



menomonie  
**market**  
food co-op



**Menomonie Market Food Co-op**  
 521 East 2nd Street  
 Menomonie, WI 54751  
 (715) 235-6533  
 www.mmfc.coop  
 M-F 7-8, S-S 8-7

## ENDS STATEMENT

Menomonie Market Food Co-op will create cooperative sustainable economic development that is nurturing to the community. Cooperative sustainable economic development will result in an enhanced quality of life and an improved environment. The community is defined as all present and future members, patrons, employees, producers, and vendors with the focus on the local foodshed and the larger cooperative network.

### **About Menomonie Market**

Menomonie Market, founded in 1973, is a member-owned retail grocery store that has experienced explosive growth in the past seven years. Since it moved to its present location in downtown Menomonie, membership has increased to over 1,000 member-owners and sales to \$1.6 million and growing.

In retail terms, MMFC is a big “small” co-op. Its volume and income place it among small co-ops according to the National Cooperative Grocers’ Association (NCGA), but the operation has been growing so quickly that it shares as many concerns with medium sized co-ops as it does with small ones. As interest grows in MMFC in the Menomonie community, greater Dunn County and beyond, its management finds inventive ways of accommodating new shoppers and products while still maintaining the feel of a small neighborhood grocery.

Though MMFC holds many important values in common with non-profits, it is not actually a non-profit. A cooperative generates some of its capital by selling memberships, which confer ownership and equity to purchasers. These member-owners have the power to direct the co-operative through democratic processes like Board of

Directors’ elections and Annual Meeting attendance and voting.

### **What Does a Director Do?**

An MMFC director (board member) serves our members through Policy Governance.

### **What Is Policy Governance?**

Policy Governance, an operational model developed by John Carver in the 1970s, has been adopted by the MMFC board to ensure that MMFC serves its member/owners as it should. In practice, policy governance works by means of a few basic principles:

- The board speaks only through policy. Whatever the board wants accomplished or wants to prohibit is written as policy. The board cannot hold itself or the GM responsible for practices that are not written policy. Of course, policies can be changed as the board sees the need. The board writes policy in four areas:

1. Ends policies (MMFC’s overall goals)
2. Executive limitations policies (what ways of achieving the goals the GM should avoid)
3. Board process policies (how the board itself should operate)
4. Board-Staff relationship policies (how the Board should relate to the MMFC staff)

- The board delegates authority for the operation of the co-op to the general manager (GM). The Board does not make decisions about the day today operations of the co-op. This is the responsibility of the GM who delegates some of this operational authority to staff.

- The board speaks only as a whole. What individual directors believe is not something the GM can be held accountable for. The GM is responsible only for policies approved by the board as a whole.

- The board monitors its own operation and the operation of the GM through monitoring reports based on its policies.

1. The board establishes a regular calendar for monitoring the policies stated in its policy manual.
2. The GM provides reports to the board that state the GM’s interpretation of the policy in question and includes data to support compliance with that interpretation. The board decides whether the GM’s interpretation is reasonable and whether the data provided shows compliance with that policy.



### **Community Involvement**

Menomonie Market board members working at the Great Community Cookout in downtown Menomonie. They're serving up food from the co-op of course!

3. The board monitors its own operation through the evaluation of individual directors.

The board, then, only evaluates and makes hiring and firing decisions about the GM. The GM, in turn, evaluates and makes decisions concerning other staff. The board does not make decisions about how to run the store or what products to carry. Instead, the board's function is to consider the big picture, to formulate the overarching vision for MMFC and its long term goals, and to write and monitor policies that will assure that the GM is achieving these overall goals in a manner that accords with the organizations' values.

#### ***What Am I Committing To?***

- Confidentiality

Policy G.3.2 of the Board Policy Manual states: All directors will maintain confidentiality as needed to protect the co-op's interests and financial viability. All issues related to personnel, real estate, market strategy and goals, pending litigation, and details of the co-op's financial status will be considered sensitive and subject to confidentiality unless or until full disclosure is approved by the board as a whole.

- MMFC Ends Statement (see opposite page)
- Attending regular and special meetings fully prepared.

MMFC board membership requires a significant time commitment. Each director is responsible for attending all meetings and for thoroughly preparing for meetings by reading and thoughtfully considering meeting packets. The board does, however, make an effort to accommodate members' schedules when setting meeting dates and times. Between meetings, it is sometimes necessary to communicate via email. Directors should be prepared to respond as needed.

- Sharing ideas and concerns.

Directors are encouraged to take an active part in the work of the board by asking questions and putting forward ideas.

- Acting in a professional manner.

Directors are expected to display integrity, to resist pressures from special interest groups, to be able to work constructively with others, to be able to analyze and use good judgment, to be forward looking, to be constructive and energetic, and to be loyal to the interests of the co-op.

- Attending training sessions.

Ongoing education is part of board membership. Directors should be willing to read articles, participate in webinars (online seminars) and attend the Cooperative Board Leadership 101 Workshop as well as other live workshops as opportunities arise.

- Taking on leadership and consistently and actively serving on committees.

Though the board has no standing committees, from time to time the board will create a committee for a specified purpose. Directors should be prepared to serve on a committee if called upon and to participate in projects outside of board meetings as needed.

- Avoiding conflict of interest.

Policy G.3.4 states: All directors will avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

#### ***How Will I Benefit?***

Not only will you receive a monthly stipend of \$50 credit at the co-op, you will have the satisfaction of serving a growing organization that serves the community with healthy products and education. You will have a voice in the shaping of the future of the co-op while working with a group of people who share a commitment to a democratic process and a sustainable local economy.

### ***The 7 Coop Principles***

The cooperative principles are international guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership. Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.



2. Democratic Member Control. Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.

3. Member Economic Participation. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

4. Autonomy and Independence. Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

5. Education, Training and Information. Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, and they inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

7. Concern for Community. While focusing on members' needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

### **Member Linkage**

Menomonie Market board members having a casual meal with MMFC members after a leisurely bike ride on the Red Cedar Trail.

### **NOTES:**