



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS Application Packet 2025

Northampton Community Cooperative Market Inc.  
doing business as River Valley Co-op

Rev. 7/01/2025

## WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the River Valley Co-op Board of Directors. Serving on the Board provides personal and professional rewards while helping guide a unique, progressive, community-owned cooperative. Our Co-op is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its leadership. We aim to build a Board that reflects the diversity and vision of our ownership and community.

This packet outlines everything you need to know about the Board's structure, responsibilities, and application process. If you have questions, please contact the Board Elections Committee at [elections@rivervalley.coop](mailto:elections@rivervalley.coop).

## ELIGIBILITY

Each year, three positions on the Board of Directors are open for election. Any River Valley Co-op owner in good standing may apply for nomination. Please refer to Article 4.3 of the Co-op Bylaws on our [website](#).

## CONTENTS OF THIS PACKET

- Board Structure and Responsibilities
- List of Current Board Members and Meeting Schedule
- Three-Step Candidate Application Process
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- Addendum 2 – Board of Directors Application for Nomination

## BOARD STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Co-op is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors elected by Co-op owners. The Board is empowered by and accountable to owners for overseeing the cooperative's performance and strategic direction. We operate with a cooperative model of governance based on policies that guide how we work together as a Board, how we work with and delegate responsibility to our general manager, how we monitor business operating results, and set the overall strategic direction of the co-op.

Board responsibilities include:

- Understanding co-op owner needs and values within the context of the grocery business.
- Maintaining effective governance processes and procedures to guide the general manager and Board in their respective and shared leadership roles.
- Providing effective stewardship to meet the fiduciary responsibility of protecting the collectively owned assets of the cooperative.

(See [www.rivervalley.coop/ownership/policies-processes](http://www.rivervalley.coop/ownership/policies-processes) to learn more about Policy Governance.)



## BOARD MEMBER QUALITIES, COMMITMENT AND REWARDS

The co-op is seeking Board candidates who:

- Are dedicated to our grocery cooperative, its owners, and its mission;
- Understand and are willing to contribute to the task of governance
- Prefer to think in terms of systems and context
- Act with integrity and have independent judgment, courage, and good faith
- Are able and eager to embrace with values, vision and the long term
- Are able and willing to participate assertively in discussions and abide by Board decisions and the intent of established policies
- Are willing to operate in a group decision-making environment, to share power in group process, and to delegate areas of decision making to others
- Are knowledgeable about cooperatives and food retailing

We also seek Board members who reflect our community's diversity and/or have experience in areas related to our cooperative mission, such as business, farming, or food access, and are committed to locally based, sustainable economic development.

Serving on the Board is a serious and rewarding commitment. Directors are expected to attend monthly Board meetings, participate in committees and trainings, attend the annual retreat and membership events, and contribute 10–15 hours per month. Each term lasts three years, with a maximum of five consecutive terms allowed.

In return, Board members receive training in Policy Governance, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and other relevant topics, gain experience in cooperative leadership, and help shape the future of our community-owned store.

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

<b>President</b>	Emma Woebbe	<a href="mailto:ewoebbe@rivervalley.coop">ewoebbe@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>VP</b>	Abby Getman Skillicorn	<a href="mailto:agetmanskillicorn@rivervalley.coop">agetmanskillicorn@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Clerk</b>	Elizabeth Appelquist	<a href="mailto:eapplequist@rivervalley.coop">eapplequist@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Steve Trombulak	<a href="mailto:strombulak@rivervalley.coop">strombulak@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Member</b>	Wendy Messerli	<a href="mailto:wendymesserli@rivervalley.coop">wendymesserli@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Member</b>	Angus Brewer	<a href="mailto:abrewer@rivervalley.coop">abrewer@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Member</b>	Gary Schaefer	<a href="mailto:gschaefer@rivervalley.coop">gschaefer@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Member</b>	Jeanne Young	<a href="mailto:jyoung@rivervalley.coop">jyoung@rivervalley.coop</a>
<b>Member</b>	Dorian Gregory	<a href="mailto:dgregory@rivervalley.coop">dgregory@rivervalley.coop</a>

## APPLYING FOR A BOARD NOMINATION- 3 STEP PROCESS

### STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT THE CO-OP AND THE BOARD

Before applying, all candidates must:

- Attend at least one Board meeting before applying.
- Read the River Valley Co-op Board Member's Code of Ethical Conduct (see Addendum 1).
- Review the Co-op's Bylaws (available on our [website](#)).

