

French Broad Food Co-op

Annual Owners' Meeting

November 14, 2024

The meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting began at 6:00 PM

Board members present: Terra Marshall (Co-President), Andrea Burkins (Co-President), Clare Schwartz (Treasurer), Jamie Carson, Lulu Edmonds (Secretary), Buffy Ford, and Tricia Baehr, and Marielle Angell.

Others Present: Bobby Sullivan (General Manager), Amy Zimmerman (Board Assistant), and 29 Co-op Owners (we did not have a quorum).

Agenda overview

Welcome to the Owners

Andrea welcomed all attendees. She expressed appreciation for their participation in the cooperative's governance.

Andrea shared a brief history of the French Broad Co-op, noting its founding in 1975 and its continued success at fifty years of operation.

She acknowledged the challenges of recent years, including the pandemic and Hurricane Helene and reaffirmed the Co-op's commitment to community support.

Board Introductions and Transitions

Terra Marshall discussed board member transitions. She announced that four new board members had joined as of August: Marielle Angell, Tricia Baehr, Jamie Carson, and Buffy Ford.

Board members participated in a retreat earlier in the month.

The board expressed gratitude to outgoing President Christa Hamilton for her leadership and service. Her contributions were recognized as instrumental in shaping the current board.

Board members introduced themselves and shared their current role and responsibilities.

General Manager's Report — Presented by Bobby Sullivan

Store Operations and Storm Response

- The store remained operational throughout the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.
- Staff received extra storm pay in recognition of their hard work during the disaster.

Business Performance and Growth

- The store has record sales and improved operational efficiency.
- Bobby presented a detailed finance report.
- Sales growth is exceptional.
- The store ranks in the top 25% of all Co-ops nationally.
- A patronage rebate was approved for owners, issued as store credit.
- The recent truckload sale generated \$19,000, the highest yet.
- The Co-op also supplies local restaurants, which now represent 10% of total sales.

Facilities and Expansion

- New lighting installed.
- Store expansion will double its current size.
- Built a kitchen and produce prep room in the warehouse.
- Warehouse expansion underway.

- Lower parking lot has been paved.
- Removed the walk-in cooler, replaced it with a new grocery aisle.
- The bulk department will occupy the rear of the store.
- Added two new freezers and a new deli case.
- Produce department repainted and fitted with new lighting.
- Exterior improvements include a lighted sign and new signage above the entrance.

Staffing and Training

- No hiring difficulties; the store remains fully staffed.
- Staff received a bonus and a new benefit on special orders and Co-op Basics.
- There is a new staff break room and restroom.
- There was 100% participation in the staff survey.
- Staff received professional development opportunities including: Hood Tour (Black history tour of Asheville), Narcan training, and “101 Gender and Sexuality” training by Youth Outright.

Programs and Marketing

- Co-op Basics Program relaunched: over 100 staple items at everyday low prices.
- FBFC-branded canvas bags reintroduced.
- New Ownership 10% off Co-op Deals benefit.
- New ball caps, t-shirts and canvas bags.
- The store moved into its current location on November 19, 1990.
- Marketing focus on Loyalty-Bot, an automated coupon program:
 - 10,000 coupons sent to members.
 - 500 coupons redeemed, driving \$50,000 in sales.
- Additional marketing support for Democracy Now through WPM and Asheville FM.

Community and Sales Initiatives

- The Double-Up Food Bucks program lost grant funding; the Co-op now self-funds it.
- Fundraiser held to sustain the program; all participants were granted ownership.
- Donations continue to support the Double-Up Food Bucks initiative.

Terra highlighted the Bylaws and how they work.

Andrea Burkins encouraged Owners to run for the Board. Nine candidates ran for the Board in the elections in 2024.

Clare reviewed comments and messages in the group chat.

The meeting adjourned.