Adopted Minutes
East End Food Co-op Board Meeting
Hybrid Meeting held in EEFC Conference Room and via Microsoft Teams
April 21st, 2025

In attendance:
Board Members: Tom Pandaleon, President; Nick Leise, Vice President; Desmond Zheng, Secretary; Tyleda Worou, Treasurer; Mark Bowers, Mike Murphy, Nico Demkin, Heather Kenner
Management: Tyler Kulp, General Manager
Member-Owners: Iris Powell, Jeffrey Fisher, Jeremy Kahn, Meira Jodi Russ, Aviva Lubowsky, jkohl613, Jess W.
Board Clerk: Jessie Ryan

Introduction
Tom called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m. and Nick read the Ends Statement aloud.

The East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community.
To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
2. An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
3. A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
4. A creative vision to transform the future

Check-In
Directors in attendance checked in to express their feelings and any needs.

Amend/Approve Agenda
Decision: The agenda was approved as written. There were no objections.

Amend/Approve Minutes
Decision: Tom motioned to approve the minutes as written. Second by Nick. There were no objections.

Member-Owners Open Session
Iris shared their support of the boycott of Israeli-made products.

Jeffrey distributed a "Co-ops Against Genocide" brochure, created by the Union. He stated that this is not about anti-Semitism, but rather the genocide against the Palestinian people.

Jeremy thanked the Board for doing a great job of navigating this situation. He also spoke out in opposition to the boycott. He has reviewed the By-Laws but requested clarification on the petition process. Tom explained that the Board is bound by the By-Laws. If a petition is submitted, the Board will call a special meeting, but what that process looks like is at the Board's discretion. Before making any decisions, they would likely seek legal counsel.

Jodi also thanked the Board for their hard work and for taking the time to listen to Member-Owners. She stated that several members from the Jewish community have stopped shopping at the Co-op because they no longer feel like it is a safe space. Tyler thanked her for speaking up and apologized for what she and others have experienced. The Board and Co-op Management emphasized their commitment to keeping the Co-op a safe and inclusive place for all.

Aviva feels that the Board is allowing misinformation and hate speech to be spread each month at these meetings. She believes this wouldn't be tolerated if a different group were targeted. She also feels uncomfortable with employees wearing clothing or pins that express personal opinions.

Mark joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Tyleda joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

April Working Meeting Report

The EEFC Board of Directors met for its monthly Working Meeting on Monday, April 7th, 2025. The Board discussed the following:

1. Status of Strategic Plan and Tyler request for Board feedback
2. Board ongoing evaluation of B1, B6 & B10 Reports content
3. Update & procedure re: Board taking applications to fill empty Board seats
4. MOP Board Game Night proposal
5. Annual GM Evaluation process
6. Board attendance at upcoming MMS events

GM Update

This report is in addition to the monthly monitoring reports. The expectation of this update is to give additional information to the Board of Directors that may not be included in the month's monitoring report. This report aligns with parts of sub-policy B7: Communication to the Board…. 'The General Manager shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.'

Membership:

Current active Member-Owners: 17,135
New Member-Owners: March – (net) 59
Total Member-Owner Sales: March – $720,236
FYTD New Members – (net) 404

Register Round-Up Total:

April-June (Q4) Recipients:

Pittsburgh Struggling Student Association – https://pghstrugglingstudentassociation.weebly.com/
Allegheny Cleanways – https://www.alleghenycleanways.org/

YTD Total Raise: $3,894 (as of 3/31/2025)

Operations Update:

- We installed new credit card pin pad machines at each lane and customer service. The previous versions had been in place since 2015. This upgrade was needed in preparation for some technology upgrades coming to our POS system, and for changes coming to SNAP/EBT cards. Plus, hopefully it's a faster checkout process and easier to read screens. Our IT Manager Erin Myers worked very hard to get all of the computers updated and pin pads changed out over a 2 day period with as minimal disruption as possible. Thank you, Erin!
- After receiving 3 estimates from local companies, we are moving forward with an estimate to replace both of the signs in our parking lot: the Penn Ave. entrance large marquee sign and the smaller one at

the Meade St. entrance pointing toward the store. We are optimistic these can be designed, permitted, and installed by June 1st. The existing sign was installed in 2017 and is overdue to be updated!

- Egg prices have cooled, surcharges have ended, though costs are still higher than in years. The volatility of the Tariff situation is being closely monitored by us, along with NCG, and all of our distributors.

Finance Update:

- YTD sales week ending 04/13/2025: $11,005,718 7.2% growth over prior year, continuing the upward trajectory of sales growth we started to see in mid-February. The last month of the quarter finished extremely strong, with the first two weeks of Q4 keeping pace as well.
- For the week of 4/7/25-4/13/25 sales again topped $300,000 for the 5th time in the last 6 weeks. Sales of $304,744 amount to a 17.8% increase over the same week prior year.
- Customer count and basket size have continued to grow faster also. See the chart with Q3 customer count comparisons going back to 2019.

