

DRAFT Minutes

League of Canadian Poets - Annual General Meeting 2018

Saturday, June 16 2018 – 9am – 12pm

Miss Lou's Room, Harbourfront Centre

Council members in attendance: Sarah de Leeuw, Ayesha Chatterjee, Nasra Adem, Fortner Anderson, Tracy Hamon, Michael Andrews (incoming Treasurer), Ray Mitchell (outgoing treasurer), Miriam Dunn, Claudia Radmore, Lori Cayer (outgoing representative), Brenda Sciberras (incoming representative), Kate Marshall Flaherty, Lesley Strutt

Staff in attendance: Lesley Fletcher, Nicole Brewer, Madison Stoner

Others: Anne Burke requested that her name be added to attendee section, AGM 2019.

1. Call to Order – 9:09 am

The AGM was called to order at 9:09am. President Sarah de Leeuw began with an acknowledgement of the Indigenous people of the city of Toronto, and introduced members of Council and staff to attendees to begin the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

Two items were added to the agenda for discussion:

- An update from the Feminist Caucus
- A motion to approve a Reserve Fund

MOTION: To approve the AGM agenda with these amendments.

Motioned by: Anne Burke

Seconded by: Miriam Dunn

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2017

Noted a duplicate sentence in point 7 to be removed: (“Toronto Arts Council will be providing us with op...”)

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2018 with one edit.

Motioned by: Ayesha Chatterjee

Seconded by: Miriam Dunn.

All in favour. **Motion Carried.**

4. Business arising from Minutes of the AGM 2017

Increased Canada Council Funding: There was a discussion about increased funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. The League successfully completed an application for an increase for 3 years of operating funding (which amounts to a 44% increase in year 3).

A member noted that a letter-writing campaign was conducted in support of this increase to the League.

Award Longlists: Were released after a discussion at the AGM 2016. There was a strong response to longlist, shortlist, and winner announcements.

Heartwood Anthology: As we prepared for the Treasurer report, Lesley Strutt provided an overview of the Heartwood Anthology, explaining that poets from across Canada responded to her call for support. The anthology has planned launches across Canada, and a partnership has been created with the film *Call of the Forrest*.

5. Presentation of Treasurer's Report and Review of Audited Statements

Ray Mitchell presented his last Treasurer's Report for the League of Canadian Poets. Noted that because of positive news, his update would be brief – but more detail has been provided.

- Revenues: Overall, Ray noted an excellent increase in revenues
 - Membership: Good to see an increase in membership revenue after many years of
 - Grant Revenue: Increased funding from Canada Council of \$30,000, and a slight increase from DCH.
 - Donations: Grew by \$4000
 - Expenses: Over plan due to double office relocation, and got some much-needed supplies for the office.

Stursberg Fund: Noted that the Stursberg Fund has been performing very well, and that the value of securities has allowed it to continue to grow despite paying out payments to the program.

Question about Draft Financial Statements: Noted that the current financial statements are being presented in draft form. Because Council are hoping to create a Reserve Fund, the membership will be asked to approve the Draft Financial Statements pending amendments, should the membership approve a reserve fund.

Question about Chapbook Publication: A member noted that Chapbook Publication had been added as a budget line for the following year. Explained that through a very generous donation from member David Dowker, the League will begin publishing chapbooks in the next year.

Updated Financials: A member noted that the League has grown in terms of financial reporting and strength, and noted that they are impressed by the growth.

With increased revenues, there was an increase to unrestricted funds. In the past, the League has not had much of a cushion for unexpected events. With new grant money, and other sources of revenues, we now have an increase in unrestricted funds. This allows us the opportunity to create a cushion for the League's future.

Overall, the League is in a better financial position, with better cash flow and ability to plan ahead. Ray recommended that the League create a Reserve Fund for unforeseen events such as grants being cut after expenses are laid out. Recommended that the League eventually aim for a fund of approximately \$70,000 (which covers 3-4 months expenses), and begin with an initial contribution of \$10,000.

