



CWCF
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**CANADIAN
WORKER
CO-OP
FEDERATION**

**FÉDÉRATION
CANADIENNE DES
COOPÉRATIVES
DE TRAVAIL**

Canadian Worker Co-op Federation: 2023 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 10:15 am Eastern Time and Thursday, November 16, 2023, 4:00 pm Eastern Time, Quebec City and virtual

Minutes

Chair: Reba Plummer
Minute-taker: Kaye Grant

Parliamentarian: David Lobie-Daughton

Wednesday, November 15th, 10:15 am ET

Part I: Reports

1. Call to order & land acknowledgment (Reba Plummer, Board President).
Reba called the meeting to order at 10:34am and gave a Land Acknowledgement.
2. Verify Quorum (Hazel Corcoran, Executive Director)
Quorum is 10 members, quorum was declared at 16 members (14 in-person, 2 virtually).
3. Approve Agenda (Reba) Reba stated that she wanted to move to the agenda to do the director elections today. *Lisette Lemus moved Kelly Storie seconded. Carried.*
Motion to approve the Amended Agenda Evan Proven moved Leslie Brown seconded. Carried
4. Approve 2022 AGM Minutes (Reba Plummer, President)
Chris Nichols moved, and Andi Argast seconded. Carried.
5. Business Arising (Reba)

There is no business arising.

6. Reports: President, and Executive Director (Reba Plummer (President)/ Hazel Corcoran (Executive Director).

Highlights from President's Report included noting the CWCF winning the inaugural CMC JEDI Award, SSG winning the inaugural CMC Sustainability Award, & Juliet 'Kego Ume-Onyido winning the OCA Award. Reba brought up the on-going challenges for members with high costs of rents and inflation. Members are struggling to pay affordable wages / living wages. CWCF provided loans to members to allow them to pay back their CEBA loans and be able to keep the forgivable portion of the CEBA Loan Program. She wrapped up by recognizing the hard work of the staff and board.

The Executive Directors Report included the difficult and challenging times we face, including climate change and increased racism, noting that we are part of a profound social movement working to combat these social and environmental issues.

Part II: Financial Statements and Budget

7. Financial Report: Presentation of audited financial statements (Kelly Storie, Treasurer)

Kelly noted that the revenues for CWCF and the Tenacity Works Fund combined was \$835K, net income was \$175K, We have \$939K in members' equity. For the fully detailed report see the Financial Statements for 2022-23.

David Lobie-Daughton moved and Lissette Lemus seconded the acceptance of the financial statements. Carried

8. Appointment of Auditor (Kelly Storie, Treasurer)

Leslie Brown moved and Chris Nichols seconded that CWCF appoint Bishop and Company as our auditor again this year. Carried.

9. Budget 2023-2024 (Hazel Corcoran, Executive Director)

Hazel provided a summary of the budget, noting that the investment from reserves for co-op development could be more, but that is up to the board if they wish to approve more.

A member asked about the \$10,000 for Government Relations. Hazel noted that it is set up as an external consulting firm, to provide guidance and support on Government Relations.

Another member asked if there were alternative revenues to cover the \$200K of additional expenses. Hazel responded, yes, primarily interest.

Part III: Resolutions and Elections

10. Bylaw Resolutions for Decision (Jessica Provencher, Vice President, and Hazel Corcoran, Executive Director)

CWCF's Board of Directors is proposing amendments to the CWCF by-laws. The purpose of the amendments is three-fold:

- a) to add the member category of "Friends" of the Federation.

Friends of the Federation would be individuals who work in solidarity with CWCF and lend it their support. This new member category would pay \$25-\$500, sliding scale based on set criteria. Friends would have the same rights as regular members but would not have a vote at the AGM. At the AGM they would only have observer status. The purpose is to bring in racial communities and collectives that aren't necessarily incorporated as worker co-ops into the space and to increase participation from the broader solidarity economy.

A member asked why Friends wouldn't have voting rights at the AGM. Jessica responded that it is intentional to maintain worker co-op control of the federation. However, the next resolution is to propose that friends can run for the Board of Directors, which could provide more diversity.

