



Information on Running for the WSGC Board of Directors

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of our Co-op Board of Directors! If elected you'll be essential to helping a progressive organization grow and flourish. You'll learn a great deal about how the Board works to lead the cooperative (through policy governance) and have the opportunity to focus on strategic planning and big-picture items. You'll work with talented and energetic individuals (Board colleagues and staff) and make a solid contribution to the Willy Street Co-op community.

Application Process

- 1) Learn more about the Co-op, the Board, and its system of governance and the qualities and commitment required of an effective director. This packet will provide you with basic information to get started. You are also encouraged to speak with current Board members (contact information is available in this packet) and complete the additional candidate activities listed below.
- 2) Complete and submit your answers to the list of board candidate questions no later than **9 p.m. on July 10, 2014**. All submissions should be sent to **Dan Neely, Board Administrator** (d.neely@willystreet.coop), for publication in the Co-op Reader.
- 3) You will also need to schedule a time for Co-op staff to take your photo in one of our retail locations, to be completed no later than **July 15, 2014**. To book a time, please email **Dan Neely**.
- 4) Please plan to attend the annual meeting on **July 10, 2014** and be prepared to make a brief statement and answer Owner questions.
- 5) *Additional candidate activities are strongly recommended by the Board, specifically:*
 - a. Attend at least one Board meeting within one calendar year of the Annual Meeting (August 2013 - July 2014).
 - b. Collect and submit 20 nomination signatures from other WSGC Owners (by 9 p.m. on July 10, 2014).

Candidate information, including completion of the candidate activities listed above, will be shared with Owners in print and online. Elections are held from August 1 until August 20, when the Board will hold a special meeting to receive a tally of the votes.

Having a diverse array of qualified candidates helps to shape the strategic direction of the Co-op and ensures our continued success.

Thank you for considering running for the Board of Directors of your Co-op!

More About the Willy Street Co-op & Our Board of Directors

The Willy Street Coop Board of Directors Board Structure and Responsibilities

The Co-op is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors that is democratically elected by its Owners. The Board is directly accountable to Owners for the activities and accomplishments of the Co-op.

Specific Board member responsibilities include:

- Creating a shared vision for the Co-op's future.
- Developing, monitoring and revising a body of policies which guide the work of both the General Management Team and the Board to achieve outcomes consistent with Owners' values and visions.
- Using consistent monitoring mechanisms to ensure that management achieves goals set by the Board and that the Board operates in accordance with the goals and policies it has set for itself.
- Collaborate with the Co-op's General Manager and Management Team staff.
- Communicating clearly with Owners and striving to understand their values and visions for the Co-op.

The Board is committed to doing its work through a governing system called "Policy Governance" (developed by John Carver). This is a significant philosophical position for both Board members and management. Prospective candidates are advised to carefully read the enclosed section, "The Policy Governance Model" with the expectation that they will be working within this framework as new Board members

Eligibility

As stated in the Co-op by-laws, the Board consists of no more than nine members. Each must be an Owner in good standing (current with annual payments, and shopping at least once per year). Employees who are Owners in good standing are also eligible to run for the Board (only two seats allowed for staff at any one time).

Board Member Qualifications

- Directors must be Owners of Willy Street Co-op in good standing, without a substantial conflict of interest resulting from an affiliation with any enterprise that is in competition with the Co-op.
- Interest in serving the Willy Street Co-op and commitment to its mission and values.
- Ability to read financial statements.
- Communications, social media and marketing or branding experience.
- Willingness to work closely and cooperatively with other Board Directors.
- Commitment to providing the time and energy necessary to accomplish the Board's objectives (approximately 8-10 hours a month).
- Understanding of and commitment to Board requirements for confidentiality.

- Ability to learn quickly.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Board experience is helpful, but not a prerequisite for service.

Additional Skills & Experiences

In addition, potential Board members are needed to bring more specialized skills to their service. Some of those skills may include any of the following:

- Organization experience with non-profits/for-profits and with small or large scale operations, preference given to retail or wholesale (especially grocery).
- Strategic planning, leadership and group facilitation skills.
- Sustainability experience in operations/facilities, farming/gardening, or food systems development.
- Experience with organizations setting goals based on the triple bottom line-- people, planet and profit.
- Leadership and group facilitation skills.
- Other co-op experience.