Noted that this is a move that would improve the financial health of the organization, and demonstrates fiscal responsibility to our funders.

Discussion of Reserve Fund

One member noted that considering the strength of the previous year, that we may want to consider putting \$15,000 in the reserve fund. Council and staff noted that because of cash flow, they would prefer that the contribution be kept to \$10,000. This motion was eventually withdrawn, but the members wanted this suggestion noted in the minutes

Suggested that we may want to consider having a special fund created for the purpose of donating to the Reserve Fund. Council noted that with increased donations come the possibility of a surplus, which we can always commit to topping up our reserve.

One member noted that the membership should motion to create a reserve fund, and to allow the Reserve Fund contribution to be determined by Council and Staff.

Members wondered why we wouldn't make a larger reserve fund. Ray clarified that this reserve fund would not be immediately accessible, preventing us from using it in an emergency.

MOTION: To establish a Reserve Fund for the League of Canadian Poets in the amount of \$10,000 to improve the financial health of the League as an organization

Motioned by: Alice Major

Seconded by: Susan McMaster

Motion carried with one abstention.

MOTION: To accept the draft Financial Statements with an amendment to include the newly established reserve fund.

Motioned by: Alice Major

Seconded by: Laurence Hutchman

All in favour. Motion carried.

6. Appointment of Auditor

MOTION: To approve Marinucci and Company as the League's auditor for 2018-2019

Motioned by: Sarah de Leeuw

Seconded by: Nasra Adem

All in favour: Motion carried.

7. Presentation of President's Report

Sarah de Leeuw provided a very brief review of her President's Report, noting a huge increase in membership, revenues from new and innovative contests, the success of our silent auction, and the dedication of the Finance Committee. Noted that it is a big relief to have a stable and steady office for the League.

Noted that all of this growth is thanks to an excellent community, and the work of members, staff, and Council. Sarah encouraged all members to continue to support the League's work and tell others about the incredible work that the League does.

8. Presentation of the Executive Director's Report

Lesley Fletcher provided a very brief review of the Executive Director's Report. Highlighted that the League is in a very good position, and has come much further much faster than staff our Council could have imagined. To move from difficult cash flow to creating a reserve fund within 2 years is a major feat.

The League is doing more than ever, bringing poetry to more places, and providing more opportunities for poets. Wanted to especially point out the incredible work of Nicole Brewer and Madison Stoner, who do the work of several people.

9. Presentation of 2018-2019 Budget

Lesley Fletcher walked the group through the proposed 2018-2019 budget. Noting this is a fairly standard budget, but with some improvements.

Revenues: Budgeted for an increase in membership fees, with an ambitious goal of \$96,000. Book sales are expected to increase, while royalties are expected to decrease. Sponsorship income is expected through the ArtsVest program, helping to increase unrestricted income. Donations, contests revenues, and silent auction revenues have been set to a higher goal. Noted that the increase from Canada Council will be very beneficial in the coming year (both for operating and for the Canada Poetry Tours Program).

One member noted that Quebec members feel the dues of the League of Canadian Poets are too high. Another member noted that many people are able to justify their membership by using a reading program. With increased funding for Canada Poetry Tours, there may be more chances for poets to recoup their costs.

Expenses: Noted that with an increase of revenues has come an opportunity to provide more opportunities, payments and projects that directly benefit poets. Noted that we've put some money aside for the German Poetry Project to help poets be published on the website Lyrikline to get poets included ahead of Frankfurt 2020 (where Canada is the guest of honour). This project is open-ended and one that will continue through 2019-2020, and we will be on the lookout for opportunities in the leadup to the festival. Poem in Your Pocket continues to be a huge success that also provide a paid opportunity to poets.

