

Grand Ridge Village Board
Minutes of the February 18, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Village Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Kay Hines at the Farm Ridge Township Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance. A motion to appoint Sheryl Churney as Secretary *Pro Tem* due to illness of the Village Clerk was made by Trustee Hettel; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Roll Call: Trustees present: Jim Stricklin, Anne Hinterlong, Dennis Rockey, Cindi Koetz and John Hettel. Absent: Kim Olney. Also present: Village Attorney Sheryl Churney. A sign-in sheet was provided for all others present and a copy of the sign-in sheet is attached.

Minutes. Trustee Hettel made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2025 Village Board Meeting and the January 8, 2025 Historic Committee Meeting; second by Trustee Hinterlong. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report. Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried. Trustee Hinterlong asked if the report can be reformatted as the section on the bills is difficult to read. The concern will be raised with the Treasurer.

Payment of Bills. Trustee Hettel made a motion to approve payment of the monthly bills; second by Trustee Stricklin. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Public Comment. None.

Travel Request(s). None.

Old Business.

- A. Update on Purchase of Welcome to Grand Ridge Sign.** Trustee Rockey reported he consulted with IDOT regarding the placement of the sign. The population sign must remain. Sign placement will not interfere with mowing and sight lines. Trustee Rockey is meeting Friday February 21 with the sign company representative to review proofs and Trustee Rockey will circulate to board members if possible. Trustee Rockey will also discuss options for a new park sign with the company. The Welcome sign may be up in several weeks depending on weather.
- B. Update on Vacant Homes on Poundstone Ave.** Shingles have been delivered to 225 Poundstone Ave.; the owner previously reported he secured financing to begin work at the residence. The broken window at 305 Poundstone Ave. was repaired.
- C. Update on 160 W. Main Street.** No update.
- D. Action on Garbage Service Opt-Out Requests.**
- (1) Request by Barry Redman, 420 Burlington Avenue. Motion by Trustee Rockey to deny; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
 - (2) Request by Farm Ridge Township for 135 Railroad Ave. and 130 Sylvan Street. As these are not residential properties, no action was taken.

- (3) Request by Kevin Chalfont, 140 W. Main Street. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (4) Request by Glen Cole, 800 Burlington Ave. Motion by Trustee Rockey to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (5) Request by John Franzen, no action was taken as more information was needed.
- (6) Request by Eric Yacko, no action was taken as the house is vacant.
- (7) Request by Julie Bowman, 120 E. Washington Street. Motion by Trustee Hinterlong to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (8) Request by Jenna and Kyle Boyd, 630 Myrtle Avenue. Motion by Trustee Koetz to approve; second by Trustee Hettel. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (9) Request by Beth McCormick, 455 Railroad Avenue. Motion by Trustee Hinterlong to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (10) Request by Thomas Hoxsey, 500 S. Bloomington Road . Motion by Trustee Hinterlong to approve; second by Trustee Stricklin. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (11) Request by Larry Eutis, 385 E. Liberty Street. Motion by Trustee Hinterlong to approve; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.
- (12) Request by Vicki Redman, 440 Burlington Avenue. Motion by Trustee Hinterlong to grant; second by Trustee Koetz. Motion approved on a unanimous voice vote.

E. Renew Membership with the Starved Rock Foundation. The merits of membership were discussed. The Mayor will ask for more information about the period covered by dues and the ability to add the memorial project. A motion to renew the membership was made by Trustee Hinterlong; second by Trustee Rockey. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

New Business.

- A. Resolution Approving Park Grant Administration Agreement with NCICG.** Following a question by Trustee Hinterlong, the board discussed the funds (General and Park) to be used to pay the contract fee. Trustee Hinterlong noted the administrative expenses for the park project need to be tracked. Trustee Rockey made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-02-18; second by Trustee Koetz. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- B. Motion to Hire Hopkins & Associates for FYE 2025 Audit.** Trustee Hinterlong made a motion to hire Hopkins & Associates for the FYE2025 Audit; second by Trustee Hettel. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- C. Discuss and Act on Mowing and Maintenance Contract.** The contract was reviewed by the Board. The terms were developed from information submitted based on previous bid solicitations. The term of the contract went to October 31, 2025 so that additional services could be completed depending on weather conditions. Motion by Hettel; second by Trustee Rockey. Ayes: Stricklin, Hinterlong, Rockey, Koetz and Hettel. Nays: None. Motion carried.

