



menomonie

**MARKET**

FOOD CO-OP

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

candidate packet

## ABOUT MENOMONIE MARKET

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Founded in 1973, Menomonie Market Food Co-op (MMFC) is a community-owned grocer. For 45 years, it had operated out of a single Menomonie store until 2021 when it merged with Just Local Food Co-op in Eau Claire. This growth increased ownership to almost 5,000 households and sales to \$7 million.

In retail terms, MMFC is a big “small” co-op. Its sales volume places it among small co-ops according to National Cooperative Grocers (NCG), but the operation has been growing so quickly that it relates with medium sized co-ops almost equally. Menomonie Market employees find inventive ways of accommodating additional shoppers and products while maintaining the feel of a friendly neighborhood grocery store.

Though MMFC has values in common with non-profit organizations, it is operated as a cooperative. A cooperative generates some of its capital by selling ownerships, which confer ownership and equity to purchasers. These owners have the power to direct the cooperative through democratic processes like board of directors elections and annual meeting attendance.

A director represents our owners, acting as liaisons and offering strategic leadership. They also supervise the general manager in accordance with policy governance. In addition, directors look to the future of the co-op by creating long term goals.



## ENDS STATEMENT

Menomonie Market Food Co-op will be central to thriving, healthy communities.

Because of us:

- customers have local access to healthy choices for their physical, social, and environmental needs;
- local farmers and producers are supported;
- the cooperative model is promoted;
- our owners have a vital sense of ownership and belonging; and
- employees enjoy sustainable, equitable, and dignified employment.

## WHAT IS MY COMMITMENT?

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### **Attending regular and special meetings fully prepared**

MMFC board membership requires a significant time commitment during the 3 year term. 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 directors' 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 ideas forward.

### **Taking on leadership roles and consistently and actively serving on committees**

Directors should be prepared to serve on a committee if called upon and to participate in projects outside of board meetings as needed.

### **Attending training sessions**

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

### **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, analyze and use good judgment, to be forward looking, constructive and energetic, and loyal to the interests of the co-op.

### **Confidentiality**

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.

### **Avoiding conflict of interest**

All directors will avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.

## HOW WILL I BENEFIT?

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Not only will you receive a monthly stipend of \$50 credit at MMFC, 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.



## 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

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

1. **Voluntary & 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 & Independence** - Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.
5. **Education, Training, & 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.

## WHAT IS POLICY GOVERNANCE?

Policy Governance, an operational model developed by John Carver in the 1970s, has been adopted by the board to ensure that MMFC serves its 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 delegates authority for the operation of the co-op to the general manager. The board does not make decisions about the day to day operations of the co-op.
- The board speaks only as a whole.
- The board monitors its own operation and the operation of the general manager through monitoring reports based on its policies.

## HOW TO APPLY

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**Answer the seven questions below designed to help the MMFC Board of Directors understand your approach to board governance, finances, cooperative principles, and community service, create a 300 word Candidate Statement summary to be printed in the newsletter and posted prior to the election, and submit both via email to [crystal.halvorson@mmfc.coop](mailto:crystal.halvorson@mmfc.coop) or in person Attn: Crystal Halvorson to the store.**

Refer to this packet for information concerning what it means to be a director. Additional information about MMFC and its Ownership is at [mmfc.coop](http://mmfc.coop).

Board candidates are encouraged to attend two monthly board meetings to be considered for a position on the board. This provides a realistic sense of how the board operates so that a candidate can make an informed decision about seeking a position.

Members of the Nominating Committee would also like the chance to answer questions about serving on the board in person. Contact Karlee Wallin at [karlee.wallin@mmfc.coop](mailto:karlee.wallin@mmfc.coop) with any questions.

## QUESTIONS

1. Please discuss your prior experiences serving organizations through board participation, committee membership, or leadership positions.
2. Menomonie Market employs a Policy Governance Model in conducting board business. Please discuss Policy Governance and how you feel you might contribute to this type of governance at MMFC.
3. Tell us about what experience you have had, if any, with organizational financial statements or organizational decisions about financial matters.
4. What motivated you to apply for a board position? What do you hope to gain through your participation on the board?
5. As a cooperative, Menomonie Market has a special set of principles it follows. Please discuss an aspect of the seven co-operative principles you find interesting or meaningful.
6. Through the mission set out in its Ends Statement, how do you see Menomonie Market influencing the larger communities to which it belongs?
7. What else would you like to share that could be relevant to your potential board participation?