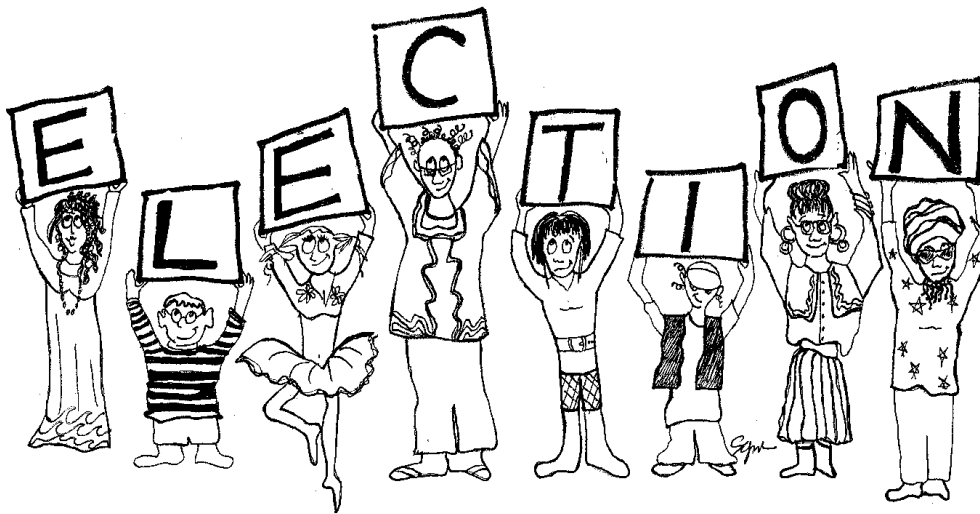


SEVANANDA

NATURAL FOODS MARKET
~cooperatively owned since 1974~

Nomination Committee Elections Process Manual 2011-2012 Edition



**The cooperative movement takes a positive stand.
It frankly asserts that it means a change in the motive and method of industry.
Cooperation stands in contrast to the antagonistic spirit.
It rests upon natural human impulses.
It is creative.
It invites all the people of the world to join it –
Irrespective of occupation, race, religion, or social standing –
And to enjoy equal rights in its administration.
No new qualifications are necessary.
The more who join, the greater is the success.
This is the test of its humanity.
It aims to create no privileged class.
It is all-embracing.**

That is, at least, the theory of cooperation.

- Dr. James Warbasse, founder & President - The Cooperative League of America

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Resources

2010-2011 Nominating Committee

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Betsy Abrams – secretary

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Debra Bonaparte

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2011 – Board of Directors

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Vice President:	Leslie Harmon	templekeepers@bellsouth.net	– 1 year term
Secretary:	Kijai (Connie) Turpeau	kijai33@gmail.com	– 3 year term
	Samiyyah Allah	raw759@yahoo.com	– 3 year term
	Tawhiyda Tupak-El	trancedancer_5@yahoo.com	– 2 year term
	Rex Batson	rexbatson@bellsouth.net	- 2 year term
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Board Assistant: Kathy Piselli

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Nominations and Election - Current Policy

The relevant portions of Sevananda's bylaws follow:

Article II: Board of Directors

- a. The Board of Directors shall set the goals and policies of the cooperative and shall see that the cooperative provides the highest level of service to the membership. The Board of Directors shall work closely with the staff to accomplish the goals of the cooperative.
- b. The Board of Directors shall be composed of nine (9) Directors, elected by the membership. Every Director shall be a member of the cooperative. Directors whose membership terminates may be reinstated by the Board of Directors upon renewal of membership.
- c. Staff members may be elected to the Board, but no more than three (3) board seats may be occupied by staff members.
Any Director who changes categories may remain on the Board of Directors if such change does not upset this balance between staff persons and general membership persons. If such category change does upset this balance the member will be automatically removed from the Board of Directors.

- d. The normal term of service for Directors shall be three (3) years.
- i. Openings which occur for reasons other than expiration of term, including resignation, shall be filled for the unexpired term by a plurality vote of the members at the next annual general election. An acting Director may be appointed by the remaining Board of Directors for the interim between the time of resignation and the annual general election.

Article III: Elections

- a. At an annual general election, the general membership shall vote to fill all open Board of Directors positions. The election will be decided by a plurality of all votes cast as long as the balance established in Article II (b) is maintained.
- b. Voting shall be by secret written ballot.
- c. Nominations for any vacancy on the Board of Directors shall be solicited and/or received by a Nominating Committee.
- d. The Nominating Committee shall be elected by the membership for a one-year term. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of at least five (5) persons.
- e. The Nominating Committee shall recommend and review nominations. It shall publicize the list of candidates, prepare the ballot, conduct the elections, tabulate the votes and announce the results. Elections for members of the Board of Directors shall be done in the store itself and/or by mail, to allow for maximum participation of the membership. The vote shall be taken over a period of at least one full week. f. Members of the Nominating Committee shall be ineligible for nomination.

Selection of Nominating Committee

At the Fall Membership meeting, candidates for the Nominating Committee are nominated by another co-op member, including someone on the current or any former NomComm (or they can self-nominate) who is not seeking a seat on the Nominating Committee. Once the slate of Nominating Committee candidates is final (a bylaw-mandated minimum of 5 is required), a request can be made to accept the nominees by acclamation (thereby accepting all of them via one show of hands).

If no one objects to this request, the nominees will all be on the Nominating Committee with no further voting.

However, if at least one person objects, sheets of paper will be handed out in order to conduct a vote. If a vote is required, voting members will be asked to write each of the candidates' names down on their sheet of paper, with a "yea" or "nay" after each individual they care to vote for.

Anyone with more "yeas" than "nays" will be accepted onto the Nominating Committee. Votes will be counted, at that moment, in an open fashion with all meeting attendees viewing the vote count.

If at the fall 2011 member meeting the newly-elected NomComm wishes to ask the assembled membership if any of them are interested in running for the Board in the 2012 election, they can take that person's contact information at that time.

The Nominating Committee will have no voting members from the Board of Directors. However, the Committee will be joined by a member of the Board of Directors in the role of Board Liaison/Ex Officio. This person will be appointed by the board, will be invited to attend all Nominating Committee meetings, will have a say in all discussions, but will not have a vote in case one is taken at a Nominating Committee meeting. The 2010-2011 NomComm did not have a Board Liaison for most of their meetings, and instead both attended monthly Board meetings and published (with the Marketing Manager's assistance) the minutes of their meetings online with links to them from the Sevananda.coop website. If the 2011 Board does not set a liaison then the 2011-2012 NomComm should probably continue this plan, as it seems to work well. However, if there are questions that the NomComm has that they should feel requires a Board member to answer, they should be free to compel the Board to send a representative to the meeting in question.

Additionally, the President of the Board of Directors will be an Advisor to the group. He/She won't be specifically invited to attend Nominating Committee meetings, but may attend at their discretion. The Board President's primary role would be to be readily available to consult with the Nominating Committee as issues arise, and to serve as a balancing influence to the Board Liaison.