- D. **Discussion of Adoption of Local Grocery Tax.** Ms. Churney reviewed with the board the repeal of the statewide grocery tax and the need to adopt a local municipal tax to replace the lost revenue. There would not be a tax increase. It was the consensus of the Board to have Ms. Churney prepare the needed ordinance.
- E. **Update by Holly Koster on the Development of a Consumer Owned Grocery Store.** Ms. Koster opened her remarks noting a 4 year fight to repeal the statewide grocery tax as she believes it prevented people from purchasing food. Ms. Koster still plans to use the 160 Main Street property for a co-op grocery store. She noted she is not the building owner, but wants to see the building preserved. She is working on the co-op project to improve access to locally sourced food. She is working with the rural grocery store initiative to develop the co-op as a for-profit organization. There is a current organization with 11 board members. Grateful Plains is a supplier. The organization is already selling in Chicago and Peoria.

The organization is trying to get \$300,000 to \$500,000 for building improvements. The organization is being advised by Marty Travers and is in talks with the USDA on a weekly basis. It could be 3 to 4 years before the grocery store begins operations. Obstacles in the past 2 years included supplier issues and the death of the attorney advising the organization.

Ms. Koster noted she is very passionate about the project and would like to bring it to Grand Ridge. She asked if the Board is against the project to let her know. Trustee Koetz stated she did not understand what the project would look like. Ms. Koster said there is a similar store in Benson which is part of a group from Fairbury. Ms. Koster wants the location to be nostalgic and authentic. Products would include bread, milk and dairy, produce, homemade pasta, grains and the like – not just vegetables.

Trustee Stricklin asked about what the store would give back to the community. Ms. Koster noted the Benson store asks for donations so food boxes can be provided to those in need. The store would also accept SNAP and WIC. A chef would prepare meals for food boxes.

Ms. Koster noted the store may operate out of the 190 Main Street building. Grant money is now frozen, but there is private support for the project. The project does not qualify for funds from the Starved Rock Foundation as it is a for-profit organization.

A concern was raised about whether the store is competing for the same donors as the Village. Ms. Koster noted customers would not just be from Grand Ridge. She also noted there would be a \$200 lifetime membership cost, but a person need not be a member to shop at the store.

Trustee Rockey remarked he liked the idea of a grocery store in Grand Ridge and supporting local farmers but that it would be a monumental chore to get it accomplished at the 160 Main Street building given the building's condition and the cost to repair. It was noted that the property taxes on the building have been sold to a tax buyer and concerns were expressed about the location at 160 Main Street being feasible.

The Board members wished Ms. Koster well. The materials provided by Ms. Koster are attached to the minutes.

Engineers Report. None.

Committee Reports.

Finance, Insurance, Police, Building Permits, and Health & Storm Drains. No reports.

Streets and Alleys. The Board discussed complaints about vehicle speeds on Sylvan and possible ways to address the concerns. All members did not support a stop sign; traffic calming devices such as speed bumps are not recommended. The Board will look into getting a speed sign similar to the one used by the school.

Park. Mayor Hines reported several donations for the Park project have been received.

History. Trustee Hettel reported fundraising letters have been sent and some funds have been received.

Ad Hoc Long Range Planning. Mayor Hines noted a meeting will be held on February 26 and the Village Engineer will attend.

Attorney's Report. No report.

Mayor's Report. No report.

Correspondence. Mayor Hines noted a thank you card was received from NCAT; board members commented the NCAT busses are frequently in town.

