



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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IN MEMORIAM MARGARET HEALEY



Please join us in remembering Margaret Healey, former Board member (one of the originals!) and Treasurer, who passed away in March of this year.

Of Margaret, former Board Secretary David Hale wrote, *"On a sunny mud season week day, the original 4 members of the Caledonia Co-op Board, traversed the hilly ruts up Crepeault Hill to sign our articles of incorporation. After two false starts and a few years passing, the idea of a Co-op in St. Johnsbury moved toward becoming a reality. It is fitting that we signed these documents in Margaret Healey's home. Margaret provided financial and legal knowledge as well as dogged research skills that gave us the bedrock upon which to build this incredible project. The group at this time, had many responsibilities, relying on each other for timely, pertinent information. Things moved quickly, but Margaret kept us on track with her amazing ability to have the clarifying document at her fingertips. If we got in the weeds, Margaret was the voice of reason and caution while keeping her eye on the future. She made sure all the I's were dotted and the T's were crossed.*

Margaret didn't share much about her incredible accomplishments prior to moving to St. Johnsbury. She was just quietly confident, with no time for nonsense. All of this, with a great sense of humor and a deep belief in the work we were doing. I loved working with Margaret. When we are celebrating on opening day, she will be in the forefront of my thoughts."

And Eric Skovsted, former Board Chair, shared the following about Margaret: *"'I need a project.' That was how Margret described her motivation for joining the Co-op effort during one of its earliest visioning sessions. And boy did she find one! I had no idea that we were beginning a six year journey on the board together, but I think Margaret might have. During our six years, I got to know Margaret and her family and many other board members who I never would have had occasion to work with outside the Co-op. Success in our efforts to start a co-op was always going to be a distant and difficult outcome, so for me, much of the satisfaction came from working with other people on the project. Margaret's steady commitment inspired me and others as each annual meeting came and went.*

Starting a co-op is such a long process that hugely significant changes occur in our own lives. Some board members had kids graduate from college and high school. Others changed jobs. Margaret witnessed the birth of two grandchildren during her time on the board, milestones that made her continued devotion to the project all the more remarkable.

A little known fact about Margaret and the Co-op: the five original directors signed the incorporation papers while seated



IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED

...around her dining room table. However, this bit of trivia is probably the least significant of Margaret's contributions to the project. If people who start co-op's offer whatever energy, talent, and patience they have available, the co-op generally devours it and asks for more. The amazing thing about Margaret is that she always had more to give.

In my opinion, Margaret was always the most prepared person at any board meeting. She was firm in her opinions, stood up for herself if challenged by another board member, and was VERY excited about the Co-op's purchase of the former Walgreens property. I remember her glowing smile as we celebrated: 'We did it!' she said. Yes we did, Margaret, but we couldn't have done it without you.

Margaret carried the Co-op through its evolution from an idea to a business. And she did it on all levels. She was both our CFO and our bookkeeper, leading high level decisions on things like financial controls, while also signing the checks and making deposits. She set up and managed our banking infrastructure and helped put us in a position to receive credit card memberships. She built a relationship with the Littleton coop where their bookkeeping department mentored our bookkeeping department (which was Margaret), she engaged the CPA firm we still use and began the process of filing and paying taxes. She prepared financial statements for the board and annual meetings. And when it came time for the preferred shares she clerked the entire offering through the purchase of the building—a momentous task. And she did it all as a volunteer board member.

When Katy Smith shared the news of Margaret's passing with me I was shocked and saddened by her family's tremendous loss. I am grateful to the board for the opportunity to remember a wonderful, if unlikely, friendship, and to share Margaret's many contributions to the Co-op. Thank you so much, Margaret! We miss you!"

Without Margaret Healey, the Co-op would not be where it is today. Please pause with us to recognize and honor Margaret's firm and steady leadership, her tremendous work ethic and dedication, her precise and conscientious contributions, her quietly fierce way of doing right by the Co-op, and at the heart, just her passion and love for this project. We are indebted and deeply grateful to Margaret for her service, wisdom, work, and care. Our thoughts and love are with Margaret's family.



The Caledonia Food Co-op Board



2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Brandolyn Bradley



Jay Craven



Mark Clough



Eli Emerson



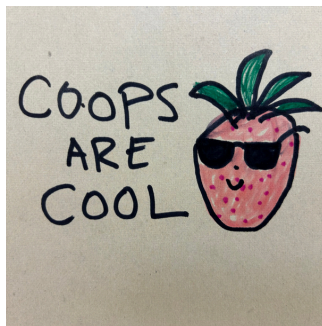
Ann Helmus, Vice Chair



Jim Levison, Treasurer



Adam Norwood



It's true!