Nominating Committee members are elected by the membership at the Fall Membership Meeting and must be Sevananda member-owners in good standing at the time of their election. They are eligible to receive a Working Member discount of 20% for one week for each three hours of their time spent on committee work. They will keep a Working Member timesheet, and the Ex Officio/Liaison member will work with the Member Services Manager to ensure procedures are followed and that committee members receive their discount. This ends once the committee's work in the election cycle is done: the ballots are counted and reported, and any updates to the following year's manual is complete.

NomComm Orientation

Annually (starting in 2010) the Operational Staff of Sevananda will host a Nominating Committee orientation in order to explain the channels and options Sevananda has to communicate with the member-owners of the cooperative. This meeting should be as soon as can be scheduled after the election of the NomComm at the fall meeting so as to make sure there is clarity and understanding of deadlines, requirements and responsibilities of being on the NomComm and how to work best with the Operational staff of the co-op to facilitate the election. At this meeting, an operational contact may be chosen from the NomComm to work with Sevananda to facilitate all outward communication about the election, candidates and other activities as needed.

Commitment of committee members

The Nominating Committee serves the entire membership by putting forward a slate of candidates they have met with and who have followed the rules of application.

The Nominating Committee strives to conduct a fair election that allows all approved candidates an equal voice and does not favor any candidate over another. While serving on the committee, Nominating Committee members must refrain from campaigning for candidate(s) or participating in petition campaigns or forums that might be, or be perceived as being, associated with individual candidates or issues. This can include conversations where others are trying to ask you who to vote for because you're on the NomComm, so be mindful.

- While serving, they must act in the interests of the entire membership (and even the non-member shoppers who make up a majority of Sevananda's sales) as a whole rather than of a specific interest group and therefore must not bring their recommendations of candidate(s) to any group or individual.
- Nominating Committee members should commit to serving on the committee until it is dissolved (one year) to avoid unduly burdening the remaining members and endangering the integrity of the election. If a committee member does not follow these rules (and any others agreed-upon by the committee itself), as well as the Code of Conduct they can be removed by a majority vote of the Nominating Committee.
- The committee members can also have no conflicts of interest in the greater success of Sevananda as a cooperative and a business, including, but not limited to, any legal actions against Sevananda Cooperative. There a commitment letter later in this manual for all NomCom members to sign.

Committee Process

The Nominating Committee is tasked with finding suitable candidates for open board seats and with conducting an election that abides by the Sevananda Cooperative bylaws. The committee strives to avoid having to redo the election because of any impropriety. Therefore, it is the committee's responsibility to ensure that election rules have been understood and are followed.

Ideally, the committee has an initial meeting early in the month following the fall meeting. The first meeting they are to choose a Chair and a Secretary, review the calendar (see below), identify how many open seats there are, check on the status of the Candidate Package, and assign responsibility for *Co-Options* articles. The committee should meet approximately every two weeks between early January and the middle of March to review its progress and plan its future activities. The Ex- Officio member (Board liaison) guides the committee and reports on its progress regularly to the board.

If the committee wants to place an article or notice in the January Co-Options, the deadline is November 1st. The committee should meet approximately every two weeks from January until the end of March. The deadline for articles/submissions for *Co-Options* is 50 days prior to publication.

This means that for publication in the April issue, all written candidate statements need to be submitted to the NomCom by February 1st and the must go to the Co-Options editor by February 10th.

The Chair is responsible for scheduling meetings, preparing an agenda, communicating with all candidates, and ensuring that the committee meets its deadlines. The secretary takes concise minutes of the committee's meetings, and submits them to other committee members and the Board Liaison by the Friday before board meetings.

NOTE: the board meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm.

The Nomination Committee minutes are a legal document and must be taken at every Nominating Committee meeting. If no physical meeting is held, but decisions are made by email or phone (including conference calls), the secretary must still report to the Board Liaison prior to any upcoming board meeting.

It would also help the NomCom to go to at least two Board meetings between when they are elected to the committee and the elections in the spring. This will help them be familiar with the procedures and duties of the Board, to explain to candidates how Policy Governance works, and what the Board is and is not responsible for.

Board/NomComm Orientation

During the 2011 election cycle a representative from CDS (Co-op Development Services) facilitated a training session for Board candidates that the NomComm was invited to participate in. This may turn into an annual session, and if so, it is highly recommended that members of the Nominating Committee participate. In 2011 it was the day before the spring meeting, and it might be scheduled next year once the slate of nominees is locked so that it happens more than one day before the elections starts.

Board Liaison and the Committee relationship with the board

The Nominating Committee will have no voting members from the Board of Directors. However, the Committee will be joined by a member of the Board of Directors in the role of Board Liaison. This person is appointed by the board. He or she cannot be running for re-election, must be invited to attend all Nominating Committee meetings, will have a say in all discussions, but does not have a vote if one is taken at a Nominating Committee meeting.

As the co-op's policymakers, the board must have a role of providing guidance and the NomComm must be open to accepting it, but members of the current board might be running for re-election and the Nominating Committee will always strive to avoid the perception of favoring one candidate over another. The Board Liaison is tasked with reporting back to the board on the progress of the Nominating Committee's work.

Other directors or operational staff can be invited to attend Nominating Committee meetings as resources to answer questions and to help ensure that election rules are followed in the store and that the spring membership meeting runs smoothly.

How the number of open seats is determined

The Ex-Officio member will identify how many open Board seats there are for the coming election. Seats come open because either a director has completed a regular three-year term, or because a director is vacating a three-year term early.

In addition, if a director vacates a seat in the middle of a term, the board is allowed to appoint an interim director to serve until the next election, but the remainder of that directors' three-year term must be filled at the next election, which can create a vacant seat for a two-year or one-year term.

NOTE: The May board meeting begins with an "old business" portion at which the previous board is seated and makes decisions. Directors rotating off the board are then dismissed and newly elected directors are sworn in, continuing the meeting as "new business".

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In the case of the 2011 board, their term started May 2011, and the terms were staggered by how many votes each candidate got. The top 3 candidates took a 3-year term, the next 3 got a 2-year term and the last 3 got a 1-year term. So, barring resignation or removal, there should be three seats up for election in 2012.

As a general rule, three seats rotate off annually, so that there are always six Board members with at least a year of experience. Board continuity is important. The “learning curve” of the Board’s duties is generally considered to be at least a year, sometimes more.

In another scenario if an additional seat has come open in the middle of someone’s three-year term (if someone on the board moves away with time left on their term), there would be four seats to fill. The three top vote-receivers will receive the full three-year terms, the next runner-up will finish out the remainder of the unfilled term of the fourth open seat (after which time that seat is open again). At least four candidates are needed to conduct such an election.

However it is considered good form to have at least two candidates for each open position. This helps ensure an election in which real choice in candidates is a factor.

The committee should also keep a folder at Sevananda’s Customer Service desk. This can be used by committee members to leave information for one another, by candidates to leave documents, and later, to house the voting table schedule. After the elections, the committee is responsible for updating this Nominating Committee Manual and passing it on to next year’s committee.

Changes in candidacies between February 1st Co-Options Deadline & the “Meet the Candidates” meeting

Changes in candidacies that have occurred in the past include: the addition of write-in candidates, candidates who dropped out, and changes in the number of open seats.

