



Board Policy Register

December 7, 2015

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Policy Type: Ends
Policy Title: A – Global End
Last Revised: April 22, 2025

Littleton Food Co-op Ends Policy

Littleton Food Co-op exists so that we have a vibrant regional economy in which:

- Employees have a safe and supportive work environment.
- Local producers are offered a market for their products.
- Members and customers can make environmentally sustainable choices.
- The community has a safe and inclusive space to shop and gather.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B – Global Executive Constraint
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics and practices, or in violation of the Cooperative Principles.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B1 – Financial Condition and Activities
Last revised: December 7, 2015

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial conditions and activities, the General Manager must not cause or allow the Cooperative to be unprepared for future opportunities, the development of fiscal jeopardy, or key operational indicators to be below average for our industry.

The GM must not:

1. Allow sales growth to be inadequate.
2. Allow operations to generate an inadequate net income.
3. Allow liquidity (the ability to meet cash needs in a timely and efficient fashion) to be insufficient.
4. Allow solvency (the relationship of debt to equity) to be insufficient.
5. Allow growth in ownership and owner paid-in equity to be insufficient.
6. Default on any terms that are part of the Cooperative's loans.
7. Allow late payment of contracts, payroll, loans or other financial obligations.
8. Incur debt other than trade payables or other reasonable and customary liabilities incurred in the ordinary course of doing business.
9. Acquire, encumber or dispose of real estate.
10. Allow tax payments or other government-ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.
11. Use restricted funds for any purpose other than that required by the restriction.
12. Allow financial record keeping systems to be inadequate or out of conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B2 –Planning and Financial Budgeting
Last revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not operate without annual and multi-year budgets and plans that address intentional and improved Ends accomplishment along with avoidance of fiscal jeopardy.

The GM must not:

1. Create plans or budgets that
 - a. Risk incurring those situations or conditions described as unacceptable in the Board policy “Financial Condition and Activities.”
 - b. Omit credible projection of revenues and expenses, owner investment and return, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.
 - c. Do not address excellence in business systems and operations.
 - d. Have not been tested for feasibility.
2. Provide less for Board prerogatives during the year than is set forth in the board budget.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B3 – Asset Protection
Last revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not allow assets to be unprotected, unreasonably risked, or inadequately maintained.

The GM must not:

1. Allow equipment and facilities to be inadequately insured, or otherwise unable to be replaced if damaged or destroyed, including coverage for any losses incurred due to business interruption.
2. Allow unnecessary exposure to liability or lack of insurance protection from claims of liability.
3. Allow deposits or investments to be unreasonably risked.
4. Allow inadequate security of premises and property.
5. Allow data, intellectual property, or files to be unprotected from loss, theft or significant damage.
 - a. Allow improper usage of members' and customers' personal information.
6. Allow purchasing that is uncontrolled or subject to conflicts of interest.
7. Allow lack of due diligence in contracts.
8. Allow damage to the Cooperative's public image.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B4 – Membership Rights and Responsibilities
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not allow members to be uninformed or misinformed of their rights and responsibilities.

The GM must not:

1. Create or implement a member equity system without the following qualities:
 - a. The required member equity, or fair share, is determined by the Board.
 - b. Members are informed that equity investments are a) at risk, and b) generally refundable, though the Board retains the right to withhold refunds when necessary to protect the Cooperative's financial viability.
 - c. Equity will not be refunded if such refunds would lead to a net decrease in total member paid-in equity, or would risk, cause or exacerbate non-compliance with any Financial Condition policy.
2. Implement a patronage dividend system that does not
 - a. Comply with IRS regulations.
 - b. Allow the Board to examine a range of options and implications, so the Board can make a timely determination each year concerning how much, if any, of the Cooperative's net profit will be allocated and distributed to members.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B5 – Treatment of Customers
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not be unresponsive to customer needs.

The GM must not:

1. Operate without a system for soliciting and considering customer opinion regarding preferences, product requests, complaints and suggestions.
2. Allow an unsafe shopping experience for our customers.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B6 - Staff Treatment and Compensation
Last revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not treat staff in any way that is unfair, unsafe, or unclear.

