



Caledonia  Food Co-op

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

A YEAR OF PASSION, PURPOSE, AND PROGRESS

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PHASE 3 FUNDRAISING

TO MAKE **OUR BUILDING INTO OUR CO-OP,**

GIVE TODAY!



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REFLECTIONS FROM ERIC SKOVSTED, BOARD CHAIR

The Co-op's incredible year continues. The story of our journey to purchase the building and the outpouring of community support we received along the way is always front-page news. But today, I would like to focus--for a moment--on the importance of this meeting to the cooperative process. The Annual Meeting is fundamentally an election--more on that soon. The board members you elected last year, and the year prior, all made the decision to purchase the building and raised the money to see it through. This meeting and the election that accompanies it will have a significant impact on the path the Co-op charts over the next few years.

We will welcome our new board shortly, but first I want to acknowledge that Margaret Healey, Hannah Wigginton, and I are all leaving the board as our current three-year terms end. Scott Campbell will also be leaving as his one-year interim appointment ends. Margaret has anchored the Co-op as the treasurer for over five years, donating hundreds of hours to the cause. Hannah has worked to establish best governance, had a hand in so much of our communications and outreach, and is our resident expert in the national and regional co-op support services. Scott has lent his energy and expertise to all areas from fundraising to building design to governance. Thank you, Margaret, Hannah, and Scott, for your service to the Co-op! All of us will continue to work on the project through roles on subcommittees or in other capacities.

We received 22 applications for 5 available board positions this year. With so many applicants, we created a vetting process to narrow down the field, so a meaningful election could be held. This level of interest in board service is pretty much unheard of in co-op circles and is yet another indicator of the enthusiasm our membership has for the project.

It is important to note that the election of board members at the annual meeting is fundamental to Co-op governance. It is through this vote that member owners shape the direction of the Co-op. Board members elected last year played a pivotal role in securing the new building. Thank you to all the candidates who were willing to serve and congratulations to our new board members.

Following the Annual Meeting, the new board will select officers: chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer. Both Margaret (as former treasurer) and I (as former chair) will do whatever we can to ease the transition for the new officers.



REFLECTIONS CONTINUED...

I also want to take a moment to thank some of our most valuable partners. Board member Jay Craven and Kingdom County Productions led the fundraising for the building purchase. Jay's hard work and experience were instrumental to the success of our campaign.

Additionally, the Littleton Co-op, long a huge resource and supporter of our Co-op, made a significant investment in the NH Community Loan fund, which helped us secure our bridge financing. Ed King, general manager of the Littleton Co-op, has provided constant advice and encouragement, even writing our business plan and creating the first draft of the store's floor plan.

There are so many more to thank: NVDA, VEDA, NHCLF, and of course all the individuals and businesses who generously stepped up to help us secure the building.

The immediate next steps for our co-op include hiring a general manager, a project manager, and an architect to plan and price store build out. We also expect to receive our final corrective action plan as part of the Phase I and Phase II environmental reviews and will then undertake the necessary remediation steps. Additionally, the project financing stack is still a puzzle of moving pieces as we continue to apply for grants and loans and plan a Fall 2024 fundraising campaign. Currently, we hope to open the store in Spring 2026.

Members should know that we are exploring a potential short-term use of the space by LINK and are open to other ways to bring the community into the building during this pre-construction window. We are undertaking some small cleaning projects to get ready for these events and installing surveillance cameras to help combat the graffiti problem.

Coming right up, we are looking forward to seeing everyone at the 🍓 Strawberry Festival on 6/22 🍓! A celebration is certainly in order!

Here's to another year of community, growth, and Co-op success!

Eric Skovsted
Caledonia Food Co-op Board Chair



TIMELINE: JUNE '23-MAY '24

June-August 2023:

- Co-op holds 4th annual meeting in June, electing 5 new board members.
- Town of St. Johnsbury awards us grant funds to hire a project manager.
- Launch of Phase 2 of our capital campaign to acquire the building at 502 Railroad St. (former Walgreens).

September-November 2023:

- Co-op raises \$350,000+ in just over 5 weeks and makes first non-refundable option payment to building owner, followed by the second non-refundable option payment in October
- Board votes to expand and adds 2 more members.
- Littleton Co-op assists with developing a business plan and accounting systems
- State of Vermont approves the offering of \$1,000,000 in preferred stock shares; celebration and offering launch at the Ray Vega concert.
- Co-op retains Karen Geraghty as the project manager.

December 2023-February 2024:

- Phase 2 environmental testing performed, awaiting results.
- Explore bridge funding options to purchase property and commission appraisal.
- Preferred shares outreach begins with the hiring of a team of fundraising coordinators.
- Phase 2 fundraising is in full swing, including two member house parties, raising approximately \$50,000, along with several match opportunities. Over \$200,000 raised in February alone.

