



Annual Owner Meeting Minutes October 27, 2020

Call to Order and Welcome

Sally Nixon, Vice-president of Seward Co-op's Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and welcomed co-op owners in attendance via Zoom.

Verification of Quorum

Sally confirmed quorum was established. According to the co-op's bylaws, 50 owners must be in attendance to qualify as a quorum; more than 50 owners registered and attended the meeting.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda

There was a motion to approve the annual meeting agenda. Motioned seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes from the Oct. 22, 2019 annual meeting. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Election Results

Sally thanked candidates in the board of directors election and thanked those who voted. A total of 1,441 votes were cast, which elected Vina Kay and Warren King to three-year terms. Kate Seybold was elected to a one-year term, and Claire Purvey Houston was elected to a two-year term in the designated employee director seat. Additionally all four proposed changes to the co-op's articles and bylaws were approved.

General Manager's Report

Sean Doyle, General Manager, shared the annual report and financial condition of the co-op, as required in bylaw four section three of the articles and bylaws. He then detailed impacts of the global pandemic on Seward Co-op operations. Sean thanked the board for their leadership over the past year, in particular president LaDonna Sanders Redmond for her clarity and compassion during an unprecedented year. Sean closed by expressing gratitude to essential co-op employees, who were deemed first responders in the state of Minnesota during the pandemic.

Recognition of 2021 SEED Community Choice Recipients

Cyrus Berg, Grant Advisory Team member, announced the names of local organizations who won the SEED Community Choice vote and will be recipients in 2021.

Business portion of annual meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Allison Meyer, Advocacy and Governance Specialist, Nov. 2020.

Panel discussion on racial justice and abolition in the cooperative movement

The 2020 meeting featured a dynamic and powerful panel discussion featuring Resmaa Menakem, Mankwe Ndosi, and Sophia Benrud—activists, artists, and community organizers whose work is at the forefront of Black liberation and racial justice. Seward Co-op Board President, LaDonna Sanders-Redmond facilitated the discussion, and shared her hope for our co-op community to “articulate a vision of community that is free from white supremacy.” Through conversation, song, and movement, the panel centered on the co-op’s role in the movement for racial justice and liberation in our communities – a movement that holds parallel values of abolition with cooperative history and principles.

We examined the modern definition of abolition and what the activity of an abolitionist is today. When the panelists mentioned abolition, it is in the context of ridding ourselves of oppression, to build a world that is free from the patterns and structures of white supremacy. Resmaa re-emphasized the words of Mankwe, Sophia and LaDonna in saying, “Being an abolitionist or abolitionism is not just about a concept. Being an abolitionist is about what you do. It is about using something and about using your body to make things change.” Challenging the notion that being an ally is a marker you can claim for yourself, Resmaa asked those who occupy white bodies to examine how and where they are actively showing up for racial justice. When we recognize the advantage our bodies hold, only then can we strengthen our entire community and gain true abolition for all.

Cooperative and abolitionists movements are built on and continue to live through the actions of individuals and communities. Developing an antiracist culture is an embodiment of being an abolitionist. Embodying abolition and abolitionist activity is acting in alignment to our cooperative values. In cooperatives, we can embody a culture of action – intentional, community-based justice strengthened by our history of collaboration.

Seward Co-op staff and board extend deep gratitude to guest panelists Mankwe Ndosi, Resmaa Menakem, and Sophia Benrud for this challenging and motivating discussion.