



2019 Oshkosh Food Cooperative Board of Directors Statement of Nomination

Name: Peter Westort

Address: 1103 E Parkway Avenue, Oshkosh, WI. 54901

Biography (~150 words or less):

I earned a Ph.D. in Accounting from the University of Oregon, an MBA from the University of Southern Maine, and a bachelor's degree from St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. I am also a CPA and was a Fulbright Scholar in Alexandria, Egypt for the 2011-2012 academic year. My wife, Mary Ann, and I have lived in Oshkosh since 2003. We have been active in AFS (American Field Service), the high school student exchange program for more than 20 years having hosted 13 international exchange students. I am also a board member of AFS-USA as well as the treasurer of the local area team. I have also been active in the VITA program, an IRS sponsored program, where local volunteers provide free tax return preparation services for low and moderate income taxpayers. I retired in 2015 and have been a member of the Co-op board of directors since 2017.

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

After a career in Accounting and Taxation, I feel I can offer insight and assistance in the financial management of Board activities. I have been involved in not-for-profit organizations in a variety of capacities over a number of years including AFS (American Field Service), United Way, Boy Scouts of America, UW Oshkosh Credit Union Assets and Liability Committee, and, in particular, as a member of three different food coops, all of which had retail stores. I feel this gives me an ability to be objective and helpful.

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

It is my desire that the Oshkosh area have a place that offers healthy food at reasonable prices, provided in a sustainable manner, and with easy accessibility. To be responsive to buyer needs, it should be member owned. I think it is imperative that processes be put in place that will result in the members of this co-op opening within the next two years.

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

I believe that the long-term health of any community requires healthy, affordable, reliable, and easily accessible food options. In this sense, I believe that the Oshkosh Food Co-op would provide a valuable resource to the community. The existence of a food co-op also sends a signal that the community has a large, committed, and caring volunteer base.

4. Why cooperatives?

The primary reasons for cooperatives are cost and control. A cooperative, by its very design, does not need to provide for owner profit. It only needs to provide for sufficient cash flow to continue and grow operations. This allows a coop to keep prices reasonable. Since a co-op is customer controlled, it can be much more responsive to consumer needs. This affects sourcing and type of product, portions or size of offerings, and pricing.

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

- a. I am a retired accounting professor and have lived in Oshkosh for about fifteen years. I have been involved in the community in various capacities for most of that time.
- b. I was the coordinator of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program from 2004 until we merged with United Way a few years ago. I continued to be involved as a quality reviewer until 2017. We provided free income tax return preparation services for low and moderate income taxpayers.
- c. My wife, Mary Ann Offer, and I have been involved with AFS (American Field Service), the high school student exchange program, for about 20 years. We have hosted international exchange students who have attended Oshkosh North and Oshkosh West high schools. I am currently the Treasurer for the local Area Team of AFS and I also serve on the national board of directors of AFS-USA.
- d. I have served on Allocations Committee of the Oshkosh Area United Way for several years, but am currently inactive.

**Your complete nomination statement is provided to the membership at the time of voting.*