



**ASHLAND  
FOOD CO+OP**  
— BOARD OF DIRECTORS —

**Board Meeting Minutes**

March 11, 2026

Approved

**Directors attending:** Mark Gibbs, Evan Archerd, Elizabeth Walsh, Jen Gibbs, Bob Kaplan, Ernesto Soto, Kathryn Kavanagh, Joanna Wnorowski. **Also attending:** Barry Haynes, Interim GM, Abby Lazerow, Board Administrator.

Facilitator: Evan Archerd

Timekeeper: Jen Gibbs

Item	Agenda Topic	Lead
1	<b>Positive Affirmation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Joanna Wnorowski led the positive affirmation.</li></ul>
2	<b>Land Acknowledgement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ernesto Soto led the land acknowledgement.</li></ul>
3	<b>Owners Forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Owners Kathleen Herring, Jennifer Dunn, Jessica Sinacori, Kelda Vath, and Michael Boumil attended the meeting. Kathleen Herring said she would like AFC to have signage that indicates it is a safe space. Michael Boumil asked if more details about milling and production could be added to product labeling. For example, he said Lotus Foods black rice is sterilized and doesn't sprout; the oat groats also do not sprout. Michael encouraged the grocery buyer to purchase organically grown whole grain white rice from Chico.</li></ul>
4	<b>Agenda Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The agenda was reviewed. No changes were made.</li></ul>
5	<b>Consent Agenda</b>	The following consent agenda items were unanimously approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Board Meeting Minutes, February 11, 2026</li><li>Executive Session Minutes, February 11, 2026</li><li>Board Finance Report, January 2026</li><li>Board Actions, 2025</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Petition Understanding, March 2026</li> </ul>
6	<b>Announcements and Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kathryn Kavanagh will be teaching a class at the Co-op on March 29 about making rosemary focaccia.</li> </ul>
7	<b>GM Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim General Manager Barry Haynes reported sales for February were up 1.7% over the previous year, RoCo sales were up 33%. February combined sales were up 2.2%, and up 1% YTD.</li> <li>• Barry reviewed the results of a recent customer survey, covering the past 90 days. Helpfulness of staff was up by 4%, checkout experience up by 7% and being greeted by someone other than a cashier was up by 4%. Barry will send out the full summary report to the Board.</li> <li>• Even though we are perceived as expensive, AFC offers the lowest basic pricing in Ashland.</li> <li>• Transaction counts were by 143/day and the average basket was down by \$2.20/day.</li> <li>• Several staff members were promoted to new positions at the store.</li> <li>• Extended summer hours will return at RoCo on April 1. The café will be open from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. There are new offerings at ROCO from the Co-op's Bakery and Prepared Foods department. Marketing Department Manager Tracy Fischer has been assisting RoCo Manager Jessica Harnois with additional operations and systems guidance.</li> <li>• AFC has a number of socially responsible programs led by the Meat and Produce Departments. The Smart Giving promotion through the month of November generated a donation of 1,920 lbs. of chicken which will be distributed to local vulnerable populations. \$3303.69 was donated to the Betty LaDuke Cultural &amp; Education Fund for Farmworker's Children in 2025 with purchases of 1 lb. organic strawberries. \$2391.22 was donated to Rogue Valley Farm to School through the purchases of our Farm to School bagged organic apples. This program motivated PCC Markets to also give 100% to their Farm to School programs.</li> <li>• Sustainability Manager Chris Byrne attended Climate Day 2026 at the Expo West Natural Foods Show where key initiatives and climate goals for the natural products industry were discussed. New Sustainability Coordinator, Markus Mager will begin the Level II Building Operator Certification, which will help us meet our sustainability goals.</li> <li>• Managers have undergone training and protocols in alignment with 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protocols. Barry attended an NCG (national cooperative grocers) webinar with GM's across</li> </ul>

