

City Center Market Board of Directors

City Center Market, the retail store and cafe operated by MOMS Food Co-op has grown and evolved into a thriving community based provider of organic and locally grown foods. Today, it has more than 2000 owners, approximately 35 employees, and is *governed* by a nine member Board of Directors, which meets monthly. Directors are elected from the ranks of the owners, typically at a general election held in the fall. Directors are elected to terms lasting three years and the terms are staggered so that three positions are up for election each year. And while the Co-op has more than 30 employees, the General Manager (GM) is the only employee of the Board of Directors.

This may surprise some people who are more familiar with a typical business organization and structure. But if you think about it, how many typical businesses have more than 2000 owners? And can you imagine having the Board form itself into committees to try and run various parts of the business operation? Such a structure would require exceptional managerial and communication skills between the different committees and the staff. Instead, City Center Market, as do most food cooperatives, relies on a method of governance known as “policy governance”.

In essence, the Board uses the authority given to it by the owners, to set strategic direction, ensure organizational accountability and maintain a healthy, sustainable cooperative for the future. In 2012, the Board established what we call “ends” to set our strategic direction as follows:

City Center Market exists so that our owners have a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community.

- 1. The community has access to products and services that support healthy living.*
- 2. The community has access to organically and locally produced goods*
- 3. The community has knowledge to make healthy choices.*
- 4. The local economy is supported and strengthened.*
- 5. Sustainable practices are supported.*
- 6. The larger cooperative community is thriving*

Accountability is achieved by setting specific policies governing the operation of the store and associated business activities, by setting expectations for the General Manager and by setting limits on how the Board operates. Put another way, we establish that the GM will manage our business operations in a fiscally sound manner. We further want our store to be fair and equitable to employees and owners alike. Last, we as a Board diligently monitor the Co-op’s financial condition and the GM’s job performance, while acting collectively in the best interests of the co-op.

If you would like to learn more about the Board or are interested in joining the Board by running for a seat at the annual election in October, please contact President Mike Mueller at: theboard@citycentermarket.coop or inquire at the store with Gayle.