



2016 AGM Minutes

May 7, 2016 2:00-4:00pmEST

Present - In-person: Rochelle Eisen, Wayne Adams, Ashley St. Hilaire,

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome from the President

3. Motion to approve the Agenda

Moved by Georgina B; seconded by Beth M; Motion carried

4. Motion to approve minutes of 2015 AGM

Moved by Shannon B; seconded by Beth M; Motion carried

5. Presentation of the Financial Results

Marilyn introduces 2015 financial statements, noting the accomplishment that they are audited statements approved by the board (first time this has been achieved in years). Thank you to the chapters for meeting tight timelines to get financial information in for the audit, and thank you to everyone involved in making this a successful and efficient audit!

a. Motion to approve WPG Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants for 2016 Audit

Moved by Marilyn C; seconded by Rochelle; Motion carried

6. Motion to change the by-laws with respect to Section 2.4

Currently there is no fixed fee for membership; any donation over \$1 qualifies an individual as a COG member. This motion will allow the board to set a fixed fee for membership (amount to be decided at the June board meeting) and enable COG to speak more clearly to and target more specifically donors and members – two distinct groups with different needs. This was the old model which was changed under Laura Telford's directorship but is being revisited again for various reasons: To comply with new Charity Act which makes clear that donors cannot receive benefits, so distinct membership is required; to improve COG's fundraising and member retention strategies. Donors will receive charitable receipts while members will not. Members will have voting rights and receive benefits such as discounts on books. An individual can be a member and donor.

Moved by Shannon B; seconded by Marilyn C; Motion carried

Member vote on bylaw change overwhelmingly "in favour."



7. Election of 2016/2017 Board of Directors

a. Review of election process

Two methods of voting: those in office using paper ballots and all other votes cast electronically on same ballot as the bylaw vote (survey monkey link)

Staff will count votes, need to combine paper and e-votes counts, and verify the votes; results announced after this process

b. Nomination of Directors

See slide for nominee slate. Thank you to outgoing and returning board members!

c. Election (Approximately 10 minutes or until counting is completed)

d. Announcement of results

All nominees elected to Board of Directors. Welcome new board members!

8. Executive Director's Report

See slide for detailed report on COG's current and upcoming projects and programs, including chapter highlights of their 2015 activities. Lots of grants coming through for 2016 (way to go, team!), but COG does have obligation to raise money to match these funds: \$36,110, plus in-kind contributions, so the major challenge in 2016 is to achieve this level of fundraising when donations have been down. See slides for new fundraising plans.

9. Question and answer forum between Members and the Board of Directors and Staff

What is strategy to increase donations?

-identifying new donors: Organic Master Gardener course participants, books purchasers, library borrowers who have not made donation or are not member but have affiliation with COG already

-embrace new identity: we're not the voice, we are the source of organics - information and education is our focus (linked to this, COG will be revisiting its strategic plan to create new strategy for 2017-2020)

COG has so many different audiences and one that we haven't really reached is organic consumers. How can we serve organic consumers nationally?

-Extremely difficult to fund consumer oriented activities. Planned website revamping is a great opportunity to increase access to resources for consumers. We already know they are using our site to access info on what organic means and how to garden organically in their backyard. Think Before You Eat website exists as consumer tool, but it sends people away from COG, so need to build the Think messaging into the COG site.



-Other opportunities to reach consumers: Organic Ambassador program in Atlantic Canada by ACORN, Organic Week retailer opportunity

COG is hotline for organics; sometimes very technical questions come into the office

-creating goal to respond to all these inquiries within 3 days

-connect to experts via the development of the Guidance Document

10. Motion to adjourn

Moved by Sarah D; seconded by Beth M; Motion carried