



2021 Oshkosh Food Cooperative Board Of Directors Statement of Nomination

Name: Susan T Vette
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Brief Biography (150 Words or Less):

Current volunteer activities: Current member Oshkosh Food Co-op board, since 2019-board liaison for capital campaign/grants; Oshkosh Opera House Foundation board; Women’s Fund governance committee; volunteer mediator Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center; Oshkosh United Way resource development committee. **Past volunteer boards/leadership:** president Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra, Oshkosh Opera House Foundation (interim executive director, 2004), and Mercy Health Foundation (emeritus); Vice chair Mercy Medical Center capital campaign; treasurer Women’s Fund OACF (emeritus board,) Affinity Health System (professional activities committee,) Evergreen (chair operations committee,) Christine Ann board (co-founder “Men Who Cook;”) Boards: UW Oshkosh Foundation, Tempo Fox Valley, Tempo International. **Professional background:** (Retired) corporate advertising copywriter/account service Chicago, IL; San Juan, PR: Neenah, and Oshkosh, WI; self-employed consultant as Write Ideas, Oshkosh, WI. **Awards:** Oshkosh Rotary Honorary Paul Harris, Oshkosh Chamber Alberta Kimball Community Service; State of Wisconsin Governor’s Award for Support of the Arts. **Education:** Graduate Oshkosh High School, UW Madison.

Please provide a written nomination statement that addresses the following questions. This will be shared with your fellow member-owners and posted on our blog. Recommended length not to exceed 2 pages:

1. What would you bring/offer to the Oshkosh Food Co-op Board?

My experience helping lead OFC’s fast-paced \$1.6M capital campaign, assistance with grant development, climbing the “learning curve” of the cooperative business model, and helping communicate Co-op benefits to the Oshkosh community – all will help provide a basis for advocacy and sound decision-making as the store becomes

operational. I have great enthusiasm for the project and its potential for good. My previous experience centered on marketing communications, fund-raising, community-building, and board service. I have deep roots in the Oshkosh community. That, and past experience, will help me support this new enterprise.

2. What is your dream for the Oshkosh Food Co-op?

I share a dream with all of us: To help open the doors of a full-line grocery store where there currently isn't one – in downtown Oshkosh. I envision a resource that will help address food insecurity and add to the lifestyle of all in our diverse community who crave healthy food and the special shopping experience of a food co-op.

3. Why do you think the Oshkosh Food Co-op is important to the greater Oshkosh community?

So many reasons! Here are a few:

- Member-owners will enjoy a return on investment, financially, and also in knowing they helped provide important food resource for their community.
- The location will benefit residents of the USDA-designated food desert by offering healthy food options close to where they live and creating programs to help make good food appetizing and affordable.
- The Co-op, with its emphasis on local sourcing, will partner with area producers and help them grow sales, while also making “home-grown” readily available for all of us.
- UW-Oshkosh students will gain a grocery store within walking distance of campus.
- The City of Oshkosh will fulfill a long-held priority to have a center-city grocery store to support downtown revitalization, business growth, and retain grocery dollars.
- Oshkosh will have another unique amenity with only food co-op in northeast Wisconsin.
- With a commitment to diversity and inclusion, OFC will be the community's “kitchen table” where we gather around food to celebrate ... and elevate ... all in our community.

4. Why cooperatives?

Co-ops are model democracies. We member-owners are “in charge” of our own enterprise, electing leadership and agreeing on the mission, vision, values, and policies of our store. As such, we are something of a “hybrid,” able to combine sound business practices with a mission to meet community needs. We can partner with other organizations to achieve our ends and agree to accept lower margins in favor of community benefit.

If not a co-operative, this project might not have been feasible. In general, grocery stores operate on very small margins. As food co-op member-owners, we put mission over margin. Our collective passion and determination to make this store happen has enabled us – together -- to lift up the project, raise the funds to finance it, and realize the dream. It will also help us deliver on the vision to “strengthen the local economy, promote health, and build communities.

5. Please offer any additional thoughts you would like Oshkosh Food Co-op member-owners to know about you.

Initially, I joined the OFC board because I’m an organic “foodie;” (a true-believer,) and wanted everyone to be able to eat like I do. (I still feel that way!) Now, after discovering the power of enthusiastic member-owners, experiencing the exhilaration of a successful capital campaign, and partnering with such committed and talented leadership, I hope to continue into the next phase when the imagined is realized and the store is open. I look forward to helping meet challenges that lie ahead as we transition from an operating team to a governance board with oversight responsibilities for all stakeholders’ interests; balancing mission and margin to create a thriving Oshkosh Food Co-op that will serve the community far into the future.

Please note that the OFC Board of Directors or its Governance Committee may modify the format but not content of self-nominations to ensure all self-nomination documents are consistently presented to member-owners for consideration.