Elections Committee
Meeting Minutes – July 28, 2026
Arcata Co-op and Zoom

Present
Board: Jon Haumeder (EC Chair), Layla Richardson (EC Member), Lizzy Gahm (EC Member)
Staff: Emily Walter, Sean Nolan
Owners:

1. **Welcome and Review** - The meeting commenced at 6:05pm by Jon.

2. **Approve June Minutes**
   Approved by consensus.

3. **Election Timeline**
   The committee reviewed the 2026 election timeline.

4. **Write-in Candidates**
   The committee reviewed feedback from the attorney recommending not having a write-in candidate on elections ballots as it is a potential liability to the organization. For example, if only one person was running for one seat and they dropped out, then a write-in candidate could win with only 1 vote, as California law prohibits having a minimum votes threshold. It also undercuts the purpose and intention of the Elections Committee's process of creating a slate of qualified candidates.

Recommendation to the Board: Remove the following bullet points from Board Policy Manual Section G "Election of Employee Directors" and "General Membership Voting."

Election of Employee Directors
- Write in Candidates are permitted. A line for "write in" shall be placed on the Employee Election ballot for each open Employee Director seat and counted by the EC.
- Any write in candidate must be a current employee and a current member-owner of the North Coast Co-op and agree to candidate requirements. If a write-in candidate is elected, they are required to return requested paperwork before being placed on the General Election ballot.

General Membership Voting
- Write in candidates are permitted. A line for "write in" shall be placed on the general election ballot for each open General Director seat and counted by the EC.
- Write-in candidates must be current member-owners of the North Coast Co-op and agree to candidate requirements. If a write-in candidate is elected, they are required to return requested paperwork before being seated.

Motion by Jon, 2nd from Layla. All in favor, motion passed (3/0/0).

The committee had previously discussed potentially adding a policy for self-nomination. The attorney recommended against this due to undermining the purpose and intention of the Elections Committee's process of creating a slate of qualified candidates. Having a self-nominated candidate who was denied candidacy by both the elections committee and the board could then lead to disfunction of the board if that person were to be elected.

AGREEMENT: The committee agreed they do not want to add a self-nomination policy.

The attorney gave feedback on the new qualifications the committee added to the Board Policy Manual earlier this year. They strongly agree that it is important for this committee to use necessary and relevant qualifications to achieve a qualified slate of candidates. This includes information gathered during the application process, including applicant interviews.

The committee does not want to lose insight from the attorney and discussed adding language to the Board Policy Manual that captures it.

Recommendation to the Board: Update Section K of the Board Policy Manual.

Section K

- The Elections Committee will determine whether an applicant is eligible for candidacy based on these qualifications and any other relevant factors ~~shall use these qualifications to determine candidate is excluded from candidacy~~. The Elections Committee reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to determine applicant eligibility and to make final decisions regarding 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.

Motion by Jon, 2nd from Layla. All in favor, motion passed (3/0/0).

5. **Employee Seat**

No applications were received for the employee seat. The committee discussed different reasons they heard as to why employees don't submit applications. These included not believing they're capable, not knowing how or what to write in a candidate statement, not wanting to go through the voting process, not knowing what the board is like, not wanting to commit to a three-year term, and not having enough time.

Different ideas were brought up to consider for future employee elections cycles:

- Invite a board member to speak at the monthly onboarding employee trainings.
- More encouragement and publicity to get employees to attend at least one board meeting.
- Perhaps offer employees a one-year term instead of three.
- Do a board meet-and-greet at the stores to answer employee questions.

The committee decided that instead of opening an application period again, repeating a process that already failed, they would like to recommend to the board to do an internal search for a qualified employee. The committee could approach interested staff to interview and if deemed qualified the board could then appoint them.

Recommendation to the Board: Find a qualified employee to appoint to the board. Motion passed by consensus.

The committee agreed they would like to start a search at the Eureka store first, since there is already one employee director from the Arcata store.

6. Next Agenda Items

Next meeting Thursday, Aug. 20, 2026, 6pm via Zoom.

- Review general board applications.
- Employee Seat discussion continued.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38pm

Minutes by Emily Walter