Updates/Questions/Comments:

- Do you see Fresh International Market as competition?
    - Looking at their sales for their existing locations, they specialize in produce, meat, and prepared foods. We will be looking closely at those three categories for any impact on our sales. They will most likely not have local produce, and most of it will be conventional. Price-conscious shoppers might choose to shop there.
- Are other Co-ops seeing this great sales performance as well?
    - At the NCG Spring Meeting, Tyler discovered that many other Co-ops are seeing similar growth. A lot of other small businesses are seeing this as well. Customers may prefer supporting local businesses over shopping at large corporations.
- Is a $2.00 increase in basket size something to be excited about?
    - Yes, absolutely. When you see the number of customers and basket size increase, that means that more people are shopping and purchasing more items.
- Does this increase in basket size factor in inflation?
    - Not into our data, but food cost inflation for February was only 1.9%. We were at a 7% growth, so even if you take off 2% for inflation, we would still be pleased with that sales growth. Tyler expects inflation for March to be higher because of tariffs and other factors. Some distributors have already increased prices in the last few months to prepare for this.
- When is the summer dip?
    - Typically, after Memorial Day and when school gets out. People start traveling more in the summer, so there aren't as many people in the city. Produce tends to see a dip in sales because of the return of farmers' markets.

A – Ends

The Policy Register states, "The East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community. To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
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Updates/Questions/Comments:

- Tyler read through the introduction and the data points of the report.
- Do you have a target percentage of local products you'd like to sell in the store?
    - The goal is to increase the number of local products each year. As the number of food producers grows, more opportunities become available for local vendors in the marketplace. One objective in the strategic plan is to allocate more retail space to product categories where local sourcing can expand.
- We recently updated the language on the website for local vendor submissions to give them more of what they need to know right away and answer their questions upfront. We have already had 20 online vendor submissions this year.
- We've resumed in-store sampling for local vendors, which helps boost sales by increasing customer exposure to local products.
- In 2024, our staff retention rate was 80%, and the average tenure was almost 7 years.
- Are cashiers supposed to ask customers if they want to "round up"?
    - Yes, they are supposed to. If they aren't, it could be a factor as to why we haven't raised as much money this year. We have tried to revamp the program to get staff more engaged by taking it from a monthly recipient to two quarterly recipients so that it is not changing all of the time. We also allowed the staff to choose the recipients, but there was low participation.

Decision: Desmond motioned to accept the A – Ends report. Second by Nico. There were no objections.

B10 – Environment

The Policy Register states, "The General Manager shall no fail to take reasonable measures to ensure that the Co-op activities and practices minimize the Co-op's negative impact, and maximize the Co-op's positive impact, on the environment."

Updates/Questions/Comments:

- There has been some discussion at the Board level about modernizing this report. Some of this data is tracked for the A-Ends report, so there is some overlap.
- Why don't we get any compost back from Zero Waste Wrangler?
    - He is not a soil manufacturer, he is a compost hauler. He takes the compost to a farm outside of Pittsburgh.
- Are we partnering with anyone to divert food that could not be composted?
    - Yes, 412 Food Rescue picks up any food that is still edible three times per week.
- Are there any energy saving measures that we might push with the landlord?
    - Heating on time is probably something we could do on our own. We could possibly have timed sinks, but we don't have access to our water utility bill to measure water usage.
- When the refrigerators went down, was that lost product composted?
    - Solid waste was composted, but liquids such as milk were poured out.
- Is it possible to get B10 policies from other Co-ops to see what they are paying attention to?
    - Tyler can try to get some suggestions.
- Do you think the landlords would ever install solar panels?
    - It could be a future initiative that they take on, but probably not for this building. It requires a lot of solar to run refrigeration, which we need to run 24/7.

Decision: Desmond motioned to accept the B10 report as compliant. Second by Nico. There were no objections.

Committee Updates:

Finance

The Committee will meet in early June to discuss the B1 report. They hope to have the report much earlier this quarter so they have time to review it before the meeting.

Board Perpetuation and Elections (BP&E)

Tom and Nico will schedule a meeting soon. Two new Board Members have been appointed and will need an orientation.

Member-Owner Participation (MOP)

The Committee met last Wednesday, April 16th. They began discussing the Annual Meeting. They also discussed the proposals for game night and a book club. Jeff and Andy provided updates on upcoming Marketing events. The Board would like to have a Director present at every event.

Executive

No update was provided.

Action Items

Directors reviewed progress or lack thereof on Action Items from previous meetings.

Appreciations

Those in attendance took a moment to share their thanks.

Closing

Next Meeting: Monday, May 19th, 2025
Packet submissions due: Monday, May 12th, 2025

The meeting adjourned at 8:45p.m. without objection.

The Board and General Manager entered Executive Session at 8:45p.m.