

Minutes - OCFF 2009 AGM
Sunday, 18 October 2009
Crown Plaza Hotel, 101 Lyon Street, Ottawa ON
Frontenac/Richelieu Room
Start time: 12:00 Noon Finish time: 13:15

1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda – Paul Mills, President

Steve Tennant moved to adopt the agenda
Seconded by Dave Newland
Motion carried

Paul Mills welcomed the membership to the AGM. He established that quorum existed, then thanked former president Aengus Finnan (now ex-officio) for his help during the last year.

2. Approval of 2008 AGM Minutes - Karen Flanagan McCarthy, Recording Secretary

Larry Leblanc moved to accept the 2008 AGM Minutes
Seconded by Trevor Mills
Motion carried

3. President's report – Paul Mills

The President extended thanks to the entire Board of Directors, with a reminder that all serve as volunteers with the personal sacrifice of a significant amount of time and resources. He thanked members of the Executive Committee: Ellen (Vice-President and Secretary); Dennis Landry (Treasurer) and Tina DesRoches (Member-at-Large) for their invaluable contributions and support, noting that this AGM marks the end of their terms on the Board. He also thanked Candace Shaw, who has retired from the Board due to increased commitments.

He then extended special thanks to Peter MacDonald, close to completing his first full year as Executive Director of OCFF, for his magnificent job in the post. He noted that Peter and the Board have become a good team and have accomplished much. The President also extended special thanks to the staff, noting that the success of this conference is evidence of how good they are.

The President then turned his attention to Board activities. A principal focus of the past year has been the fundamental re-examination of the organization, its purpose and goals. Based on Aengus Finnan's work during his three years as President, the groundwork for the work has been firmly laid.

The President then recapped the three year plan executed during Aengus Finnan's tenure:

2005 / 2006 - Orientation, with a review of the organization's bylaws and Board and Staff Handbook;

2006/2007 - Clarity, building on the stability of those bylaws, policies and procedures, the Board established terms of reference and mandates for committees and created other committees as needed;

2007/2008 - Input - Stakeholder Research.

The President underscored the fact that the third phase of that plan, the research, was impacted by the Board's preoccupation of managing the organization in the absence of an Executive Director after Erin Benjamin's departure. With the hiring of a new ED, the Board has been able to resume this important work.

A Strategic Planning Committee was struck under the chairmanship of Board Member Dan Greenwood. With members Dan Kershaw, Larry Leblanc, Paul Loewenberg and ED Peter MacDonald, they invested more than 500 hours over an eight-month period of research, interviews and meetings. Their work has culminated in a new OCFE Strategic Plan, which he promised to present later in the meeting.

The President also drew attention to the work of other committees, including:

Conference Steering Committee – Co-chaired by Dan Kershaw & Paul Mills, with members Richard Flohil, Erin Barnhardt, Peter MacDonald and Carolyn Bigley, they met extensively and built on principles established during the committee's first year: dedicated artist, festival and general interest streams; longer, more substantive panel sessions; protected and enhanced exhibit hall; increased profile for festival members; better use of the Sunday schedule and keynote speaker. This conference is fine example of work between committee and staff.

Green Committee – originally established by Ellen Hamilton, chaired this past year by Tina DesRoches, with members Peter MacDonald, Ellen Hamilton and Candace Shaw, it continued its work to make the OCFE greener and offered advice to its members re: how they could become greener. 'Flash Your Folk' helps reduce the amount of promotional paper; poster rules and guidelines and the banning of plastic water bottles were just the few of the ways in which the conference was not only 'greener' but also certified as being "Carbon Neutral".

Finance Committee – Dennis Landry, as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee worked hard with the ED to ensure the finances of the OCFE were healthy. The goal has been met. (Financial Reports to be tabled).

Board Nominating Committee – With Jan Vanderhoorst as Chair, consists of the entire Board. This year's slate is stellar. Jan will announce the results of the election later in the meeting.

