

Paul G. Swanson

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Biography:

I grew up in Oshkosh, graduated from Lourdes and UW-Oshkosh with an Accounting degree. Thereafter I went to UW-Law and ultimately came back to Oshkosh to work in my father's Law office. I now am the senior partner in Steinhilber Swanson LLP with offices in Oshkosh, Madison and Milwaukee.

I am married with two adult children and have practiced Law in Wisconsin for 40 years, primarily focusing on business reorganizations, restructuring, and formal Chapter proceedings under the Bankruptcy Code. I represent debtors. I have represented farmers during many downturns in the farm economy and have done extensive work in the food industry from production to distribution to retail.

I have served on many professional Boards and in leadership positions in the legal profession and speak frequently at conferences and seminars locally and nationally related to my profession. In my free time I like to sail, ski and bike. For a complete CV please visit our firms website at www.steinhilberswanson.com.

What Might I Bring to the Board:

I have extensive experience in analyzing and recommending improvements in business operations because of my work experience. I have dealt with milk producers, cheese manufacturers, vegetable growers, organic farms, and distributors of food products extensively and have contacts in these industries around the state. I think my advice and my contacts would help advance the mission of the Coop, and the advice would be free. I think I work well in a Board setting and am currently not serving on a Board for the first time in my professional life, so I am able and willing to commit the time to this Board.

My Dream of the Coop:

In my student years in Madison, I lived in a food desert and relied on the Langdon Street Food Coop for wonderful food. They locally sourced and were priced fairly. Wholesome food on a student budget. Later, I frequented the Willy St. Coop. My dream for the Oshkosh Food Coop would be to see it rise into the ranks of these well established and seemingly well-run cooperatives, providing great and unique food to our community. I also think that we can serve a very underserved neighborhood – there really aren't many food sources downtown but for the Wagner Market and I would hope we could compliment rather than compete with it.

Importance of the Coop to Greater Oshkosh

I am hopeful that the Coop will carry a large variety of locally sourced food and food products, especially produce in the appropriate months. If we can help sustain smaller artisan farmers and producers, we not only provide our members with great food but encourage and support people who grow or produce

food in small family run sustainable operations. Farming has gone very large scale and the family farm has been largely squeezed out. I have always thought that there is a great demand for quality product, in effect, handmade. If Wisconsin is to maintain its family farms, we need more outlets like our Coop to buy and sell the products produced carefully on a smaller scale. If we succeed, then we help promote and preserve our Wisconsin heritage.

Why Cooperatives:

Cooperatives are owned by their patrons. The "dividends" or profits are reinvested into the mission of the entity. Credit Unions are in effect cooperatives, as well as the major dairy processing operations such as Land O' Lakes and DFA. Cooperatives also have access to the Bank for Cooperatives, (not sure if we would be eligible) and have the benefit of membership commitment to the core mission. If a person has a stake in the entity, they generally support it. I am sure that our members will be committed, assuming we deliver a good range of products at fair prices. Cooperatives have as their central purpose the mission of the organization, but of course need to be profitable or they fail. We should never lose sight of the reality of operating at a profit.

Additional Statement:

I am a foodie and have sought out and found great food from small producers all over the state. I would love nothing better than to promote and foster a source for great, wholesome, and tasty food in the center of Oshkosh, at a fair price. We have built the foundation for what can be a great asset to the community, but it will take hard work, good products, and great service to grow the operation and get it to continuing sustainability. I think my experience can help move our Coop forward.

In conclusion, I would love to give my time and experience to the Coop, am willing to do so freely and meet or exceed the expectations articulated in the request for Board members. I hope you look favorable on my candidacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul G. Swanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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