The GM must not:

1. Operate without written personnel policies that:
 - a. Clarify rules for staff.
 - b. Provide for fair and thorough handling of grievances in a way that does not include the board as a participant in the grievance process.
 - c. Are accessible to all staff.
 - d. Inform staff that employment is either permanent or guaranteed.
2. Cause or allow personnel policies to be inconsistently applied.
3. Provide for inadequate documentation, security and retention of personnel records and all personnel related decisions.
4. Establish compensation and benefits that are internally or externally inequitable.
5. Change the GM's own compensation and benefits, except as his or her benefits are consistent with a package for all other employees.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B7 – Communication to the Board
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

The GM must not

1. Submit monitoring reports that are untimely or inaccurate, or that lack operational definitions and verifiable data directly related to each section of the policy.
2. Report in an untimely manner any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Board policy, along with a plan for reaching compliance and a proposed schedule regarding follow-up reporting.
3. Allow the Board to be unaware of relevant legal actions, media coverage, trends, public events of the Cooperative, or internal and external changes.
4. Withhold his/her opinion if the GM believes the Board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Management Delegation, particularly in the case of Board behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the Board and the GM.
5. Deal with the Board in a way that favors or privileges certain directors over others except when responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.
6. Fail to supply for the Board's consent agenda all decisions delegated to the GM yet required by law, regulation, or contract to be Board-approved.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B8 –Board Logistical Support
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager must not allow the Board to have inadequate logistical support.

The GM must not:

1. Provide the Board with insufficient staff administration to support governance activities and Board communication.
2. Allow the board to be without a workable mechanism for official board, officer or committee communications.
3. Allow directors to be without an updated copy of the Policy Register and the Bylaws.
4. Provide inadequate information and notice to members concerning Board actions, meetings, activities and events.
5. Allow insufficient archiving of board documents.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B9 – Emergency GM Succession
Last revised: December 7, 2015

To protect the Board from sudden loss of GM services, the GM must not have less than one other manager sufficiently familiar with Board and GM issues and processes to enable her/him to take over with reasonable proficiency as an interim successor.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations
Policy Title: B10 - Board Elections
Last revised: August 2025

The General Manager may not fail to institute and implement a board election process in accordance with the Board's Governance Process policies concerning elections and perpetuation, the coop's Bylaws, and the Cooperative Principle of Democratic Member Control.

The GM must not:

1. Allow member-owners to have insufficient or untimely information about the election process.
2. Allow member-owners to have insufficient opportunities in advance of the election to learn about the candidates, in writing and in person.
 - a. Along with information about the candidates, members will receive background on the role of the board, our governance process, and qualities to look for in an effective board member.
3. Allow prospective candidates to have insufficient information, including complete and accurate application packets.
4. Use an unsecure balloting and counting system.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C – Global Governance Commitment
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

Acting on behalf of our owners, the Board ensures the success of the cooperative by working together effectively, empowering and holding accountable professional management, providing strategic leadership for our cooperative, and perpetuating our democratic organization.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C1 – Governing Style
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

We will govern in a manner consistent with the Four Pillars of Cooperative Governance (Teaming, Accountable Empowerment, Strategic Leadership, Democracy). In order to do this, we will:

1. Be a strategic leader by focusing our vision outward and toward the future.
2. Ensure effective systems of delegating authority to professional management, holding the use of that power accountable, and clearly distinguishing between board and management responsibilities.
 - a. Observe the 10 Policy Governance principles (Ends Policies, Ownership, Board Process Policies, Board Holism, Board-Management Relationship Policies, Governance Position, Limitations Policies, Policies/Decisions Come in Sizes, Any Reasonable Interpretation, Monitoring)
3. Maintain team discipline, authority and responsibility.
4. Practice the habits of a successful democracy.
5. Obey all relevant laws and bylaws.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C2 - The Board's Job
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

In order to govern successfully, we will:

1. Practice, protect, promote and perpetuate a healthy democracy for our Cooperative.
2. Hire, compensate, delegate responsibility to, and hold accountable a General Manager.
 - a. Use a strategic process to establish the value of GM compensation, and complete this process in a timely manner.
3. Assign responsibility in a way that honors our commitment to empowerment and clear distinction of roles.
4. Rigorously monitor operational performance in the areas of Ends and Executive Limitations, and Board performance in the areas of Board Process and Board-Management Relationship.
5. Perpetuate the Board's leadership capacity using ongoing education and training, a robust recruitment, qualification and nomination process and fair elections.
6. Perform other duties as required by the bylaws or because of limitations on GM authority.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C3 – Agenda Planning
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

We will follow a strategic multi-year work plan and annual agenda that focuses our attention upward and outward.

