

INFO ABOUT MEMBER-OWNERS' PETITION

HWFC MEMBER-OWNERS' GRASSROOTS RESPONSE TO HWFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS' PR TACTICS

DATE: October 31, 2015
TO: The voting, member-owners of the Honest Weight Food Co-operative
FROM: The voting, member-owners who are petitioners for an emergency Special Membership Meeting of HWFC

Please distribute copies to all HWFC member-owners you know
For more information: <https://hwfcinfohub.wordpress.com/>

On Friday afternoon, 10-23-15, a small piece of paper was tacked to the bulletin board at HWFC giving notice that the board of directors of HWFC had voted to significantly alter member-owner rights by attempting to severely curtail member-owner labor, the mainstay of our co-operative community. This vote was taken without a full vote of the member-owners, as called for in our by-laws.

An electronic message, the standard means of communication used by the board to communicate with the member-owners for years, was not sent until Thursday, 10-29-15, six days after the paper notice on the bulletin board.

In this e-message the board failed to mention four significant actions that had also taken place this week, and of which they had full knowledge:

1. On Saturday, 10-24-15, member-owners responded to this threat to the owners of our co-operative corporation by placing in the hands of the acting board president a petition for an emergency Special Membership Meeting, signed by 65+ member-owners.
2. On Monday, 10-26-15, the Governance Review Council of HWFC held an emergency meeting; they made a unanimous decision that HWFC board of directors had overstepped its authority when it made its decision to (attempt to) significantly alter member-owner rights', stating that that right rests with the member-owners of HWFC.
3. The board failed to address why they felt that a paper notice tacked to a bulletin board *on a Friday afternoon* was adequate notice.
4. On Monday, 10-26-15, the HWFC executive committee **hand-couriered** a letter to the NYS Department of Labor, although DOL has never cited our member-owner labor program as a problem in any way. Member-owners were denied a copy of the letter.

We want to ensure that all HWFC member-owner individuals, families and employees have these facts which were omitted in the board's PR communication.

Our petition to hold an emergency Special Membership Meeting has met HWFC by-laws' standards. The board secretary of HWFC emailed the following message to the petitioner: "The total Membership is at 1,246. The 65 signatures on the petition are enough to garner both the 4% needed for a Special Membership Meeting and the 5% needed to recall Board members."

The only means we have to reach other HWFC voting, member-owners - at this moment - is grassroots' means: via this leaflet, speaking to member-owners at HWFC, and clip boarding for contact info.

We have made a formal request to the board of directors to be able to utilize all means of communication through HWFC to publicize the upcoming emergency Special Membership Meeting, as supported in our by-laws. **It is the opinion of the original petitioner** that we are not being given the logistical support in a cooperative manner as called for in the by-laws. **Despite roadblocks**, when we have the date, time & place set for our emergency Special Membership Meeting, we will do our best to communicate with you, the member-owners of HWFC.

The board of HWFC is "controlling the microphone" & "controlling the message." The board has access to ALL means of communication out of HWFC. We do not. They are "shaping" the message you are hearing. We have no ability to quickly respond.

If you find that your reaction to the board's PR tactic is anger or fear, then it has done its job. Their message was carefully crafted, most likely with the help of the board's PR consultants & lawyers. **Manipulation of this kind can be very powerful.**

Personal contact with working, voting, member-owners is the only means available to us to reach you at the moment: person-by-person, family-by-family, employee-by-employee. **Grassroots action is also very powerful!**

Please seek to get the facts and make up your own mind. **Please help us** get our information out to all 1,246 voting, member-owners of our co-operative and get those voting member-owners to the emergency Special Membership Meeting.

ACTION STEPS: PLEASE HELP...

- ✓ **ATTEND OUR INFORMATIONAL MEETING: Sunday, November 1, 6:00 PM**
Ramada Inn across from HWFC: Small donations will be accepted for room fee
 - Claiming common ground: Explanation of facts: what's happened, where we are, where we need to get to
 - Action steps that will get us there
- ✓ **Member-owners contact form:** <http://goo.gl/forms/KicpOFICIW>
- ✓ **Go here for information:** <https://hwfcinfohub.wordpress.com/>
- ✓ **Personally call 5 HWFC member-owners** you know and update them
- ✓ **Volunteer to clipboard** at HWFC: personally talk to member-owners and get their contact information
- ✓ **There is an HWFC board of directors meeting** on Tuesday, 11/03/15 at 5:45PM at HWFC. Please attend.

When talking to other HWFC member-owners, stay calm, rely on facts, and don't verbally attack anyone ...and do be impassioned about saving our co-operative!

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead