

# DRAFT Minutes

## League of Canadian Poets 2025 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 2 pm ET

*Held online as a Zoom Meeting*

*Quorum requires 10% of voting members to be present; total active voting members as of June 24, 2025: 826 (quorum: 83 voting members). Some members came and left the meeting between 2pm and 4:30pm ET, but at no point was quorum compromised.*

### **Attendance (91)**

#### **Voting Member Attendees (75)**

##### *Board of Directors*

Rayanne Haines  
Jaclyn Desforges  
Jannie Edwards  
Frances Boyle  
Michael Andrews  
Tracy Hamon  
Hollay Ghadery  
Stuart Ian McKay

Caroline Di Giovanni  
Catherine (Cassy) Welburn  
cathy ford  
Colin Morton  
Concetta Principe  
Dani Spinosa  
Daniel Scott  
daniela elza  
Diane Taylor-Sexton  
Dina E Cox  
Elizabeth Greene  
Eric Folsom  
Fatima-Ayan Malika Hirsi  
Forrest Orser  
gary barwin  
Gavin Barrett  
Heidi Greco  
Jerry Prager  
John Barton  
Jonathan Chan-Choong  
Kathy Mac  
Katie Marshall Flaherty  
Kristina Bresnen  
Lady Rojas  
Laura McRae  
Laurence Hutchman

Leesa Dean  
Lisa Reynolds  
Lorne Daniel  
Louise Carson  
Lynn Tait  
Marsha Barber  
Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes  
Mary Simmerling  
Melanie Flores  
Melanie Marttila  
Michele Rule  
Micheline Maylor-Kovitz  
Nathanael Jones  
Neall Calvert  
Pamela Galloway  
PAMELA MORDECAI  
Penn Kemp  
Shahanaz Hoque  
Sheniz Janmohamed  
Sneha Subramanian Kanta  
Stephen Roney  
Sue Bracken  
Susan McMaster  
terese svoboda  
Tonya Lailey  
Tracy Francis

##### *Full and Life members*

Diana Hayes (also by proxy)  
Kim Fahner (also by proxy)  
Abdulsalam Abo Alshamat  
Alice Green  
Alice Major  
Amanda Merpaw  
Ambrose Albert  
Amy LeBlanc  
Anna Yin  
Anne Burke  
Barbara Tran  
Bassam H  
Beatriz Hausner  
Blaine Marchand  
Bren Simmers

#### **Non-voting attendees (16)**

*Associate members*

Joan Conway  
Adrienne Adams  
Anna Quon  
Atma Frans  
Carol Thornton  
Carole Giangrande

Glenda Fu  
Janis La Couvee  
Jonathan Chan-Choong  
Leah Bobet  
Madi Johnstone  
Sana Paracha (non-member)  
Tarik Malik

*Staff*

Nic Brewer (2)  
Elisabeta Juventine  
Caitlin Lapena

**Proxy voting (93)**

**Jaclyn Desforges**, assigned by 39 members:

Manahil Bandukwala  
Elana Wolff  
Lisa Shen  
Geoffrey Nilson  
Paul Sanderson  
Jean Van Loon  
Honey Novick  
Maria Caltabiano Montuori  
Erín Moure  
Bianca Lakoseljac  
Kelly Madden  
Lindsay K. Miles  
Sanna Wani  
Sophie Anne Edwards

Phil Hall  
Katerina Vaughan Fretwell  
Marvyne Jenoff  
Rosemary Clewes  
Jessica Lee McMillan  
Joanne Epp  
CAROLYN BOLL  
Jay Ritchie  
Flavia Cosma  
Susan McCaslin  
Rita Bouvier  
Marlo Browne  
Eva Halus  
Pasquale Verdicchio

Sarah Ens  
Ben Robinson  
Madeline Bassnett  
Leilei Chen 莫譯  
Meena Chopra  
Julie Cameron Gray  
Cornelia Hoogland  
Jane Shi  
Natalie Meisner  
Jessica Robinson  
Julie McNeill

**Hollay Ghadery**, assigned by 19:

Patrick Connors  
Tea Gerbeza  
Ellen Chang-Richardson  
Kate Rogers  
Erin McGregor  
gillian harding-russell  
George Elliott Clarke

