

PEI Writers' Guild
Saturday, September 26, 2020
Beaconsfield Carriage House & Zoom Meeting

Board of Directors 2020 AGM Meeting Minutes

Present:

Todd MacEwen
Mo Duffy Cobb
Christine Gordon-Manley
Sophia Ball
Tanya MacCallum
Ilona Daniel
Dylan Roberts
Jolene Jackson
Emma Fugate

Regrets:

Mark Belfry
Elizabeth Iwunwa
Julie Pellissier-Lush
Suna Houghton
Kirstin Lund

Refer to COVID-19 sign-in forms for membership attendance.

DISCUSSION:

1. Greetings from chairperson, Laurie Brinklow
 - a. Meeting called to order. Brief history given, and welcome to the membership on Zoom.
 - b. Christine gives overview of how the morning will look; Christine has been interim president for the last few months. Our intent is to go over the information and allow for comments, but we're going to give a summary of the reports and not go into detail as they were circulated prior to our AGM for review. Please wait until there's a call for comments from our moderator. The folks on Zoom can use the 'raise hand' function to vote.
2. Approval of minutes from the 2019 AGM
 - a. Todd move to accept minutes; Mo moves to second.
 - b. No discussion, motion carries.
3. Approval of agenda, addition of new business

- a. Mo has something to add to agenda, constitutional amendments as part of the president's report.
- b. Ilona moves to accept, seconded by Orysia
- c. Motion carries

4. President's report

- i. Hosted first national creative writing conference, we hired a part-time ED, will be speaking to that in President's report, hosted first online ILAs, and have continued to put out content during a national pandemic. Most of the work for 2019/2020 took place under Mo's leadership. On the first page of the report is a list of the BOD, but that will change. Many thanks to our outgoing board members; Julie, Mark and Jolene. We are planning for this year's workshop schedule which will pivot to online programming, we are still planning our 2021 Wild Threads, and most of our programming from the cancelled 2020 lineup has agreed to stay on for 2021.
- ii. No comments on workshops.
- iii. Open mics have been temporarily put on hold and we are currently working on how to make them work during COVID-19. Options are online or moving to larger venues but they charge.
- iv. Comments: Richard wondering what to do with the equipment; should we take it back to L&M, hold on to it, pass it along to another member.
- v. Comments: Mo asking the membership: are the open to doing the Open Mics online – we'd appreciate any comments here: Rod: I love the Open Mics, as far as I'm concerned it's a last resort to go online – I like the camaraderie of in-person. Sophia: if in-person wasn't available, would people be interested in online? Ilona: There are options for in-person. Richard: part of why we did well there, is there is food and drink, that was a draw. A big space like this, without the food and drink, there isn't the same draw. For Twig, and trying to pivot online, our numbers have collapsed. On Zoom, there is no interaction, and a lot of people aren't technologically proficient, or they can't hear properly, or their equipment is bad, there's a lot of factors to consider. Christine: if there's a cost associated with venue; would people chip in? Comments from Zoom; both to pause, and to explore online. Stacey suggested perhaps a 'pay what you can' model to offset costs without creating barriers. Tanya raised concerns over barriers in a paid structure.

b. Island Literary Awards report

- i. We moved them online this year. We have a report if anyone would like to read through it. We had members of the board host a virtual gala for youth and adult, one thing we learned is to take videos of all nominees so that

winner remains a surprise. The video content plays extremely well online however, and then we have this content indefinitely.