Adjournment. Trustee Koetz made a motion to adjourn; second by Trustee Stricklin. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sheryl Churney, Secretary Pro Tem

*Approved by the Board of Trustees on
March 18, 2025*


Christy McGuire, Village Clerk

EST 2024 | GRAND RIDGE, IL




RIDGE FRIDGE

GROCER & GRANGE

OWNER HANDBOOK

COOPERATIVELY
OWNED
COMMUNITY
GROWN

*Stay in
touch!*

-  ridgefridgecoop@gmail.com
-  www.ridgefridge.coop
-  www.facebook.com/ridgefridgecoop

THANK YOU

OWNERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome to *Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange Food Co-op*! The idea to start a food co-op in Grand Ridge sprouts from being in the wake of a farmer-driven ripple to deliver chemical-free, regenerative farmed food to LaSalle County. As a group of 100+ farm families built a food hub distribution model, neighbors and friends came together to design the spokes across all of Illinois that will catapult small farm success to the forefront of the upcoming shift to count on each other more than ever. Our community-wide effort stretches across three counties so far, connecting members like you with easy access to fresh food and preserved farm food all year round!

Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange (RFGG) is a community owned and controlled, mission-driven cooperative grocery store which aims to build equity and strengthen our community through the power of democratic and cooperative action.

The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and

cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise." The co-op business model allows us as owners to work collectively to meet our common needs. For food co-ops like ours, this can mean supporting local farmers & producers, making affordable organic food more available, and instigating a strong local, cooperative economy.

As Ridge Fridge thrives, we revive rural economy in the Village of Grand Ridge and spark wellness for people living in and adjacent to LaSalle County, too. Plus, we reinvest profits back into the local interests that directly fortify missions aligned with Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange.

Cooperative principles are the distinction of witnessing our values in action! Thank you for fueling this important mission with your personal energy. We look forward to building and maintaining a thriving food co-op with you for generations to come!

In Cooperation,

Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange Board of Directors & fellow co-owners

“*A food co-op is an opportunity for a much needed springboard of farmer-driven abundance and prosperity to reach the households of people yearning for a way to eat healthy, support farmers and co-create ways to produce and distribute regeneratively grown food.*”

” Tim & Rev. Holly Koster,
RFGG Owner #1

MISSION & VISION

Our Mission

Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange is a cooperatively owned grocery store committed to community well-being through access to local, wholesome, organic foods and goods.

Our Vision

Because of Us:

1. We have a thriving, cooperatively-owned grocery store which welcomes everyone and cultivates relationships with people in LaSalle County and beyond.
2. We engage involved owners who actively work to strengthen the co-op through cooperative ownership and collaboration.
3. We have a growing, resilient, regional food system through direct support to local growers and producers.
4. Our community has a leader that models and promotes sustainable business practices and environmental stewardship.
5. We have a welcoming space where people come together to share ideas, learn, and empower each other through education and cooperation.

“ Here I would like to add a quote by you and your family

”

Owner Member

#2

CREATING A MORE COOPERATIVE, SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM.

Benefits of Ownership

- Own a local business with a mission to increase access to local, healthy, organic whole foods and products.
- Support local growers and producers right here in our region.
- Every owner has a vote and a voice! You can vote in annual board elections or run for the board yourself.
- Possible owner incentives and specials, bulk buying discounts, or patronage dividends during profitable years (as determined by the board of directors.)

Co-op ownership comes with many benefits as well as many important rights and responsibilities. As a co-op owner, you literally own a part of the business along with all the other owners! RFGG decisions are made through the actions of its owners, and your participation and engagement are vital to our co-op's success. Here are three easy ways you can support your co-op now:

Share

Positively promote the co-op to family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. Tell them why you became an owner and ask them to become an owner with you!

Engage

Owner involvement and control are essential aspects of a cooperative business. Attend meetings, vote in elections, read our newsletters, follow us on social media, and stay informed about the co-op. Engaged owners = successful co-ops!