1. We will create, and modify as necessary, an annual calendar that includes tasks and events related to our multi-year workplan, membership meetings, Board training schedule, monitoring schedule, and the GM evaluation and compensation decisions as outlined in our Board-Management Relationship policies.
2. Board meeting agendas will be determined by the Board president, and may be modified at the meeting by a majority vote of the Board.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C4 – Board Meetings
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

Board meetings are for the task of getting the Board's job done.

1. We will use Board meeting time only for work that is the whole Board's responsibility. We will avoid committee issues, operational matters, personal concerns and other topics that are not the highest and best use of our time.
2. Meetings will be open to the membership except when the executive session is officially called.
 - a. We may occasionally use executive sessions to deal with confidential matters, as long as the purpose of the session is stated. When possible, the announcement of the executive session should be on the published agenda.
3. We will seek consensus through discussion. We will then finalize and document decisions through the use of motions, seconds and majority vote.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C5 – Directors’ Code of Conduct
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

We each commit ourselves to ethical, professional and lawful conduct.

1. Every director is responsible at all times for acting in good faith, in a manner which she/he reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Cooperative, and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.
2. Directors must demonstrate unconflicted loyalty to the interests of the Cooperative’s owners. This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups, membership on other Boards or staffs, and the personal interest of any director acting as an individual consumer or member.
 - a. There will be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any director and the Cooperative except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to “inside” information.
 - b. At a new director’s first board meeting, he/she will complete the “Conflict of Interest Disclosure” form, and will verbally report to the whole board the potential conflicts. Any subsequent potential conflicts will be reported to the whole board immediately.
 - c. When the Board is to decide on an issue about which a director has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that director shall abstain from the conversation and the vote.
 - d. A director who applies for employment must first resign from the Board.
 - e. Any director who is also a paid employee has the same duties and responsibilities as any other director, and has the additional duty of clearly segregating staff and Board responsibilities. Any director who is also a paid employee will resign from the Board if and when their employment ends.
3. Directors may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization.
 - a. When interacting with the GM or employees, directors must carefully and openly recognize their lack of authority.
 - b. When interacting with the public, the press, or other entities, directors must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any director to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.
4. Directors will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature and must continue to honor confidentiality after leaving Board service.

- 5. Directors will prepare to attend, and participate fully in all Board meetings and training.
- 6. Directors will support the legitimacy and authority of the Board's decision on any matter, irrespective of the director's personal position on the issue.
- 7. Any director who does not follow the code of conduct policy can be removed from the Board by a 3/4 vote of the full Board.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C6 – Officers’ Roles
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

We will elect officers in order to help us accomplish our job.

1. No officer has any authority to supervise or direct the GM.
2. Officers may delegate their authority but remain accountable for its use.
3. The president ensures the Board acts consistently with Board policies.
 - a. The president is authorized to make decisions that are consistent with Board Process and Board-Management Relationship policies in order to facilitate the Board’s functioning.
 - b. The president will chair and set the agenda for Board meetings.
 - c. The president plans for leadership (officer) perpetuation.
 - d. The president may represent the Board to outside parties.
 - e. In accord with our bylaws, the president will also preside at member meetings, and sign and execute all certificates of stock together with the treasurer.
4. The vice-president will perform the duties of the president in her/his absence.
5. The treasurer will lead the Board’s process for creating and monitoring the Board’s (not the Cooperative’s) budget.
 - a. of the financial condition of the Cooperative.
 - b. In accordance with our bylaws, the treasurer must attend all member and board meetings, sign with the president all certificates of stock, review quarterly financial statements and the GM’s annual budget, and support the board in understanding and making decisions about these documents.
6. The secretary will make sure the Board’s documents are accurate, up to date, and appropriately maintained.
 - a. In addition, in accord with our bylaws, the secretary is responsible for attending and taking minutes at all board and member meetings (or designating another person to do so), and signing all contracts entered into by the board.

cPolicy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C7 – Board Committee Principles
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

We will use Board committees only to help us accomplish our job.

1. Committees will reinforce and support Board holism.
 - a. In particular, committees help the whole Board move forward when they research alternatives and bring back options and information.
2. Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes.
3. The Board will establish, regularly review and control committee responsibilities in written committee charters.
 - a. We will carefully state committee expectations and authority to make sure they do not conflict with authority delegated to the GM.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C8 – Board Elections and Terms of Office
Last Revised: September 2025

The Board will ensure that our co-op has a reliable, clear and valid elections process that is consistent with our Bylaws.

