



MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION INFO





ANY QUESTIONS?

**CONTACT:
BOARD@MIDDLEBURY.COOP**

This year, your Board recruited among the membership for the three open Board seats, reaching out via all our channels – newsletters, social media, and in-person Q&A sessions on zoom and in the store. Applications for Board candidacy were made available both online in paper form in the store at our Customer Service Desk. We have two incumbent directors excited to continue to work on your behalf in addition to 4 members running during this year's election.

STRONGER TOGETHER





AMANDA WARREN
PRESIDENT



KATE GRIDLEY
VICE PRESIDENT



LYNN DUNTON
TREASURER



ILARIA BRANCOLI
BUSDRAGHI
SECRETARY



NADINE CANTER



ERIN BUCKWALTER



MOLLY ANDERSON



ESTHER THOMAS



OLLIE CULTRARA



**SAMANTHA
LANGEVIN**

The MNFC Board of Directors

The Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors that is elected by its member-owners. The Board is directly accountable to member-owners for all of the activities and accomplishments of the Co-op, including the store. However, the Board does not “micro-manage” the Co-op or its General Manager, but sets policies by which the Co-op (and the Board) are run.

The MNFC Board is responsible for:

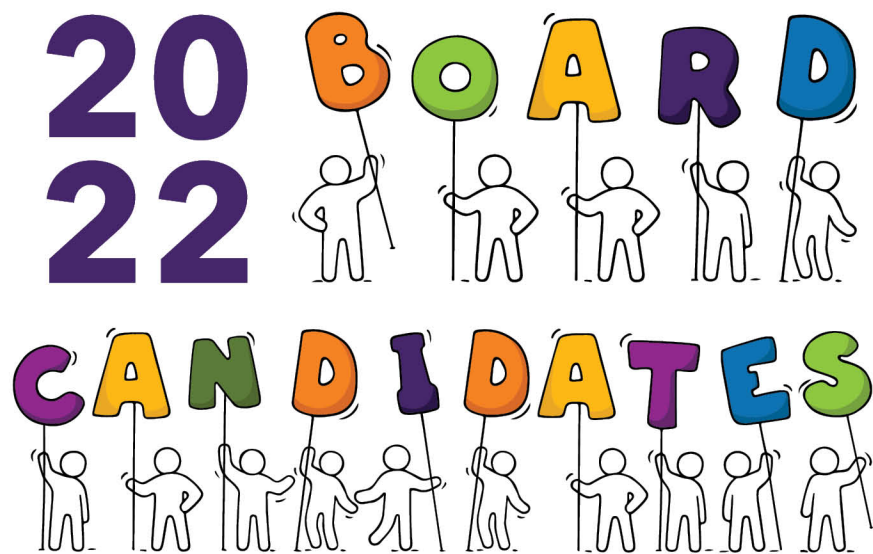
- Developing, monitoring, and revising policies that guide the store to achieve outcomes that are consistent with the members’ values and vision.
- Ensuring (through consistent monitoring) that management achieves goals set by the Board and that the Board operates according to its established processes.
- Acting as a representative for all of the Co-op’s member-owners.

Board members hold their positions for three-year terms, and elections are held every Spring.

How Do I Bring An Issue Before the Board?

We encourage members to be active in their participation.

Contact the Board:
board@middlebury.coop



Candidates were asked to answer the following questions:

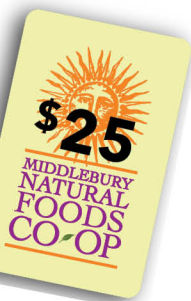
1. Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
2. Briefly describe any experience you have had with cooperatives or not for-profit organizations.
3. What has been your experience working with groups and what is your approach to group dynamics?
4. Is there anything else you would like the membership to know about you?

This year there are 3 available seats on the Board of Directors.

Voting will open at
8AM on May 1ST
and close at
7PM on May 31ST



All voters will be automatically
entered for a chance to win
one of fifty \$25 Co-op Gift Cards!



Election Results will be shared
by **Friday, June 3**, via our website,
social media, and in the store.



she/her/hers

ERIN BUCKWALTER INCUMBENT



I have served on the Middlebury Natural Food Co-op's Board for the past three years and am excited by the prospect of representing our members for another term.

Currently, I am the Chair of our Board Development Committee and also a member of our Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee. I have spent my adult life working and volunteering in the Vermont food system and am passionate about connecting with

people through food and agriculture. I see Co-ops as an integral partner in a sustainable food system and the Middlebury Co-op is key to this vision locally. I have been honored to participate in the democratic processes of our Co-op and to support others in keeping more dollars and decisions local.

Since 2010, I have worked in several different roles at the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), working to build a more just and equitable food system. As a member of our core Administrative Team, I have deep experience with program development and implementation, grant writing and fundraising, strategic planning, and developing organizational policies.

