

A Sample Election Process

1. **Appoint an Elections Officer:** Check your co-op's by-laws to see who is responsible for making this appointment. Look for the Organizational By-law under the Article for Board Elections. The person appointed should not be running for election, should not be related to someone running for election and should not be from the same household as someone running for election.
2. **Review the Process for the Election:** The elections officer will explain to the members how the election will run. Start by stating the number of positions up for election at this meeting. There will be a call to open nominations from the floor. Once nominations are open the elections officer will make 3 calls for nominations. After the third call for nominations the elections officer will ask for a motion to close nominations. At this time each candidate will be asked if they wish to accept or decline their nomination. Once the slate of candidates has been established each candidate will be given the opportunity to address the members and the members can ask questions of the candidates. Ballots will then be distributed. Once all of the ballots have been cast the election officer and 2 volunteers will count the ballots. The elections officer will then announce the results of the election. Ask the members if they have any questions about the process before you move on.
3. **Review the qualifications to serve on the Board:** The Co-operative Corporations Act states that in order to serve on the Board of Directors you must be a member of the co-op, must be 18 years of age or older, may not be mentally incompetent or undischarged from bankruptcy. Please also review your co-op's by-laws for any additional qualifications the members may have set for the Board members. You will find this in your

Organizational By-law under the Article for Board of Directors. Remind the members that any member who currently does not meet the qualifications to serve on the Board can decline their nomination at the appropriate time when asked with no questions asked. Ask the members if they have any questions about the qualifications before you move on.

4. **Motion to Open Nominations:** The elections officer will ask the members for a motion to open nominations and ask for someone to second the motion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.

5. **Three Calls for Nominations:** If the co-op has received any nominations in advance of the meeting those nominations should be read aloud and the candidate's names listed on a flip chart or somehow displayed for all members to see. Advise the members that you are making the first call for nominations. Any member may nominate themselves or another member. Once you receive a nomination ask for a seconder and then add the candidate's name to the list. Receive as many nominations as the members want to offer. When there seems to be a lull in the nominations tell the members you are making the second call for nominations. Receive as many nominations as the members want to offer. When there is a lull in the nominations remind the members how many positions they need to fill that evening and that they should be sure to nominate more candidates than there are positions for so that the members can be sure to exercise their democratic voice in these elections. Remind the members that if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled then those candidates will be elected by acclamation and the members will not get the opportunity to vote. Then tell the members you are making your third and final call for nominations.

6. **Motion to Close Nominations:** Once there are no further nominations forthcoming from the members ask for a motion to close nominations and ask for someone to second the motion. The persons who make the motion to close nominations should not be running in the election. Once the motion has been moved and seconded call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.

7. **Ask Candidates to Accept or Decline their Nominations:** At this time you should once again review the qualifications for serving on the board of directors. Starting with the last candidate nominated go up through the list and ask each candidate if they wish to accept or decline their nomination. If they decline stroke their name off the list of candidates. Once all of the candidates have had an opportunity to accept or decline their nomination ask the Manager to confirm that all of the candidates are eligible to run in this election. The Manager will answer “Yes” or “No”. If “yes” move on to the next step. If “No” review the qualifications once more and ask each of the remaining candidates once again if they accept or decline their nomination. If there are more candidates running in the election than there are seats available to fill at this meeting continue on through the process. **If the number of candidates running for election is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled then declare the candidates elected by acclamation and the election process is complete.**

8. **Remarks from Candidates & Questions from Members:** Allow each of the candidates to make a brief statement to the members outlining why they want to serve on the Board of Directors and what they see as an important contribution they can make to the governance of the co-op. Ask the members if they have any questions they would like to pose to the candidates.

9. **Appointing Volunteers to assist with counting the ballots:** Ask the members to appoint 2 volunteers to assist in counting the ballots. These volunteers cannot be candidates for election and should not be related to someone running in the election or be from the same household as someone running in the election.

10. **Balloting:** Before the ballots are distributed explain that the members are being asked to elect xnumber of directors to the board at this election. Each ballot must contain a number of votes equal to the number of directors to be elected. For example if there are 4 positions to be elected then each ballot must contain 4 different names. Any more or less than 4 names will result in a spoiled ballot and will not be counted in the election. Make sure the members are very clear on this before you hand out the ballots. Show the members the ballot box and show them that there are no ballots already in the box. Each member will be given one ballot. After every member has received their ballot and had time to mark it, members will be asked to place their ballots in the ballot box. Once all of the ballots have been received into the ballot box the elections officer and the 2 volunteers will take the ballot box to a quiet spot to count the ballots.

11. **Counting the Ballots:** Each of the volunteers should write each of the candidates names on a sheet of paper. They can use the simple tally method to track the votes. (4 marks and a line through it makes 5) This makes it very simple to add up the votes at the end. The elections officer will remove one ballot at a time from the ballot box. Quickly review the ballot to ensure that it contains the correct number of votes and that each vote is for a different valid candidate. If the ballot does not have the correct number of votes, or if they have voted for one candidate more than once, or if they voted for someone who was not listed on the list of candidates then declare the ballot spoiled and set it aside. None of the votes on that ballot will count. If the quick review shows that it is a good ballot read out each of the names on the ballot so the volunteers can tally

the votes. Keep an eye on the volunteers to make sure that you are not reading the names too fast. We want to make sure the volunteers have time to make sure their tallies are accurate. Set the good ballots in one pile and the spoiled ballots in a separate pile. Once all of the ballots have been read aloud and tallied ask the volunteers to total the votes cast for each candidate. Both volunteers should get the same number for each of the candidates. If they do not you will have to go back through the pile of good ballots and re-read the votes cast for **only the candidates that they had differing votes for** . Once both of the volunteers have exactly the same number of votes for each candidate you will determine the candidates who are elected to the board. The volunteers should each sign and date their tally sheet. If there were spoiled ballots the volunteers should list the number of spoiled ballots on the tally sheet as well. The tally sheets and the ballots (both good and spoiled) will be placed in a large envelope and sealed.

12. **Announce the Election Results:** The elections officer and the volunteers will return to the meeting. The elections officer will thank the volunteers for their assistance and then announce the names of the newly elected directors in no particular order. The co-op's by-laws will tell you whether you are to announce the vote count or not. You will find this in the Organizational By-law in the Article about Board of Directors Election Procedures.

13. **Motion to Destroy Ballots:** The elections officer will then ask that the members make a motion to destroy the ballots after the period of time that is outlined in the co-op's By-laws. You will find this in the Organizational By-law in the Article about Board of Directors Election Procedures. Once a member has made the motion and another has seconded it call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.