



**Council Meeting
April 3, 2023**

Present: Eva Schectman, Jen Porrier, Steven Farnham, Julia Scheier, RJ Adler, Catherine Lowther, Ashley Muscarella, Jeff Roberts

Absent: Lauren Antler

Bylaws Committee Members: Jed Davis, Carl Etnier, Scott Hess

Staff: Kari Bradley, Stephani Kononan, Mary Mullally, Jay Wisner

Staff Representative: Genevieve Cambron

Facilitator: Elly Wood

Note Taker: Rowan Sherwood

[Meeting recording is here.](#)

**1. Executive Session:
Interpersonal Relations 5:30PM
(Not Recorded)**

Jeff moved to enter Executive Session for building interpersonal relations. Eva seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **5:44pm** Steven moved to exit Executive Session. Julia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Welcome and Agenda Review
5:45 PM (0:00:30)**

Eva requested an executive session to address complaints or actions against a co-op employee, member, or vendor at end of meeting. The council agreed.

**3. Cooperative Community
Comments 5:47PM (0:02:08)**

RJ shared that his brother is very excited about the member privilege change approved in the previous meeting. He also shared that the placement of the breadcrumbs in the store was hard to find. Steven mentioned that it was noted that in the packet that there are perennial requests for less plastic. A friend of his wondered... since it is characterised as "perennial," does

that mean it not given any attention? Kari shared that it is taken seriously and single use plastic reduction is on the top of the sustainability committee's work plan.

**4. Council Calendar 5:49PM
(0:04:32)**

Kari introduced an updated council calendar that resulted from changing the annual meeting date.

**5. Retreat Follow-up: Council
Meeting Logistics and
Community Impact 5:50PM
(0:05:58)**

Eva explained that she asked the group to reflect on the purpose of the meeting. This list is compiled in the packet, and she asked folks if there was anything else to add. Jeff agreed with the statement about the purpose of the meetings but would change the order of how it's presented - switching b and c.

Julia likes the three points and would like to circle back at the beginning of the next council year. She especially likes the length and including a strategic session. RJ agreed with Julia and emphasised the strategic

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aspect. Jen agreed with #1. She questioned the need for 20-30 minutes of strategic discussion every meeting. Catherine agreed that a max of 2 hours for meetings is a good goal. Steven agreed with it as written, as well as Jeff's suggestion. Genevieve was happy with the proposed goals. Ashley agreed with the purpose as stated. Kari agreed with the purposes, liked setting a goal, and felt like 2 hours is ambitious but he supported it. Eva wanted to accomplish critical council work in service to members and workers. She heard that folks want both shorter meetings and time for generative strategic topics. There's a need to remain flexible.

Eva asked how folks were feeling about hybrid meetings? Ashley asked if there could be a full in-person meeting. Genevieve agreed with Ashley. Julia asked the executive committee to consider a social gathering and/or outside meeting.

Eva reminded the group of the upcoming dinner and discussion and the council recruitment meet and greet.

6. Bylaw Committee Final Report 6:06PM (0:21:53)

Carl, Scott and Jed joined the group to summarise the Bylaw Committee's accomplishments. Carl led the discussion. He emphasised that the bylaws are a living document and while they are proud of the work they did, they also wanted to make it easier to revisit in the future. Eva asked how much time they spent working on the bylaws? What would be a reasonable amount of time to devote to future revisions? Carl answered that transparency took a lot of time, but it resulted in success. The council as a whole doesn't need to give it a lot of time; they should appoint a committee. Scott added that it really depends on the substance of any proposed changes – are they controversial or not? Jed added that

the background they documented will make it easier next time and that it is a member engagement opportunity. Steven acknowledged the interconnectivity of the bylaws – how looking at one thing brings in many other pieces. He appreciated Carl's dedication to the cause. Kari also expressed appreciation for all the work of the committee.

7. Consent Agenda 6:19PM (0:34:36)

RJ moved to accept, Julia seconded.

Discussion: Steven asked for clarification on when Mary would be authorised to sign checks. Kari said only when he is absent, and he does not sign many checks. The motion to accept the consent agenda passed unanimously.