I also have a strong grasp on the statewide food system, having held different leadership positions in the Vermont Farm to Plate Network, including serving on the Steering Committee and co-chairing the Food Access Cross Cutting Team. In addition, I previously served five years on the Vermont Community Garden Network's Board, with two years as Board Chair. In the late 2000s, I volunteered to help start three community gardens in Addison County, including one in Middlebury, and also was a manager for the Bristol Farmers Market.

I have experience working with groups of all sizes and thrive working as part of teams. I like facilitating group processes and also being an active listener. I appreciate open and direct conversations and healthy debate.

My partner and I live in Starksboro with our two sons. In the past, we ran a small pasture-based livestock farm and currently homestead with a large garden, chickens, and a 550-tap sugar bush. I look forward to continuing to use my experience and passion to support our vibrant Co-op community.

he/him/his

GABRIEL COLE



I'm hoping to serve on the BOD at the MNFC to create new like-minded

food and farm community, expand my knowledge about the regional food systems and lend support and guidance to this amazing grocery where I've spent more time than anywhere else since moving home last August.

I was born and raised in this great state but have spent the last 20 years in California. I'm new to Addison County and excited to

participate in the bread basket of VT's thriving agricultural area here. I have worked in food and farming my entire life starting with a year of culinary school at Essex Tech.

I am the CEO of a social impact catering company in Oakland CA called Just Fare. Among many accomplishments I'm most proud of how we pivoted from mostly catering to workplaces to a non-profit model at the start of the pandemic. We have served over 400,000 dignified meals (using organic ingredients and providing living wages and benefits to our staff) since the start of the pandemic. We also paid over \$500,000 to our CBO partner organizations who distributed the food. Just Fare plans to become employee-owned in 2023 and we currently run a rather egalitarian governance structure, have a transparent wage tier and provide unlimited PTO and sick time to all salaried positions.

I have served on multiple non-profit boards including Food Shift and The Berkeley Student Food Collective. I have volunteered countless hours and deeply supported La Cocina, Homies Empowerment and Doof (a children's healthy food media company). I plan to continue growing my food and farming knowledge by turning ten acres of degraded Vergennes clay into an educational permaculture and carbon sequestration farm. I have coached hundreds of food and farming entrepreneurs (often pro-bono) and have engaged with the VT Sustainable Jobs Fund to continue that work here. I believe that food and farm entrepreneurs are the fabric of our food system and have the ability to drastically alter the climate crisis and put us on a trajectory to building healthy soil, people and food systems for generations to come.



I love the co-op! Every visit is exciting for my inner foodie and I would be honored to be a member of the board for a co-op that is an essential part of the Vermont food scene and economy.

I have had the privilege of working for both the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) and Vermont Federal Credit Union (VFCU). While at VHFA, I partnered with local lenders and community leaders like Addison County Community Trust to promote homeownership through affordable mortgage programs. At VFCU, as the Director of Project Management I support the organization and its membership in prioritizing, planning and executing strategic and operational initiatives with the goal of improving the financial lives of our members and local community.

As a project management professional, I am continuously involved in group work. With any group there are stages that occur as a team comes together to agree on a common mission and goals; for me when I join a new team or group I am always an active participant, listener, honor diverse thoughts and seek out different voices.

I was born in Middlebury, the co-op has long been a backdrop to my history, when I was a kid I helped my Mom on volunteer days. I firmly believe that the co-op helped influence the foodie in me! I love to cook, am a dog mom to a golden retriever and a little rescue dog from Puerto Rico, am a big reader, an aspiring writer, a British murder mystery show fan and an on again/off again yogi. I would really enjoy being on the board and supporting the new general manager and the co-op community.



There are several roots to my desire to serve on the Board of Directors of the Middlebury Co-op. I've long loved our co-op, stretching back to my arrival in this community over a decade ago as a student at Middlebury College. Moreover, I am rigorously committed to finding ways to make local food systems more robust and more equitable. I am currently studying at Vermont Law School, where I plan to specialize in food and agriculture policy. Since 2015, I've managed "Eat Vermont" on Instagram - one of the most widely followed social media accounts supporting local restaurants in the Green Mountain State.

At core, I fundamentally believe that good food is preventative medicine. I believe that local food is essential to community resilience. Most of all, I believe access to affordable, healthy food is a human right that our society needs to do a better job of moving toward.

While my direct involvement with nonprofits is somewhat limited, I've served on student government both at Middlebury College and at Vermont Law School. My philosophical approach to decision making and group action has changed a lot this past decade. I admittedly used to hold the mistaken belief that "the best idea should win out", period. It's taken a while to temper my personality, to understand that a slower, collective process allows time for greater and deeper buy-in and consensus. Suffice it to say, I've become a better believer in the value of patience, of empathy. (And, as I'm sure many of you can relate, becoming a parent of a toddler has inspired much of this personal growth!)

