

Candidate Statements

Tessa Leung

1. Reasons for running

- The need to support our communities with food and through the business of truly local food.
- Servant leadership to our communities.
- The need to continually learn new skills and how to work within and for an organization that supports our communities.



2. Skills

- A strong, local business background.
- I have worked with and continue to work with high functioning teams that are community based.
- Listening and making sure what I heard is what the person communicating was truly trying to say.
- Breaking big issues and topics into manageable and executable stages.
- Not afraid of being wrong, it is always a chance for me to learn how to do something better!

3. Relevant experience

- CEO of local brewery and restaurant, 2015–current.
- Current PFC board of directors and president from 2016–present.

- Current national finance committee member of the Pink Boots Society.
- Former owner of local farm-to-table restaurant (Sontes) for eight years.
- Former Rochester Downtown Alliance board member for seven years.
- Former Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce board member for seven years.
- Former executive committee member of Rochester Chamber of Commerce as well as the lead for policy and bylaw committee.
- Former co-chair of the subcommittee for talent and retention committee for Journey to Growth.

4. Challenges for PFC

- Growing competition in the natural food market.
- Workforce.
- Differentiating ourselves clearly to our community.

5. Potential opportunities for PFC

- Differentiating ourselves in our community.
- Being able to act quickly to support our local growers and producers.
- Continuing to be a leader in the co-op world in terms of innovative ways of supporting the co-op community and thinking outside of the box to deliver our message and services.

Cynthia Carr

1. Reason for running

- Help develop a strategy for moving forward in time of significant change in the industry
- Provide new energy and perspective
- Most importantly, to contribute my skills to the cooperative model which I strongly believe in and have participated in for over twenty years



2. Skills

Leadership, accounting, management, strategic planning, cooperative decision making

3. Relevant experience

- Bluff Country Co-op board of directors, 1998–2000
- Downtown Mainstreet, Inc., 2013–2017

- Catholic Worker Community, Winona, MN 1998–2000
- 30+ years in accounting and management

4. Challenges for PFC

- Growth of organic offerings in big box stores and supermarkets
- Fostering a sense of community among a diversifying member-base
- Providing a living wage
- Physical limitations of La Crosse People's Food Co-op

5. Potential opportunities for PFC

- Create online community and expand sales via online and/or delivery
- Restructure Hackberry's pricing/menu to better serve members (affordability)
- Expand members' participation opportunities
- Strengthen the relationship between consumer and producer
- Foster communication /relationship between members

Jacob Davidson

1. Reasons for running

My family started going to The Good Food Store in 2005, and have enjoyed watching it grow. We see the importance of food in our life and community. During my family's trips to the Minnesota State Fair, we always toured the agricultural exhibits and our interest in organic food grew. In college, I took courses dealing with food policy, adding to my interest in local and ethically produced food.

2. Skills

If I am fortunate enough to be on the board, I would bring my enthusiasm for the success of the co-op movement, an analytical mind (as evidenced by my degree in mathematics), knowledge of economics and food policy (through extensive college coursework), demonstrated leadership skills as a student leader in high school and college, and experience coordinating data-based medical research in the nutrition field. In addition, I have a great work ethic!



3. Relevant experience

I have worked in food banks since I was a toddler (truly!). As a student, I was responsible for coordinating a production that generated thousands of dollars for our Physics Club, and I helped develop the Jewish Student Organization from a non-active campus group to one that held monthly interfaith dinner events. As a data analyst in nutrition research, I coordinated gathering and presentation of data that has resulted in multiple peer-reviewed publications.

4. Challenges for PFC

Undoubtedly, the most challenging aspect facing the co-op is to remain ethical while also remaining profitable in a free-market setting. Other challenges include: continuing to partner with ethical producers of co-op items, continuing to enroll new members, enrolling people across varying socio-economic groups, and expanding the co-op's visibility in our community.

5. Potential opportunities for PFC

I would love to see the co-op become active in our local schools to promote healthy lifestyles and education of ethical, sustainable food sources for the future. Further, actively advertising and providing possible discounts to local high school students who leave school campus each day and usually head to the fast food establishments.

Lisa Wiste

1. Reasons for running

- I simply love shopping at these two stores! I've been a member since the 1990s and I am finishing my first term as board member.
- To continue the work on getting maximum benefits for PFC members.
- It offers me the opportunity to tell people about the rewards of shopping at the co-op. One of the board's jobs is to share with others on why they should join the co-op, or run for the board, or work for the co-op.



2. Skills

- Since 2002, I started and continue to run my own business. There are many similarities between the co-op and my business regarding market trends and competition. I've survived against big box stores and I believe the co-op can do the same.
- Ability to speak on what I believe while respecting the viewpoints of others.
- Level of commitment in working on the board's goals.

3. Relevant experience

- One term served as PFC board member; co-op member since the 1990s.

- Ten years of full-time self-employment in an online shopping business.

4. Challenges for PFC

- Meeting the needs of members in a rapidly changing market.
- Conveying that the co-op can be an affordable option for customers.
- Attracting and retaining employees has become very competitive. The emphasis needs to be on offering good wages and benefits, continuing education, and providing safe working conditions for employees.
- Being pro-active with competition. The co-op needs to strongly adhere to its mission of being "the best fresh food market in the country."

5. Potential opportunities for PFC

- Member outreach. PFC needs to strengthen the connection between itself and members. These stores, after all, belong to members! While it's up to members to let PFC know what their needs are, it's PFC's job to show members what channels are available for doing that. Getting that dialogue going between PFC and membership will only strengthen the co-op.
- Education. Learning is never done. PFC should continue to find new ways on educating the community about the benefits of the co-op.



CAST YOUR VOTE



CAST YOUR VOTE



CAST YOUR VOTE