Meetings

The Board meets once a month, currently on the third Tuesday of the month from 6:30 p.m. to about 8:30 p.m. Several hours of reading are required to prepare for each meeting, generally in a combination of emails and a Board packet provided the week prior to the Board meeting. Board members typically serve on one or more committees, which also tend to meet monthly. Board members also attend various member meetings, including the Annual Meeting (the second Thursday in July) and work on outside projects or proposals. Board strategic planning retreats are held 1-2 times each year. Board members are encouraged to attend national or regional co-op conferences.

Board Benefits

The chief reward for serving on the Board is the satisfaction that comes from doing useful work. Board members also receive a 15% discount on their store purchases. Regularly scheduled evening meetings include a shared meal. The Board provides special training for new Board members and ongoing training for all Board members. Finally, reimbursement for childcare expense while attending Board meetings, as well as for printing Board materials, is provided.

The Policy Governance Model

The WSGC Board is run using the Policy Governance Model created by Dr. John Carver. Here is a brief description adapted from PolicyGovernance.com.

Policy Governance®, an integrated Board leadership paradigm created by Dr. John Carver, is a groundbreaking model of governance designed to empower Boards of directors to fulfill their obligation of accountability for the organizations they govern. As a generic system, it is applicable to the governing body of any enterprise. The model enables the Board to focus on the larger issues, to delegate with clarity, to control management's job without meddling, to rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the organization, to truly lead its organization.

In contrast to the approaches typically used by Boards, Policy Governance separates

issues of organizational purpose (ENDS) from all other organizational issues (MEANS), placing primary importance on those Ends. Policy Governance Boards demand accomplishment of purpose, and only limit the staff's available means to those, which do not violate the Board's pre-stated standards of prudence and ethics.

The Board's own Means are defined in accordance with the roles of the Board, its members, the chair and other officers, and any committees the Board may need to help it accomplish its job. This includes the necessity to "speak with one voice." Dissent is expressed during the discussion preceding a vote. Once taken, the Board's decisions may subsequently be changed, but are never to be undermined. The Board's expectations for itself also set out self-imposed rules regarding the delegation of authority to the staff and the method by which Board-stated criteria will be used for evaluation. Policy Governance Boards delegate with care. There is no confusion about who is responsible to the Board or for what Board expectations they are responsible.

Current Board Members

Marti Ryan, President – martiryan@me.com • 608.843.3486
Holly Fearing, VP – hollyfearing@gmail.com • 608.665.6418
Karen Bassler – kjbpod67@gmail.com • 608.242.1662
Courtney Berner – courtney.berner@gmail.com • 360.672.4535
Rick Bernstein – rabernstein@icloud.com • 608.251.4615
Mike Engel – mik3eng3l@gmail.com
Dawn Matlak – abrosojos@gmail.com • 561.568.0954
Danie Ramos Haaz – drhaaz@gmail.com • 608.957.6619

The Willy Street Co-op

Origins

Since 1974, the Willy Street Co-op has offered an expanding selection of natural and organic products. We strive to uphold Owner values in all our activities by adhering to co-op principles, promoting and supporting sustainable lifestyles, and being socially responsible. We work to balance the needs of Owners with the right of workers to participatory management and a humane work environment. After all these years, we continue to be thriving cooperative business thanks to a tradition of providing high quality foods, excellent customer service and consumer education while maintaining strong connections to our neighborhoods and cooperative's history.

Like many Madison co-ops, the social and cultural forces of the 1960s and 1970s influenced the formation of the Willy Street Co-op. During this time people became attracted to natural foods cooperatives in order to have more control over what they ate. Initially, a food-buying club called Common Market satisfied this need locally. However, when it moved its operations out of the neighborhood, the Co-op's founders worked to fill the void. To that end, the Williamson Street Grocery Co-op (WSGC) was incorporated in September 1973.

In 1974, the Co-op first opened for business at 1101 Williamson Street (currently Mother Fools Coffeehouse). This tiny space was shared with Nature's Bakery and the inventory and selection were severely limited. A small, dedicated volunteer staff kept the Co-op operating while other Owners searched for a more permanent location and sold bonds to generate capital.

In October of 1974, the Co-op relocated to 1014 Williamson Street. This space featured a small storage area and 900 square feet of retail space that allowed for a more varied selection of produce and bulk foods as well as a limited supply of packaged foods and convenience items. At this time the Owners also agreed to hire a staff of six full-time workers. However, they were not initially paid. Instead, staff could obtain up to \$50 a week of products for sustenance, though some would take less or nothing until the Co-op was on firmer financial ground. Three months later the Co-op was able to begin paying these dedicated staff members.

Willy Street Co-op at 1202 and 1221 Williamson St.

