



# **Board of Director Applications**

**Name:** Kevin Kmetz

**Member number:** 1267

**Current occupation:** Program Director for a Human Services Non-profit

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** I do not have current or past involvement with cooperatives.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** In addition to being a Fair State member, I was also an initial investor at Northbound Smokehouse and Brewpub. I do not have any voting or governance share as account of that investing, but it was critical for early success and demonstrates initiative taken to assist a local business in the beer industry.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I have multiple years of working in a management role in non-profit organizations. In a previous role, I facilitated a board of directors committee and am quite familiar with the process involved and the work necessary for a successful committee; this included reviewing and preparing reports ahead of meeting times. I am comfortable reviewing financial statements and do so regularly in my current job. In addition, I have professional experience not only reviewing complex regulations, and policies and procedures, but also writing policies and procedures.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** I believe that I offer a combination of helpful skills, experience, and love of Fair State beer. As noted previously, I have experience in many roles that would be beneficial for Fair State's board. In addition, I already find myself championing Fair State's beer with family and friends; I just simply think that it is the best that the Twin Cities has to offer and would enjoy the opportunity to help support Fair State's long-term vision. Lastly, I would welcome making the commitment and offering my time.

---

**Name:** Brian Grondin

**Member number:** 656

**Current occupation:** Graphic Designer

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Have been a member of various grocery coops and member based community organizations.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Co-founder of The MN Beer Activists, a group that helped change the taproom laws and repealed the Sunday sales prohibition. Currently on the board of Community Hops, a member driven urban hop farm in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis, and at Fair State Brewing's own rain garden.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I have been on a couple boards of directors (currently a member of two). I'm a community organizer and active participant in the volunteer community.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** My name is Brian Grondin and I'm running for the Board of Directors of Fair State Brewing Coop.

I've been a member since 2016 and am constantly impressed at the depth of involvement this coop has in the various communities around it. Incredibly great beer too! The number of collaborations is astounding. I love this brewery and the group of people that make up the community. I've made many friends here.

I'm originally from Ohio and moved to Minnesota in 1994. I went to OSU and figured out that I have a talent for design. Professionally I'm a graphic designer working at Allegra Print (which has been a vendor of Fair State). I am a founding member of the MN Beer Activists in 2011. We helped to change the tap room law and were the driving force behind changing the Sunday Sales law in 2017. MNBA morphed into Community Hops which has a small plot in the Longfellow neighborhood and maintains the hop plants & rain garden by the taproom patio. I have been quite active with Fair State Cooperates and was named the "Top Cooperator" of 2018.

I understand the purpose of this Board is to maintain fiscal responsibility of the brewery and provide an additional viewpoint to the decision makers. I feel that my personal experience means that I'm well suited to help with this task. Member-owner engagement is critical to maintaining the heart of the coop. I am the record keeper for Comm Hops and my HOA and am happy to take on that role if elected. I ask for your vote for the Board position. Thanks!

---

**Name:** Jordan Merhar

**Member number:** 496

**Current occupation:** Lab Manager

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Currently serving on the FSBC board

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Former server

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** Served on the Board of Governors for North Star Roller Derby

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** There are many reasons I would continue to make an excellent board member. Over the last year on the Board I have been a valuable member of discussions, was elected records officer, and served as interim vice chair for two months. I am passionate about representative democracy and would continue to use my position on the Board to make the Board accessible to the membership, and reflect the membership to the Board.

The second reason I am an asset is that I am coachable. This is evident from the difference in skills required to get my Biology degree and those I've honed in my career. I am faced daily with situations where knowing building systems and controls is crucial to managing my labs, which was not how I anticipated using my degree. I've leveraged my soft skills and paired them with my hard skills to become successful in my new role by building strong professional relationships and creating a solid rapport with the tradesmen and technicians who work on the systems and equipment in my labs. My job requires getting the right people together to resolve issues, thus building and maintaining strong networks.