		<p>the country, with co-op GM's from Minnesota reporting about their experiences and how they are implementing these protocols.</p>
8	<b>GM Search Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elizabeth Walsh reported the internal posting for the GM position will end on March 11. The committee will look at the open applications and decide next steps.</li> </ul>
9	<b>Board Treasurer's Report Minimum Patronage Dividend; 2025 Profit Sharing Bonus; Labor Cap Extension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Treasurer Ernesto Soto reported January and YTD sales were \$99,119 or 3.3% under budget, with lower than budgeted sales in all departments except Prepared Foods. March sales are flat so far. The average basket remains strong at \$38.27 which is -0.5% lower than last year and about 35% higher than January 2019. Customer counts were 10% below pre-pandemic numbers.</li> <li>January labor costs were \$21,933 under budget. Labor costs were \$30,248 over last year. Non-labor expenses \$13,000 higher than last year. Operating income was \$35,154 lower than 2025. There are 14,167 owners, and In January there were 8632 active members.</li> <li>Because of increasing accounting costs, the Finance Committee requested that the Board consider increasing the minimum patronage dividend from \$2 to \$5. Tracking down owners to redeem their dividend takes hours of calls and emails from employees. This change would save the Co-op about \$40,000. The Board of Directors unanimously approved this change.</li> <li>The Board was asked to approve the distribution of \$139,000 for the 2025 profit-sharing bonus. This reflects \$.60 per hour for each hour worked. The Board of Directors unanimously approved this proposal.</li> <li>The Finance Committee had recommended the temporary labor cap remain at 23.5% of sales for 2026 for the productivity bonus calculation. The cap had been 22% since 2014 and temporarily increased to 23.5% for the past three years. Bob Kaplan asked the FC to look further and come up with a recommendation by September.</li> <li>AFC is self-insured with a stop-loss. Last year there were higher insurance premiums because there were 10 major medical claims. These costs are not expected to carry over in 2026.</li> </ul>
11	<b>Board Development Committee Report Board Committee Roles and Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elizabeth Walsh discussed the document Board Committee Roles and Boundaries which will be included in the Board Handbook. The document outlines and clarifies advisory committees versus Board committees. The Board discussed the differences between advisory and operations.</li> <li>Directors should share their comments about the document before the next Board meeting.</li> </ul>

13	<b>AFC Gives Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board chair Evan Archerd reported \$63686 was collected for Change for Good (CFG) in February. \$3,193.42 will go to Rogue Valley Street Dogs and \$3,193.42 will go to Rogue Community Cat Rescue.</li> <li>● The committee received 39 applications for CFG. Teams have been assigned to evaluate the applications and will make their decisions in early April.</li> <li>● The committee has been making a list of potential native American organizations that could be highlighted for CFG in November.</li> </ul>
14	<b>Operationalizing EDI Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elizabeth Walsh reported she met with the EDI working group and shared resources to help consider how EDI policies and the 8<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Principle could be disseminated throughout the organization. The working group recently sent out a survey to Board directors and managers.</li> <li>● A celebratory dinner for EDI committee members is being planned to thank them for their work.</li> </ul>
15	<b>Strategic Planning Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mark Gibbs spoke with the strategic planning consultant to tell them know this work will be on hold until a GM is selected.</li> </ul>
16	<b>Annual Meeting Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board Administrator Abby Lazerow reported the 2206 annual meeting will be held on June 10 at the Resistance Winery.</li> </ul>
17	<b>Action Items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Board approved the March consent agenda documents</li> <li>● Barry Haynes will send out the full shopper survey summary report to the Board.</li> <li>● The Board agreed to increase the minimum patronage dividend from \$2 to \$5.</li> <li>● The Board approved the distribution of \$139,000 for the 2025 profit-sharing bonus.</li> <li>● The Board asked the Finance Committee to review the temporary labor cap by September 2026.</li> </ul>
18	<b>Meeting Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This was a good meeting and the agenda times were closely followed.</li> </ul>