As a law student who loves Middlebury, local food, and storytelling, I am confident that I will offer an engaged and unique perspective to the Board of the Middlebury Co-op. Thank you for your consideration.

she/her/hers

JESSE NATHA VENDITUOLI



MNFC has been part of my life for almost as long as I can remember, from bagging bulk raisins as a kid to working as a cashier in the summers in the 90s, a brief turn on the board a decade ago, and taking my own kids shopping with me today. The Co-op community, a commitment to cooperative governance, and healthy, local foods are part of who I am.

During my younger years, I worked at food co-ops and natural food stores in Durango, CO, Corvallis, OR, and Nantucket, MA, then turned my love of food and agriculture into a career as a food writer and researcher. Since then, I have focused on business finance, management and strategic planning. Today, as Strategic Communications Director for a brand design studio, I help organizations around the world articulate and grow momentum around meaningful ideas that will make the world a better place.

My hope now is to give back to the Co-op by contributing those skills and experiences to its future. I'm a natural leader who's equally comfortable organizing and motivating people and working collaboratively in a team. I ask a lot of questions and gather information from all angles, and help synthesize it into consensus-based decisions.

I would like to see the Co-op continue to make itself welcoming to all people, to be a hub for learning and sharing the joy of food, and to be a partner for new and growing businesses in our region. I want the Co-op's success to create opportunity for others, and will work proactively to support long-term food security and livelihoods.

I've lived in Vergennes for 8 years; my daughter is a student at MUMS and my son goes to Bridge School. I love this part of the world, the people here, the food culture of Addison County, and helping businesses I care about thrive. That's why I'd like to serve the community on the Co-op Board. Thanks for considering me, and please be in touch if you'd like to chat.

she/her/hers

AMANDA WARREN INCUMBENT



I have served as President of the MNFC board since July 2021. Since 2016, I have also served as Vice President, Board Development Chair, and as a member of the Search Committee as we hired our new General Manager. In these leadership roles, I have worked closely with the GM – first Glenn Lower and now Greg Prescott – and I have brought a unique

perspective because of my background in collaborative leadership, agriculture, and education.

I am running for another term because I hope to remain as President to support our new GM and our Co-op through this important transition. I have spent the last several months working with the board, Glenn, and Greg to think strategically about this historic moment. Furthermore, I am eager to support our board's JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Committee, and participate in the comprehensive audit of the board's work that we are undertaking through a JEDI lense.

Outside of the Co-op board, I am a mom of three. I have an M.Ed. and I was Co-Director at Bridge School for five years. I bring an empathetic perspective to the Co-op board because at Bridge School I was an employee governed by a board. I have been an MNFC member-owner since I came to Middlebury College in 2008. Both my husband, David Dolginow, co-founder of Shacksbury Cider, and I have worked on local vegetable farms and apple orchards.

We are all familiar with the refrain "voting with your dollars." I choose to spend my money at the Co-op because I believe in this slogan. I choose to be a member of the Board because I similarly believe in the concept of "voting with your time." Being a member of the board allows me to "spend" my time committing to democracy. Wendell Berry writes: "No matter how much one may love the world as a whole, one can live fully in it only by living responsibly in some small part of it." Participating in the democratic leadership of a cooperatively owned, local business allows me to practice living responsibly in my small part of the world.

MNFC VOTING PROCEDURE

WHAT AM I VOTING FOR?

- There are six (6) members seeking election to three (3) seats on the MNFC Board of Directors.
- Vote for up to three (3) candidates (please find candidate information on pages 8-13).

WHO CAN VOTE?

- Only the MNFC member who is named on the MNFC membership is eligible to vote. That person's name appears on this mailing label.

One membership = one vote

HOW DO I VOTE?

- This year, voting will take place online again.

- To vote, go to middlebury.simplyvoting.com or scan here with your smart phone camera.



- If you receive our Monthly E-News, this link will be available to you on the front page, in the "time to vote" section.

- When you follow the link, you will arrive at the following directions:

To vote, please submit below:

- The last 5 digits of your member number (e.g. "15726")**
- The first initial of your first name (e.g. "J")**
- Your Last Name (e.g. "DOE")**

- All of the information requested can be found on the mailing label of your Election Info Packet.
- Once you are successfully logged in, a ballot will appear, with drop-down menus to help you review candidate information. Please read this information **BEFORE** casting your votes.
- After you fill out your ballot, click "**Continue**". A confirmation page will appear asking you to review your choices.
- By clicking "**Confirm**", the ballot will be recorded and you will be given a receipt. At this point, you will no longer be able to make any changes to your ballot.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

- If you are unable to vote online, please reach out to Karin at the number below and we'll arrange a way for you to vote.

Karin Mott 802-388-7276 x307



MIDDLEBURY
NATURAL
FOODS
CO-OP

1 WASHINGTON STREET
MIDDLEBURY
VERMONT 05753

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE

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MIDDLEBURY, VT