March-May 2024:

- Fundraising continues as the Co-op gets some publicity from the Neighboring Food Co-op Association, *The Caledonian-Record*, and WCAX.
- **On April 10, 2024, the Co-op officially purchases the building at 502 Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury!**
- Co-op is awarded the Bill Gessner Startup Food Co-op Award at the CCMA Convention in Portland, ME.
- The Board begins to strategize around Phase 3 of fundraising with a focus on hiring a general manager, renovating the space, and purchasing equipment.



Current Membership				
STEP 5				
1500				
1400				
1300				
STEP 4				
1200				
1100				
1000				
STEP 3				
900				
800				
700				
600				
500				
400				
300				
200				
100				
STEP 1				
0				

STEPS TO OPENING THE CALEDONIA FOOD CO-OP

1 ORGANIZE 2019-2021

2 GROW 2021-2022

3 PLAN 2023-2024

4 IMPLEMENT 2024-2025

5 OPEN! 2025

- ✓ Organize & hold community meetings
- ✓ Incorporate the organization
- ✓ Kick off ownership drive
- ✓ Hold first Annual Meeting
- ✓ Elect first Board of Directors
- ✓ Conduct preliminary market study
- ✓ Financial proforma created
- ✓ Assess community capacity
- ✓ Double ownership from organize stage
- ✓ Board votes on store feasibility
- ✓ Acquire option for site
- ✓ Announce selected site
- ✓ Kick off owner preferred shares drive
- ✓ Secure selected site with contingencies
- ✓ Purchase Building
- Conduct owner loan & preferred shares drive
- Finalize store design
- Set up vendor relationships
- Apply for grants and secure any bank lending needed
- General Manager search
- Select contractor & begin construction
- Finalize construction
- GM to hire/train staff
- Install equipment
- Order and stock inventory
- Celebrate store opening!



TWO-YEAR FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	2023	2022
Donated Capital Income	\$ 21,895.92	\$ -
Grant Income	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Total Income	\$ 96,895.92	\$ 2,000.00
Gross Profit	\$ 96,895.92	\$ 2,000.00
Total Expenses	\$ 80,497.61	\$ 4,768.00
Net Operating Income	\$ 16,398.31	\$ (2,768.00)
Total Other Income	\$ 5,019.27	\$ -
Net Income	\$ 21,417.58	\$ (2,768.00)
Current Assets	\$ 141,255.69	\$ 56,058.84
Earnest Money Deposit	\$ 350,000.00	\$ -
Total Assets	\$ 491,255.69	\$ 56,058.84
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 39,902.60	\$ 1,368.00
Accrued Interest	\$ 3,926.67	\$ -
Promissory Notes Payable	\$ 296,950.00	\$ -
Total Liabilities	\$ 340,779.27	\$ 1,368.00
Equity	\$ 150,476.42	\$ 54,690.84
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 491,255.69	\$ 56,058.84



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ADAM NORWOOD
Comms & Outreach and Fundraising



ELI EMERSON
Building and Sources & Uses



ERIC SKOVSTED
Board Chair, Building, Sources & Uses, and Governance



HANNAH WIGGINTON
Comms & Outreach and Governance



JAMES SWEENEY
Building, Comms & Outreach and Governance



JAY CRAVEN
Fundraising and Sources & Uses



KARINA WEISS
Comms & Outreach



KATY SMITH
Board Secretary and Comms & Outreach



MARGARET HEALEY
Board Treasurer and Fundraising



MARK CLOUGH
Sources & Uses



PETER SCHWEIGERT
Building and Sources & Uses



SCOTT CAMPBELL
Building and Sources & Uses



THE YEAR IN PICTURES



8/2023: The community gathers for a special meeting at the Fairbanks Museum to hear about the option to purchase the Walgreens building and the need for community support.



10/2023: Hannah & Eric (with a member) compete in the Do North Pitch Competition. We won the Audience Choice award!



11/2023: Adam & Mark answer questions and generate support at the Ray Vega concert.



11/2023: Co-op and jazz enthusiasts celebrate with the Ray Vega quintet.



12/2023: Karina brings some Co-op light to the St. J Sparkles! celebration



1/2024: Hannah & Eric present at the St. J Distillery to the Young Professionals Network.



2/2024: Jay Craven speaks at a special meeting at the Athenaeum to inspire participation in Phase 2 fundraising.



4/10/2024: We did it, Co-op community! Members of the Board gather on the day of purchase at OUR BUILDING at 502 Railroad St., St. J.



6/2024: The Co-op is awarded the Bill Gessner Startup Food Co-op Award at the CCMA Convention in Portland, ME.



2024: Panels by artist Tara Goreau adorn our windows. What's next? Support us and help make our building into OUR CO-OP!