

2018 FIDDLEHEADS FOOD CO-OP

**ELECTION
INFORMATION
PACKET**

VOTE

The word "VOTE" is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a circular emblem. Inside the circle, there is a stylized green figure with a head that has two spiral-like shapes, resembling a fiddlehead. The figure has a simple body and arms.

WELCOME TO 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

Candidate Statements will be posted in store and online by Saturday, April 28, 2018.

Meet the Candidates at the Annual Meeting - Sunday April 29th at 4PM.

Voting will open at the Annual Meeting. Owners can also vote between 8 AM and 8 PM at the Co-op from Monday April 30th through Friday, May 18, 2018.

Election results will be posted in the store and announced in our newsletter the week of Monday, May 21st.

This packet includes:

Co-op FAQ

Election FAQ

Candidate Questions

Candidate Statements available separately

CO-OP FAQ

What is Fiddleheads?

Fiddleheads is a natural foods consumer co-op owned by over 3,000 community members. We are a full-service grocery store that specializes in local, natural, organic and wholesome food options for those in our community supporting special diets.

What is a Co-op?

A Co-op (short for Cooperative) is a term for a business structure that is collectively owned by and accountable to its members. "One owner, one share, one vote" is the organizing principle of all co-ops. Fiddleheads Food Co-op is guided by a Board of Directors elected by our ownership. The Board of Directors oversees the General Manager who then is responsible for regulating the day-to-day operations of the store.

Who can be an Owner?

Ownership is available to anyone interested in joining the Co-op. Ownership is voluntary, it begins with filling out an application and contributing the first equity payment. At any time an owner has the right to terminate their ownership by submitting a request for an equity refund and forfeiting ownership privileges.

Why be an owner?

You Get a Co-op! A grocery store where you have a voice. Owners have the right to elect their Board of Directors and to attend Board meetings. We also offer exclusive promotion programs, coupons and special events to our owners.

How much does it cost to be an owner?

Fiddleheads ownership is accessible and affordable. Become an owner today for \$25 using the payment plan or pay your equity in full for \$175. The payment plan is an annual equity contribution for six years until the full equity of \$175 is reached.

*Please note a \$5 processing fee is added to all payments.

Do I have to work or volunteer at the Co-op to be an owner?

Not at all. We have a great staff to operate the store. Owners primarily support the store by shopping at the Co-op, investing equity to support the growth of the business and participating in the election of (and running for!) the Board.

ELECTION FAQ

What is the Annual Meeting?

Each year the Board must hold an Annual Meeting. This is an opportunity to hear reports on operations and finances, review issues that affect the Co-op, and facilitate elections to the Board. The Board may also call special meetings of the ownership or hold a meeting in response to a written petition of 5% of the ownership.

How is the Board of Directors Elected?

The Board is composed of nine Directors who serve staggered three-year terms such that one third of the Board is elected each year. Annually, the owners must vote for qualified candidates. Each ownership has one vote.

Who can vote in the election?

All owners are eligible to vote. There is one vote per membership. Please make sure your equity is up to date before voting.

Is Proxy voting allowed?

Yes, a proxy holder may only vote for one proxy and does not have to be a member in order to vote on the Owner's behalf.

Why do we have two sections of the ballot?

Section A of the ballot lists the candidates who are running for the three Board openings.

Section B of the ballot lists the Board member who was appointed to the Board in November 2017 and seeking ratification to fulfill the remaining term ending in 2019.

What if a Director cannot continue to serve?

In the event that a Director leaves the Board for any reason before completing their term, the remaining Board members may appoint a qualified owner to serve the remainder of the vacated term. These appointees will be ratified in the upcoming election cycle by the ownership. If a director is not ratified by the ownership, the seat will be vacated and the remaining Board members can appoint a different owner to the open seat.

ELECTION FAQ

How is the election process determined?

In 2016 we shifted to voting in the store for a few weeks around the Annual Meeting. We went to in-store voting because it allows for a much broader owner participation in the election. Having candidates commit in advance and supply a written statement gives the Owners a better sense of the qualifications and strengths of all the candidates.

We have historically had the Annual Meeting in May but have found that scheduling a time when many can participate is a challenge as the weather warms up. This year we decided to try a date earlier in the year and opted to begin the voting at the Annual meeting and continue the voting for two weeks in the store.

Why are we limited to voting for candidates that only appear on the ballot?

The minimal requirement to be on the ballot as a Board Candidate is to notify the Nominations committee by April 20th and submit a Candidate statement with photo. The candidate statement is important for owners in their decision-making. So Anyone not in compliance with these minimal requirements (e.g. write-in votes) is not eligible, and we have chosen not to record those votes. These are the methods established by the Board in accordance with the Fiddleheads' Bylaws, as they have periodically been amended and ratified by member-owners.

How will we know which candidates won the election?

The results of the election will be tabulated at the end of the voting period. An announcement in the Fern, the co-op's electronic newsletter. Results will also be posted on the Website and in the store by May 21st.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

First Question: Answered by all candidates

Tell us about yourself and what you would bring to the Board (experiences, skills and abilities) that will contribute to Fiddleheads ongoing success.

Second Question: Choice of one

Describe how you would work to revitalize, strengthen and reinforce our Member Owners involvement in the Co-op.

or

Please describe how Board Members could become better “Servant Leaders” for Fiddleheads Owners (characterized by collaboration, trust, empathy and the ethical use of power).

or

In what way(s) can we ensure the Fiddleheads Board of Directors focuses on strategic thinking and long-term visioning for the Co-op?

or

How could you assist our General Manager in strengthening her position of leadership in Southeastern Connecticut and beyond?