



52st Annual Meeting

At the Finnish American Heritage Center, Hancock & on Zoom

April 16, 2026

Approved Minutes

Owners Present (In-person & online)

Danielle Ahrens & Izaak Lauer	Ruth Gill Kim Green	Katrina Mills Shelby Merrick
Chris Alquist	Kimberly Goffinet	Heather Mroz
Lois & Rick Anderson	Jay Green	Ariele Pizzo
Kathryn Astbury	Barb Hardy	Chaundel Sammarco & Alan Salmi
Elizabeth Benyi	Polly & Sean Havens	Susan Serafini
Kristine Bradof	Joseph Hendrickson	Peter Sparks
Susan Burack	Maria Horner	Ethan Stout & Ellie Gelety
Adam Campbell	Stephen Jukuri	Ashley TenHarmsel
Joan Chadde	Sue Ellen Kingsley	Audra Thurston & Kyle Hiltunen
Coral Conway	Sarah Kuhl	Curt Webb & Keren Tischler
Adrienne Detanico	John Kurkowski	Viki Weglarz
Jeff Flam	Sharon Levine	
Liz Fujita & Nathan Miller	Michael Mallow	
Harry Gable	Rebecca & Brett Matuszak	

Others Present: Incoming General Manager Josh Paakola, Staff member Ray Brotherton

*This list includes all individuals who signed-in in-person and online. On record, **52 individuals, representing 41 member households were in attendance. Quorum was satisfied by the 476 online votes cast.***

Call to order & Welcome - Board President Rebecca Matuszak

The hybrid annual meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm.

Rebecca welcomed everyone, reviewed housekeeping items and the agenda, and introduced current board members and the General Management team Curt Webb (outgoing GM) and Josh Paakola (incoming GM). A special thank you to outgoing board member Susan Serafini, who served on the board both prior to and during relocation.

The draft Annual Meeting minutes will be posted on the Co-op website on Friday, May 1st. Owners in attendance can submit corrections, amendments or comments to the draft minutes via email to contactboard@keweenaw.coop or in-person at the next board meeting at 6pm on May 13th at the MTU Lakeshore Center. The draft Annual Meeting minutes will be amended as needed and approved at this meeting.

Special Acknowledgements to Curt Webb - Board President Rebecca Matuszak

Though Curt will continue to work fulltime until the end of this month, he will soon be retiring from his 22 years at our co-op. Tonight we wish to thank Curt for his time in this position. Rebecca shared the 2004 board announcement of Curt as the new GM. Co-op staff overwhelmingly suggested hiring Curt during a tumultuous time when a planned relocation was put on the back-burner and the GM was replaced. Curt came to the co-op with seven years of experience as part of the collective management team of North Country Co-op in Minneapolis. Produce became his specialty, and it was as Produce Manager that he was first hired at the Keweenaw Co-op before he became the GM.

While many in the community may associate the co-op with a bearded man on his bicycle, most who've had the privilege of working with Curt are struck by his kindness, compassion and commitment to our community. Curt is a valued person who embraces and embodies his values. Over years, staff have described him as: steady and consistent; methodical in decision-making; a calm & steady presence; always with an open door; willing to help whenever he can; kind, patient, approachable; a great team player; respectful in every interaction; inclusive; thoughtful; a fantastic collaborator; hardworking and mentally tough; someone who trusts his employees.

Rebecca welcomed others to add to this list:

Harry Gable was around when we hired Curt. It was a delightful change, and he's totally impressed that Curt made it 20+ years and has taken the co-op through some trying times.

Roger Woods spent many quality years working with Curt in his years on the board. Curt was always a steady hand, dealing with things that boards were throwing at him, whether a decision to go down the policy governance path or relocation. Roger appreciates Curt's time and effort in putting up with all of those boards! Thank you Curt!

Joan Chadde: We're all going to miss you Curt. It's always wonderful to see your smiling face. You're never in a hurry, but always willing to stop and chat. You make us feel so welcome. Happy adventures ahead.

Rebecca's 4-year old son, noticing Curt's white beard and twinkle in his eyes, always asks her if Curt is Santa Claus. She said that if Santa Claus is the evolution of St. Nicolas, who is known for his kindness, generosity and charity, her son has the right idea. Thank you Curt for embodying cooperative principles, for stabilizing the ship, for ensuring financial success and growth and for your vision of strengthening this alternative business model that values its members. Thank you for your years of dedication and friendship.