- ii. Comments: none.
- c. Battle Tales
 - i. We were not able to gather in-person but we were able to run the contest itself and video the winner. No comments.
- d. Strategic Planning Session
 - i. We were excited to get funding to run a strategic planning session that we hired Sarah Roach-Lewis for. We highlighted three strategic directions for the coming years:
 - ii. Organizational Capacity Building: we are a busy board. We are looking for bring about more sustainability to the board to reduce board turnover and burnout. We were able to get funding for a staff member under this direction. We are looking for more funding under this strategic direction. Looking to find a permanent home: we are looking to have an office somewhere, we could have a little library, we could have 'come meet an author' etc. Comment: Stacey: Creative Hub was looking for expressions of interest. Mo: we did put in an expression of interest. Comment from Zoom: Elizabeth: could we be considered to be housed as a resident company with the Start-up Zone? Mo: I'm not sure if they do NFP, but I'll look into it.
 - iii. Under the Business of Writing: looking at programming that looks not just at 'how to write' but at the 'business of writing'; publishing, grants, etc.
 - iv. Continue to offer exceptional programming: that we get good facilitators on board. Rather than trying to figure out what our audience might want at the board level, we're seeking input from our membership on which workshops they want. We're going to get feedback from our members on what programming they want to see. We're going to continue with Wild Threads. We're going to continue to appeal to all audiences and be more inclusive. Comments: None.
- e. Wild Threads
 - i. We made the decision this spring to cancel Wild Threads. We didn't have the capacity to pivot quickly online, we'd like to do a hybrid model in the coming years; online and in-person simultaneously. One of the changes we are making is to the pricing system to make it more accessible so that people can register for specific events at lower prices. Comments: none.
- f. Funding
 - i. We were successful to get funding from the province to run a Writers-in-School program. This might in-person, it might online. Launches

in January, and we're putting out a call for proposals in the fall. Mo is working with the public schools branch on this.

- ii. We got a web assistance bursary to enhance our knowledge of hosting webinars.
 - iii. We got funding for a PT ED position, which has been a long-term goal for PEIWG. We received three applications, and we hired Mo Duffy Cobb who had resigned by the board at that point.
- g. Emma moves to accept the Presidents report. Todd seconds. All in favour, motion carries.

h. Constitutional Amendments

- i. Christine covers new vision, Mission, and mandate.
- ii. Vision: Speaks to purpose. Christine reads old and new vision statements.

CURRENT: The Prince Edward Island Writers' Guild (PEIWG) is a dynamic organization dedicated to promoting the growth and quality of the literary arts on PEI. We are proud that our members range from students to published authors, and that everyone with an interest in writing can join.

AMENDED TO: A thriving and inclusive writing community on PEI

Comments: Laurie wonders if it should be 'to be'.

- iii. Mission: Speaks to why we exist. Christine reads old and new missions.

CURRENT: The Prince Edward Island Writers' Guild (PEIWG) is a dynamic organization dedicated to promoting the growth and quality of literary arts on PEI. It was founded in 1989 by a group of writers to unify literary programs such as writing workshops and readings, to create a formal intersection for discussion and action, and to speak periodically as one voice for the Island's literary community.

AMENDED TO: The mission of the Prince Edward Island Writers' Guild is to inspire, support, and encourage established, emerging, and potential writers to find their voice, improve their craft, and experience success in their writing.

Comments: Richard: **AMENDED:** To promote writing on Prince Edward Island, and to facilitate opportunities for writers to share and promote their work and craft.

- iv. Mandate: Speaks to how we achieve that vision. Currently there are five points, and we've kept that structure but changed the points.

CURRENT: 1. to promote writing on Prince Edward Island; 2. to provide assistance to writers at all stages of their careers; 3. to represent the interests of writers in relation with public and private institutions and

individuals in Prince Edward Island and Canada; 4. to facilitate the exchange of information among its members; and 5. to undertake such projects, studies, and actions as shall be required to implement these objectives.

AMENDED TO: 1. To provide mentorship, training, and a safe space for writers to share, explore, learn, and hone their craft 2. To facilitate opportunities for writers to share and promote their work and craft 3. To encourage the entrepreneurial, economic, and business aspects of writing 4. To represent the interest of Island writers with government, key stakeholders, and the general public 5. To provide opportunities for the writing community to meet, share, and self support

Comments: Richard thinks it should be to promote writing on Prince Edward Island. Christine: Should be incorporated into mission perhaps. Zoom: Elizabeth suggested rewording to be 'facilitate and promote' regarding their craft x,y,z and agreed with amended word change suggested by Richard.

