
- General Applications are due Wednesday, August 12.

# ONLINE APPLICATION

**Thank you for your interest. Please note that the online application does NOT allow you to save work. It's recommended to prepare your answers in a separate document (e.g., Word or Notepad) and copy them into the form once you are ready to submit. Closing your browser or navigating away from this page will result in the loss of all data entered.**

Name

Member #

Address

Phone

Email Address

Answers to questions 1-6 are confidential and only reviewed by the Board.

- 1) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, give date and nature of offense (an affirmative answer will not automatically disqualify one from being considered).
- 2) Any person with an overriding conflict of interest may not serve on the Board of Directors. An overriding conflict of interest is one that is ongoing and is in conflict with the business of the Co-op or its mission and principles. Do you have any interests that you think may potentially create a conflict of interest with North Coast Cooperative?
- 3) Do you have a "Family Member" on the board or running for the board in this election? "Family Member" means spouse, domestic partner, child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or first cousin. If yes, you must state who, and your relation to them as part of your candidate statement.
- 4) Why did you become a member of North Coast Co-op?
- 5) Have you attended or plan to attend a board or committee meeting at North Coast Co-op? Please describe.

If approved as a candidate #6 (Candidate Statement) will be posted on the Co-op website, in stores, social media and in the election packet to inform voters.

- 6) **CANDIDATE STATEMENT** Please include answers to the following 4 questions in your candidate statement. You can submit up to 500 words. Candidate statements exceeding 500-words will be cut off at the 500th word.
  - Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?
  - Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards will help you succeed as a board member.
  - What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?
  - Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

*Please list one professional reference who can speak to your qualifications:*

Name, Email Address, Telephone

How long and in what context has this person known you:

## Expectations of Board Members

Please read carefully and thoughtfully; **check each item** to indicate that you are willing to meet the expectations.

- Be an owner in good standing and shop regularly at the Co-op.
- Be willing to make a three-year commitment to serving on the board.
- Be prepared for meetings, including reading--carefully and thoughtfully--the agenda packet in advance of every Board meeting.
- Be willing to accept the majority vote of the Board even when you may not have agreed with the decision.
- Attend Board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 6pm.
- Actively participate in Board discussion via e-mail or phone between meetings as necessary.
- Serve on, and attend, at least one active Board committee (Finance, Policies & Procedures, or Elections)
- Attend board training sessions, the annual retreat/s.
- Attend the Annual Owner Meeting which takes place in October.
- Complete an online Diversity and Equity Training provided by Human Resources.

## Check each box below to acknowledge that you've read and understand the Board Candidacy Packet.

- I qualify to serve as a Director in accordance with the Board qualifications.
- I understand that I am committing to a three-year term.
- I agree to attend a North Coast Co-op Board meeting prior to November.
- I acknowledge that North Coast Co-op is an organization that actively pursues and represents social equity and diversity, and as a board member I will support and actively advance these values.
- I agree to a background check and fingerprinting if elected as a Director.
- I agree to participate in an interview with the Elections Committee prior to August 20 (prior to July 29 for employee applicants).
- For consistency and fairness, candidate photos must be scheduled and taken by Co-op staff at one of the stores. I agree to schedule a time for a Co-op employee to take my photograph to be used for election promotions as well as Board promotions if elected.
- I acknowledge that my photograph and candidate statement may be published in official North Coast Co-op publications and used in other election materials posted in and around North Coast Co-op stores, on social media, and on the Co-op website. I agree to the Co-op's use for election promotion purposes.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

Following submission, you will be contacted by the Elections Committee to set up a time, prior to August 20 (July 29 for employees), for a brief interview and to answer any questions you may have.