Rebecca presented Curt with a photo book of the slide show presented at the meeting with notes from owners and a gift from co-op friends toward bike-packing gear for his next adventure.

Voting Results - Board Member Liz Fujita

All voting took place online from April 1 - April 14, 2026. Liz thanked all who voted. Participation was excellent again this year with 476 ballots cast (497 in 2025) of 2,620 eligible voters, representing 18.2% of owners.

Owners voted for two Bring-a-Bag Campaign fund recipients from seven applicants, as well as three Board Directors from four candidates.

Bring-a-Bag Campaign

For every reusable shopping customers bring to the co-op to fill with groceries, the co-op deposits \$0.05 into the Bring-a-Bag Fund. Each recipient organization receives these funds for six months. In a typical year, this amounts to approximately \$500 for each organization. We see this as a great way to reduce the waste stream while also supporting local charities. Organizations that were not chosen this year are eligible to reapply next year.

Applicants:

- Keweenaw Pridefest
- Kaleidoscope
- Woodland Hill Preschool
- Pewabic St. Community Garden
- Keweenaw Outdoor Recreation Coalition
- Keweenaw ATV Club
- Ontonagon Theater of Performing Arts

Chosen Recipients:

For the periods: Jul 1, 2026 - Dec 31, 2026 & Jan 1, 2027 - Jun 30, 2027

1. Pewabic St. Community Garden (212 Votes (23.6%))
2. Keweenaw Outdoor Recreation Coalition (196 Votes (21.8%))

Board of Directors

We had four strong board candidates running for three board seats (all three-year terms ending 2029)! Each of our 2620 eligible voters were able to cast ballots for three candidates. We appreciate the commitment each candidate made to run for the board. The race was very tight.

Candidates:

1. Katie Astbury
2. Kim Goffinet

3. Stephen Jukuri (incumbent)
4. Michael Mallow

Elected Board Members:

1. Stephen Jukuri (395 votes)
2. Katie Astbury (367 votes)
3. Kim Goffinet (347 votes)

Liz congratulated the elected board members and thanked them for their interest and willingness to support the co-op with board service. A special thanks to board candidate Michael Mallow who was not elected.

Surprise Appreciation for Rebecca - Board Member John Kurkowski

This past year has brought a lot of great things to our co-op, and a few bumps along the way. Our board president, Rebecca, has been at the center of it all. Rebecca's many qualities, including her hard work, her genuine care for our co-op and our community, her patience and her persistence have made our co-op stronger. Thank you Rebecca!

GM Report 2025 Financial Recap & Highlights - Outgoing General Manager Curt Webb

2025 Financial statements were prepared by our accountant and are not yet final. The 2025 financial audit will commence in May. Find more details in the 2025 Annual Report available online and in print.

Operating Revenue. 2025 was another strong year for the Keweenaw Co-op. Enhanced by our new store, which opened Oct. 16, 2024 saw 27.9% annual sales growth and \$8.3M in annual sales (\$8.1M less discounts), with over 60% (\$5M) of sales to co-op owners. With relocation, we are seeing new faces in the store, so sales to owners is around where we were in 2020. We welcome everyone to shop at the co-op, and consider new shoppers as potential new owners.

In 2025, our first full year in our new store, we maintained our target profit margin. Operating expenses increased, but at a lower rate than sales as we realized an efficiency of scale. Depreciation, necessarily a lot larger due to relocation capital investment, represents \$374K of that expense.

A negative net operating income was predicted, but there too we did better than projected. Net operating income saw a big improvement over 2024, which included some large expense lines related to the completion of the project.

Other Income/Expense & Net Profit. Our MEDC Community Revitalization Program grant, one of multiple inputs that made our relocation possible, paid out in 2025. That grant, which was only payable after the project was complete, replenished cash reserves and paid off a portion of our project debt. A few project expenses as well as holding costs for our old

storefront remain. Interest on debt is another large expense post-project at over \$250K/year. Thanks to the MEDC grant, we showed a bottom line net profit.

Balance Sheet. The asset side of our post-project Balance Sheet peaked in 2025, representing replenished cash from the MEDC grant and the fixed assets in the entirety of the new store. 1035 Ethel moved from fixed assets to other assets (assets held for sale). Our Liabilities decreased in 2025, with no additional project payables and a paid off line of credit in the short-term. Long term Liabilities show where our loans were at the end of the year. In 2025, Equity grew by 46.4%, with Owner equity at \$56,800, up 12.2% from 2024. Retained Earnings decreased due to an overall loss in 2024, our relocation year. Overall, net income is strong.