Fundraising Committee – led by Nicole Rochefort, has pulled together another fine silent auction and has raised more than \$6,000 this year.

Estelle Klein Award Committee – Chaired by Paul Loewenberg and consists of all Board members. The choice this year of Sharon, Lois & Bram was an especially inspired choice.

Communications Committee – lost its Chair early this year and has been relatively inactive this year. Ellen Hamilton has agreed to step in as Interim Chair.

The Personnel, Policy and Governance Committee, under the guidance of Chair Tamara Kater, has been working on revisions to our policies and the development of a Code of Ethics for the OCFE.

In addition to the committee work, the President and some members of the Board and staff took part in a series of meetings with festival members. This was in line with the promise made by the President at last year's AGM to meet with festival members in the coming year. It also coincided with work on the strategic planning initiative. Four meetings were held: two in Toronto, one in London and one in Kingston.

In closing, the President said that it had been an honour to serve as the OCFE's President. It had been a year of transition and that transition continues. The President then announced that with Candace Shaw's retirement with one year remaining in her term, the Board (per OCFE bylaws), made the decision to appoint him to fill the remainder of her term. He announced that he was willing to accept the appointment when his 3-year term was officially over at the end of the AGM. He also noted that the new Board would meet immediately following the AGM and that the new officers would be elected at the meeting. He announced his intention to run for the President's position. Results of the election of the Executive will be announced in the week ahead.

Bruce Morel moved to accept the President's Report.
Seconded by Arthur McGregor
Motion carried

4. Executive Director's Report – Peter MacDonald

The Executive Director began by announcing that there were about 800 delegates at this year's conference, an increase of 75 over last year. There is also an increase in the number of agents and presenters attending the showcases. Membership now sits at 31 Festivals, 47 Ontario organizations and 435 individuals. Funders are noticing the increases.

There have been several staff changes the past year. The OCFE hired a new community outreach manager, Chris McLean, who placed 33 artists in 40 different locations for the Art Beat program. The Art Beat program happened again this year with the significant support of the Songwriters Association of Canada. Erin Barnhardt was retained on a part-time basis to help with staff transition and to assist with the conference. Jennifer Ellis is the OCFE's Office Administrator. The ED noted that the organization is fortunate to have Ana Miura as Conference Manager and Dave O'Hearne as Production Manager at this year's conference.

Sponsorships are strong and growing. Lunchtime showcases were sponsored and half of those sponsors have already indicated an interest in returning next year.

The ED noted that funding has remained stable. OAC's three-year funding program is soon coming to an end. Other funders have moved to a multi-year funding model rather than single-year funding. Multi-year is providing additional stability. We continue to research new funding streams.

The ED and the Board spent a significant amount of time this past year on the strategic process. It will prove to be time very well spent.

There will be changes to *Folk Prints* in the coming year including a review of its delivery method and the installation of an editor. Communications will also be enhanced through the use of social media tools.

Staff and Board members have attended as many member festivals as possible; A couple of staff members will attend the NERFA Conference; Staffer Chris McLean will travel to Australia to attend the Australasian World Music Expo, as their guest. At the Folk Alliance in Memphis, the Pan-Canadian program has been quite successful in pooling resources to increase the profile of Canadian artists and festivals. Those efforts will be repeated and will include a showcase of Ontario talent.

OCFE became member of CAPACOA this past year. The ED will attend the CAPACOA Conference and continue the networking that began with presenter network members of CAPACOA at an annual spring meeting.

There are plans to roll out an employee benefits program through Ottawa Festivals for festival organizations and their staff.

OCFE also renewed its membership in the Canadian Council of the Arts.

The Executive Director is an ex-officio member of the OCFE Board and attends Executive Committee meetings.

In closing, the ED noted the change coming July 1st, 2010 with the launch of the Harmonized Sales Tax in Ontario, bringing to everyone's attention that this would have an impact on the OCFE and its clients.