Volunteer

There are many opportunities for owners to volunteer time and expertise to help build the co-op!
Keep reading for more info on how you can get involved!

IT'S YOUR TIME TO

Our interim store is open but we don't quite yet generate ample revenue through grocery sales to pay for things like consulting fees, supplies, advertising, and training. Currently, all of these costs are paid with owner equity which is dependent on steady owner growth throughout development. For this reason, having a core group of owner volunteers willing to commit their expertise and time is critical until the co-op is open and running with paid staff. We continue to welcome new volunteers at every stage of development to meet the need of launch success.

Our organizing team includes people helping out once or twice, people doing work in the background, and those who are "all-in". It's an opportunity to share your skills while connecting with others who share similar values. RFGG volunteers help build community and a more equitable food system by helping open the only food co-op LaSalle County!

Read newsletters & emails from the co-op.

Fill out the short Volunteer Survey on our website. Help when you can, how you can!


Attend board meetings & the Annual Meeting.
Vote in elections for the board of directors.

Staff our booth at an event for a few hours; have fun while chatting about the co-op with community members!

Like, comment on, & share our social media posts.

Visit our website calendar. Share co-op event info with a friend & encourage them to attend with you!

Easy ways to participate!



Ask someone to become an owner. Try: *"I'm excited because I just joined as an owner of Ridge Fridge Food Co-op! Have you heard about them yet?"*

Volunteer on the Capital Campaign team. The Campaign is important & we'll need your help!

Attend co-op events, & visit our booth at community events!

Learn about board service. If it is a good fit for you, run for a board position or fill a vacant seat.

Invest in preferred owner shares to loan money to the cooperative to build the historic storefront!

Ask us about posting co-op brochures at your workplace or other community location.

Join an ongoing team; use your skills to make a positive lasting impact on the co-op!

COOPERATIVE

VALUES

Principles

Cooperatives across the globe follow a set of universal principles known as the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles are guidelines by which cooperatives (like RFGG) put our values into practice inside our communities:

1. VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Members have equal voting rights meaning one member = one vote.

3. MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control the capital of their cooperative.

4. AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

5. EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Values

Co-ops (including food co-ops!) are mission driven businesses with a long history of commitment to a core set of social and ethical values:

Self-help

Democracy

Equity

Honesty

Social Responsibility

Self-responsibility

Equality

Solidarity

Openness

Caring for Others

Ridge Fridge Grocer & Grange

It all starts with owners!

Food co-ops operate under IL Statute 805 ILCS 310/ Co-operative Act which lays out how a co-op is organized, powers of the co-op, the role and requirements of the board of directors, and the rights of owners, among other details.

Our Bylaws state that RFGG can have up to eleven board directors, each with a three year term. (Full bylaws can be found on our website or contact a director to request a paper copy.) Directors are co-op owners who are elected by other owners at each annual meeting, unless they are appointed to fill a vacant seat.

The role of the board of directors is to:

- Act in good faith on behalf of owners to represent the best interests of the cooperative.
- Set long range goals and perform strategic planning.
- Ensure proper management of all the co-op's resources.
- Work towards fulfilling the mission and vision.

The board is also responsible for creating meaningful and effective ways for owners to be informed and provide input into their co-op. We do this through regular board meetings, annual meetings, email newsletters, owner and community meetings, and listing contact info for current board directors on our website.



Board meetings are held monthly and all owners are welcome and encouraged to attend! Dates, times and locations for board meetings, team meetings, and other events the co-op is attending can be found on our website calendar at: ridgefridge.coop

DEVELOPMENT

Working our way to opening day!

RFGG is following a professionally created timeline developed with expert national consultants specializing in cooperatives. It is a framework for organizing and planning the many lengthy steps involved in starting a new co-op, and has been used successfully by food co-op start-ups around the country.

Through the many years it takes to open a food co-op, the timeline helps us visualize what needs to be completed, and address critical tasks and ownership goals at each development stage. It also informs our annual Strategic Plan, shown here in its simplified version:

