

FILED

Sep 04, 2026

9TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE 9TH CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO**

BENJAMIN BROWN, an individual,
et al.

Plaintiffs,
v.

Case No. 2026 - 0305 - CK
Judge Gary C. Giguere, Jr.

THE PEOPLES FOOD CO-OPERATIVE
OF KALAMAZOO, a Michigan nonprofit corporation,
et al.

Defendants.

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ORDER FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

At a session of said Court, held in the City of Kalamazoo,
County of Kalamazoo, State of Michigan,
on September 4, 2026.

PRESENT: HON. CURTIS BELL

The Court has reviewed Defendants' August 28, 2026 Emergency Ex Parte Motion, the supporting affidavits, the pleadings and materials of record, and the written certification of counsel under MCR 3.310(B)(1)(b), as well as responsive materials, and heard oral argument on September 3, 2026. The Court, having applied the factors governing preliminary injunctive relief, finds: that the likelihood of success on the merits solely of the moving parties' anti-self-help claim favors the moving parties; that harm will result if relief on that claim is not granted; that the moving parties would suffer greater harm from the absence of relief than the opposing persons would suffer from its issuance; and that the public interest would be harmed if the relief is not granted, for the reasons stated on the record on September 3 and September 4, 2026.

All persons known to be involved in the challenged conduct received notice of, and were heard at, the September 3, 2026 and September 4, 2026 hearings. The limited relief below preserves the last actual, peaceable operating status pending an expedited hearing on the competing governance claims, and does not finally adjudicate the competing governance claims.

IT IS ORDERED:

1. Defendants' request for leave to amend is neither granted nor denied. The parties may address the issue of intervention and/or adding parties at a subsequent hearing.
2. Pending further order, no persons shall interfere with, obstruct, disrupt, or attempt to halt the ordinary business operations of The Peoples Food Co-Operative of Kalamazoo.
3. Any person occupying a nonpublic or restricted area of the Co-Op without authorization from the management structure in place immediately before the August 28, 2026 events shall promptly vacate that restricted area.
4. The reinstated board of directors retains its ordinary authority to appoint, remove, or replace an Interim General Manager. No person, other than the current, reinstated board of

directors –Ellis Martin, Noe Giorgio, Olukolade Adelabi, and Kim Gregory – or an Interim General Manager appointed by that board, shall purport to terminate, suspend, discipline, supervise, or direct Co-Op employees pending further order. Nothing in this Order, without approval from the reinstated board of directors, restores or confers upon James Bridgforth a/k/a James Andre any authority over Co-Op operations, personnel, records, banking access, or credentials. This Order does not adjudicate the validity of any planned, potential or purported employer separation, resignation and/or termination of Mr. Bridgforth, and all rights and claims concerning his employment status are reserved. Counsel for Defendants Giorgio, Adelabi, Gregory and Willhite has represented to the Court that Lalonie Willhite resigned as a director of the Co-Op prior to entry of this Order.

5. No person shall prevent authorized employees, customers, vendors, contractors, or agents from entering or using the Co-Op premises in the ordinary course of business.

6. No person shall change, cut, remove, disable, block, or interfere with locks, doors, alarms, point-of-sale systems, computer systems, passwords, payroll systems, vendor accounts, banking credentials, or other operational systems.

7. No person shall remove, conceal, destroy, alter, withhold, or exercise unilateral control over Co-Op records, equipment, supplies, funds, credentials, keys, access devices, or other assets.

8. No person, other than the current, reinstated board members – Ellis Martin, Noe Giorgio, Olukolade Adelabi, and Kim Gregory – shall represent to any financial institution or other third party that they have present authority to alter Co-Op banking access, authorized signatories, account credentials, payroll authority, or other operational authority pending further order.

9. Solely to preserve the status quo pending hearing, the Co-Op's banking access and authorized-signatory arrangement shall be maintained or restored to the arrangement that existed

immediately before the August 28, 2026 events, except that the reinstated board may substitute an Interim General Manager appointed by the board in place of James Bridgforth as an authorized signatory. No person shall submit or enforce contrary instructions pending further order.

10. Any person possessing Co-Op keys, access devices, records, passwords, banking information, or other Co-Op property obtained or withheld during or after the August 28 events shall promptly return that property to the Co-Op's management pending further order.

11. All persons shall preserve all documents, communications, electronic data, surveillance footage, photographs, recordings, and other evidence concerning the August 28 events and the competing claims of governance authority.

12. Nothing in this Order prohibits peaceful protest, communications among owners or members, petition activity, voting activity, or other lawful exercise of membership rights that does not interfere with ordinary business operations.

13. This Order is binding only to the extent provided by MCR 3.310(C)(4).

14. Under MCR 3.310(D), no security is required because this Order preserves the preexisting operating status, imposes no cognizable monetary restraint upon persons, and the Court finds that security is unnecessary under the circumstances.

15. This Order shall remain in effect pending further order of the Court, including any order entered following the September 14, 2026 hearing.

16. A continued hearing on Defendants' request for preliminary injunctive relief / order to show cause shall be held on September 14, 2026 at 9:00 am.

17. Defendants, and the potentially intervening parties represented by Attorney Josh Hilgart, shall provide additional briefing to the Court on the remaining issue from Defendants' Motion of corporate governance and control. Defendants shall provide additional briefing to the

Court on or by Wednesday, September 9, 2026 and any response brief, including any brief elected to be filed by Plaintiffs, shall be filed on or by September 11, 2026.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Hon. Curtis J. Bell
Kalamazoo County Circuit Court Judge

APPROVED SOLEY AS TO FORM:

/s/ Philip Hamilton
Philip E. Hamilton (P68814)

/s/ Richard Smith
Richard P. Smith (P36668)

/s/ Christopher Bovid
Christopher G. Bovid (P68265)

/s/ Josh Hilgart
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