In the case that significant changes occur between February 1st and the Spring Membership Meeting, (date TBA) the Nominating Committee reserves the right to reprint the ballot that will be used at the voting table during Voting Week that reflects the correct number of open seats, includes write-ins, and excludes drop-outs, even if it differs from the one printed in *Co-Options*.

In such an extreme case, members who use *Co-Options* ballots for voting should be offered the choice of re-doing their vote with the newer ballot. The NomCom can call any mail-in ballot Members and advise them that there have been changes to the ballot, and offer to either mail them a corrected ballot (with self addressed stamped envelope), or have one held for them at the Customer Services Desk, which they can fill out and put in the ballot box during the week of voting.

Historically around a dozen votes are mailed in, so this should not place undue burden upon the committee members to address this issue. If someone re-mails in a ballot such as this, it would still need to be postmarked no later than the end of the voting cycle in order to be counted the Monday after, along with the other ballots.

Co-Options Deadline

Candidate statements must be submitted by email or in writing to the Nominating Committee chair by February 1st. This date is the usual deadline for the April *Co-Options* issue in which the candidate statements and ballot will appear. The Nominating Committee believes it is important to have all candidate materials appear in *Co-Options* to allow equal participation in the election process by members who cannot physically attend the Candidate forum at the Spring Membership Meeting or to vote in the store.

Sometimes, as for any month, that deadline can be flexible by a day or so at the discretion of the *Co-Options* editor. The Nominating Committee does not intend to hold up *Co-Options* for procrastination or indecision; flexing the deadline would be in the case of spectacular and hopefully temporary trouble like car accidents or hospital stays, and the decision to be flexible must rest with the *Co-Options* editor. Nominating Committee members interacting with candidates should immediately inform the Nominating Committee chair if they are aware that an emergency has come up for a candidate; it is also the responsibility of candidates to communicate if a serious problem comes up that will cause a day or two of delay.

***Co-Options* layout**

The *Co-Options* editor has final responsibility for matters of physical layout and column length in the newspaper. The Nominating Committee works with the editor so that all candidates are presented as fairly as possible. Statements should not exceed 500 words. Also, in 2009 and 2011 the Nominating Committee made use of a computerized randomizing program in deciding the layout of candidates in *Co-Options*.

It was felt this gave each candidate a fair chance at being advantageously placed in an election with a large number of candidates running. Nominating Committees should carefully consider layout in promotional materials to be fair as possible to all candidates.

Randomizing was also used for layout of candidate statements displayed in the store and on the website, and for the order of names on the ballots.

The Member Services and Marketing Managers have responsibility for layout and content of materials on the Sevananda website. The Nominating Committee can work with the MS/MMM's to ensure that all candidates are presented as fairly as possible and that necessary editing happens as soon as practical.

The Nominating Committee itself bears responsibility for design and layout of candidate statements in the store. A wall is designated to receive this layout after April 1; check with the MSMM as to which one it is. In the 2009 and 2011 elections, a working member was asked to come in and artistically design the display, but this can just as easily be done by members of the NomComm. There is a small budget to cover the cost of materials. Determine with the Board how much that amount is in one of the first NomComm meetings. Candidate statements should appear only in this designated area although candidates may place additional campaign notices on the Community Bulletin Board subject to that board's usual rules for size and duration.

Calendar

At its first meeting, the committee should set up the calendar of events (see example later in manual). Use the previous year's calendar. The basic requirements of the calendar are that:

- 1) Candidate statements and photos must be received in time for inclusion in the April *Co-Options*; (Feb 1st to NomCom and Feb 10th for *Co-Options*)
- 2) The Spring Membership Meeting, when "Meet the Candidates" occurs, should precede the election period, and should avoid Easter and the Inman Park Festival, as those draw huge crowds who might normally come to the Spring meeting;
- 3) The elections must be at least one week long (traditionally nine days, including two weekends and ending on a Sunday);
- 4) The elections must conclude at least one week before the May board meeting (third Tuesday in May, except avoiding the Memorial Day weekend).

Solicitation of Candidates

Potential board candidates can be found in many ways. This manual provides names of past board members and past nominating committee members. The complete list of co-op members may be obtained from the Member Services Manager. Holding candidate drives in the store may be another way to contact potential members. The 2011 NomComm did this and took names/emails of people who were given packets. At the fall 2011 meeting it might be proposed that anyone who is interested in running for 2012 and give their contact information to the newly elected NomComm in order to get a jump on finding candidates. Potential candidates can be found by contacting current and past board members, the general manager and other staff, and asking for suggestions.

Other potential candidates can be solicited through Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to media outlets and by leaving flyers posted in the store and on other community bulletin boards or by issuing press releases with information about the duties and requirements of the Board.

Committee members should also make use of their personal contacts to recruit skilled candidates. Sometimes this can be a mechanism for persuading frequent (but non-member) Sevananda shoppers to become members and put their skills to use to help build the cooperative. Bag-stuffing of notices asking for interested members to contact the NomComm might also be done with the assistance of the Front End staff, if it is found to be of use in the process.

To assist with recruiting, the Ex Officio/Board Liaison member can place appropriate short articles in the December, January, and February (and maybe March) *Co-Options* that describe what the board does, skills specifically sought, and publicizing the upcoming election process (see an example in Section C). Even though the deadline for written submission for *Co-Options* is February 1st for publication in April issue, someone might read the March issue and decide to run as a write-in candidate. These articles can also be seen on the Sevananda website as well.

Committee members should split up lists of potential candidates and contact them to see if they are interested in running. Once a potential candidate has expressed interest, the designated committee member should take charge of him or her by providing the candidate package, answering questions and following through with the candidate if he or she agrees to run.

Checklist of follow-through tasks once candidates express an interest in running:

- Be sure their questions about the Board process get answered;
- Encourage him/her to attend the remaining board meetings between their declaration of candidacy and the elections;
- Explain requirements and deadlines for submission of written statement and photo for *Co-Options*;
- Remind him/her about the "Meet the Candidates" meeting;
- After the election, ensure he/she has been informed of election results.

Candidate statements may be submitted by e-mail or in writing to a committee member or mailed to the Customer Service desk in the store. If using email, remember a photograph also must be received by the deadline. Sending a scanned photograph by email is allowable, check with the Member Services Manager for sizing requirements.

Write-In Candidates

Candidates who miss the *Co-Options* deadline will not have their statements appear in the paper. However, space is always provided on the ballot for write-ins. Their statements can be published online on the Sevananda website if they miss the Co-Options deadline. If statements are submitted in time for the ballot to appear in the newspaper, their name can be on there, even if the printed statement is not in that issue of Co-Options.

Such candidates still must go through the regular approval process of meeting with the Nominating Committee and if the write-in decides to run so close to the Spring Membership Meeting that time does not permit the approval process, the committee may at its discretion, disallow an additional candidate during the current election cycle.

Once approved, write-ins may attend the “Meet the Candidates” meeting and present themselves along with the other candidates. Their statements and photographs are displayed in the store if received by the time the display is set up. Their statements and photographs are placed on the website if time permits. Their statements and photographs are provided at the voting table. In the unusual instance of a ballot reprint (see below), write-in names are added.