Key Ratios. Key ratios show the position of our co-op at year-end. Our key ratios improved immensely since 2024 when we were riding the tides of project expense and financing. Leverage ratios show how we use debt vs equity. Liquidity ratios measure our ability to pay short-term obligations with our current assets. Our key ratios are all well within benchmark goals - It is very good to be in this position one year after a major project.

Both sales and customer count are up. Relocation has accelerated all of this. We've come a long way in 10 years, and we continue to be pleased with the community's response to the new store.

2025 Highlights. We couldn't do what we do without our dedicated staff. In 2025, **our staff** rang up over 500 customers per day, totaling nearly 1.5M units sold and over 200K annual transactions. We sold nearly 50K pounds of bulk products at retail and another 10.25K pounds of bulk special orders - that's 30 tons! Staff processed 2,850 special order items, reset 26 Co+op Deals sales cycles (averaging 300 items/cycle), prepared 33,169 deli sandwiches and wraps, 20,838 burritos and 8,167 pizzas.

There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes as well. We serve as support for the board to put on this annual meeting - thanks to all the staff who assisted!

You helped You brought your own bag 28,190 times (a 9% increase over 2024), raising \$1,410 for Copper Shores Meals on Wheels & Copper Country Recycling Initiative. You Rounded Up your transaction 33,524 times, collectively raising \$16,783 in donations to the Western UP Food Bank, Copper Country Angel Mission, Keweenaw Invasive Species Management, Canterbury House and Copper Island Culinary Program.

Through our participation in the Double Up Food Bucks program, we provided \$10,015 of free produce to our community.

Over the last year plus, we've been excited to support the Copper Shores Bridges program, which allows community members who have been trapped in generational poverty to learn skills and develop a mindset to move out of poverty. We provide some meals for their classes and provide education about stretching the food dollar and utilizing programs such as Double Up Food Bucks.

Curt also highlighted the Roundup program. Typically half or more of Roundup dollars go to the Western UP Food bank. Rather than just giving them money, we use the money to purchase quality food from our suppliers at a discount. This has been a great relationship over a number of years. In 2025, we donated ~\$13,000 worth of food at retail value!

Together we gave over \$21,000 in community donations and sponsorships, a 48% increase over 2024. Curt pointed out that some of these relationships are mutually beneficial. For example, in 2025, in collaboration with Keweenaw Wild Ones, we put in a native plant garden near our entrance. Keweenaw Wild Ones had been a recipient of one of our programs, and used some of that money for garden design and plant purchases. We also worked with Superior Watershed Partnership to get some grant money for our EV Charging Station.

What's next? One big piece of work will be getting our new GM, Josh, onboarded and settled into his position, which involves building relationships with staff, board, customers, members, community and our partners. This year also brings outdoor seating, more initiatives to expand local offerings, a lower level parking & receiving redesign and fiscal preparation for the next opportunity.

Gratitude & Reflections. Curt thanked everyone for the kind words and the trip down memory lane. He thanked the staff for everything they do and the support he has received both during his transition back into his job and now in his transition out of it. A big thanks to Denise for serving as the Acting GM and sharing management duties in late 2024 and 2025. Curt thanked the board and all of the board committee members for their time and amazing work. Thanks to the owners, investors and the broader community - all of your support has been invaluable to making the co-op what it is today. Thank you to the organizations we partner with in the world of food and cooperatives. It's great to have this support network, especially as we hand things off to a new GM.

Curt ended with a reflective poem of sorts, including this request: "I want you all to remember that you are the constant through change".

Board Report & GM Search Update - Rebecca Matuszak, Board President

It has been a very busy few years for our co-op community. We raised \$1M in community investments, we successfully completed a \$7M relocation and major construction project, and we launched a GM search. After many years of sweat, tears and very nearly his life, Curt made the decision to retire. The board formed an ad hoc search committee, hired a recruiting company and a search facilitator and launched a nationwide search. Over the course of six months, the search committee interviewed a variety of individuals. When you think of all the skillsets needed in a GM, we were looking for someone with experience, financial background, leadership, co-op culture and a community focus. That's a big list.

