

Approved



Council Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2026

Present:

Council: Carl Etnier, Steven Farnham, Jeff Roberts (Online), Giles Brule (Online), Catherine Lowther (Online), Mark Seltzer, Leesa Stewart (Online)

Staff: Mary Mullally, Elly Wood

Facilitator: Elly Wood

Guests: Billy Donovan (Online), Laurie Veatch (Online)

[Audio](#) (Timestamps in blue indicate where audio corresponding to a given paragraph can be found in the recording.)

1. Commencement 5:30:55PM (0:00:14)

Carl called the meeting to order, welcoming Council members, staff, and guests.

2. Agenda Review 5:32:00PM (0:01:21):

Carl recommended scheduling open session at the beginning and Executive Session at the end, beginning with Strategic Planning Committee Charter, followed by Strategic Planning Committee appointments. In Executive Session, address the Strategic Planning Committee budget and the contract negotiation. No one objected to the revised agenda.

3. Community Comments 5:33:18PM (0:02:35):

None.

4. Strategic Planning Charter 5:34:50PM (0:03:06):

Carl mentioned edits made to the Charter based on input from a Co-op member, stating that the goal is to launch the committee so those initially appointed can recruit and nominate a full slate of committee members for Council approval. Carl asked for reactions to the Charter draft. Steven moved to approve. Leesa seconded. Steven then requested clarification on a couple items: 1. How soon after a meeting must minutes be posted? Should meetings be recorded? 2. In item 8,

should committee's work be reviewed more than once between commencement and conclusion, and should specific "due" dates be named?

Mary expressed concern that the requirement to warn meetings and post minutes might excessively encumber Community Relations. Discussion ensued with Carl and Giles advocating for removing the requirement. Steven advocated keeping the requirement. Jeff stated a scribe will be needed, and suggested that item 6 require meetings to be recorded. Catherine agreed. Carl demurred.

Mark requested clarification on maximum number of Committee members, and under what situation could members be added or removed. Steven suggested adding a sentence clarifying that.

Jeff wanted Mary's concern addressed, suggested using Chat GPT, and establishing a calendar of when the committee will meet. Steven asked if a person functions only as a scribe, will that person be counted as one of the nine committee members? The question not addressed.

Carl moved to amend the Charter (changes appended below - read at [29:30](#)). Giles seconded. Ayes: 5, Nays: 1, Abstentions: 0.

Draft

Approved

The motion passed. Vote on the original motion (as amended): Ayes: 5, Nays: 1, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.

5. Strategic Planning Appointments 6:03:37PM (0:32:52):

Carl described Rita Ricketson's earlier service on the Council and to the Co-op, and moved to appoint Jeff Roberts and Rita Ricketson to the Strategic Planning Committee. Giles seconded.

Mark requested more information about Rita Ricketson. Steven shared that in Rita's role chairing an earlier iteration of the Bylaws Committee, despite her having pretty strong feelings about the issue, she lead the committee in a very fair and open-minded manner. Jeff mentioned that Rita served on the Vision Committee. Giles, having also served on the the Vision Committee, characterised Rita as a very pleasant, engaging colleague. Steven added that Rita grew up on a farm. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Executive Session 6:11:58PM (0:41:13):

Jeff stated, "Move to go into Executive Session." Leesa seconded. Carl rephrased the motion as follows:

"Whereas knowledge by co-op members of the items to be discussed in Executive Session could cause substantial harm to the Co-op or a person involved... we enter Executive Session to discuss negotiation of a contract the disclosure of which would put the co-op or a vendor at a competitive disadvantage." Both mover and seconder agreed to this phrasing. Carl requested the body's approval; there was no objection.

Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council entered Executive Session at 6:15:44PM. Steven moved to exit Executive Session. Leesa seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council exited Executive Session at 6:52:35PM (0:44:25).

7. Strategic Planning Committee Authorisation 6:52:50PM (0:44:35):

Draft

Carl moved the Council ask the Strategic Planning Committee to solicit proposals from consultants to assist in the process, and to recommend a consultant for the Council to approve. Leesa seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Denouement 6:53:45PM (0:45:30):

Action Items: None

Calendar: Carl mentioned upcoming committee meetings, and asked if everyone was clear about when they meet.

Future Items: Carl stated that a future item was mentioned in Executive Session.

Evaluation: Members rated the meeting between 7 and 9, unless the room temperature was included in the consideration, in which case, one member rated the meeting a 2. Meeting was characterised with these words: Good listening, Learning, Civilised, Not entertaining, Covered a lot of ground, Appreciate being part of the group, Productive dialogue, Good Choices, Thanks for attending a non-typical meeting, and Expedient accomplishment.

9. Adjournment 6:56:31PM (0:48:28):

Hearing no objection, Carl declared the meeting adjourned at 6:56:42 (0:48:39).

Edits to Charter:

Item 2: The Strategic Planning Committee is established to design and lead an [open and](#) inclusive process to develop a three- to five-year strategic plan aligned with the Co-op's Mission and Ends.

Item 4: [The committee shall not at any time exceed nine members.](#)

Item 6: ~~Meetings shall be publicly warned in the same way as Council meetings and be open to member owners to the same extent as Council meetings, per the Co-op Bylaws, and minutes shall be posted online.~~