Zane Koss  
Jacob McArthur Mooney  
Bruce Kauffman  
Derek Webster  
Margo LaPierre  
Kim Fahner  
STEPHANIE ROBERTS

Nisha Patel  
Nancy Jo Cullen  
Laurie D. Graham  
Conyer Clayton  
D.S. Stymeist

**Jannie Edwards**, assigned by 12:

Gail Sidonie Sobat  
Brenda Sciberras  
Sheila Stewart  
uchechukwu peter  
umezurike

Pierrette Requier  
Rajinderpal Pal  
Matthew Weigel  
Ali Blythe  
Trisia Eddy Woods

Samantha Jones  
Alycia Pirmohamed  
Rosemary Griebel

**Stuart Ian McKay**, assigned by 2:

Paul Pearson

Cynthia Sharp

**Frances Boyle**, assigned by Deborah-Anne Tunney

**Blaine Marchand**, assigned by 2:

Keith Garebian

Ronnie R. Brown

**Heidi Greco**, assigned by 2:

Diana Manole

Bänoo Zan

**Eric Folsom**, assigned by 13:

Terry Ann Carter

Gay Allison

Diana Hayes

JC Sulzenko

Lillian Allen

Patricia Keeney

Doris Fiszer

Antony Di Nardo

Albert Moritz

Mori McCrae

Maureen Scott Harris

Ayesha Chatterjee

Arleen Pare

**Gary Barwin**, assigned by Hugh Thomas

**Allan Briesmaster**, assigned by Clara Blackwood

## **AGM 2025 Proceedings (approximate times noted at each agenda item)**

### **1. Call to order and welcome (2:05pm ET)**

- a. Speakers: Rayanne Haines, President); Nic Brewer, APD; and Elisabeta Juventine, interim ED
- b. Rayanne Haines welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance
- c. Nic Brewer provided an overview of how voting, discussion, and questions will work for the session
- d. LCP staff took approximately 10 minutes to accurately gather attendance information to ensure quorum
- e. Meeting called to order at 2:32 ET

### **2. MOTION to approve the meeting agenda (2:35pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Rayanne Haines, President
- b. **Moved:** Micheline Maylor-Kovitz
- c. **Seconded:** Melanie Martilla
- d. No discussion
- e. **Vote**
  - i. In favour: 140 (62 in meeting, 78 by proxy)
  - ii. Opposed: 0
  - iii. Abstain: 4 (2 in meeting, 2 by proxy)
- f. Motion carried

### **3. MOTION to approve minutes of the League of Canadian Poets' 2024 Annual General Meeting (2:35pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Rayanne Haines, President
- b. **Moved:** Kim Fahner
- c. **Seconded:** Lynn Tait
- d. No discussion
- e. **Vote**
  - i. In favour: 133 (57 in meeting, 76 by proxy)
  - ii. Opposed: 0
  - iii. Abstain: 8 (4 in meeting, 4 by proxy)
- f. Motion carried

### **4. Business arising from the minutes (2:40pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Nic Brewer, APD
- b. Nic presented the findings of the League's research into ways of bringing the League membership together for the organization's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a result of a passed member motion at the 2024 AGM.

