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**Meeting Date & Venue:** July 7th, 2026, Via Zoom | **Next Meeting:** July 27, 2026, via Zoom

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## Overview

The Board held a special meeting to finalize the recruitment materials for the Co-op's permanent General Manager search. Directors and leadership staff worked together to ensure the job qualifications, description, and posting reflect the skills and experience needed to lead the Co-op successfully into the future.

## Key Updates & Decisions

- **GM Search Materials Finalized:** The Board approved the updated General Manager qualifications, job description, and job posting, allowing the recruitment process to move forward.
- **Shared Leadership Input:** Board members and leadership staff collaborated to identify the most important qualifications for the position, ensuring the hiring criteria reflect both governance and operational perspectives.
- **Focus on Cooperative Experience:** The approved qualifications place greater emphasis on retail grocery management experience, a demonstrated record of success, and experience in the cooperative and/or natural foods industry as a highly desirable qualification.
- **Leadership Priorities:** Visioning was added as a required qualification, while accountability, integrity, transparency, communication, financial management, and people leadership remained among the highest priorities for the position.
- **Recruitment Begins:** Interim General Manager Wynston Estes will prepare the internal announcement and website posting so the search can begin.

## What's Ahead

- Publish the General Manager job posting and begin recruiting qualified candidates.
- Continue the Executive Search Committee's work to identify and evaluate applicants.
- Keep members informed as the recruitment process progresses.

**UKIAH NATURAL FOODS  
(A.K.A THE HOMESTEAD EXCHANGE)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A special meeting of the Ukiah Natural Foods Board of Directors was convened on Monday, July 7th, 2026, at 5:32 PM via Zoom.

**BOARD DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Gideon Burdick (President), Angie McChesney (Vice President), Tim Dolan (Treasurer), Christine Rodrigues (Secretary), Anthony Browning , Maria Landaeta, Ky Mayers, Steve Turner

**BOARD DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Jen Dalton

**STAFF PRESENT:** Natasha Jelen (IT and Pricing Manager), Lodi DeAlba (Front Manager), Wynston Estis (Interim General Manager)

President Burdick called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.

1. **Introductions and Check-Ins:**
2. **Brief Announcements and Confirm Agenda:**

Board President Burdick **MOVED to approve the agenda as presented.** Seconded by the Board Secretary Rodrigues. **MOTION PASSED.**

|      |                                                                                  |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes: | Board Members:                                                                   |
|      | McChesney, Rodrigues, Burdick, Turner, Dalton, Browning, Dolan, Mayers, Landaeta |

3. **Public Comment:**

None

4. **GM Hiring Packet Review and Approval:**

Board Member Turner shared his screen and the Executive Search Committee presented the results of a qualifications survey used to refine the General Manager job description and hiring criteria. Twelve participants (six board members and six leadership/staff members) completed the survey, showing strong agreement on the most important qualifications. Accountability received unanimous support, while integrity, transparency, communication, collaboration, business planning, financial management, leadership, and people management emerged as the highest priorities. Less emphasis was placed on innovation and entrepreneurial qualities compared to the previous search process.

Board members discussed whether strategic thinking, visioning, and innovation should remain prominent in the evaluation criteria. While survey results ranked these lower, several members

felt they were essential for leading the Co-op through future challenges. The committee agreed to add visioning to the required qualifications and retain strategic thinking as a key consideration during candidate evaluations.

The committee also reviewed the General Manager job description and agreed to:

- Remove the spending authority/executive limitation language from the job description, recognizing it belongs in a separate Board policy document.
- Strengthen the experience requirements by changing "retail grocery experience" to retail grocery management experience and emphasizing a demonstrated track record of success.
- Use the qualifications list primarily as the first screening tool for evaluating applicants before interviews.

Board and staff members stressed the importance of hiring someone who understands the cooperative business model and natural foods industry. They noted that previous General Managers without cooperative experience faced challenges adapting to the Co-op's culture and values. The committee agreed to add experience in the natural foods and/or cooperative grocery environment as a highly desirable qualification in both the job description and job posting.

The committee reviewed the draft job posting, including salary and benefits. Members discussed paid time off, agreeing that PTO should be negotiated with the final candidate rather than fully defined in the posting. There was general consensus that vacation should accrue over time, while allowing flexibility to remain competitive for highly qualified candidates.

After incorporating the agreed-upon revisions, including adding visioning, emphasizing cooperative and natural foods experience, and strengthening management qualifications, the committee unanimously approved the qualifications, job description, and job posting for publication.

Interim GM Estis was directed to prepare the internal announcement and website posting for the job.

Treasurer Dolan requested that the minutes note that both board members and leadership staff participated in developing and aligning the required and highly desirable qualifications for the General Manager position.

Board President Burdick **MOVED to approve the Executive Search Committee's recommended revisions to the General Manager qualifications, job description, and job posting, including the agreed-upon additions and amendments discussed during the meeting, and authorize the posting of the position.** Seconded by Board Secretary Rodrigues. **MOTION PASSED.**

Yes: Board Members:  
McChesney, Rodrigues, Burdick, Turner, Dalton, Browning, Dolan, Mayers,  
Landaeta

5. **Little Questions:**

The next meeting is July 27th via Zoom.

6. **Topics for Next Month:**

- GoogleDrive

7. **Closing and Evaluation:**

President Burdick adjourned the meeting at 6:43 P.M.

The next Meeting is on **July 27th, 2026**, via Zoom

Submitted by Erica Ramirez, Board Administrator, edited by Secretary Rodrigues