It wasn't long before the Co-op outgrew this space and in October of 1977, it relocated to 1202 Williamson Street (currently the Social Justice Center). This space had 1,600 square feet of retail space and an additional 2,500 square feet of office and storage space. It was also cleaner, more organized and much easier to navigate while shopping. The product line was greatly expanded to include more bulk items, health and beauty aids, processed foods, convenience foods, ethnic items and frozen meat and fish. Sales doubled almost immediately and the staff was increased to manage the much higher volume. Within five years, the Co-op increased from 1,300 to 4,000 Owners.

During this period of growth, the Co-op began experiencing problems related to its staff and governance structures. At the time there was no functioning Board of Directors and the governance issues were being dealt with at monthly membership meetings. In order to streamline this cumbersome system, a Board of Directors was elected and began holding monthly meetings in March 1979. The original collective staff structure was also problematic, since all employees shared the decision-making authority and responsibility in all matters and decisions were made by consensus. Staff tensions grew and began to have an effect on the profitability of the store. After its first two years of financial losses, the staff was restructured and the first General Manager was hired in the fall of 1982.

By 1985 the financial outlook was improving and the business sharing the building with the Co-op relocated. With the help of Owner and bank loans, the Co-op expanded into the adjoining space and added a greatly needed deli. Despite continuing organizational and staff problems in the late 1980s, the Co-op's sales continued to grow and in 1990 they were able to purchase the building.

In 1998, the Co-op was able to purchase and extensively remodel the building across the street, known at that time as the Eagles Club at 1221 Williamson Street. The current Willy East store opened in October of 1999 and features 9,500 square feet of retail space and a total square footage of 20,000 feet. The membership strongly supported this expansion and relocation on the condition that the new store remained in the immediate neighborhood and that it retained its personal, friendly atmosphere.

Willy Street Co-op in Middleton

In 2007 the membership voted to allow an expenditure of funds greater than \$50,000 to pursue opening a second retail site within three years of the ballots being cast. After nearly three years of careful deliberation, the Co-op opened Willy West at 6825 University Avenue in Middleton. Willy West opened on November 15, 2010 and boasts 9,700 square feet of retail

space. It has a total square footage of 22,000 feet, and offers a full service deli and meat counter.

Current Information about the Coop

The Co-op's Owner numbers have swelled to include over 30,000 individuals. The number of employees has grown to a total of over 350 people, and annual sales are exceeding 38 million dollars. Throughout our periods of growth there has been an emphasis on not only addressing the needs of the Owners, but also increasing staff satisfaction. In 2012 Madison Magazine named the Willy Street Co-op one of the best places to work, based on survey results from Co-op staff.

The democratically elected Board of Directors continues to steer the future of the Willy Street Co-op. The Co-op remains an economically viable business, ever strengthening its ties with vendors and neighborhood, community, and cooperative organizations. Thanks to many years of support from our Owners, the Co-op is a vibrant community institution and a model of cooperative success.

Today the Willy Street Co-op is keeping stride with the boom in organic, local and sustainable food choices. The Board of Directors has established four primary areas of focus for the organization strategic growth, sustainability, engagement and participation, and innovative leadership. Management and staff are working with the Board of Directors to create tangible steps to achieve a variety of goals within these parameters while continuing to focus on providing top-notch customer service and high quality products.

Board Candidate Questions:

Please submit answers to the following questions to Dan Neely (d.neely@willystreet.coop) by **9 p.m. on July 10, 2014**. In addition to this information, please submit a 25-word summary statement to be included with your photograph on banners in the retail stores and with your candidate statement in the newsletter. Each candidate may also submit one additional website (blog, Facebook page, Twitter handle, etc.) for inclusion in candidate materials.

475 Total Word Maximum for all three questions.

- 1) Why do you want to serve on the Willy Street Board of Directors?
- 2) Willy Street Co-op strives to be a cornerstone of a vibrant community. Why is that an important role for the Co-op to play?
- 3) What do you think are the major issues the Co-op's Board needs to address in the next five years?

Owners Supporting Your Nomination

Although it is not necessary to have at least 20 Owners sign this form, whether or not you included this completed form by the deadline will be indicated on your candidate statement information for Owners' consideration.

	First Name (printed)	Last Name (printed)	Signature	Owner Number	Date
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I, _____, a Candidate for the Willy Street Co-op's Board of
Your signature

Directors, verify that I have collected these signatures.

Your printed name: _____ Your Owner number: _____

This form must be submitted to Dan Neely, Board Administrator, via email (d.neely@willystreet.coop) or via mail (Dan Neely, 1457 E. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53704) by 9 p.m. on July 10, 2014.