Ballots

Two ballots are used for the election, one for mail-in and one for in-store voting. The contents of both should be identical with enough blank spaces for write-in candidates for each open seat on the board. The mail-in ballot appears in the April *Co-Options* along with the candidate statements. In-store ballots must be pre-numbered so that they can be tracked and correlated with the voter’s name and signature in the voting register. If numbering was not done during word-processing, it must be done by hand before the voting table opens. See sample ballots in Section C.

Mail-in ballots

To be valid, mail-in ballots must be accompanied by that member’s signed mailing label. The Co-Options ballot with signed mailing label can be mailed, but some members just put it in the ballot box in the store during election week. If mailed, ballots must be received by 5:00 pm of Monday following the close of voting in the store.

Interviewing Candidates and Board of Director Guidelines

In order to fulfill Sevananda’s Bylaws stating that “the Nominating Committee shall recommend and review nominations”, each candidate will be interviewed by at least three members of the Nominating Committee at one time. Background checks and/or credit checks may be required as if the NomComm feels it would benefit the cooperative. All information found will be kept confidential by all involved. If there are other circumstances in which the NomComm should not accept a potential candidate, these should be discussed in a Nomcomm meeting and the potential candidate informed of the decision. All potential candidates should be informed of this as a possibility, and to agree that if the NomComm does not accept their candidacy at this time, perhaps in the future they could submit to run for the Board again. Not all who wish to run should be accepted just because they are a member-owner of Sevananda. Taking a Board position is a serious business and all efforts made to determine the viability of each candidate should be made.

Use of Sevananda’s online media outlets

No candidate for a Board position or for any other position affiliated with Sevananda (staff, working member, committee member, including sitting Board, etc) is to make use of Sevananda’s communication channels including any online presence for their personal gain, including soliciting votes for any elections.

This includes using Sevananda’s own website, Facebook, Twitter or any and all other social/online media in use by the business named Sevananda, Sevananda Natural Foods Market, Sevananda Cooperative or any variation thereof. Candidates cannot post on Sevananda’s online media asking for votes or talking about their ‘platform’ in any fashion.

These outlets are for the business of Sevananda and not to be used by anyone who is not authorized to do so. If any posts are seen on any of these platforms they will be removed and the NomComm will give consideration to revoking the candidacy of the person in question.

There is an online Member-only forum for candidates to post about their candidacy. All members of the forum must be current member-owners of Sevananda, and once this is confirmed, anyone can post to the forum. It is moderated by Member Services staff and overseen by the GM. Sevananda will create a sub-section on the existing online forums specifically for candidate campaigning each year. They will be required to join the online forums (as any other member does), and then can submit posts for the forum. This will ensure that only member-owners of Sevananda are privy to the business of the election. The forum is monitored for conduct, language of topics, and if found to be in violation of any of the stated Forum rules, the candidate will be informed, and depending on the severity of the issue, the NomComm reserves the right to revoke a candidacy.

Qualifying to run

The Nominating Committee seeks to put forward a slate of candidates that understand the role of the board and responsibility to the membership and that will bring needed skills to the board. The Nominating Committee strives to ensure that:

- ❖ Candidates are members in good standing
- ❖ Candidates are aware of and are willing to commit to the board's present role vis-a-vis policymaking; namely that the board's job is to make, amend, and destroy policy, and not to interfere in operational decisions of the General Manager
- ❖ Candidates are aware of and are willing to commit to the board's appropriate role vis-a-vis the GM, namely that the board accepts or does not accept the GM's interpretations of Executive Limitations, does not interfere in how he carries out his operations, then monitors him for his results

Candidates are committed to serving the membership as a whole rather than any single group

Candidates are aware of and willing to commit to the 7 Cooperative Principles, and Sevananda's Ends

Candidates are aware of the general qualifications for a Board Director, which are:

- Dedication to Sevananda's principles and values and the Member-Owner agreement
- Ability to appreciate board diversity
- Understanding and willingness to contribute to the task of governance
- Honesty and independent judgment, courage and good faith
- Ability and eagerness to deal with values, vision and the long term growth and prosperity of Sevananda
- Fair and open-minded
- Ability and willingness to participate assertively in discussions and abide by board decisions and the intent of established policies
- Willingness to operate in a group decision-making environment, to share power in group process, and to delegate areas of decision-making to others
- Ability to communicate clearly orally or in writing
- Knowledgeable about cooperatives and food retailing or commitment to learn
- Having no over-riding conflicts of interest
- Commit to the meeting and retreat times and dates already set by the board. The board sets these at its June meeting.

To do the above, candidates should attend a Nominating Committee meeting with the Board Liaison present at which this information is provided to them and at which they can ask questions if something is not clear. At this time their member status is also confirmed. Candidates agreeing to run then are asked to write a statement of no more than 500 words. This statement will be published with their photo in *Co-Options*, on the Sevananda website, and in the store. In their statement, candidates are asked to answer particular questions to be chosen by the Nominating Committee from the list below. The questions are to help guide the candidates in their statements.

The Nominating Committee can choose any number of the following questions:

- 1- What qualifications do you bring to the board?
- 2- Why do you want to run for a seat on the Sevananda Board of Directors?
- 3- Where do you envision Sevananda going as business and as a cooperative?
- 4- How does your vision of sustainability relate to your proposed service?
- 5- Describe personal experience and history with Sevananda (if any).
- 6- Describe general background and education.
- 7- Describe co-op, community, or business experience you will bring to Sevananda.
- 8- Mention noteworthy skills – finance, outreach, fundraising, communication, etc.
- 9- How your schedule allows you to commit to spending time on board-related activities and fulfilling a three-year board term.
- 10- What does cooperative business mean to you and why is it important?

Revocation of Candidacy

The Nominating Committee is charged by the bylaws of Sevananda to “review and recommend” candidates. In the past, some NomComms felt that they had to accept any member-owner (despite either written recommendation against this from outside of the NomComm itself, or because of personal observation concerning a potential candidate) who applied to be a candidate.

However, since the business of Sevananda is in some very important ways, very different in 2011/2012 than in 1995 when those (very vague) bylaws were written – it is in the best interest of the cooperative as a whole to take into serious consideration of the possibility of revoking someone’s candidacy if it is considered by the NomComm as a whole. This means that even though that member-owner may want to run for the Board, information may surface that would sway the NomComm in such a way that they would feel that in fact, that this person would not be best in representing Sevananda at this time (i.e. – this election cycle).

There need to be guidelines created by the NomComm as to what information would be used to revoke a candidacy of someone. These could include past criminal or civil offences, current behavior towards other member-owners, working members, shoppers and/or staff or other reasons not listed here. The NomComm must strive to codify these “reasons to revoke” and make all potential candidates aware of the potential rulings by the NomComm, and that they will need to abide by them if the situation warrants revoking a candidacy. All candidates, however, should be allowed to speak to the whole NomComm to explain the issue or situation so that they can make a considered and thoughtful resolution in the best interest of Sevananda as a whole.

It is recommended that at the first or second NomComm meeting that they decide what the valid reasons to revoke a candidacy are, and to make sure any interested potential candidates fully understand them and agree to abide by any decisions made by the Nominating Committee. If there is any financial needs necessary to this procedure (i.e. background checks), then, speaking with the Board Liaison will be the best way to determine finds for such a thing. While we do not want to cost Sevananda the business any excess fees concerning this, it may be in the cooperative’s best interest to make that investment in a solid board candidate.