Pete Schweigert, Chair



Katy Smith, Secretary



James Sweeney



Karina Weiss



REFLECTIONS FROM PETER SCHWEIGERT, BOARD CHAIR

Fellow members of the Caledonia Food Cooperative,

We on the Board often find ourselves fielding some version of the question “how is the Co-op doing?” This is a question we are always happy to have asked and comes with the territory of being entrusted to help lead this significant community effort! As I think back on this past year, and particularly the past several months, my answer to that question has shifted as the path forward in terms of the work needed to be done, the people who will do that work, and the way we will pay for that work have all started to come together. I am happy to share here that the way in which we, as a community, are moving together to create a business in the heart of St. Johnsbury that will be strong and sustainable and add to the vibrancy and economic and food system resiliency of our local community is rapidly becoming clearer.

This past year has been incredibly busy as we have worked to finalize the development plans, build a viable financial stack, and prepare the organization itself to transition to its next phases of implementing those development plans and then functioning as a working business. This work has been driven by your Co-op Board, all of whom have volunteered massive amounts of their time over this past year to keep this project moving forward. Thank you to Katy, Jay, Jim, Brandolyn, Adam, Ann, Mark, James, Eli, and Karina – when the story of the success of the Caledonia Food Cooperative is told, it will be entirely as a result of the past and future volunteers who have given so much to make it happen.*

Thank you as well to NVDA, the Town of St. J, and USDA, all of whom have been instrumental in providing financial and material support for our activities over this past year, which have included contracting with our project manager Chris Gilbert and with National Cooperative Grocers’ (NCG) Store Development Services. Chris has brought the co-op start-up development and co-op management experience and expertise that the rest of us lack and has been working on nailing down our renovation and equipment needs and costs, and NCG has helped us to develop a floor plan, full equipment list, and a pro forma that models the sustainability of the business based on that floor plan. We have also been working with a community-based lending coalition to secure the long-term debt for the project.

And even as this planning work has happened, we’ve also been working to use our assets to meet our mission of community benefit, even before the store is open. We’ve made our building



REFLECTIONS CONTINUED...

available over the past year to numerous local organizations as well as hosted the public in the building ourselves, and it has been great to catch a glimpse of the potential of this space as a real community-owned and community-benefiting facility.

As everyone is well aware, these are trying times for development projects, with uncertainty from the Federal level roiling the financial, construction, and equipment markets. In response to that, we have been working hard on scaling back our plans and our costs as much as possible without affecting the operational plans and projections of the store. Right now we are projecting our total project costs, including the building purchase and holding costs, to be approximately \$7M. After our long-term loans, grants and cash on hand, and the equity we have already put in, this leaves us with approximately \$1.5M that we still need to raise in order to execute this project. While that is a big number, it is one that I feel really good about. We have several grant applications under consideration right now and more planned. Other sources being pursued include tax credits, new member equity, efficiency incentives, and more. And as has been the case at every step along the Co-op's now 6-year journey, local support is going to be key in this final step, as we are also executing a final capital campaign to raise the needed funds through investments and donations.

Throughout this past year, it has been both the support and investment of the community and the benefits of this project for our community that have been keeping us on the Board going. A vibrant store bringing thousands of shoppers a week into downtown St. J, creating 38 new, good jobs at its opening, supporting our local farmers and food producers, keeping and recycling all profits into the local community, and providing us all with a retail source of local, natural, and healthy foods, is a beautiful dream, and one that we are on the verge of realizing together.

Peter Schweigert
Caledonia Food Cooperative Board Chair

**The rest of the Board wishes to sneak in a big THANK YOU to Pete! Pete continues to give countless hours of thought, energy, and work to make this project happen. We are so grateful for Pete's dedication, time, and leadership! Thank you, Pete!*

-The other members of the Board



JUNE '24-MAY '25 HIGHLIGHTS

June-August 2024:

- 5th Annual Meeting held in June, electing 5 new board members.
- 1st Annual Strawberry Festival held at our building
- Board generates and issues RFPs for Architectural and Project Management Services.
- Board develops 3-year strategic plan
- Contract entered with NCG Store Development Services for store design and pro forma financial projection
- \$200K USDA Rural Business Development Grant awarded for professional services costs