### STEP 2: COMPLETE AND SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION.

A complete application includes:

- Contact information (form included in Addendum 2)
- Candidate statement (maximum 250 words)
- Current resume
- Two professional or volunteer references who can verify your experience
- Signed and notarized CORI form (required by Massachusetts law)
- Photo of yourself (head and shoulders, 1200 x 1800 pixels)

**Please note: All board members must be U.S. citizens and pass a CORI criminal background check to serve.**

### STEP 3: ATTEND A NOMINATION INTERVIEW

All applicants are required to participate in an in-person interview with the Election Committee. This gives you an opportunity to meet current Board members and learn more about the role.

The Board nominates candidates based on their ability to fulfill fiduciary responsibilities in good faith and in a cooperative spirit.

Once all three steps are completed, the Election Committee presents a slate to the Board in September. Nominees will be informed of their status within three business days of that meeting.

## CANDIDATE NOMINATION TIMELINE – KEY DATES

- May–August 2025 Attend a Board meeting (contact Beth Skinner at [bskinner@rivervalley.coop](mailto:bskinner@rivervalley.coop) or any Board member).
- August 31, 2025: Submit completed Application for Nomination by 5:00 PM to [elections@rivervalley.coop](mailto:elections@rivervalley.coop).
- Early September 2025 – Participate in your in-person nomination interview.
- Early December 2025 – Attend the Annual Meeting and Election.

## PREPARING TO APPLY

In addition to reviewing this packet, we recommend that prospective candidates:

- Review Board meeting minutes and governing documents (available at [www.rivervalley.coop](http://www.rivervalley.coop)).
- Attend a Board meeting (held every fourth Tuesday of the month from 6:30–9:00 PM).
- Speak with current Board members to learn more about the experience

## ADDENDUM I: CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

All Board members are expected to uphold high ethical standards and act in good faith for the benefit of the Co-op. This includes responsibilities such as maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and supporting Board decisions. This agreement is signed at the first Board meeting following the annual meeting and remains in effect for one year, after which it will be re-affirmed and signed.