Guidelines for Candidate Campaigning

A candidate's written statement and the Candidates' Forum at the Spring General Membership Meeting are the main vehicles by which candidates make themselves known to the membership.

It is permissible to campaign in the store if the following guidelines are observed:

- 1- Candidates should stay away from the vicinity * of the voting table; while not blocking or impeding the entry and exit doors into the store.
- 2- They should avoid giving the impression that they work in the store when introducing themselves to customers (there may be additional rules regarding staff candidates in the staff personnel manual);
- 3- Signs are only allowed on the community bulletin board, and are subject to the posted rules regarding placement and size. Such signage would be in addition to the official Nominating Committee display of candidate photos and statements that is put up around April 1st.
- 4- Little Five Points, where Sevananda is located, is a hate-free zone. Candidates should keep grossly negative messages out of their campaigning.

**Vicinity is designated by the operational staff of Sevananda, so as to not hinder the flow of shoppers into and out of the store, and the NomCom will be advised what it is so they can tell candidates this information.*

The "Meet the Candidates" Meeting

The Spring Membership Meeting in April (or May, depending on when it is scheduled by the Operational staff) provides a chance for the membership to meet the candidates and ask them questions. Traditionally, the committee creates a forum. Candidates may be given the opportunity to make a brief (approximately two-minute) opening statement and a brief (one minute) closing statement, with audience questions (moderated by a committee member) in between. In years when a large number of candidates are running, this format may be impractical in the interests of time.

The committee also should use this meeting to solicit volunteers to help work the voting table (see sample sign-up sheet in Section C). Those attending this meeting are permitted to vote following the end of the meeting, so election materials must be ready.

A formal forum may be videotaped and the tape played in the store during election week. Check with the General Manager about the possibility of doing this.

*At the time of this printing, October 20, 2011, the voting on the bylaw proposal to allow for electronic, in addition to paper ballot voting has not been done. If it passes, then the rules and guidelines will have to be modified to accommodate such.

Voting Table Orientation

As the Operational Staff offered both NomComm and Board Candidate training sessions, this next election cycle, there will be a Voting Table orientation. This will cover all aspects of working at the voting table, and may even be held more than once to train any and all volunteers for working that voting table during election week. Since this is also a new item for the NomComm to work with Operations on, the procedures are not set in stone at this point, and instead will be co-created by both organizations.

Conducting the Elections

The committee is responsible for coming up with a schedule for the voting table (see sample schedule in Section C), **with at least two people at the voting table at all times**. And they can do this with the Member Services Manager also can help find volunteers, often from the Working Members.

Board members (whether they are running for reelection or not) and Nominating Committee members may **not** volunteer.

There has also been discussion about the possibility of hiring a third-party organization to actually be at the voting table during the election, and then counting the votes and reporting the results to the NomCom, who would then report them to the Board and membership.

This has not been determined to take place at this time, but it is something the NomCom and Sevananda's Board and Operational staff may want to discuss, in an effort to not have any questions of election-integrity come up among the member-owners.

Voting Tables workers and Voting

Any person(s) manning the voting table are not to vote on the shift they are working. This way, there is never any question of any improprieties taking place. The volunteer can vote before or after their shift, or any other time that the table is open to accept ballots.

There can be no buttons, shirts or other paraphernalia related to candidates or any issues they may be campaigning on worn by either anyone on the NomCom or by anyone at the voting table during election period. Volunteers are given \$15 gift certificates for each 3-hour shift they work; they may work multiple shifts if needed.

Table hours can instead count for a Working Member's hours; in that case no stipend is paid. The volunteer must declare in writing if they want the stipend. If they do not, and are already a part of the working member program, they will automatically be given one week's discount for each 3-hour shift worked.

One committee member should serve as the keeper of the schedule, working with the Membership Coordinator. The Voting Table volunteers who comes in at the 6-9 pm shift is responsible for calling the next day's workers, to remind them of their shift. If someone says they cannot make the shift, there are usually a few people who agree to be 'on call' to come in on short notice.

There is also the possibility of scheduling a third person to be at the table from 10:30-1:30, 1:30-4:30 and 4:30-7:30 pm as those are generally the busiest times. The third person on the schedule will also be of use if someone needs to leave the table for any reason, as there would still be at least two people at the table.

The voting table is set up in the foyer of the store. Basic materials for the voting table include:

- A locked ballot box, membership list, voting register, and ballots.
- A copy of the most recent *membership list* is obtained from the Membership Coordinator.
- The *voting register* is a composition book kept in the Board of Directors file cabinet (check with the board secretary). It contains the register of preceding elections. Begin at the first clean page, title it for the current year, and number the lines sequentially.

Pre-numbered *ballots* are created from template by the committee. The committee should be in contact with the Front End Manager, since these basic voting materials are locked up with the cash safe when no one is at the voting table and at the end of each night's shift.

Other useful materials: a *table*, *signage*, at least *two chairs*, *pens*, a *highlighter* for marking off names in the membership book, at least one copy of *candidate statements*, extra copies of the *April Co-Options*, a copy of the *Instructions for Voting Table Volunteers* (see appendix), extra *membership brochures*, and a *trash box*. Some years a video of the Spring Membership Meeting available runs continuously. Signage throughout the store (including staff area, restrooms upstairs and downstairs) has been very helpful. A committee member should make sure that all this is in place prior to the start of the first shift.

The candidate statements printed in the *April Co-Options* may be used at the voting table.

Write-in candidates may display a statement and photo consistent with those in *Co-Options* (i.e. same type size, font, picture size, etc.) placed *after* those of the other candidates, clearly identified by an explanation such as

“This person did not submit the required materials in time for the candidacy deadline, and is running as a write-in candidate.”

To be valid, mail-in ballots must be accompanied by that member’s signed mailing label. The *Co-Options* ballot with signed mailing label either must be postmarked a date during the election period or placed in the ballot box in the store during election week.

It is the committee's responsibility to ensure that election rules have been communicated to all voting table volunteers so that questions from the membership can be answered accurately.

It would be helpful if a committee member could volunteer to be "on call" by phone in case any questions come up at the voting table that is not answered by these instructions. Such questions should be answered in the next revision of the Nominating Committee manual.

Counting the Ballots

Mail-in ballots should be picked up from Sevananda’s P.O. Box periodically (usually by a staff member, along with other mail) and deposited in the ballot box. The committee must coordinate with office staff to ensure that a 5:00 pick-up is made on the Monday following the last day of balloting.

As soon as possible after the final 5:00 pm Monday pickup the day after the close of the elections, at least four Nominating Committee members should meet and arrange with the Board President to unlock the ballot box.

First, separate out the mail-in ballots, and check that the voter enclosed and signed his/her mailing label. If there is no mailing label, there is no way to validate the vote and the ballot is void. Mark the sender off the membership list. If the sender’s name is already marked off, it means he/she also voted in-store and the mail-in ballot is void. Separate the label from the ballot and tape it in the voting register at the end of the list of in-store voters. Place the now-anonymous ballot in with the other completed ballots.

