

**Olympia Food Co-op**  
**Member Initiated Ballot Procedure and Petition Requirements**

**I. Petition Process and requirements**

Members may submit an item for vote by the membership using the following procedure.

**Step 1:** A proposal is brought to the board, clearly describing the issue(s) in question. At this time the board may do one of the following:

- a) Approve the proposal to move forward as a member initiated ballot
- b) Agree to sponsor the member ballot and make it a board ballot
- c) Identify appropriate committee or staff to address the concern/idea
- d) Give feedback for possible rework
- e) Reject the proposal: The board may reject the proposal if it is illegal or deemed financially irresponsible or financially unfeasible. The board will provide a written statement articulating its reasons for rejection.

**Step 2:** The Board considers the proposal and determines which of the above options to carry forth. The following applies only if the proposal is approved to move forward as a member initiated ballot.

**Step 3:** The member(s) draft a petition to conduct a member initiated ballot. The petition must be lawful, and must be reasonable based on financial feasibility. The petition must include provisions for validating that the petition signatures are from active members. In addition, the petition must be clearly written so that the reader may be able to easily answer the following questions.

- Who wrote this petition?
- What is the issue they are trying to address?
- What is their solution?

**Step 4:** The board reviews the petition to insure that it meets the requirements in Step 3. If the board finds that the petition meets the above requirements, the petitioners may proceed with signature gathering. See tabling guidelines. In order to be included in the upcoming election, the required number of valid member signatures must be gathered by August 1<sup>st</sup>. The petition must be signed by 1/2 of the average number of voting members from the previous three annual elections, or 300, whichever is greater.

**Step 5:** The membership coordinators will review the petitions to insure that the required number of signatures are from active members.

**Step 6:** The required number of validated, signed petitions is presented to the board.

**II. Member Initiated Ballot Procedure**

After successfully completing the **Petition for Member Initiative Procedure**, the board or board committee works with the petitioners to put together the member-initiated ballot.

**Step 1:** Develop a voter pamphlet and educational materials that will be published in the October newsletter (September 1<sup>st</sup> submission deadline).

The voter pamphlet must include

- Benefits (pros)
- Impacts (cons)
- Costs
- Legal aspects
- Purpose, vision

**Step 2:** Between September 1<sup>st</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>, at least two member forums will be held at which the member initiative will be the topic. In addition, the member initiative must be included as an agenda item for the annual meeting. The board or board committee will also work with the petitioners to insure that the membership be given an opportunity to educate itself with regard to the issue during this period. Other methods of education that should be utilized are notebooks at stores with ballot and educational materials, the website, and tabling at the stores.

**Step 3:** The Election is held October 15<sup>th</sup> through November 15<sup>th</sup>. Unless otherwise specified by State law, a 60% majority is required for a member-initiated ballot to pass.

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