

Minutes of the Tuesday, February 24, 2026 Park Slope Food Coop General Meeting

The monthly General Meeting (GM) of the Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC) was held at the Prospect Park Picnic House and over zoom on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, beginning at 7:02 PM. An announcement about the scheduled meeting was posted on the PSFC website, foodcoop.com, inviting members to participate. Meeting materials were made available to all Coop members by email before the meeting, as well as screen-projected during the meeting. Chair Committee members Maribeth Batcha and Genevieve Yue served as chair and secretary, respectively. Sofia Montgomery served as zoom moderator. Cheyenna Weber and Sarah Kaufmann provided tech support. 103 members were in attendance in person; 103 people attended over zoom. This meeting marks the first hybrid general meeting of the Park Slope Food Coop.

Open Forum

Issues raised by members included: many thanks and congratulations to the chair committee and people who worked on hybrid; an announcement about an art project to plant poppies for Palestine; a question about the cost of the hybrid meeting (no additional financial cost; additional emotional cost); an objection to any vote that includes members not attending the GM in person; a question about what happens when a member attends a GM online only for the time it takes to vote (they are allowed to vote just like if they attended in person); a question about accommodations mentioned in the accessibility survey; a request to update the Guide to the General and Annual Meetings (approved at the February 2011 GM and last amended at the January 2016 GM); questions regarding whether agenda items can be presented over zoom (yes) and if they could they be pre-recorded as long as the member attends the meeting (probably but needs to be confirmed); a long pause as we experienced technical difficulties; a suggestion for the hybrid display to show the picnic house side-by-side with the agenda so it feels more like “you are there”; a request for a document that controls the rules of the GM (Charlie Rogers from the Chair Committee would love to work on it; changes would need to be approved by the membership); a question about how one vote per member will be handled when anyone can log in using the link to attend the GM (this process will be updated; voting will be audited after the fact; in person members will have to include their member numbers); a suggestion for how members attending online can pin or spotlight the video feed (Sofia Montgomery will add this to the instructions).

Financial Report and General Coordinators’ (GC) Reports

General Manager (GM), General Coordinator (GC), and Treasurer Joe Szladek thanked the Chair Committee, GM squad, and staff for getting hybrid off the ground: “a great first step; it didn’t come easy”. The fiscal year ended a few weeks ago and so the 52 week statement will be presented in March. Net income dipped \$400K over the summer but we have almost broken even. He shared a slide with comparing the Coop’s fiscal years pre- and post-pandemic:

	Averages across 2018-2020	Averages across 2024-2026	Percent change
Members	16,985	16,216	-4.5%
Transactions	75,357	56,371	-25.2%
Units sold	1,651,043	1,374,986	-16.7%
Units per member	97	85	-12.4%
Sales	\$5,050,784	\$5,266,857	4.3%

He identified a couple of causes for the decreases in transactions and units sold: the change from a 4- to 6-week cycle for shifts and the transition of committee and Gazette staff meetings from in person to virtual. To try to drive up sales, the Coop will be:

- Instituting “Coop deals” through the National Cooperative of Grocers in a couple of months that will reduce prices of certain items by 20-40%;
- Adding more prepared foods; and
- Installing a new cooler where the seltzer end cap is currently.

Home delivery has been considered but will require more thought and planning. Expenses keep rising. The Coop is very close to capacity of members. Health care costs continue to rise faster than inflation; the health plan year starts March 1, 2026. Insurance has been increasing. There are efforts to reduce costs and streamline processes:

- Bringing more members into leadership roles in front end support and delivery support;
- Recruiting more team/squad leaders in receiving and food processing to reduce staff hours;
- Expanding the dairy cooler into the backyard (restocking from the basement is challenging);
- Using Clover, a new ordering system; and
- Trying not to hire when Coop staff leave (without overly pressuring the remaining staff).

There is a town hall meeting with the staff to talk about operations and costs. The Financial Advisory Committee was approved and will have members who are well-versed in finance and financial strategy to collaborate with the Coop financial team; the committee is soliciting new members through the LWG and physically in the coop. The Coop is also increasing membership size by 2-2.5%; new orientations have started in the meeting room!

Membership asked questions about whether it is possible to compare members’ time spent shopping pre- and post-pandemic and if the 4.3% increase in sales was adjusted for inflation (no). Membership also asked questions relating to the letters to the editor removed from the February 10, 2026 Linewriters’ Gazette (LWG), asking when the new standards would be established and disseminated and inquiring whether the removal of letters was related to other legal liability. Joe Szladek answered that the GCs act as the publishers of the LWG because of their roles in institutional, legal, and governance oversight of the Coop. The co-coordinating editors of the LWG are strengthening and clarifying the policy and the GCs are not involved. This editorial review is about sustaining a strong member-operated gazette and is unrelated to other issues. Ann Herpel, GC and staff liaison to the LWG, read a statement explaining that the letters were removed after it was determined that the LWG letter policy was applied inconsistently; instead of waiting for the editorial review to occur, members acted uncooperatively and distributed the letters in a rogue publication. She reiterated that the letter removal was a procedural and not punitive action. She stated that upholding the cooperative principles requires good faith participation by all members. Membership asked whether the Coop has considered shorter shifts more frequently. Joe Szladek gave several reasons why not:

- The Coop already has a hard time filling shifts;
- People like the 6 week cycle (someone was booed for suggesting a return to 4 weeks); and
- Fewer members have left the Coop under the 6-week cycle than the 4-week cycle.