In closing, the ED thanked the Board and Staff for their support in the last 11 months. He also thanked recording secretary, Karen Flanagan McCarthy for her work at today's AGM.

There were three questions/observations from the floor:

Brian Gladstone asked what CAPACOA is (Canadian Arts Presenting Association/l'Association canadienne des organismes artistiques).

Erin Benjamin, ED of CAPACOA, asked whether the OCFE had given any thought to how the implementation of the 13% HST will affect ticket sales. The President replied that the OCFE will provide information to member festivals re: how to prepare for the implementation of the new tax and possible exemptions. The HST will be charged on any tickets or conference registrations and other products sold after June 30th.

Eve Goldberg pointed out that fees and CD sales will also be affected by the HST.

Candace Shaw moved to accept the ED's Report.

Seconded by Nicole Rochefort

Motion carried

5. Treasurer's Report - Delivered by proxy by Paul Mills

Board member Paul Mills reported to the membership on behalf of the Treasurer, Dennis Landry. Dennis's report touched on the following points:

- The financial statements will show that the OCFE's financial situation, while not as good as he'd hoped to be able to report, is better than was originally forecast.
- A number of practices that will make financial management of the OCFE easier have been put into place, with thanks to the organization's ED.
- A new budget process, one that engages the committee structure of the OCFE and solicits their feedback in terms of preparing the budget around their respective areas, has also been implemented.
- The budget for this fiscal year was passed in February and was a very "activist", deficit budget, incorporating committee feedback, and building for the future, some of which will be discussed in the Strategic Planning presentation.
- In summary, the Treasurer reports a good year for the organization and on a personal note, reports being pleased with the financial health of the organization, both in terms of money and management.

Nicole Rochefort moved to accept the Treasurer's Report

Seconded by Scott Merrifield

Motion carried

Auditor's Report – Jamie Chung, from Welch & Co., LLP. The auditor's report showed a deficit of \$19,000. The Radio Starmaker Fund Grant, deferred to this year, should help offset the deficit. Part of the deficit is due to having to pay the ED's salary, which wasn't paid in the previous year, due to the fact that the Board of Directors managed the organization during the search process for a new ED. There were also expenses involved in moving the OCFE office to a new location.

Arthur McGregor asked why there was no name on the auditor's report. President Paul Mills replied that a draft report was sent out to enable members to review it before the AGM.

Jason Bouchard asked about the deficit reduction and was reminded that part of the deficit was due to the fact that we had to pay \$15,000 for the conference locale in London, ON in 2007.

Eve Goldberg asked a question about the increase in office expenses. Paul Mills answered that the increase was due mostly to moving expenses; the fact that in the new space we pay utilities in addition to rent and that the organization also had to invest in new (inexpensive) furniture.

Paul Loewenberg moved to accept Auditor's Report
Seconded by Dave Newland
Motion passed

6. Election of Directors – Jan Vanderhorst, Nominating Committee

Jan Vanderhorst, Chair of the Nominating Committee, announced the election results. Continuing Directors include: Tamara Kater; Nicole Rochefort; Larry Leblanc; Paul Lowenberg; Dan Kershaw; Jan Vanderhorst; Dan Greenwood and Paul Mills, who was appointed to fulfil the last year of Candace Shaw's term.

He thanked all those involved in the process, with special thanks to those who stood for election but were not elected.

The Chair then announced the newly elected members of the Board of the Ontario Council of Folk Festivals:

Katherine Partridge
David Newland
Scott Merrifield
Bill Stunt

Andrew Buntin moved to accept the Board of Directors (newly elected, as well as those continuing to sit as members of the Board.)
Seconded by Steve Tennant
Motion carried

Eve Goldberg moved to destroy the election ballots
Seconded by Trevor Mills
Motion carried

7. Presentation of the OCFF Strategic Plan – Paul Mills, Dan Greenwood

Paul Mills and Dan Greenwood presented the OCFF Strategic Plan. In doing so, Paul stressed that the presentation was for information purposes only, that in the months to come there would be discussion and votes on articles of incorporation and bylaws.