Lastly, I live close! My partner and I live a few blocks from FS1 and enjoy walking over for a beer and have enjoyed hosting some events the last few years. I love trying and sharing FSBC's offerings with friends and family. I'm not a stranger around the taproom (or on social media!), so I am available to the membership.

---

**Name:** Sean Capistrant

**Member number:** 1026

**Current occupation:** Green Coffee Trader

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Member of various coops, no experience in board membership

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** No involvement in commercial groups/companies in the industry

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I've been part of a small 501c3 non profit theater. My current industry deals with finance and global supply chains. I also used to be a commercial coffee roaster.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** Not only am I a massive fan of Fair State, but my personal experience in the special coffee industry brings fresh perspectives to the beer industry. Much of my time is working on creative logistical and financial solutions for small businesses in the US and Canada. I'm completely energized by developing new ideas for creating sustainable supply chains and finance models. The COOP model is something I would like to learn more about, as it is a big part of our future for not only our community, but for our country. I also live in the neighborhood and feel a certain civic pride for Northeast!

---

**Name:** Charli White

**Member number:** 761B

**Current occupation:** Relationship Manager and Learning Strategist for U.S. Bank with a focus on Agile methodologies and Digital App Adoption

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Fair State: Volunteered for U-pick, Member of the Kickball team, participate in potlucks and members first activities, Shareholder.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Was a bartender for many years

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** Have served as committee leads at work as well as organized and executed several volunteer events. Was secretary treasurer and head of the social committee for the largest BNI chapter in MN.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** I believe I would make an excellent candidate for the Fair State Board of Directors because I truly enjoy being involved in the community and have a strong drive to help make Fair State a successful cooperative and business. My husband and I have been members since 2017 and have found a sense of community at Fair State and work hard to drive membership to the taproom as frequently as possible. We recently became Shareholders which sparked my interest in getting more involved with the co-op. I currently work for U.S. Bank in the Learning Strategy area of Enterprise Education. My job requires me to imbed myself in different areas of the bank and help drive learning strategy, with a specific focus on Agile methodologies and driving digital adoption. My previous roles have been as a corporate trainer, a retail banker/manager, and in financial operations. I have excellent customer service, organizational and project management skills. I have worn many hats in my career which allows me to be flexible and know a little bit about a lot of things. I have a passion for helping people succeed and with all that is happening in the world I'm looking for more positive ways to give back to my community. I'd love the opportunity to bring my passion and skills to the Fair State Board of Directors.

---

**Name:** Jeff Clement

**Member number:** 1461

**Current occupation:** Retired partner and chief Analytics and Solution Officer from Marketing Architects

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** I've served on boards of city youth athletics of Maple Grove and ran the biggest fundraising program of girl's traveling basketball including a special program I created recruiting Lindsey Whalen to meet all the girls at a Twin Cities tournament before she came back to play for the Lynx.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** I was meeting all the first brewers before the brewery scene was popular. From Lift Bridge in 2008, Surly Darkness

festivals (at the old place). Buying the first growler from Patrick at Jack Pine up in Brainerd from his original garage space to being a founder donor to Omni in Maple Grove for Zack and Justin starting out. I also spent the summer after retirement working the food truck Signature on Wheels with my friend Derek at St. Paul breweries just because I wanted to learn more and have a passion for food trucks and breweries.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I spent most my career helping entrepreneurs successfully grow their businesses. By using data and marketing insights to identify the problems that needed to be solved and the opportunities and solutions to capitalize on for growth. I did this across hundreds of different business models, markets and organizations.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** First, I have a track record and unique knack of helping companies grow by solving what holds them back. You can study my history on LinkedIn, talk to my former partners directly at marketing architects or Leigh Bailey (LinkedIn) my former executive coach and draw your own conclusion.

Second, I retired 2 years ago looking for a new passion to put my skills to use. I have been staying involved and following both the brewery and food truck businesses for years as they both appealed to my sense of entrepreneurship. I've been waiting for the right opportunity to get more involved.

Third, I'm now part of this community. We moved last November from Maple Grove to a townhouse in the landings by the north loop. And my daughter and son in-law are members of Fair State and live in NE MPLS near you.