1. The Board will maintain final authority about the language of any ballot, and will delegate other operational details of elections to our GM.
2. The Election committee will be composed of Board directors, the Operation Manager and a representative from the Marketing Department. This committee will clearly define the responsibilities and boundaries of all parties during the election process.
3. Each of the nine seats on the board will be filled for a three-year term. In each annual election, three seats will be up for election.
 - a) Board executive officers will assume responsibility for filling a temporary opening followed by a Full board vote of approval .
4. The term of service for each board member begins on June 1st, after completion of orientation, and concludes on May 31st, three years later, unless otherwise specified due to appointment or early resignation.

Policy Type: Board Process
Policy Title: C9 – Board Perpetuation
Last Revised: September 2025

The Board will ensure perpetuation of a governing body that provides effective leadership over time. We will accomplish this through recruitment, election and development of skilled, committed and engaged full member-owners, and through ongoing training and education of current Directors.

1. We will identify and recruit qualified, skilled candidates for future and/or vacant Board positions.
2. For each election, we will present a sufficient number of candidates to the member-owners and provide opportunities for member-owners to learn about the candidates.
3. Before elections, we will provide information about the Board's role to prospective candidates so that they can determine whether they want to serve on this Board
4. Following elections, we will provide an orientation to newly elected and reelected Directors so that they can more fully understand their role and be ready to contribute to the Board's work. Newly elected board directors are capable of participating in all board functions upon completion of their orientation, to be completed no later than June 1st. All directors will have the opportunity for ongoing training and education.
 - a) Each Director is expected to attend at least one educational event each year in addition to any whole-Board events. Educational events may include both external and internal events.

Policy Type: Board-Management Relationship
Policy Title: D – Global Board-Management Connection
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The Board's sole official connection to the operations of the cooperative will be through the General Manager.

Policy Type: Board-Management Relationship
Policy Title: D1 – Unity of Control
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

Only officially passed motions of the Board are binding on the GM.

1. Decisions or instructions of individual directors, officers, or committees are not binding on the GM except in rare instances when the Board has specifically authorized this power.
2. In the case of directors or committees requesting information or assistance without Board authorization, the GM can refuse any requests that, in the GM's opinion, may disrupt operations or that require too much staff time or resources.

Policy Type: Board-Management Relationship
Policy Title: D2 – Accountability of the GM
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The General Manager is the Board's only link to operational achievement and conduct.

1. The Board will view GM performance as identical to organizational performance so that organizational accomplishment of Ends and organizational operation within Executive Limitations will be viewed as successful GM performance.
2. The Board will not instruct or evaluate any employee other than the GM.

Policy Type: Board-Management Relationship
Policy Title: D3 – Delegation to the GM
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The Board delegates authority to the GM through written Ends and Executive Limitations policies.

1. As long as the GM uses any reasonable interpretation of the Board's Ends and Executive Limitations policies, the GM is authorized to establish all further policies, practices and plans for the cooperative.
2. The Board will respect and accept the GM's choices as long as those choices are based on reasonable interpretations of Board policies.
3. If the Board changes an Ends or Executive Limitations policy, the change only applies in the future.

Policy Type: Board-Management Relationship
Policy Title: D4 – Evaluating GM Performance
Last Revised: December 7, 2015

The Board will systematically and rigorously monitor and evaluate the GM's job performance compared to expectations set forth in Board policies.

1. The Board will acquire monitoring information by one or more of three methods: (a) by internal report, in which the GM discloses policy interpretations and compliance information to the Board; (b) by external report, in which an external, disinterested third party selected by the Board assesses compliance with Board policies; or (c) by direct Board inspection, in which a designated director or committee assesses compliance with the policy.
2. In every case, the Board's standard for compliance will be any reasonable GM interpretation (as described by operational definitions and metrics) of the Board policy being monitored. The Board is the final arbiter of reasonableness but we will always judge with a "reasonable person" test rather than with interpretations favored by individual directors or by the Board as a whole.
3. The Board will accept that the GM is compliant with a policy if he/she presents a reasonable interpretation and adequate data that demonstrate accomplishment of that interpretation.
4. The Board will monitor all policies that instruct the GM. The Board can monitor any policy at any time by any method listed above but will ordinarily follow the schedule outlined in the Board Annual Calendar.
5. The Board's annual evaluation of the General Manager, based on a summary of monitoring reports received from January 1st through December 31st, will be completed by May 1st. The Board will make its decisions concerning the evaluation no later than June 1st.