

## BOARD NOMINEE QUESTIONNAIRE

Cathy Neal  
Shelburne Falls

January 29, 2026



### **1. Why do you wish to serve on the Board?**

We relocated to Shelburne 18 months ago and joined FFC even before actually moving in. Becoming a member of a local food co-op was a priority especially given my commitment to and experience with food co-ops and other local food initiatives. I'd always anticipated taking a meaningful role. With the upcoming expansion and relocation, I believe this is the right time to actively contribute my knowledge and skills to the future of our co-op.

### **2. What do you see as the significance of the Co-op and what is your relationship to the Coop / that significance in the community?**

I am impressed with the co-op as a place of value through the food offered, the commitment to locally grown & produced food and sustaining and broadening our community. Having attended recent BOD meetings, I was especially grateful that the co-op proactively stepped up when food access programs were threatened. I am ready to participate in impactful ways expanding and deepening access to healthy food and the associated benefits, community well-being; existing successes and new ventures that grow Green Fields' role across our communities.

### **3. Work/Life Experience as basis of the general skills below:**

My interest in joining the Franklin Community Co-op Board has been a work in progress for decades; starting, managing and participating in warehouse, retail and trucking food co-ops. Trained as a landscape architect, I am an activist, having helped develop creative solutions to community needs including founding a community wide local food initiative, co-creating a design/ build literacy program for youth and heading up a governance committee to develop measurable goals and objectives for a Boston based planning and site design non-profit.

- **Financial Literacy:** I have managed multi-faceted state and non-profit construction, planning and programming projects that included budgeting, funding and fiscal oversight. Boston University's Certificate of Non-Profit Management program gave me additional financial literacy tools. With the design and building of our home with Wright Builders, my confidence reconciling budgets, work orders & payments was further enhanced.

- **Communication:** In paid & pro-bono work, I have coordinated and facilitated in-person and remote presentations through a variety of roles; board member, consultant & staff for meetings, interviews and community engagement. Permaculture & leadership trainings contributed to my becoming a better listener: working with youth, colleagues, interns as well as public and industry figures. As a teacher, leader and participant these situations have illuminated the value of respectful engagement and finding accessible ways for all to be heard.

- **Time Commitment:** Having been a participant in numerous volunteer/pro-bono board and design/education undertakings, I am prepared to commit to the hours needed to serve on this board.

- **Policy Governance:** This is a great framework. My past board experience necessitated first defining means and measures... I welcome working with these measurable guidelines and appreciate that the BOD, Staff and Co-op members had agreed to this structure.

#### **4. Special Skills to Bring to my Board Service:**

- **Business:** Working with food co-operatives began in college as part of a small team starting an on-campus co-op. After college, I was co-manager of Common Market Co-op, Madison Wi. for several years when it transitioned from a warehouse operation supplying multiple co-ops to a retail storefront operation; managing member-workers work, weekly ordering produce, dairy and dry-goods, community outreach efforts to elderly housing and other under-served members of the community. I was invited to join the board of the Inter-Community Cooperative, a Madison-based trucking and wholesaling co-op as a local co-op representative.

- **Complex Organizations:** As a Project Manager @ Mass Division of Capital Planning I led multi-disciplinary teams with agency representatives, consultants and public officials for a variety of projects across the Commonwealth: State Parks & Recreation, Higher Education Facilities, Child Care and Corrections. I was responsible for coordinating all aspects of the work required to present a program, budget and anticipated timeline to obtain funding beyond planning.

- **Marketing:** Through community outreach, public forums, social media and Grant writing I have promoted programs for organizations including; Bountiful Brookline, a local food initiative, COG Design, community outreach for public landscape designs, Hands in Outreach, an educational fund serving children in Nepal.

- **Leadership/ Group Facilitation:** As noted above.

- **Board Experience:** As noted above. Varied, but generally smaller focused organizations.

- **Co-op Experience:** Multiple settings over decades – as noted above.

- **Food Growing or preparation:** I've grown food for decades in containers, raised beds, community gardens, edible landscapes and volunteered @ Sunset Farm, Amherst. I have grown from seed under lights, with season extenders including cold frames. I am an avid baker & cook.

#### **5. Any thoughts about the Policy Governance approach as described here?**

First impressions – thoughtful, thorough and workable.

I am grateful the framework includes the ability for Staff/Operations to have a means to make adjustments if necessary.

#### **6. Is there anything else to know about you?**

I have always enjoyed bringing people together.

# NOMINATION FORM

Candidate's Name: Cathy R Neal

Candidate's Town or City: Shelburne Falls

Approximate Year Member-Owner Joined: 2024

Nominations for the directors shall be made by petition, signed by at least three member-owners of the Co-op. (Only one signature per member-owner number for this nominee.)

I nominate the above candidate to fill a vacancy on the Franklin Community Cooperative Board:

1. Member-owner name (print): Erin Wilensky

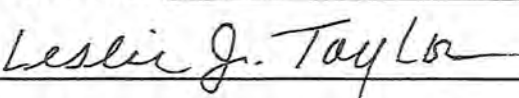
Town or city of residence: Shelburne

Signature: 

Approximate Year member-owner joined: 2014

2. Member-owner name (print): Leslie Taylor

Town or city of residence: Shelburne

Signature: 

Approximate Year member-owner joined: 2003

3. Member-owner name (print): Mara Silver

Town or city of residence: Shelburne

Signature: 

Approximate Year member-owner joined: 2010

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return Form To: BOD Clerk, by October 31, 2025