September-November 2024:

- Chris Gilbert hired as project manager
- Building utilized by community groups for events
- Co-op's non-profit status discovered and confirmed by Vermont SOS
- Contractor Bill Graves retained to assist in building design decisions
- CPG Enterprises hired to provide Capital Raise Feasibility Study and other services
- Preferred Shares Offering renewed

December 2024-February 2025:

- 10-year tax stabilization agreement awarded by Town of St. Johnsbury
- New logo and brand kit developed by Stephen Kenary of Magic Wolf Co.
- 1st Annual Caledonia Food Co-op Chili Cook-Off held at our building
- Other community events held at our building
- Store floor plan developed, pro forma in progress
- Co-op bylaws update proposal

March-May 2025:

- Unveiling of new Co-op mural by Larry and Ricky Golden
- Patrick Kane hired for architectural services
- Most recent floor layout completed (see pg. 10)
- More community events!
- Estimates/quotes received for renovation work and equipment
- Discussions with lenders to secure long-term debt
- State approves finalized Environmental Corrective Action Plan
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with St. Johnsbury Academy's Career & Technical Education program for role in renovation work



TWO-YEAR FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

	Year to Date	2024	2023
Donated Capital Income	\$3,609	\$84,037	\$21,896
Grant Income	\$0	\$164,400	\$75,000
Total Income	\$3,609	\$248,437	\$96,896
Operating Expenses	\$111,447	\$297,944	\$80,498
Net Operating Income (Loss)	(\$107,838)	(\$49,507)	\$16,398
Other Income	\$915	\$4,315	\$5,019
Net Income (Loss)	(\$106,923)	(\$45,192)	\$21,418
Current Assets	\$602,116	\$786,216	\$141,256
Fixed Assets	\$2,201,470	\$2,201,620	\$0
Other Assets	\$10,370	\$20,740	\$350,000
Total Assets	\$2,813,956	\$3,008,576	\$491,256
Current Liabilities	\$1,136	\$18,984	\$60,000
Other Liabilities	\$0	\$0	\$3,926
Promissory Notes	\$250,500	\$250,500	\$296,950
Loans	\$1,820,754	\$1,897,403	\$0
Total Liabilities	\$2,072,390	\$2,166,887	\$340,947
Preferred Shares	\$750,000	\$746,000	\$60,000
Membership Shares	\$136,000	\$133,200	\$83,700
Other Equity	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$5,400
Retained Earnings	(\$149,834)	(\$42,911)	(\$1,209)
Total Equity	\$741,566	\$841,689	\$150,309
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$2,813,956	\$3,008,576	\$491,256



PROJECTED PROJECT TIMELINE

June-August 2025

- General Contractor selected and contract signed
- Architectural drawings approved and permits received
- Funding commitments received
- Internal and external environmental remediation completed
- Construction begins with demolition and new electric services installed
- Refrigeration cases ordered

September-December 2025

- SJA Career & Technical Education program work: electrical & plumbing.
- Construction: framing, doors, drywall, loading dock, overhead door, HVAC units replaced, ductwork repairs
- Equipment ordered

January-March 2026

- Construction: fire alarm installation, painting, hood installed, refrigeration installed, floors sealed & epoxied
- General Manager hired

