

# Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

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*April 16, 2025 Meeting*

*Board Business Meeting, April 16, 2025, online, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm*

**Directors attending:** James Watts (general manager), Deborah Gibbs (consumer owner), Carole Hoffman (consumer owner), EmJ Jakubowics (worker owner), Jon McDonald (worker owner), and Roland Tilley (worker owner).

**Others attending:** Mark Goehring (consultant), Brenda Camp (notes), Willow Dees (worker owner), and Makeda Ma'at (consumer owner).

## 1. Preliminaries

1a. Owner Input:

Willow Dees, worker owner, provided an update on cold food donations, noting that over 104,812 pounds of food have been donated since mid -2022. She shared that Weaver Street hosted sustainability info tables at Carrboro's Earth Day and UNC's Climate Action Day. Dees highlighted the success of sampling Kernza bread at both events, which helped educate attendees about perennial grains and regenerative agriculture.

Makeda Ma'at, executive director of Grow To Life, expressed her appreciation for the Food for All program, and she shared with the Board that she would like to see the Round Up program return to providing funds for community partners who provide direct services. She also suggested having different incentives for the diverse populations of customers that we want to shop at our stores.

**1b. Agenda:** Two changes were made to the agenda. The order of the GM Report and the Financial Condition Monitoring Report were flipped, and an executive session was added.

**1c. Minutes and Decisions:** Board Minutes from the March 12, 2025 Board Business Meeting were approved.

**Decision:** Minutes from the March 12, 2025 Board Business Meeting were approved.

## 2. General Manager Accountability Report

### a. General Manager Report

James Watts, General Manager, presented his 2025 April General Manager Report. Watts observed that the GM report was becoming too encyclopedic and that he had pared it back to essential information. He provided the following observations and clarifications:

Watts noted that sales growth was above 6% in the first two weeks of the fourth quarter. He explained that the aspiration for the sales growth target is high, with a reasonable expectation of 3-4% growth. Watts emphasized the importance of the brand development manager role in jump-starting sales growth in Raleigh.

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### 3. Monitoring Reports

#### a. Policy B1–Financial Condition and Activities Monitoring Report

James Watts presented his Policy B1–Financial Condition and Activities Monitoring Report. He reported compliance with all provisions of the policy except Provision 1: Same Store Sales Growth and Provision 3: Liquidity.

Watts noted that in his new interpretation for Same Store Sales Growth, the metric for sales growth is for similarly sized co-ops and that he is using third-party data from CoMetrics. He noted that to be in compliance with the provision, sales growth should be better than the “typical performers” of similarly sized co-ops.

*Jon McDonald moved to accept the report with acknowledgement of contraventions / Carole Hoffman seconded the motion.*

**Decision:** The Board accepted Policy B1–Financial Conditions and Activities Monitoring Report with acknowledgement of contraventions. The report provides evidence that the General Manager has operated within the constraints of this Executive Limitation except for the contraventions indicated in the monitoring report. The Board finds that the rationale for contraventions and the commitment for future compliance to be acceptable.

### 4. Strategic Learning: Growing the Co-op Food Eco System

James Watts presented an updated version of the presentation he gave the Cooperative Council of Carolina’s Annual Meeting. He noted that the presentation at the annual meeting aimed to inform the co-op sector about the state of food co-ops in North Carolina and to invite their participation.

James Watts presented on the challenges and opportunities for food cooperatives in North Carolina, highlighting the fragility of co-ops like Weaver Street Market, which has an accumulative half-million-dollar net profit over time. He discussed the impact of inflation and market concentration, with top retailers controlling 60% of the market. Watts emphasized the importance of supporting local brands and startups, noting that 75% of new co-ops have failed since 2010. He proposed strategies to diversify ownership and improve market presence, including leveraging relationships with credit unions and electric co-ops. The presentation aimed to foster collaboration and support for new and existing food cooperatives.

The Board expressed their appreciation for an inspiring presentation, for Watt’s vision and passion, and specifically for the information on the Food for All program and Weaver Street’s position in the Market Share chart.

Suggestions were made to connect with other types of co-ops, such as electric co-ops and housing co-ops, to help other food co-ops, and to expand the vision regionally. Watts noted that the non-food co-ops wanted specific asks and were impressed by the passion and vision, and he emphasized the importance of regional components and food system development.

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## 5. Board Process

### a. Discuss Grocery Democracy Webinar

Board members provided feedback on the *Grocery Democracy: Master the Art of Communicating Economic Diversity at Food Co-ops* webinar by Jon Steiman and John Restakis. Directors reported that the webinar broadened their understanding of co-ops, highlighted the importance of meeting the moment and being aware of community needs, and the importance of educating owners about the unique aspects of co-op ownership.

#### b1. Election Items

Due to technical challenges, Brenda Camp, Board Administrator, led the Election Items for Deborah Gibbs, Liaison to the Elections Committee. Camp reported on two items from the committee's launch meeting for the 2025 Elections:

- The committee asked the Board to reconsider their removal of photographs from Board candidate's campaign materials, especially for worker owners.
- The committee recommended that Board form a recruitment committee to ensure that multiple consumer-owner and worker-owner candidates ran in the 2025 elections.

#### b2. Approve 2025 Elections Manual

Camp reported that the procedures outlined in the *2025 Elections Procedure Manual* were unchanged from 2024 manual.

*Deborah Gibbs moved to approve the 2025 Elections Procedure Manual / Roland Tilley and Carole Hoffman seconded the motion.*

**Decision:** The Board approved the 2025 Elections Procedure Manual.

#### b3. 2025 Call for Candidates

The Board approved the 2025 Call for Candidates application packet, which will be published on Thursday, June 5.

*EmJ Jakubowics moved to approve the Call for Candidates application packet / Jon McDonald seconded the motion.*

**Decision:** The Board approved the 2025 Call for Candidates.

### c. Calendar Review: Co-op Fair, Retreat, Co-op Cafe, CFC

The Board reviewed the upcoming calendar for Board events.

## 5. Closings

### Decisions and Tasks

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Meeting Evaluation

6. Executive Session: Appointed Board Member Committee Update