Form two groups of two committee members and give each group half of the ballots. Within each group, one person reads off the names while the other tallies the votes. Then each group exchanges ballots and recounts. In this way each half is counted twice, once by each group. Each group should keep the tallies separate for each half, total the results for each half, and compare them with the other group's tallies. If the totals for a half do not match, each group must recount that half again.

Ballots should be invalidated if there is evidence of a double vote (as above), if the ballot has more names checked off than there are seats available, or if the vote is impossible to determine (due to bad handwriting or multiple checkmarks that have been crossed out). They should not be invalidated if the ballot has fewer names checked off than are seats available or if the number has not been torn off; although this is a common mistake by voting table volunteers, it does no harm to the balloting. Just tear the number off and throw it away.

Those candidates with the most votes, in order, should fill the longer-term open seats. **In the event of a tie to determine the final board director, a coin toss will be held. – All candidates must be made aware of this procedure, and that they will be expected to abide by the result.**

In the event of a tie involving different term lengths, the candidates affected may be allowed to choose their term length by common agreement, **or if there is no agreement, the committee should decide by a coin toss.**

In the unusual event of a ballot reprint or other serious change, such as a change in the number of open seats, there is an additional step to the above. Members choosing to mail in their votes are contacted by phone to explain the changes

and to offer them the opportunity of re-voting. An additional week may be provided to allow these members to come into the store to re-vote. Traditionally, around a dozen mail-in votes are received, so this should not put an undue burden to contact the member-owners on the NomComm.

Making the Vote Official: Final Steps

After the final vote counts and term lengths are determined, the Nominating Committee should:

- Prepare an official report with the totals for each candidate, and have each committee member sign it
- Inform the candidates and the board president as soon as possible of the results
- Give the Board President a copy of the official report, along with the ballots in a sealed envelope, the Voting Register, and membership list used for the election
- Post a copy of the official report on the Sevananda bulletin board in the front of the store, leave a copy with the Customer Service Desk, and with the Member Services Manager for publication in *Co-Options*

Future Considerations

- If circumstances create a need to use an outside, independent group to conduct and/or certify the vote counting, that may be pursued.
- Background checks and/or credit checks may be required by the present NomCom or even a future one in determining the viability of board candidates.
- In order to encourage and enable increased voting, and to possibly help with vote counting integrity, online voting possibilities may be pursued.
- The Sevananda bylaws state voting is to be by secret written ballot, if electronic voting is to be pursued, this will have to be taken into account when investigating so as to not violate the current bylaws.
- Currently there are proposals to modify the Bylaws up for the membership to vote on, with results to be counted after November 25, 2011

Sample documents

Nominating Committee Calendar – EXAMPLE – you will need to create 2011/2012 calendar

October 2006:	Fall Membership Meeting; election of new Nominating Committee.
December 2006:	Orientation for newly-elected Nominating Committee.
12/14 (Thursday):	First Nominating Committee Meeting, 3 P.M.
12/28 (Thursday):	Second Nominating Committee Meeting, 3 PM
January 2007:	Articles in <i>Co-Options</i> and other publications. Contact potential candidates.
1/06 (Saturday):	Committee Tabling 12-7 PM
1/10 (Wednesday):	Deadline for February Co-Options
1/10 (Wednesday):	Third Nominating Committee Meeting, 5 PM
1/10 (Wednesday):	Candidate Open House, 6 PM
1/21-1/27 (?):	Fourth Nominating Committee Meeting TBD
1/22 (Monday):	January Board Meeting, 7:30 PM
1/27 (Saturday):	Committee Tabling -- Time?
February 2007:	Articles in <i>Co-Options</i> and other publications. Contact potential candidates. Encourage completion of statements.
2/03 (Saturday):	Committee Tabling --Time?
2/09 (Friday):	Committee Tabling --Time?
2/10 (Saturday):	Deadline for March <i>Co-Options</i>
2/10 (Saturday):	Fifth Nominating Committee Meeting, 2 PM

2/10 (Saturday): Candidate Open House, 3 PM
 2/17 (Saturday): Committee Tabling --Time?
 2/18-2/24 (?): **Sixth Nominating Committee Meeting TBD**
 2/19 (Monday): February Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.
 02/24 (Saturday): Committee Tabling-- Time?
March 2007: **Deadline for candidate statements. Prepare ballot for inclusion in April Co-Options.**
 3/1 (Thursday): Candidacy Statements & Photo Deadline
 3/4-3/10 (?): **Seventh Nominating Committee Meeting TBD**
 3/10 (Saturday): Deadline for April *Co-Options*. Candidacy Statements *really due!*
 3/18-3/24 (?): **Eighth Nominating Committee Meeting TBD**
 3/19 (Monday): March Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.
April 2007: **"Meet the Candidates" forum. Elections.**
 4/8-4/14 (?): **Ninth Nominating Committee Meeting TBD**
 4/16 (Monday): April Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.
 4/22-4/27 (?): **Tenth Nominating Committee Meeting TBD**
 4/28 (Saturday): Spring Membership Event and "Meet the Candidates."
 4/20 (Friday): Elections begin.
May 2007: **Update committee handbook and calendar. New board takes office.**
 5/4 (Friday): Elections end.
 5/9 (Monday): Ballots counted and candidates contacted
 5/21 (Monday): May Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.

Possible Media Outlets

Local media outlets:

Bulletin boards:

Sevananda	467 Moreland Ave. NE, Atlanta, 30307	404-681-2831
BOND Credit Union	433 Moreland Ave., Atlanta, 30307	404-525-0619
Sevananda Rest Rooms		
Soul Vegetarian Restaurant	North Highland Avenue	404-875-4641
Local churches, Rec Centers, Gardens, etc.		TBD

Wide-area media outlets:

Print Media:

AJC	72 Marietta St. NW, Atlanta	404-526-5151
Creative Loafing	P.O. Box 54223, Atlanta, 30308	404-688-5623
Georgia Voice	1904 Monroe Dr. Suite 130 Atlanta, GA 30324	404 815-6941
Aquarius	163 Norcross St., Suite 105, Alpharetta, 30201	770-641-9055

Broadcast Media:

WRFG/89.3 FM	1083 Austin Ave. NE, Atlanta	404-523-3471
WCLK/91.1 FM	James P. Brawley Dr. & Fair St., Atlanta	404-880-8273
WRAS/88.5 FM	33 Gilmer St. SE, Atlanta	404-651-224

-SAMPLE-

Public Service Announcement

For Release: January 01, 2007

Contact: Jacob Kincaid, 404)295-0454

Subject: The Annual Election for the Sevananda Board of Directors

Sevananda Community-Owned Natural Foods Market is preparing for the annual election for its board of directors. The candidacy deadline is March 1st, 2007.

Organized as a consumer cooperative, Sevananda is open to all, but is owned by its membership. The membership elects the board of directors to provide overall direction on its behalf. The board is composed of nine members, who each serve a three-year term. Any member is eligible to run.