- Canada Poetry Tours Program will be increased for the first time in a decade to \$71,000, and have also increased the Poets in the Schools Funding (whether or not we receive an increase from the OAC). AGM expenses have increased over time due to increasing costs of flights and inflation.
- Happy that we were able to double the prizes of all of our major awards from \$1000 to \$2000
- For the first time ever, the League has 3 full-time staff members (necessary to support all of our new programming expenses)
- Have worked to keep all of our controllable expenses (printing, mailing, administration) have been kept low with planning from staff. Noted that small amounts are included for improving our library and strategic planning (which we hope to gain further financial support to conduct)
- Noted that the total payment for staff salaries are broken down between 3 categories in our budget: Administrative Staff Salaries, 5110 (Reading program salaries) and Coordinator fees. Noted that our staff salaries are covered in part by grant program allowances
- Noted that with this budget, we do not predict a large addition to the reserve fund for the forthcoming years. But we will be working to bring in money to top up the reserve fund.

- Noted that “Lampter” should be corrected to “Lampert” and that “Monthly Rent” Should be corrected to “Annual Rent”
- Members noted that they were happy to see staff doing professional development activities to help improve the health of the League. Attendees noted that they are proud to see this initiative.

MOTION: To approve the 2018-2019 budget with 2 typos corrected.

Motioned by: Alice Major

Seconded by: Marsha Barber

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

10. The League’s Annual Report

With time short, members were encouraged to read the annual report. Noted that some members would like to ensure the time is taken to have these reports delivered verbally.

MOTION: To approve the Annual Report as presented.

Motioned by: Alice Major

Seconded by: Marsha Barber.

One abstention. **Motion carried**

Feminist Caucus Update: Anne Burke delivered an update on the Feminist Caucus, noting a very productive business meeting. Noted that there was a proposal to change the Feminist Caucus Mission Statement, a change that will be discussed over through the Feminist Caucus e-list.

- Noted that the 2019 panel will be Canadian Women and the Vote, reflecting a call from Prairie Fire. Working title of (Dis)Enfranchisement. Noted thanks to the 2018 panelists. Carol Casey and Anne Burke planned to collaborate on editing. Also thanked David Dowker for contribution to the printing of the Living Archives chapbook

The AGM was paused for a brief break at 10:50am, reconvening at 11:05

As Ray Mitchell left the meeting, members, Council and staff thanked him for his years of careful service as the Treasurer of the League. Lesley Fletcher gave Ray special thanks for settling her into the new role and fostering growth, and presented Ray with a gift as he left.

Ray noted that he was happy to be leaving the organization on good footing, a noted high in his 13 years as Treasurer.

Michael Andrews, the new Treasurer for the League, was introduced to the members as the new Treasurer.

11. 2018-2019 National Council, Award Jury and Committee Elections

Noted that the slate was fairly full, with many nominees for the year. At the meeting, we sought an alternate for the Lampert, Lowther, Souster and Stursberg prize, but noted that all primary spots had been filled.

Each spot was filled with a volunteer from the floor.

Noted special thanks to Lesley Strutt, Kate Marshall Flaherty and Lori Cayer for years of amazing work on behalf of the League. Staff and Council presented these outgoing (and soon to be outgoing) Council members with a small gift.

MOTION: To accept the Slate of Nominees for 2018-2019

Motioned by: Laurence Hutchman

Seconded by: Susan McMaster

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

13. Other Business

Associate Member Representative: Lesley Strutt took a moment to tell members what her membership and role of Associate Member Representative has meant to her. Noted that the community around the Associate Membership is an important community, and growing stronger with more opportunities and closer communication.

Noted that there are over 100 Associate members and that they are a very active community. Noted the creation of the Fresh Voices project (exclusively for Associate Members) to provide new publication opportunities.

With time up for the meeting, all members were asked to join us for the Awards Luncheon following the AGM.

14. Motion to Adjourn

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting.

Motioned by: Nasra Adem

Seconded by: Susan McMaster

All in favour. **Motion carried.**

These minutes were approved by a Motion at the 2019 AGM (June 8, 2019 – St. John's Newfoundland)