- v. On Vision, Mission, Mandate and Motion made by Christine, seconded by Dillion with changed made. Motion carries.
- vi. New special circumstances for members to attend meetings virtually: moved by Sophia, Seconded by Christine. Motion carries.
- vii. Add special circumstance for members being allowed to meet virtually in conjunction with in-person meetings (like we are now):. Moved by Dylan, seconded by Sophia. Motion carries.
- viii. Added option to grant voting privileges in acting capacity to be officially voted in at the AGM. Moved by Christine, seconded by Dylan. Motion carries.
- ix. Added executive Director: moved by Sophia, seconded by Christine. Motion Carries.

5. Treasurer's report

- a. Dylan: we had a pretty good year. Gives review of the report. There's \$35,000 in the bank account (applause). The ILAs made \$17 this year. Mo: the ILAs has never been a money-maker for the Guild. We discussed having a fee for the ILAs, for other organizations these big events are money-makers for the organization. In 2021, we'll probably see a move to start charging for the ILAs. Steph: it seems to be directly opposed to the diversity moves that we're incorporating. I'm wondering if we can make exceptions for people nominated for the awards? Mo: that's a big part of the discussion. I don't think we'd charge nominee's, but there's a lot of discussion around this. We've discussed many different formats. Tanya: Maybe there could be a discount for members? Emma: The big fundraisers tend to include meals, there'd be a value upgrade if we started charging. Maybe a gala with host? Mo: This is a year's worth of work for The Guild, to make \$17. We'd like to make a couple thousand

dollars. Christine: We're creating a bursary program, and this would help us 'pay it forward'. Dylan moves, Stephanie seconds. Motions carries.

6. Membership report

- a. 2018: total of 147 members, incl. lapsed members. Grew to 271 in 2020. The biggest news is we have a Writer-for-Hire section. This is a way we can help the community out by advertising businesses on website, or if we get inquiries about writers, we can help facilitate matches. Questions: Laurie: how much is that? Mo: \$65. We based it on the NFL model which has more services to add-ons for their memberships, which is something we're trying to develop. Our membership management system is Wild Apricot. Emma moves, Todd seconds. Motion carries.

7. ILA

- a. Mo to add: We did it from my living this year. It was interesting, we had great participation from the writers who won, it was a great perk to have all those writers online. Christine Gallant was our coordinator. One of things we've been talking about at a board level is Diversity and Inclusion, and we have a committee now. We're adding a BIPOC award, and an Acadian Award. We're doing a Diversity and Inclusion strategy at a committee level that will incorporate this. *Ilona moves, Todd seconds.* Discussion: Steph: Question about funding: how do people sign up to be a sponsor? Mo: we're looking for a new corporate sponsor, and there are multiple levels. We've never had anything on the website before for sponsorship. We built an online store for the website last year that can accept donations. Christine: to add; we have an ILA coordinator that sends out a letter to previous sponsors who get first choice, and then we target sponsors. We put out a call online for sponsors. Ilona: is there a list of corporate sponsors? Mo: yes, in the report. Todd: what is our contract with Christian? Is it renewed annually? Mo: this will be Christain's third year, and normally renewed on a year-to-year basis, but because we cancelled Wild Threads this year we're rolling those funds into the ILAs for 2021. Todd: I was thinking of signing a two or three year contract rather than year to year. Mo: We're already looking at ILAs, and we're looking to put together a small committee. Motion carries.

8. Election of new board members

- Members at Large
- Vice-president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- President

Slate of Board Nominations:

Kirstin Lund, Workshop Committee

Elizabeth Iwunwa, Member at Large

Ilona Daniel, Member at Large

Tanya MacCallum, Member at Large

Emma Fugate, Treasurer

Sophia Ball, Vice-President

Christine Gordon Manley, President

The following board are beginning year two of their current terms:

Dylan Roberts

Todd MacEwan

Nominations from the floor:

Mo: Michelle Harris Gange has self nominated for the secretary.

Second call for nominations.

Third call for nominations.

Christine moves, Emma seconds.

Todd moves to accept the slate, Orishya seconds.

Important Covid19 Notation:

Zoom experienced technical difficulties, after some experimentation, issues were resolved by positioning closer to sound system speaker.

Emma moves to adjourn meeting, Ilona seconds. Meeting adjourned.