We're excited to announce our selection of Jonathan (Josh) Paakola. Josh comes with over 25 years of retail management experience. He has worked in some pretty corporate environments, but in coming to the co-op he is making an intentional choice to move to a job that is aligned with his values. He's excited to learn about the cooperative business model and support our local growers and producers. We feel confident that Josh can successfully

balance the grocery business side of the job with the mission of our co-op, which is rooted in serving our community. Rebecca welcomed all to attend an upcoming board meeting.

Remarks from incoming GM Josh Paakola

Josh wished Curt the best in his retirement and noted the giant shoes he has to fill. He will work hard to fill them! Josh and his wife of 32 years have three children, two grandchildren and two dogs. Josh grew up in the Askel/Otter Lake area, a couple miles from where his Finnish great grandparents settled. Josh holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from MTU and a Masters Degree in Management from UW Green Bay. His retail career includes time spent at Menards, Kmart and Walmart, where he worked in management for 21 years. He attributes exponential sales growth in his position at Walmart to listening to customers and associates and improving processes. Josh also honed his finance skills in this position.

Josh left Walmart after a couple of things shifted. The first was when their slogan: *our people make the difference* was changing and eroding. The second shift was more personal. Where he once believed Walmart was good for local communities, he now thinks they do more harm to small communities and have emptied main streets.

Josh didn't know a lot about cooperative values when he applied for this job. He saw the ad and thought this is something he can be really good at. He never shopped at the old store, though he shopped at the Pelkie Co-op as a kid. The more he gets to know about our co-op, the more he understands that these values align with his values. Josh believes and has seen first-hand that diversity and inclusion makes us stronger. The co-op is for everyone, and that includes our staff. Josh likes that the co-op is independent and community-owned. This allows us to fill needs that others cannot. Small businesses are the backbone of every community. Our co-op is an important part of this community and one he's proud to be a part of.

Josh highlighted the part of our Ends that state: *Our food producers and community benefit from a thriving, fair, resilient and sustainable local food system*. This struck Josh because our food distribution system can be interrupted in numerous ways (e.g, Covid). Having a robust food distribution system builds resiliency and is a win-win, where small businesses and our co-op support one another. Josh will work hard to expand and strengthen this. In his visits to the store, Josh was sold on the team, who he experienced as passionate, smart, experienced, hard-working and great at customer service. Josh would like to help staff continue to develop new skills and abilities and have long, successful careers at the co-op. He sees this as a way for the co-op to have an internal pipeline of talent to be successful into the future.

Ends Survey & Moderated Discussion:

"Ends" policies are essentially organizational goals, answering: "To what ends are we striving?" These goals help set our collective organization's direction and communicate our overarching values. Ends policies should cover three things: what we are attempting to achieve, for whom, and at what relative value/cost. Hearing the input of Owners is a key part

of Ends development and evaluation.

In the midst of relocation, the board worked to update our Ends - in a variety of ways, we asked people what they value and tried to incorporate that feedback into our current ends. Now that we are in a new store and our membership has grown, we are again asking if our Ends are representative of our owners.

Our current Ends state:

On behalf of our Owners, the Keweenaw Co-op will be a leader in our thriving and healthy local community, supported by values inherent in the Co-operative model.

- *Our customers benefit from increasing access to food and products that improve health in ways that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.*
- *Our food producers and community benefit from a thriving, fair, resilient, and sustainable local food system.*
- *Our community understands the value of health, healthy food, and the cost of a sustainable food system.*

Ends Survey Questions:

How well do these Ends represent you? (1=not at all to 4=very well)

Rebecca was pleased to see the number of 3s and 4s among the responses.

What's missing?

- farmer engagement
- inclusive and diverse
- more sustainability
- too much use of the word "sustainability"

Comments:

- more sales on bruised fruits (Rebecca notes that they're there, but they go fast)
- sometimes merch doesn't match our ends: more bulk and less healthy junk
- less meat and less packaging
- love the flowers in produce
- engagement and visibility in our community
- more nutrition/education and cooking classes
- we have the best staff and should strive to be the best employer
- use cash/check to purchase a gift card to avert credit card fees
- move the community board up front

Rebecca welcomed all to share additional questions or comments with the management team or the board after the meeting and to join us for the **Spring Highway Cleanup at 5-7pm on Monday, May 11.**

Adjourn Meeting

Rebecca thanked everyone for their attendance, announced regular board meetings and welcomed owners to attend those meetings. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Minutes submitted by Keren Tischler, Board Administrative Assistant