Why am I not a member of your coop??? This was our first year and we went away for the winter and this thing called "coronavirus" kind of put a hold on all plans when I got back in March...

If I don't do this I will either look for another opportunity, possibly Yia Vang and his new restaurant (already a major backer of his go fund me). Or look for more involvement in the nonprofits I'm currently volunteering and learning more about their needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Jeff Clement

**Name:** Afton Benson

**Member number:** 746

**Current occupation:** Managing Director of CLIMB Theatre

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Fair State and REI

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Being a Fair State member, and operating pull tabs/bingo with Bent Brewstillery has given me some additional insight to this industry but on a macro level.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** Masters in Organizational Behavior and Business Management, Treasurer for the International Jugglers' Association since 2015, Managing Director and non voting Board Member of CLIMB Theatre, Grant Writing, Nonprofit Management, Strategic Planning

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** I would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors of Fair State because I have a diverse set of business skills and nonprofit experience. I am honest in my communications, I listen more than I speak, and my patience makes for a rich and successful team environment. My passion lies in anticipating needs, organizing tasks, and supporting organizations and individuals to ensure they are able to succeed in what they are passionate about.

Now, who could this person possibly be? Hello! My name is Afton Benson, I hold a B.S. in Business Management and a M.S. in Organizational Behavior and Business Management. Currently, I am the Managing Director of CLIMB Theatre Inc; in this role I have developed and implemented our Strategic Plan, and managed all fiscal aspects. Additionally, I serve on the International Jugglers' Association Board of Directions as the Treasurer; in this role I handle the financials including onsite financial management of our annual festival (400+ attendees). Both of these roles support activities I enjoy: juggling and experiencing the arts. (You're thinking, "Those are great activi...wait what? Juggling?" That's right, I juggle! Alright, back to business.)

I task-switch like a champ, am flexible, responsive, personable, supportive and I meet my deadlines. I would love to have the opportunity to put my skills to work with the Fair State Board of Directors!

---

**Name:** Nic Kumbalek

**Member number:** 1431

**Current occupation:** Director of Global Markets

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** None at this time. Have 13 years experience working in private companies.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** None at this time.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I have 13 years experience working in the food and agriculture industry.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** Producing quality craft beer while building and enriching communities - three things I am passionate about and believe Fair State Co-op does extremely well. The beer brewed by Fair State Co-op is world class and I believe helps to build and enrich communities. The co-op community is always warm and welcoming, open-minded, and fun. These characteristics resonate outside of the co-op, evident by giving back to the community through numerous initiatives. The Fair State Co-op is a community I want to be part of. I greatly appreciate the consideration to become a member of the Board of Directors.

---

**Name:** Shawn Horton

**Member number:** 738

**Current occupation:** Sales engineer, software

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** FSB membership since 2017, founding and charter member of South Metro Minneapolis Evenings Rotary Club in 2010

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Home brewer, infrequent and former beer podcaster

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** My wife and I were an active dog foster family for five years with Secondhand Hounds until we adopted (foster failed) and added a third and final dog to our family. I've participated in Fair State member events like spring garden cleanup last June 2019.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** I'm an advocate for philanthropic activities locally. I was a charter member of the Twin Cities first young generations Rotary Club. I coordinated volunteer events at Second Harvest Heartland with my coworkers and customers (pre-COVID). I'd like to help orchestrate Fair State programming with impactful local charities, non-profit organizations, for people and animal humane groups alike.

I have over 15 years of technical experience supporting non-profit and enterprise businesses with productivity tools like GSuite and also with social media platforms.

---

**Name:** Christina DeVries

**Member number:** 1385

**Current occupation:** Director of Development, Students United

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** I am a current Fair State member and this has been my first direct cooperative involvement. My interest in joining Fair State stems from an appreciation of delicious beer – including the skillset of brewing great lagers, investing in and participating in a shared leadership model, and a social justice minded community organization.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Outside of soliciting various breweries in the Twin Cities for fundraising events, I do not have any direct beer or alcohol industry experience.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** I moved to Minneapolis in the winter of 2014, after spending two years in the Peace Corps, Namibia. A more progressive city, the craft beer scene with more than the four beer choices I had in Namibia, a job at a human services non-profit in employment service and grant writing was a dream for my mid-twenties self. As I got acquainted with the city and people living here, I began to want to develop deeper relationships with the community I was getting to know and serving in my job.