April-June 2026

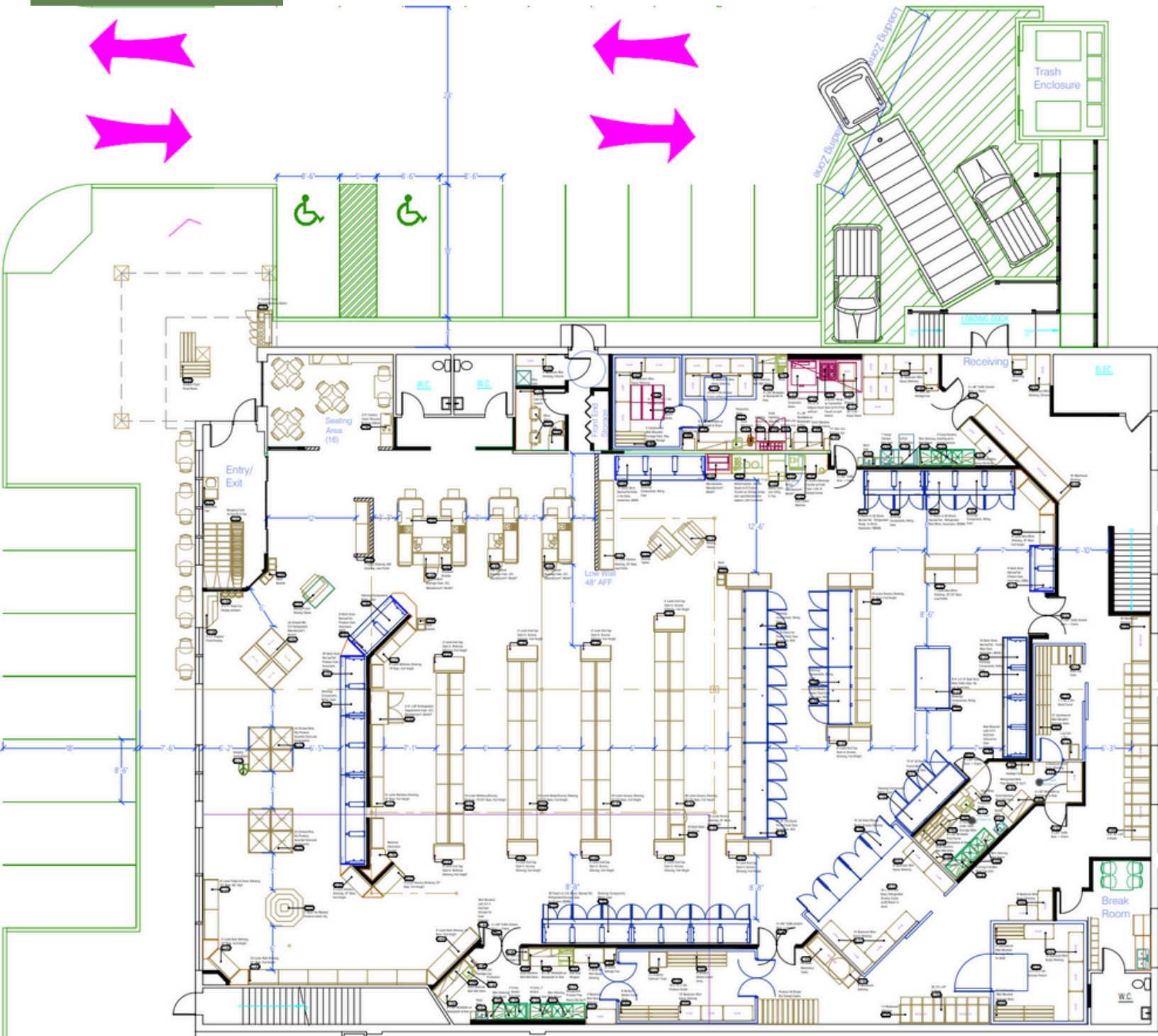
- Equipment received and installed
- Hiring and training for additional store positions
- Store stocked and fully cleaned

July 2026

- Store opens!



DRAFT FLOOR PLAN





PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Building Purchase	\$2,200,000
Professional Services (project management, architectural & engineering, design, business services, legal)	\$457,000
Renovation Costs (interior, exterior, environmental remediation)	\$1,083,937
Equipment Costs	\$1,254,931
Pre-Opening Costs (inventory, staffing, promotions)	\$493,935
Building and Financing Costs (taxes, utilities, insurance, financing fees, bridge loan interest)	\$622,081
Working Capital	\$550,000
Contingency (10% less building and working capital)	\$390,000
TOTAL	\$7,086,894



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

**GIVE
TODAY!**





THE YEAR IN PICTURES



June '24: Thanks to our vendors--like the Tack Room Bar--who joined us, all decked out, for the 1st Annual Strawberry Festival!



June '24: Strawberry lovers unite at the 1st Annual Strawberry Festival.



June '24: Sweetness abounds at the 1st Annual Strawberry Festival.



October '24: The Co-op happily welcomes PM Chris Gilbert.



Fall '24: Super volunteer Hannah Wigginton gets her vacuum on at building clean-up day.



February '25: Like Peregrine, you too can have a t-shirt featuring our new logo!



February '25: Our contestants brought the heat to our Chili Cook-Off!



February '25: Victory in a bowl! These Chili Cook-Off contestants had the recipe for success.



April '25: Larry Golden adds the finishing touches to the Co-op's new mural.



April '25: Thanks to artists Ricky and Larry Golden for our mural. And we mean it: join us at the Co-op! :)