GC Elinoar Astrinsky gave the operations report. She thanked everyone who helped out with shoveling and wished everyone many happy holidays. She explained that the citrus season had been difficult for Florida and gave a survey of many of the citrus fruits available at the Coop (she prefers the Minneola tangelo). She encouraged members to come to morning lifting shifts and late night cleaning shifts.

Member Committee Reports

Lois Wilcken from the Plastics Reduction Committee shared a QR code for [a survey](#) available until the middle of May to hear member ideas and concerns about the use of plastics at the coop. It will also be shared in the March 3, 2026 LWG.

There was a shout out of the members of the hybrid committee that was followed by applause.

Agenda Item 1: Discussion of a Podcast Committee

Amy Brinker and Rahima Nasa opened their presentation with a video. They presented a proposal:

To establish a Podcast Committee to create an oral history of the Park Slope Food Coop. The Coop's mission is all about collaboration, and our goal is to showcase the people and personalities that make this place so unique. We want to capture memories and accents, breathe new life into old stories, and use this medium to celebrate the history and the future of the Coop.

The proposed podcast would be educational and foster community. Prospective topics are: Coop history, the journey from the farm to the Coop, committee spotlights and events, and food justice. The members have conducted preliminary interviews, cut tape for a pilot episode, worked with the LWG, canvassed members, and mapped out an editorial calendar and cadence. They propose 8-9 hours of labor to produce a 30-minute episode: 1 hour to prep, 2 hours to record, 2-3 hours to script, and 3 hours of post-production (which includes editing, scoring, and distribution). Shift credit would be one work credit per episode per person. A new episode would be released every six weeks. Costs would be approximately \$300 per year for an RSS feed to distribute the show and cover cost for a website homepage. Members would be able to submit their ideas.

The membership asked questions: whether the podcast would be publicly available (yes); whether the members would have editorial independence (the podcast is not intended as journalism); why the LWG suggested the podcast be separate (the LWG doesn't have the infrastructure to support a podcast); what the editorial process and policies might be (it would be consistent with the LWG). The Chair cut off discussion of the role of the GCs in the editorial process. Additional questions were asked by the membership relating to the logistics of the podcast release: would episodes be seasonal (a season would be banked, then released bi-weekly after approval); would transcripts or tags be available (possibly, if a member was added to the committee).

The membership discussed the proposal: suggesting the proposed committee work with the Center for Brooklyn History; stressing the importance of educating the community about the political history of the cooperative movement; proposing that amateurs be able to gain experience in podcasting; expressing concern that there would ever be measures in place to prevent the podcast from becoming a fight about BDS; questioning the utility of having another committee when there are already too few people working shifts to move food; expressing concern about how much labor it takes to make a podcast and whether the committee would have sufficient resources; expressing doubt about whether a podcast can be apolitical; differentiating an oral history project from a podcast; and emphasizing the importance of knowing where we come from so that we know where we are.

Agenda Item 2: Discussion of Reimagining the Temporary Price Mark-up Increase

Tim Hospodar, member of the board of directors, presented a proposal:

Since 2020, staff annually recalibrates the Temporary Price Mark-up increase until the Coop's finances reach break-even level. Let's rethink its purpose and its policy, and let's discuss alternative ways to break-even, enabling staff to terminate the temporary mark-up.

The presentation discussed the Coop's finances and the markup and posed questions about alternative methods to increase Coop revenue and what the Coop could do if we started to break even.

Membership asked questions and discussed the proposal. GM Joe Szladek explained that the GCs have been able to adjust the markup between 21% and 25% since the March 2023 GM; that the markup is adjusted for loss, i.e. if 1.5% of broccoli ends up composted when the markup is 25% then the markup on broccoli is 26.5%; and that changing the markup would be dangerous to the sustainability of the coop. He also mentioned the possibility of joining Too Good To Go to bring in additional revenue. GC Elinoar Astrinsky clarified that at other groceries, the markup can be 50% or 100% but there are loss leaders and that a new store would cost \$20M according to the second location committee.

Chair Maribeth Batcha clarified that members can use the "Point of Information" part of General meeting rules.

Presentation of Minutes

Secretary Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones presented the minutes of the January 27, 2026 GM for approval. Meeting minutes were approved by general consent.

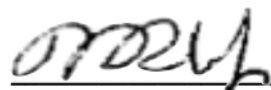
Board of Directors' Meeting

Brandon West chaired the Board of Directors' meeting. All board members were present: Tim Hospedar, Joe Szladek, and Lynn Husum were present in person; Tess Brown-Lavoie and Keyian Vafai attended virtually.

All members of the board voted in favor of accepting the advice of the members on the minutes of the January 27, 2026 General Meeting.

There were no other Board actions.

The meeting concluded at 9:12 PM.



Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones, Secretary
Park Slope Food Coop
Brooklyn, NY