- i. Several members expressed support for the 60 Events for 60 Years campaign to support in-person gathering
    1. Caroline Di Giovanni: Given the high cost of a general conference, I agree that offering funds for locally organized events.
    2. Pamela Galloway: I have attended many of the old annual meetings years ago and there is no question they were inspiring and great fun. However looking at this breakdown of current costs and likely participation I can see that this actually doesn't make sense any longer.
    3. Leesa Dean: The data on how economically devastating a 50K conference would be on staffing and budget seems pretty clear... The alternative plan proposed (60 events for 60 years) seems like a great alternative
    4. Sheniz Janmohamed: Great solution to serve more members & reduce overworking staff - less than 3% of members served would've not been viable or equitable
    5. Gary Barwin: I feel that regardless of the past attendance —and as noted above by Pamela Galloway, even if inspiring and fun —the issue is the cost of running an in person event now, one that is accessible to all members. Or like people gathering to watch sports contests (or literary award broadcasts) people could join in various ad hoc places. Maybe a national hybrid event where people organize an online reading but audience gathers in various locations in person. again, if ad hoc and member organized it could remain in keeping with the new proposal from the League
  - ii. Beatriz Hausner asks: did the League survey the membership as part of this research? Answer: For this research, the data was historical; the membership was surveyed in 2023 to shape the 2024 – 2027 strategic plan.
    1. Several members supported the idea of surveying the membership to inform this research
    2. John Barton: in the research it appears no effort was given to exploring the advantages of a national conference. Could the lack of attendance during the years survey be a result of deficiencies in the programming?
  - iii. Terese Svoboda asks: What is the administrative cost of the 60 for 60 campaign? Answer: there is very little administrative cost because it uses the League's existing program infrastructure, embedded within the current event microgrants program. A small increase will be seen in marketing workload.
  - iv. Ambrose Albert asks: Has there historically been financial support available to support poets travelling to an in-person conference/AGM? Answer: In the past 10 years, no supplementary travel support has been available.
- c. Cathy Ford asks: The programs PLR and Access Copyright are of crucial interest to the economic well-being of Canadian Poets. What is the status of the LCP's communication, lobbying, and engagement with these two programs, and where can I find the reports

on these two programs? That is, what is the LCP doing for its members on these two fronts? Answer: Although these reports are not included in our Annual Report, the League continues to work with TWUC and Access to lobby on behalf of writers, for PLR but also campaigns around elections, copyright, AI, etc. An update is often circulated in December with more information on the League's advocacy work.

**5. Presentation of the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (2:50pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Michael Andrews, Treasurer
- b. Michael Andrews presented the Treasurer's Report as circulated in advance of the meeting
- c. Michael Andrews presented the 2024-2025 Financial Statements
- d. **MOTION** to receive the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (Year-end March 31, 2025)
  - i. **Moved:** Kate Marshall Flaherty
  - ii. **Seconded:** Gary Barwin
  - iii. Discussion
    1. Cathy Ford asks: What is the figure for RENT being paid to? Answer: Partially a Center for Social Innovation Membership to maintain our Toronto home base, and a storage locker for the League's library as we continue to try to find a great home for it.
    2. Anne Burke asks: what is the new accounting for the Feminist Caucus chapbooks? Answer: The revenue and expenses were always a part of the general operating fund, but ceased to be noted separately in the notes in 2023, when the statements were updated to more accurately reflect "book sales" rather than "Living Archives sales."
    3. Ambrose Albert asks: The cost for staff seems to be quite low, do we know if they are making a living wage? Answer: The Board does review this and works to ensure staff are paid fairly; currently, 2/3 staff are part time. Staff salaries are split between three lines to accurately reflect the work being done – Artistic Salaries, Marketing & Communications, and Administrative Salaries.
      - a. Beatriz Hausner asks: Where else in the budget are there expenses being disbursed to staff? Answer: staff only receive salary payments, as indicated
      - b. John Barton asks: Would it not be more transparent to express salaries in a single line? Answer: This kind of accounting is standard within the sector, and requested by funders.
    4. Bassam asks: Membership fees (revenues) rose by over \$16,000 in 2025. How much of this is new/returning members and how much is from the fee increase in membership? Do we have those breakdowns? Answer:

The membership fee increase is not reflected in these financial statements, as it did not go into effect until April 1, 2025.

5. Bassam asks: Marketing and Communications almost doubled (from \$26,483 in 2024 to \$50,025 in 2025). Why the increase? Answer: this was a reallocation of expenses to better account for our Communication & Admin Coordinator's salary based on the work being completed.

**iv. Vote**

1. In favour: 127 (49 in meeting, 78 by proxy)
  2. Opposed: 1 (in meeting)
  3. Abstain: 7 (5 in meeting, 2 by proxy)
- v. Motion carried

**6. Presentation of the 2025-2026 budget (3:15pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Michael Andrews, Treasurer
- b. Michael Andrews presented the 2025-2026 budget in comparison to the 2024-2025 actuals, as outlined in the Member Package circulated in advance of the meeting.
- c. **MOTION** to approve the Budget for fiscal year April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

- i. **Moved:** Anne Burke
- ii. **Seconded:** Pamela Mordecai
- iii. No discussion