BREAK 6:21PM (0:36:47)

8. Shopper Survey presentation 6:33PM (0:38:11)

Rowan presented the results of the shopper survey, which reflect that generally, the co-op enjoys very favourable ratings among its shoppers. This year, in addition to the usual, there were questions looking for insight into two other threads: how folks like to receive information from the co-op, and where and why they go elsewhere for groceries. Respondents are most interested in receiving info via more passive means. While a majority of shoppers shop for a bulk of their goods at the co-op, they shop elsewhere for price, variety, and connection with farmers.

9. Monitoring Report: L1 treatment of Customers and L3 Treatment of Members 6:42PM (0:47:18)

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Kari reported compliance with all aspects of the policy. He noted that planning the introduction of new member benefits is in progress, and bylaw committee recommendations for updating membership materials is included. Steven moved to accept the report. Julia seconded. The motion to accept the monitoring report passed unanimously.

10. Governance Budget 6:44PM (0:49:32)

Julia reminded folks that this is a preview of information before next month's vote. She asked if folks have questions or suggestions for what to keep in mind for next year's budget.

Julia expressed a desire to add something for the Staff Representative's time/compensation. She recommended 8-10 hours/month as an appropriate amount of time to complete a thorough report. That will be added in the future.

Kari noted that the expense items in the memo were designed as an a la carte menu; the intention is to get a sense of the Council's priorities. Julia noted the cost difference between a financial audit and review. Eva shared that she is happy with increased compensation for council and committees and that the city of Montpelier is doing something similar. She hopes that we can at least maintain what we are doing now.

11. Recruitment Committee 6:51PM (0:56:36)

Eva emphasised the tasks and expectations for the upcoming recruitment season. There will be more info coming in an email. There were no questions. She referenced the info in the packet and led the group through an exercise. She asked of each council member "How will you be able to show up for this work?"

Jeff started by saying that he will go back to folks he asked last year. Elly interjected that folks think about how to increase diversity.

Ashley is connected to a younger community and is willing to send bulk emails and phone calls, but not social media. Jen reflected that her strengths are with in-person interactions. She will engage with folks at events. Eva shared that she has been doing this for a while. She's not afraid of outreach in all the ways. Steven said he will contribute at the meet and greets, through emails, FPF, letters to editor. Catherine will reach out to folks at the farmer's market. RJ said yes to all of the above. He noted that this is a long game, and for a lot of folks, "not now" doesn't mean "never." Follow up is important. Julia will share what she has appreciated and what she is looking forward to. She will communicate about the stipend, and how the council values time.

12. Dinner and Discussion 7:03PM (1:08:33)

Kari shared that the event is six weeks from now. He asked for folks to help promote it. Eva shared that we are still finalising presenters. She will share more as it finishes.

13. Meeting evaluation 7:06PM (1:11:45)

Elly asked that folks share a kindness they experienced in the meeting. Everyone shared something and it felt really nice. Genevieve wondered about a training session for council work? Eva will make sure she gets that info.

14. Wrap-up: Action items, calendar, future agenda items 7:16PM (1:21:07)

15. Cooperative Community Comments 7:17PM (1:21:50)

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Kari praised Jay, emphasising his consistency and compassion, and acknowledging the breadth of Jay's HR experience. Kari's expressed the the co-op is fortunate to have Jay on the team.

16. Executive Session: Individual Member Concern 7:20PM (1:24:40)

Steven moved to enter executive session in accordance with the amended agenda. Julia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Council entered executive session at 7:21PM.

Eva moved to exit executive session. Jen seconded. Unanimously approved. Council exited executive session at 8:04PM

RJ moved to Adjourn. Eva seconded. Unanimously approved. **Council meeting adjourned at 8:05.**

Action Items	
Develop recommendation for in-person council meeting or informal gathering	Executive committee
Place bylaw documents in electronic archive, consider timeline for governance handbook	Kari
Set annual calendar reminder for bylaw review, specific reminder for 2027 council	Kari
Finalize proposed governance budget for approval in May	Julia, Kari