Sevananda relies on the leadership and energy of its board, which is involved in financial and personnel oversight, strategic planning, product policy, membership and educational activities, and outreach to the community and to other cooperatives. While experience in any of these areas is useful, it is not a prerequisite for board directors. More important is the ability to work closely and cooperatively with the other directors and to commit to providing the time and energy needed. A minimum of 3 hours per week is expected. Board members receive either a 20% discount on store purchases or a \$40 monthly stipend.

Sevananda has served the Atlanta community since 1974 by providing reasonably-priced natural and organic foods and by educating the public about a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. If you are interested in participating, please call 404-681-2831 for more information.

-SAMPLE -

Call for Candidates for the Sevananda Board of Directors

Sevananda's annual spring election for the board of directors will take place in April, by mail and in the store. The Sevananda board consists of nine members, each of whom serves a three-year term. This year there will be three seats available. The Nominating Committee is looking for people who would be interested in serving in this capacity. The candidacy deadline is March 1st.

The board sets policy for and controls the overall course of the cooperative. Board members are involved in financial and personnel oversight, strategic planning, product policy, membership and educational activities, and outreach to other cooperatives. While experience in any of these areas is useful, it is not a prerequisite for board membership; what is more important is the ability to organize and to work closely and cooperatively with the other directors. A board member must also be committed to providing the time and energy necessary to accomplish the board's objectives (a minimum of 3 hours per week is expected). Board members receive either a 20% discount on store purchases or a \$40 monthly stipend.

If this sounds interesting, you can learn more about the board by reading the information letter which is available in the store at the front office. It is also very helpful to attend a board meeting; the next few are January 22, February 19, and March 19 at 7:00 P.M. in Sevananda's Education Room downstairs. The members of the Nominating Committee and the board are always happy to answer any questions you might have.

Instructions for Voting

Only members of Sevananda are eligible to vote, and they may vote only once.

The election will be held both by mail and in the store during the week of TBD (based on when the Spring Meeting is held) between the hours of 9AM and 9 PM. However, you cannot do both: **a mail-in ballot will be invalidated if you also vote in-store.**

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by Friday, TBD to: Sevananda Nominating Committee, 467 Moreland Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307. Mail-in ballots may also be dropped into the Ballot Box at the voting table.

Your *Co-Options* mailing label must be signed and included with a mail-in ballot. It will be removed before the ballot is counted to assure your anonymity. **Failure to include or sign your *Co-Options* mailing label will invalidate your mail-in ballot.**

SAMPLE Ballot

Four candidates are running for the three open positions on Sevananda's board of directors, and their names are listed below. Mark the box next to each candidate for whom you wish to vote. There are three extra spaces for write-in candidates as well. Vote for no more than THREE (3) candidates. **Voting for more than three candidates will invalidate your ballot.**

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Candidate #1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Candidate #3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Candidate #2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Candidate #4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Possible write-in | <input type="checkbox"/> | Possible write-in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Possible write-in | | |

SAMPLE

--SAMPLE--

Voting Table Volunteers
Earn a \$15 Gift Certificate!

Sevananda is holding its annual Spring Election from Friday TBD to TBD. The voting table is open during the time periods listed below, and volunteers are needed to check memberships and give out ballots. For every three-hour time period worked, the volunteer will receive a \$15 Sevananda Gift Certificate. If you can help out, write your **name** and **phone number** in one or more of the available time periods. A member of the Nominating Committee will contact you to verify your commitment. Note that **you must be a member of Sevananda** to work at the voting table. Questions? Contact NomCom@sevananda.coop

	9-12	12-3	3-6	6-9
Sun April 20				
Mon April 21				
Tues April 22				
Wed April 23				
Thurs April 24				
Fri April 25				
Sat April 26				
Sun April 27				

Instructions for Voting Table Volunteers

Hello and Thank You for volunteering!

If you can, please try to come a little early to your scheduled shift. The person who precedes you can then help get you oriented. The voting procedure is explained below.

What You Will Need At The Table:

- ballots
- table
- ballot box
- membership list
- voting register
- candidate statements
- chairs
- pens
- highlighter
- trash box
- signage
- April Co-Options newspapers
- Info brochures -Welcome to Sevananda
- When the voting table is not open, the ballots, ballot box, voting register, and membership list will **be locked up** in the Front End cash room and the Front End Manager can get them for you.
- If you need to take a quick break, please take the ballot-box to the Cash Control office to be locked up while you are away. Your table-partner can tell any interested member voters that voting will resume when there are two people at the table.
- Only one stack of ballots should be at the voting table at a time; leave the rest locked up in the Front End cash room until needed.

There are to be two voting table workers at the table at all times.

If one of you needs to go to the restroom or take a break of some sort, the ballot box must be locked in the cash control office until there are again two people at the table.

There are usually a few Working Members who have agreed to be 'on call' –in case one voting table person is unable to make their shift. They will come in on short notice and help run the table with the other person.

Shifts are 9-12 pm, 12-3 pm, 3-6 pm, and 6-9 pm.

Finding Voters:

Hopefully you will have hoards of members flocking to vote!

Unfortunately, this will usually not be the case. Therefore, any encouragement you give to passers-by is useful. Greet interested customers and invite them to vote (if they are not members, give them a membership brochure).

Many common excuses actually turn out to be a lack of information and can be cleared up by you (see sample dialogs below). Encourage cashiers to help by reminding member shoppers to vote when they show their cards at the checkout line.

Potential questions and answers

Q. *What does the Board of Directors do?*

A. The Board of Directors is the governing body of Sevananda. It creates the overarching Strategic Vision that guides the store, and monitors the performance of the Management.
Board meetings are open to all member-owners and you can attend any meeting to learn more.

Q. *But I am not qualified to vote - I do not even know any of these people!*

A. No problem. As a Member-Owner, you are as qualified and entitled to vote as anyone else, and we value your participation. All the candidates have written personal profiles to help you best decide. You can review these statements here, or take this copy of the April *Co-Options*, review the statements at your leisure and return later on. Voting ends Sunday TBD. *Sometimes there is a video of the Spring Membership Meeting to direct them to.)*

Q. *Who should I vote for?*

A. Don't try to persuade or tell anyone how to vote!

Don't even share who you voted for. This may seem obvious, but it is easy to slip-up here. DO NOT advise anyone in any way to vote for one candidate over another. A good general rule is not to tell anyone who you vote for at all.

Q. *I'm not a member; can I vote?*

A. No, but you can easily become a member. Take a Sevananda brochure which explains the benefits of membership and how to take advantage of them. If you became a member today, you could vote in this election.

Q. *I've let my membership lapse because I forgot to pay my annual installment.*

A. First off, when did it lapse? You have a thirty-day grace period. If that has passed, please consider re-starting your membership; your co-op needs you!

Q. *I don't have time right now.*

A. Please, take this copy of *Co-Options*. You could read the candidate statements when you have more time, and vote later on. Voting will end TBD at 9 pm.

Q. *I don't really care who is elected.*

A. Being able to vote is one of your most important member-owner benefits.
The board's work greatly influences whether or not the store makes a profit, whether it carries out the kind of community education that is important to you, or whether organic foods are readily and consistently available.

Note:

If you should get busy and there is someone who wants to discuss becoming a Member-Owner in more detail, don't forget to enlist the help of the Customer Services desk! The staff at that desk is trained to answer all membership-benefits questions.