**iv. Vote**

1. In favour: 121 (50 in meeting, 71 by proxy)
  2. Opposed: 1 (by proxy)
  3. Abstain: 15 (7 in meeting, 8 by proxy)
- v. Motion carried

**7. MOTION to appoint Norton McMullen LLP as the auditor for the League of Canadian Poets' 2025-2026 fiscal year (3:25pm ET)**

- a. Speaker: Rayanne Haines, President
- b. **Moved:** Alice Major
- c. **Seconded:** Concetta Principe
- d. No discussion
- e. **Vote**
  - i. In favour: 125 (54 in meeting, 71 by proxy)
  - ii. Opposed: 0
  - iii. Abstain: 12 (3 in meeting, 9 by proxy)
- f. Motion carried

**2025-2026 Board of Directors election (3:25pm ET)**

- g. Speaker: Rayanne Haines, President

- h. Rayanne Haines thanked all current Board members for their invaluable contributions to the League, and introduced Jannie Edwards as a new nominee to the Board, for the role of Secretary. Several Board members are standing for re-election in their roles, as circulated in the Member Package in advance of the meeting.
- i. **MOTION** to approve candidates for the 2025-2026 Board of Directors as presented
  - i. **Moved:** Jerry Prager
  - ii. **Seconded:** Micheline Maylor
  - iii. Discussion
    - 1. Beatriz Hausner asks: How long are the terms? Answer: Two years
    - 2. Ambrose Albert asks: has the League ever considered having dedicated seats for board members from marginalized communities? Answer: Our EDI Committee Chair is essentially that, but since our Board members can't receive funding from our programs or participate in many of our programs, we continue to consider how we can effectively be inclusive of leaders from systemically oppressed communities without contributing to increasing demands of unpaid labour
  - iv. **Vote**
    - 1. In favour: 124 (54 in meeting, 70 by proxy)
    - 2. Opposed: 1 (by proxy)
    - 3. Abstain: 13 (4 in meeting, 9 by proxy)
  - v. Motion carried

#### 8. Member Motion (3:30pm ET)

- a. Speakers: Rayanne Haines, President; Blaine Marchand, Full member; John Barton, Full member
- b. Rayanne presented the motion submitted by Blaine Marchand and John Barton, and provided an overview of the Board's stance on the motion, as well as guidelines for discussion.
- c. **MOTION:** *that the League of Canadian Poets hold an in-person two-day conference in 2026 to mark the 60th anniversary of its founding;*  
*allow as many members as possible to participate, by arranging for key elements of the conference to be live-streamed via Zoom;*  
*make the event economically feasible for all by exploring every opportunity to arrange for the in-person conference to be held at a college/university residence and dining facilities; and*  
*include a variety of programming, such as a business meeting (AGM), readings, panel discussions, professional development opportunities and a book table.*
  - i. **Moved:** Blaine Marchand
  - ii. **Seconded:** John Barton
  - iii. **Blaine Marchand presented a substitute motion, striking the original motion**
- d. **SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** We move that the League of Canadian Poets hold an at-minimum two-day, in-person, national conference in 2027. This would give the League two years

to plan, fundraise, and budget for an in-person national conference that is affordable for as many members as possible and that, after 2027, is not necessarily held every year, sometimes coincides with the conferences of other writing organizations, and is always organized with the support and active participation of a committee composed of members dedicated wholly to this purpose in order that the burden of staging such a conference does not fall solely on the League staff and board.

