FORT COLLINS FOOD CO-OP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
MEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 25, 2026
Time: 5:37 PM

1. ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present (In Person):
- Dennis Lacerte, Board Member
- Bonnie Meyer, Board Member
- Natalie Yoder, Treasurer
- Amanda Höfer, President
- Casey Terry, Vice President
- Christine Luckasen, Secretary

Board Members Present (Online):
- Lauren DeBell, Board Member

Staff Present:
- Nasa Brockus, General Manager
- Three (3) Staff Members

Also Present:
- Fifteen (15) Member Owners

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 PM by Amanda Höfer, President.

A quorum was established with seven (7) board members present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Amanda Höfer moved to swap the General Manager Store Report with Agenda Items, placing the GM Store Report earlier in the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Natalie Yoder moved to approve the February 2026 meeting minutes. Casey Terry seconded the motion. Motion passed.

5. UPDATE: NATIONAL CO-OP GROCERS APPLICATION

Bonnie Meyer provided an update on the National Co-op Grocers (NCG) application:

Application Timeline:

- Application submitted: October 1, 2025
- NCG has three application review cycles annually: January 1, June 1, and October 1
- NCG Board reviews applications and sets effective approval dates tri-annually

Current Status:

- Application status: Currently pending
- Pending status due to store relocation; at time of submission, move to Beaver's location was not certain
- Application materials need to be updated to reflect the new location
- Some financial proceedings required
- Potential effective membership date: End of 2026

NCG Membership Benefits:

- Contract pricing with certain vendors, including UNFI
- Financial and operational benchmarking support
- Community of practice and peer network
- Access to capital
- Advocacy and national representation
- Note: Membership requires some patronage commitments from member co-ops

General Manager Comments:

- General Manager Nasa Brockus confirmed the Co-op is actively working on the application. He spoke with Dave Olson from NCG earlier that day and is working to provide all necessary information for NCG's decision. General Manager emphasized that NCG membership is a significant opportunity that can greatly benefit the Co-op.

6. UPDATE: COLUMINATE CONSULTING

Amanda Höfer provided an update on the Board's decision to hire Columinate as a management consultant:

Decision Rationale:

- Decision reflects the operational and financial complexity of the new location
- Demonstrates commitment to developing the General Manager during this growth period

About Columinate:

- National cooperative consulting firm specializing in food co-ops and mission-driven organizations

- Focus areas:

- Operational and financial performance improvement
- Planning
- Staff development

Consultant Assignment:

- Steve Watts from Columinate assigned to work with the Co-op
- Steve Watts arrived on-site the previous Wednesday

7. GENERAL MANAGER STORE REPORT

Nasa Brockus, General Manager, provided the store report:

Non-Financial Store Updates:

- The General Manager thanked Board members and member owners for attending the meeting. He emphasized the importance of member participation in monthly and annual meetings, as well as shopping at the Co-op.
- **Staff Union Vote Announcement:**
    - The General Manager informed the membership that a staff union representation vote is scheduled for March 31, 2026.
    - Key points:
        - The Co-op's position is that it is everyone's individual right to vote however they would like.
        - The Co-op has retained legal counsel to assist with the process.
        - The General Manager invited questions from members regarding the union vote.

Note: Financial topics were reserved for Executive Session discussion.

8. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBER OWNERS

Member Owners engaged in extensive discussion on the following topics:

Pricing and Competition:

Member owners raised concerns about pricing competitiveness compared to other local grocery stores, including Natural Grocers, Lucky's, and King Soopers. Discussion focused on:

- The Co-op's smaller purchasing power compared to large corporate chains
- Volume-based pricing challenges in the grocery industry
- Limited margin for error in cooperative business models
- Efforts to address price pressures during the transitional period of moving to the new location

Value Proposition and Differentiation:

Discussion addressed how the Co-op differentiates itself in a market where many stores now carry organic and natural foods:

- Historical context: Food co-ops were once the only source for natural, organic, and local foods
- Current challenge: Many competitors now offer similar products with larger purchasing power
- Co-op's unique role as a conduit for local businesses and farmers
- Importance of keeping money in the local economy

Local Suppliers and Relationships:

Member owners discussed local supplier relationships:

- Native Hill Farm is waiting for operational improvements before committing fully to supplying the Co-op
- Concerns about product freshness and turnover
- Need for improved systems and operations to support local suppliers
- Value of the Co-op as a direct sales channel for local producers (e.g., Belafonte Farm)

Staff Training and Operations:

Discussion of operational challenges:

- Need for additional staff training during transition period
- Resource constraints while expanding to new location
- Plans to improve staff capabilities to handle operations efficiently

Future Plans and NCG Impact:

The General Manager and Board discussed anticipated improvements:

- Expected NCG membership approval by September or October 2026
- Volume purchasing power benefits from NCG membership
- Improved ability to communicate value to members
- Commitment to transparency and accountability to membership

Member Accountability and Communication:

The General Manager acknowledged that member owners hold the Co-op accountable daily regarding pricing and product selection. He emphasized the importance of:

- Admitting when improvements are needed
- Communicating clear goals and viable plans
- Following through on commitments
- Inviting continued member oversight and feedback

Staff Union Vote:

- Question: Is joining a union a new idea, or was this discussed at the old location?
- Response: The Board only became aware when the petition was filed with the local unit.
- Question: How will union representation impact the store and member owner experience?

- Discussion addressed potential operational and financial implications if the union vote is successful, including third-party involvement in negotiations and additional expenses.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 PM. The motion was seconded and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

An Executive Session was convened immediately following adjournment of the regular meeting.