Paul first addressed the question of whether OCFF should become a national organization. The answer is a simple 'no', based on the belief that the organization must stay focused as an Ontario arts service organization.

Two important elements of the strategy are the revised Mission and Vision statements:

Mission: The Ontario Council of Folk Festivals supports the growth and development of folk music in Ontario by supporting the growth and development of presenters and performers.

Vision: By 2015, the OCFF will have facilitated a stronger, more engaged, connected and active folk music community in Ontario.

The plan focused on eight strategies:

- Expanded member services
- More effective communications
- Renewed commitment to festivals

- An improved advocacy role
- Leveraging technology
- A commitment to being 'green'
- Increased brand identity
- Improved organizational effectiveness

Next steps were identified as:

- Review & revision of Charter & Bylaws
- Development of an Operational Plan
- Annual Review of Strategic Plan
- Organizational name change to more accurately reflect what the organization is.

The proposed name change, which will be put to a vote is Folk Music Ontario.

After the presentation, the membership was invited to ask questions.

The first, from Jason Bouchard, concerned how the Board planned to get support from the Festival members. Dan Greenwood stressed that the presentation of the plan was but a beginning, that there would be extensive discussion on all the points presented as part of the plan. He reminded members present that the Board is interested in feedback on the proposed strategy and would be available to answer any concerns. Paul added that these changes would take time, that there are legal procedures to follow for some of the proposed changes, e.g., the name change of the organization.

Eve Goldberg thanked the Board members for their work on the strategic plan. She then asked why the Mission Statement focused on presenters and performers but did not include audience. Paul Mills responded that 'audience' is addressed in the organization's vision statement which includes 'community.' Dan Kershaw added that in the workshop sessions, the focus was on services. Paul stressed that this is a mission statement for our membership which is presenters and performers; that the organization has to be practical and recognize that this focus does serve the larger community.

Ed Winacott asked a question about outreach programs like Art Beat and how they fit in with this new strategy. Peter MacDonald fielded the question, answering that Art Beat may be rolled out across the province, due to the fact that the OCFE is beginning to obtain funding for it.

Erin Benjamin (former Executive Director of the OCFE) noted that audience development and outreach are part of Heritage Canada's funding programming grant and offers support to presenters and presenter organizations;

Brian Gladstone complimented the Board on a thorough and well thought out plan. He noted that the proposed mission statement and vision refers to 'folk music'; suggests that this might be changed to 'Roots' or 'Roots and Folk.' Paul Mills answered that that point would likely be discussed in the months to come. Arthur McGregor stated that he was happy that only this word - 'folk' - was used in the mission and vision statements.

Eve Goldberg, in a follow up to this question, pointed out that presenters are developing audiences for their own events. Perhaps we could look at "audience" in a broader sense; that the OCFE could expose people to folk music in their community. After all, performers and presenters work in a community context that includes the audience. Paul Mills once again stressed that audiences would not be lost in this context. Dan Greenwood added that a lot of what Eve said was considered in creating this strategy.

Erin Benjamin was very complimentary about the Strategic Plan. As someone who led the OCFE (as its first executive director), she was delighted to see how the organization has evolved. She noted that the organizational skills and governance that have gone into this process would have a profound effect on arts organizations across Canada.

The last observation was made by Peter Zanetti who asked that the Board remember that volunteers are also stakeholders.

Peter MacDonald agreed and reminded the assembled members that more than 500 volunteer hours went into the creation of this strategy. He also singled out the very patient Board member Dan Greenwood as being instrumental in the process.

8. New Business

Jason Bouchard raised the issue of the high noise and sound levels during the banquet. Paul Mills responded by saying that a number of changes have been introduced at this year's conference and that the Board and Staff would be reviewing them all.

9. Adjournment

Dave Newland moved to adjourn.