i. **Moved:** Blaine Marchand

ii. **Seconded:** John Barton

iii. Discussion

1. Blaine Marchand and John Barton presented their statement in favour of an in-person conference, noting that members of the Senior Poets Caucus will each be presenting sections of the statement
  - a. Cathy Ford notes that in-person conferences initiate personal friendships, a sense of community, common good, and professional relationships
2. Sheniz Janmohamed asks: Does this substitute motion include a hybrid AGM? Answer: Yes
  - a. Follow-up: The BIPOC Poets Committee seeks to understand how will the League reflect on and consider access, who is being excluded, and the cost to members at large. Sheniz refers back to an earlier question for Bassam (below), noting that EDI should be a significant consideration as members determine their votes
  - b. Bassam's earlier question: Do we have a report for our progress on the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan? Specifically, on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)? Has an equity audit been completed? How have barriers been reduced to membership programs and services? What community and advocacy partnerships and/or comprehensive policies around access, equity, diversity in leadership, membership, and programs have been developed?
    - i. Answer: a more robust discussion on this is best suited for a townhall, but a summary was provided for this motion discussion: the League has implemented many options for fee waivers and discounts across membership and program fees for accessibility.
3. Louise Carson spoke to the limitations of online meetings
  - a. Several members noted that the pandemic is **not** in the past
  - b. Several rural members noted that an in-person conference was significantly less accessible to them than an online meeting
4. Allan Briesmaster spoke to the benefits of in-person gatherings

- a. Several members agreed that their experiences attending previous in-person conferences were valuable and enriching
5. Ambrose Albert asks: For those proposing an in-person conference, what accessibility measures would be in place? ASL? Venue accessibility? COVID mitigations (testing, masking, ventilation)? What measures would there be in place to ensure emerging, BIPOC, queer, disabled, and low income poets could attend? (Answer not provided; Chair noted that this question is difficult to answer prior to determining if the conference will take place)
6. Leesa Dean suggests that members can organize an ad-hoc gathering using funds for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary to create was is essentially a conference, without placing additional burden on League staff
7. Cathy Ford: from the beginning this motion envisioned using TECH to improve inclusion of all members at business and full conference proceedings, whether through zoom or recordings or some new technology. Also, I wonder if the new members support fund could be used to assist new members to attend an in-person AGM, both business and conference included? (Answer not provided; Chair noted that this question is difficult to answer prior to determining if the conference will take place)
  - a. Amanda Merpaw: As a disabled and chronically ill poet, I find it quite frustrating to hear how in person vs online space is being described in these statements, especially as it relates to building community. Community and connection are possible in other ways. Digital spaces can be meaningful and are, crucially, accessible for many folks from marginalized communities who cannot access an in-person event and who would, in fact, be excluded from one for various reasons of access.
8. Bassam notes that an event like the one proposed ignores the new reality that most national organizations have acknowledged the accessibility barriers of in-person gatherings (for immuno-compromised and low income folks in particular), and that the League still has a significant amount of work to do on its existing IDEA goals from the strategic plan without the added complication of organizing an accessible in-person conference.
9. Fatima-Ayan notes that one of the key tenets of organizing is to see what is already being done, and that AWP already offers an accessible, huge, in-person and hybrid for more than 10,000 writers each year, and suggests the funds that would be used to organize a small conference would be better spent individually disbursed to poets being invited to read/perform at events around Canada.

10. Several members note that many locations already have the networks of poets who can organise local events across the country, noting that whatever funding might be spent a conference could be supporting hard working local volunteers and local organizations for greater impact, particularly given the size of the country and the cost of travel; additionally, several members suggest that folks could combine efforts to make use of 60 for 60 funding to create longer/multi-day events functioning in a similar capacity to a conference
11. John Barton suggests that low attendance at previous events may be due more to lackluster programming and/or poor outreach. John Barton also notes that funds saved from the conference and remote work were redirected to other programs without membership input. John also suggests that members have let their membership lapse due to the loss of in-person programming.

iv. **Vote:**

1. In favour: 47 (21 in meeting, 26 by proxy)
  - a. An additional 12 proxy voters cast votes in favour to the original motion, which were not eligible to be counted for a substitute motion.
2. Opposed: 45 (26 in meeting, 19 by proxy)
  - a. An additional 25 proxy voters cast votes opposed to the original motion, which were not eligible to be counted against a substitute motion.
  - b. An additional 2 members had to leave the meeting prior to the vote but stated their opposition in the chat (which is not eligible to be counted)
3. Abstain: 12 (9 in meeting, 3 by proxy)

v. Motion carried

9. **Review of the Annual Report** (Year-end March 31, 2025)

- a. Speaker: Caitlin Lapena, Communications and Administrative Coordinator
- b. Caitlin Lapena presented a summary of the Annual Report as circulated in advance of the meeting.

10. **MOTION to adjourn**

- a. Moved: Jerry Prager
- b. Meeting adjourned at 4:21pm ET