In 2016, I applied for and was selected as part of a Giving Project at the Headwaters Foundation for Justice. This six-month cohort was a cross-class, multiracial group of people that explored race, class, and grassroots fundraising and grant making. Together our cohort raised more than \$50,000. My fundraising contributed more than \$7,000 and in our group of 20, I had the most gifts over \$500. This time at the foundation transitioned into volunteering on the Fundraising Committee, which is a sub-committee of their board. In this role, I continued to solicit donors, engage previous donors and mentor new Giving Project members. My volunteer work at Headwaters connected my growing interest to invest in a deeper way in a community I cared for and created meaningful relationships. My work there helped me see how big system change often begins with small groups of people most directly impacted by the issues solidifying and working on meaningful solutions.

Fundraising for changemaking organizations in my community and working at a nonprofit, made me realize I wanted to learn more about agents of change and how I could best use my power. In 2017, I started a graduate program with three main focuses: nonprofits as actors of community change, union and power building, and actors within the government at Metropolitan State University. In 2019, I graduated with my Masters in Advocacy and Public Leadership. Following my graduation, I started a new job at Students United as their Director of Development. Students United is the sole representative, much like a student union, for all the Minnesota State University students. Our work is student lead, with a board made up of seven student body presidents, and our policy platform is informed by student across the state. We advocate in the Minnesota State System and at the State and Federal government level. This work ties in for me the power of organized people and organized money to make change that will positively impact students statewide. My work is focused on fundraising, scholarship

allocation, strategic planning, facilitating a scholarship and alumni board, serving on the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program Board, establishing strong program outcomes and metrics, and alumni engagement.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** Living in the Twin Cities I've continued to seek a deeper understanding of myself, my role in the fight for social justice and who we are as a city. This journey informs my interest in the Fair State Board of Directors. I seek to be a part of a community where my skills can support an organization where the leadership in brewing is intertwined with social responsibility. Board leadership has been defined in the three W's – work, wealth and wisdom. I have the time and the personal space to put in the work the board needs and I am familiar with what strong board leadership requires. I have the skills to train and support and bring in wealth or financial resources to the board. Finally, I trust in the wisdom and knowledge of the brewers and the leadership of Fair State that together we can make informed and fruitful decisions. I view board leadership as a place to model transparency, provide needed support to the day-to-day team, and a place to continue to move resources and give. I am also hopeful that this boardship would be a place to grow meaningful relationships while sharing delicious beers as a board ambassador.

Fair State is a place where joy can be met with change making and brewing. It is a place where sharing a beer can be an experience to commiserate, learn, explore, or grow. That action matches my continued desire to be a part of a place where everyone can prosper and the tradition of award winning brewing can continue.

---

**Name:** Iola Kostrzewski

**Member number:** 1462

**Current occupation:** Program coordinator with Foster Advocates

**Current or past involvement with cooperatives:** Past experience with a birth workers coop.

**Current or past involvement with the beer or alcohol industry:** Ran a beer blog until realize the industry was not really supportive of black queer femme bodied people being interested in beer, even more so asking valid questions about beer. Have done some tasting sessions in Saint Paul with Fair state.

**Other relevant professional or personal experience:** Undergrad in Poly Sci, most of other work is in the politics world.

**In no more than 1500 characters, please explain why you would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors:** I fell in love with craft beer at the Urban Growler from there the love deepened. With my love of the North Shore I really got into the beer scene in Two Harbors (Castle Danger) and Grand Marais (Voyager). This even involved dragging my partner to beer

school when it was running about a year ago in Minneapolis. I bring in a unique perspective of how to implement diversification of the craft beer scene along with broad experience from my time with political boards I have served on.