

Application Form for the Franklin Community Co-op Board of Directors

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Member #: **2598**

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Current occupation: **psychiatric rehabilitation counselor**

Why do you wish to serve on the Board?

I'm seeking to extend my service. I believe my five years of accumulated experience, skills & knowledge (enhanced by attending yearly all-day workshops, four national and numerous regional conferences, nearby co-ops' Board meetings, and reading many books and articles) qualify me to responsively and effectively represent ownership.

What do you see as the significance of the co-op and what is your relationship to the co-op/that significance in the community?

I love co-ops; FCC's been a central part of my life since my partner & I moved here in 2002, largely because of Green Fields Market. Co-ops are a transformative economic model, just fundamentally different: collectively owned and inherently local, because the owners use the services (consumer co-ops) or are the employees (worker co-ops). Co-ops also stand out in our competitive society through Cooperative Principle #6: "Cooperation among Cooperatives". Our area is rich with co-ops of various types, with enough density to form the umbrella Neighboring Food Co-op Association (of which we're a founding member), expanding cooperative impact and influence.

How has your work/life experience taught you the general skills listed below?

Being an effective Board member requires these general skills and qualities:

- *Interest in serving FCC, commitment to its mission and values.*
FCC's mission and values are essential to my daily life and worldview.
- *Ability to effectively discuss complex goals and future implications of decisions.*
Professionally, I assist in the development of individuals' life goals, frequently weighing short- and long-term implications in decision-making. I've also been actively involved in broader goal-development and decision-making within the agency I work for and as part of our union's bargaining team.
- *Ability to read financial statements.*
Though *still* not my strongest area, my Board service (including ongoing training) has significantly increased my financial literacy, ability to discern relevant data and to ask prudent clarifying questions.
- *Communication and group process skills.*
Work and training in human services (42 years, two stints in grad school) has developed my communication and group process skills, including the capacity to practice mindfulness in stressful situations. These skills have been further enhanced by my participation in multiple town committees (see below).

- *Understanding of and commitment to Board requirements for confidentiality.*
Respect for and the discipline to honor confidentiality is an essential and integral aspect of my work in the mental health field, as well as my Board service.
- *Ability to meet time commitment of 5-9 hours per month.*
The past four years I've been honored to serve as Board President, and able to successfully manage the additional time commitment required of that role.
- *Commitment to learning about and becoming competent w/ Policy Governance.*
I have become well-versed in policy governance (see below).

Which of the following specialized skills or other community/organizational experience would you bring to your board service? Board members should bring three or more: business experience, retail or wholesale (especially grocery); experience working with complex organizations; experience with real estate acquisitions; labor relations and/or personnel management experience; marketing experience; financial analysis and/or investment experience; leadership and group facilitation skills; other board of directors experience; other co-op experience; experience with food growing or preparation.

- I've worked at Clinical & Support Options for 15 years in several roles and sites (Respite counselor/clinician, outreach). Despite my front line status, I've actively participated in partnering with management on programmatic plans and changes. My additional role as Human Rights Officer (15 years at CSO, 30 years overall) places me in the complicated position of asserting/advocating for clients' rights in relation to co-workers' conduct and management policy, while maintaining good boundaries and good relations.
- I've participated in labor relations as a member of my union's bargaining team.
- I've had opportunity through my work and training to develop my group facilitation skills. In rehabilitation/recovery, group process is grounded in the principles of mutual respect, transparency, and empowerment. Serving as Board President for four years (plus training and consultation specific to this role) have honed my servant-leadership skills. My facilitation and leadership skills have been further enhanced by opportunities to serve as Chair on other committees (see below).
- From 2005-09 I served on the Board of Directors of the unsuccessful effort to create the Greenfield Mercantile community-owned discount clothing store. Despite the discouraging outcome, this was a learning experience as far as recognizing the gap that is necessary to bridge between idealized vision and practical implementation (solid business plan, adequate capitalization).
- Since moving to Greenfield I've served on a number of town committees: Tree Committee, Commission on Disability Access (Chair), Master Plan Advisory Committee, Master Plan Transportation Subcommittee (Chair), Library Advisory Committee, Community Development Block Grant RFP review working group. Current: Planning Board, "Sustainable Greenfield" [Master Plan] Implementation Committee, FRTA Transit Advisory Committee (Chair).
- When I lived in Boston I was a member-owner of the Harvest Food Co-op.

After reading the enclosed article, "Policy Governance and the Role of the Board," do you have any questions, concerns, or comments about Policy Governance?

I'm very familiar with Policy Governance and find it effective. The "Ends" capture the spirit of our larger values and priorities and the 'means' (Executive Limitation policies) help to frame a healthy Board/General Manager working relationship. I have observed there is some risk this process can become static or passive. It therefore requires discipline and vigilance on the part of the Board to monitor/supervise the GM (a core responsibility the Board fulfills on behalf of ownership) with sharp attention, and to be alert to notice when a policy needs to be changed. Over the last few years we've also built more "strategic conversations" into our monthly agendas -- opportunities for 'safe' dynamic discussions on important topics that respect the Board/GM boundary required by Policy Governance while maximizing synergy and collaboration.

Is there anything else, relevant or irrelevant, that you would like us to know about you?

- I love downtowns, a wondrous blend of civic and commercial activity in a public space. It's vital to me that both of our stores are in downtowns; I'd personally prefer that we alter the third bullet of our Ends ("The co-op will provide a central place for the members and community to congregate and strengthen the social fabric of our community") to specify that any FCC store will be in a downtown.
- I'm an avid cyclist (how I usually visit McCusker's) as well as being a zealous advocate for all non-automotive modes of transportation. One benefit of a downtown store is that it can be reached via multimodal means of transport, and therefore accessible to the broadest spectrum of potential shoppers/owners.