- I shall discharge my duties in good faith in a manner which is in the best interests of the co-op, and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.
- I will uphold the interests of the ownership as my primary focus: in the event that issues arise that may conflict with my other responsibilities or interests, I will communicate that to the Board and withhold comments if necessary.  
I recognize that my personal interests as a River Valley Co-op consumer are secondary to the overall ownership's interests.
- I shall avoid any conflict of interest with respect to fiduciary responsibility.
- During my term of office, I shall not be a party to a contract for profit with the Co-op differing in any way from the business relations accorded each member, nor upon terms differing from those generally current among members.
- I shall not use my position to obtain for myself, family members, or close associates employment within the organization or a business relationship with the Co-op.
- I shall not attempt to exercise individual authority over the co-op except for representation of the Board or the Co-op as explicitly set forth in Board policies.
- My interaction with the General Manager or with staff shall recognize the lack of authority in any individual director or group of Board members except as noted above.
- I shall not interact with the public, press or other entities in speaking for the Board, unless designated to do so by the Board or General Manager.
- I shall make no judgments of the General Manager or staff performance except as that performance is assessed against explicit Board policies through official processes.
- I shall not speak for the board except as specifically authorized by a board policy that was established within the formal policy governance process.
- I shall maintain confidentiality as needed to protect the co-op's interests and financial viability.
- I shall not discuss disputed or confidential corporate actions, policies, or issues with co-op owners, employees, or the general public unless the board decided that such information is no longer confidential.
- I recognize that all issues related to personnel, real estate, business strategies and goals, pending litigation, and details of the Co-op's financial status shall be considered sensitive issues subject to confidentiality unless the Board approves full disclosure.
- I shall contribute productively to the Board's work; I agree to:
  - Regularly attend and actively participate in the Board's meetings, training sessions and retreats;
  - Come to Board meetings prepared to participate responsibly by having read all meeting materials;
  - Be responsible for expressing my own opinion;
  - Respect the rights of others to communicate their ideas free from interruption and without intimidation;
  - Listen respectfully to the opinions of others and to honor divergent opinions;
  - Not exhibit violent, oppressive, or racist behaviors or speech;
  - Accept group decisions as legitimate;
  - Share responsibility for group behavior and productivity;
  - Not dominate Board meeting time, nor expect the Board to deal with topics that are not appropriate;
  - Support the Board Chair on Board discipline and Board accountability.
- Check and respond to phone and e-mail messages in a timely fashion, at least weekly
- I may disagree with a policy approved by or action taken by the majority of the Board, but once action is taken, I shall support that policy or action.
- I have the right to present further evidence and argument to the Board for further consideration, and I have a right to have the Board reconsider its actions in a manner consistent with Board practices.
- I understand that if a majority vote of the Board finds that I do not follow Board conduct policies, I shall resign from the Board.
- This agreement is signed at the first Board meeting following the annual meeting and remains in effect for one year, after which it will be re-affirmed and signed.

## ADDENDUM 2 :APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION 2025

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Day \_\_\_\_\_ Eve/Weekend \_\_\_\_\_ (Please circle preference)

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Number \_\_\_\_\_

### CANDIDATE STATEMENT (MAX 250 WORDS):

Please respond to questions 1 through 6 in the form of a single Candidate Statement. This will be published in the 2025 Annual Report and distributed to all owners. If submitting electronically, please send as a Word document, RTF, or paste into an email body. Include a head-and-shoulders photo (1200 x 1800 pixels).

- Briefly summarize the following about yourself:
  - Current and previous employment
  - Current and previous community involvement
- What inspired you to consider service on the Board of River Valley Co-op?
- Describe any experience you've had with cooperatives, especially food co-ops or natural foods businesses.
- Share any experience with social justice, food access, or efforts to promote equity and inclusion.
- In your personal life or when working with organizations, especially ones you discussed in #3 above, what strategies have you used to bring about understanding and agreement when dealing with complex issues?
- Briefly describe any experiences you have had with the following:
  - Value-based policy development
  - Planning
  - Organizational evaluation
- (Optional) Anything else you'd like to share?
- Would your service on the Board present any conflicts of interest? If so, please explain.

### References

Provide two (2) professional and/or volunteer commitment references that can verify your candidate statement.

Reference Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to candidate \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to candidate \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Return Completed Application

E-MAIL to: elections@rivervalley.coop

MAIL to: Board of Directors Applications, 40 Main Street, Suite 301 Florence, MA 01062

or DROP OFF at either Co-op's Customer Service desk by 5:00 pm, August 31, 2025.

Mailed applications must be postmarked by 5:00 pm, August 31, 2025

**Thank you for your interest in serving on the Board of River Valley Co-op!**

### Important

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts considers River Valley Co-op Directors to represent the ownership of our liquor license for the store. This means each individual River Valley Co-op Director is required to meet all the requirements for liquor license ownership which include: US Citizenship, satisfactorily passing a CORI criminal background evaluation, and not exceeding the limit of "a beneficial interest" in more than two other MA liquor licenses.

\_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE INITIAL that you read and understood the above.

\_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE INITIAL that you understand that depending upon the outcome of the State's CORI criminal background review you may be deemed by the State to be ineligible to be a River Valley Co-op Board Director.

(The State's focus is on violent crimes, felonies and serious alcohol and drug offenses, and offenses that reflect on an individual's character.)