



**Annual Owner Meeting and Good Food Festival**  
**May 5, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**  
Medford Food Co-op and The Café

To view the meeting recording, you may access it here: <https://www.medfordfood.coop/elections>

### **Welcome & Introductions**

Kellie Hill, President of the Medford Food Co-op (MFC) Board of Directors, opened the meeting by introducing Directors and management staff. There were 27 people present including Directors and staff members.

Kellie thanked General Manager (GM) Anne Carter for her continued service to the Co-op that is the foundation of what makes this store so great. GM Carter introduced the CORE management staff in attendance: Halle Riddlebarger, Marketing & Outreach Manager; Steve Swader, Produce & Facilities Manager, along with Kathy Damas, Administrative Assistant. Others on the management team were busy in the store with the Good Food Festival.

Kellie then introduced the people that serve behind the scenes, MFC's Board of Directors: Matt Dorris, Alexis Gossage, Peggy Leviton, Roger Noyes, Dan Smith, and Jen Smith. Sadly, Board Secretary Sarah Calhoun passed away unexpectedly last June; she is missed tremendously.

Special thanks were given to outgoing Vice President Patty Casebolt. Patty served on the Board since 2015 and her contributions will be missed.

### **Board Report**

#### Election Results

A total of 379 owners voted in this year's electronic election. President Hill welcomed our newest Board Member Cecily Gallagher and congratulated re-elected Directors Peggy Leviton and Dan Smith.

In addition to the Board members elected, the organizations voted in as the 2025 Positive Change recipients include:

- Bee Girl Organization
- CASA of Jackson County
- Center for Nonprofit Legal Services
- Family Nurturing Center
- Food & Friends
- Our Family Farms
- Rogue Farm Corps
- SO Humane
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- Stream Smart
- Natives of One Wind Indigenous Alliance/  
Unete Center for Farm Worker Advocacy

#### Board Work

President Hill noted that 2023 was a busy year for Board. As she looked back there was a long list of accomplishments; here are a few of the Board's achievements she wanted to highlight.

- Finished updating the language of all the governance policies
- Contacted recently expanded co-ops to learn from them
- Completed an internal survey of all our policies
- Updated the Board's review process to clarify the acceptance of monthly GM reports

- Created a manager/staff/Board Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- Simplified the Board Manual
- Created a recruitment survey
- Tabled during owner drives
- Fully explored options to expand on-site. Unfortunately, it was determined that expanding on-site was not fiscally responsible so the search continues for another site.

Each year the Board selects one of the organizations from this year's Positive Change recipients to receive the interest accrued from the Cooperative Community Fund. This year the Board chose to donate the interest amount of \$1,043.42 to Rogue Climate.

## **Co-op Business Report**

Anne Carter, General Manager, gave her report, highlighting Co-op accomplishments and financial information for the past year. The full 2023 Annual Report will be published in June and available at <https://medfordfood.coop/owner-resources>

### Staff

GM Carter commented that operating the Co-op's store and Café would not be possible without our committed staff. She highlighted some interesting staff information: Of the current 36 people on staff, 17 work full time, 19 part time; 12 have worked at the Co-op for over three years and six have worked here over 10 years; and, 75% of staff live in Medford and Central Point.

### Income & Expenses

The Co-op's 2023 sales of \$6,675,509 were nearly identical to 2022. Flat sales fell 2.5% short of MFC's budget projections. Factors contributing to this shortfall include declining customer count (100 fewer transactions per day) and customers economizing by shopping at discount stores and purchasing less organic food, for example.

While most operating expenses were kept under budget, two areas – design and consulting fees for the expansion project and income tax expense for 2022 – were higher than expected. This resulted in a net loss of \$86,000.

To meet the challenge of operating in very tight budget constraints, operations focused on:

- Offering attractive sales and promotions for shoppers and owners, the use of which grows every quarter;
- Increasing our outreach efforts at community events, talking to hundreds of people about the Co-op; and,
- Seeking ways to reduce operational expenses, such as decreasing fees with a new merchant processor and modifying a store supplies contract.

### Looking Ahead

GM Carter sees a positive outlook for 2024. First quarter sales have increased over the same period last year. A successful owner drive last fall resulted in a record 89 new owners joining the Co-op. In addition, there is a trend of slightly more transactions per day and an overall settling of shopping habits that are reminiscent of pre-pandemic times.

### Other 2023 Highlights – Impact Metrics

GM Carter reminded the audience that their Medford Food Co-op is so much more than a grocery store! The Co-op continues to contribute to the sustainable development of our community by:

- Sourcing local foods – 102 local producers and over \$941K in sales of local goods.
- Co-ops are collectively owned by community members who participate economically in the Co-op. 206 new owners joined in 2023 and owner benefits increased by 11.7%.

- Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) – This program allows EBT cardholders to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables. Last year’s 49% increase in enrollment and over \$67K given in fresh produce received shows that this program benefits many of our shoppers.
- Preventing food waste – MFC donated blemished produce and short-dated grocery items to the Medford Gospel Mission - over 13.6 tons of food!
- We believe in the power of change and of community. Our Positive Change program raises money for local non-profit organizations working to better our community. Collectively, our shoppers raised over \$23K in Positive Change donations.
- We also strive to support the health and sustainability of our community through sponsorships. Some of the events we helped support last year included:
  - Bear Creek Stewardship clean-up projects (spring and fall)
  - Brews, Blues, and BBQ fundraiser for Rogue Valley Food System Network (RVFSN)
  - Juneteenth, hosted by BASE Southern Oregon
  - Medford Pride, hosted by SO Health-E
  - Farm Tour, hosted by both Medford Food Co-op, Ashland Food Co-op, and RVFSN

Noting that owners are critical for the Co-op’s success, GM Carter outlined numerous ways owners can help MFC, such as shopping at the Co-op, attending events, volunteering, sharing supportive social media posts, and encouraging others to shop at—and consider joining—the Medford Food Co-op.

## **Q&A**

Owners had clarifying questions about the budget and expansion. There were discussions about ideas for bringing in new owners; increasing DEI; and, affordability. A lively discussion among those present about why to shop at the Co-op versus other grocery stores in the area highlighted the benefits of MFC ownership.

GM Carter encouraged attendees to contact her through the store at any time to share any further ideas.

President Hill thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kathy Damas*

Kathy Damas, Administrative Assistant