HOW TO VOTE

Step 1: Verify Membership.

Members must provide proof of membership, usually a membership card ID. The card must have the Sevananda logo and "Member-Owner Card" on one side, and have their name on the other side, and must be current.

Staff members are not automatically members: the same proof of membership is required. Some others have courtesy discount cards but are not necessarily members. Be sure it is a Member-Owner card!

Voting in proxy for another member **is not allowed**. Period. The member-ownership is individual, and one of the reasons is for the ability to vote.

Note that some cards do not have an expiration date because the member has paid their full share. Such cards will say "Total Equity: \$120" with no renewal date on the card.

Occasionally a member will have joined so recently that no card has been issued yet.

In that case, they must show you the yellow copy of their paid membership application, the same as they would present to the cashier to prove membership and get their member discount. All Member-Owners who joined as of TBD 2010 are listing in the Member Log. You can look up someone if they do not have a card, but do have ID.

A customer who does not present you with acceptable proof **cannot** vote.

They have the option to go home and get their card within the election period, or to mail in their vote (be sure they understand the rules for this), so be polite but firm. **No exceptions, please!**

Step 2: The Membership List:

- 1) Look up the member's name in the membership list.
- 2) If there is **a line through their name**, they have already voted and **cannot** vote again!
- 3) Verify their name, address, and phone number. If the list is incorrect in some way, ask the member to fill out a change-of-address form at the customer service desk.
- 4) If the member is not listed, write their name down at the end of the list, exactly as it appears on the membership card, and include their member number. If this occurs, it is probably a new membership; check the date on the card, and if it is not from the last month, ask the member to fill out a change-of-address form.
- 5) Using the yellow highlighter, draw a line through the member's name on the list, and write down the number of the next blank ballot in the margin.

Step 3: The Voting Register

Have the member sign their name in the voting register beside the next number.

This number **should be the same** as that in the corner of the next blank ballot.

Step 4: The Ballot

- 1) Tear the number in the corner off the next blank ballot and give the ballot to the member.
The number can be thrown away; it is only there to keep track of the blank ballots.
- 2) The member should fill out the ballot right then and deposit it in the ballot box.
Please discourage them from walking away with the ballot because:
- 3) **If the member loses the ballot, they are not allowed to receive another one**
(How do you know they aren't trying to vote twice?).
- 4) If the member gives the ballot back to you (e.g. because they have changed their minds or wish to vote later), you should write VOID on the ballot and through their name in the voting register, and make a note next to the yellow line through their name in the membership list.
They **must** then start over with Step 1.
- 5) Finally, thank the member for voting. That's it!

Co-Options Newspaper Ballots

Note that some people may have filled out a ballot which was printed in the newspaper, these can be deposited directly in the ballot box without verification (**do not** mark off the voter's name; that will be done later).

However, you should make sure that these voters are aware that **only ballots with signed mailing labels are acceptable**. Otherwise, they must vote as above.

Questions?

If you have any problems or questions, ask for help from Member Services Manager Holly Blain (ext. 113)

Making the Vote Official: Final Steps

After the final vote counts and term lengths are determined, the Nominating Committee should:

Prepare an official report with the total votes received for each candidate, and have each committee member sign it.

Inform the candidates and the board president as soon as possible of the results.

Give the board president a copy of the official report, along with the ballots in a sealed envelope, the Voting Register, and membership list used for the election.

Post a copy of the official report on the Sevananda bulletin board in the front of the store, leave a copy with the Customer Service Desk, and with the *Co-Options* editor for future publication in *Co-Options*.

Example: 2005 Board of Directors Election Results

For nine days in April-May 2005, the members of Sevananda went to the polls to vote for three new directors for the Board of Directors.

Here are the results...

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>	<u>Term on Board</u>
Bahiy Watson	215	3 Years
Nancy Verre	214	3 Years
Marie Robinson	175	1 Year
Meshakai Wolf	170	

The first two candidates receive the full three-year terms; the third candidate receives a one year term, filling a seat that was originally voted on in 2003.

A total of 295 ballots were cast, of which 4 were received by mail and the rest cast in the store.

The Nominations Committee of Sevananda would like to congratulate the new directors!

-The Sevananda Nominations Committee

Director's Code of Conduct and Ethics

While the Nominating Committee is not the Board itself, operating under the same Code of Conduct and Ethics means that everyone conducts business the same way, in a true spirit of cooperation.

The following is the Board's code:

The Sevananda board of directors shall use the following Code of Conduct and Ethics to clarify any uncertainty which may now or in the future exist regarding the authority exercised by individual directors and general rules applicable to directors' conduct of cooperative business.

The bounds of authority defined in this policy serve as a medium by which greater unanimity and closer coordination can be affected amongst directors, and between directors, management, and employees.

All directors shall have the same rights and responsibilities, unless specifically empowered or excluded by board policy.

Directors have the following responsibilities:

- a. Be aware of and follow the cooperative's bylaws, policies, procedures, and regulations;
- b. Perform board duties, including committee and officer duties, in good faith, and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances;
- c. Act in the best interests of its members as a whole - not of a subgroup or designated constituency;
- d. Bring complete honesty and personal integrity to the board;
- e. Respect others and respect yourself;
- f. Openly and impartially consider all issues and matters;
- g. Research issues thoroughly and remains informed regarding cooperative operations and issues; seek additional expertise, knowledge, and skills as appropriate and needed;
- h. Prepare for meetings and make timely reports as needed;
- i. Attend all board meetings, strategic planning sessions, and training retreats, be on time, and notify the board president when an absence is unavoidable;
- j. Keep discussions short and focused, and have respect for the agenda;
- k. Serve on committees as needed, and in other capacities as appointed by the board;
- l. Have fun!



2011- 2012 Nomination Committee Commitment Letter

Dear Nomination Committee Member,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the 2010-2011 NomCom. The Committee's mission is to serve the member-owners, employees, and the community in a fair and cooperative manner.

In that spirit, the following is expected of all committee members:

- a. A one-year term commitment and a time commitment of approximately 12 hours per month for committee duties.
- b. You must be a current member-owner of Sevananda Natural Foods Market.
- c. Attendance at scheduled meetings either in person or via conference call.
- d. Your participation in the following events is expected: committee meetings, working with the operational staff to make the spring meeting a success, facilitation of the election, counting the ballots, announcing the results to the candidates, board and membership and updating the NomCom manual as needed after the election cycle is complete.
- e. Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest and agreement to abide by Sevananda's Board of Directors ethics guidelines.
- f. At least three hours of work a week on the works of the committee, for which you will be compensated with a Working Member discount of 20% off at the registers for your purchases at Sevananda for the duration of your active committee work.

Information about Carver Policy Governance is provided in order to help with both the orientation process and informing the candidates for the Board of what will be expected of them. You will also have the Nomination Committee Elections Process manual to guide you in your service on this committee.

We look forward to working with you to implement Sevananda's mission and vision for the future. Thank you again for serving on the 2011-2012 Sevananda Nomination Committee!

By signing this, I agree to all terms concerning the commitment of this committee, and agree to operate under the same code of conduct and ethic as our Board members.

Nomination Committee Member

Date ____/____/2011