Someone asked if individuals be friends? Jessica indicated yes they can be.

A member asked why call it a category of membership, & not strategic alliances? The response is that we want them to be part of our federation – including to have them be able to be on our board, representing a more informal part of the economy – solidarity economy.

Rosa Poirier-McKiggan moved the resolution, Vesta Sahatciu seconded. Carried.

- b) to expand the types of members who can run for the Board of Directors to include Worker Co-op Developer Members and Friends, within set limits.

Jessica explained the makeup of the board and proposed that the at-large seats be allowed to have Developer Members and Friends sit on the board as well. Regional members are already allowed a seat. This will help to increase diversity and help us to deal with vacant seats as we know that worker co-op members are already busy. In order to maintain worker co-op control, a maximum of two regional directors and a maximum of two Friends or Developer Members could sit on the board at a given time with a maximum of three total for all three categories

(Friends, Regional Members and Developer Members). This would ensure that at all times worker co-ops have a minimum of 4 seats on the board. This would also allow for members that no longer work for their co-op or members who co-ops cease to exist to continue out their term on the board.

A member asked: Is it possible for a Friend to be the board president. Jessica: Yes, any board member could be the president. The board determines who will be their officers.

***Amendment** that the officers would need to be held by worker co-ops. Lissette Lemus moved and Leslie Brown seconded.*

A member speaks against it, citing concerns that it could severely restrict who could be officers on the board. There is a certain degree of knowledge and experience that an individual needs to hold an official officer position and she wouldn't want to put restrictions on that. They aren't concerned about the organization losing sight of its focus with these changes.

Another member speaks in favour of the motion concern about worker co-op control of the federation.

Another member speaks against the amendment, if the intention is to bring in more BIPOC people into the federation then it's fine for them to be in leadership. Further encourages the board to consider allowing friends a vote at the AGM.

Lissette Lemus: restates that the amendment is to preserve the leadership of worker co-operatives within the federation.

Another member asks a clarifying question: Is the amendment that ALL officers need to be from Worker Co-ops or just one of them? No clear response was provided.

A member spoke against the amendment, highlighting that all board members have equal responsibility, not just officers.

An observer noted that if we are to enlarge the definition of the CWCF, we need to clearly define it. We need to better define what is "Friends".

An observer remarked that they appreciate this amendment brought forward. Observing that CWCF has a high level of trust in both the staff and board of directors. Remarking that they have seen cases where people who don't share the values can get into collusion with staff who aren't as rooted in democratic transparent governance. We need our structures to say what we want them to be. If collectively people feel it's

important to keep worker co-op control of the federation, then find some way to articulate that.

An observer remarks that they have seen cases where organizations are taken over by outside people, from a labour standpoint the capitalist class has been at war with us for 400 years and less violent for them to infiltrate an organization. I think it's very important to set things up in such a way that makes it difficult for those without the co-op spirit to take over the federation.

Clarification if the amendment is being withdrawn is asked.

Lisette Lemus clarifies that the amendment was intended to ensure that a worker co-op held at least one officer seat.

*** Lisette Lemus withdraws the amendment. ***

An observer suggests that we have raised another issue, we need the definition of friends. Jessica responds: "Friends" means individuals who work in solidarity with the federation and lend it support. Evan Proven further clarifies that there is a more detailed definition of "Friends" in the background documents.

An informal suggestion is made that the board tighten up the definition and bring a motion to the next AGM to allow friends to have voting power at the AGM.

Jessica Provencher calls for a vote for the original resolution. Carried. 11 in favour, 4 abstentions, 1 opposition (Matthew Adams, Fourth Pig)

- c) to make the language of the of the bylaws gender-neutral.

David Lobie Daughton moved, Owen Ardel seconded. Carried

11. Director Elections (Evan Proven, Director)

- a) Review process, completed.
- b) Facilitate Election or Acclamation of Directors (Two at-large seats for 3-year terms, Atlantic seat to complete a term with 2 remaining years, and BC / Yukon seat to complete a term with 1 remaining year)

Evan Proven called for nominations for each of the seats 3 times.

Chris Nichols was acclaimed for BC / Yukon seat.

Leslie Brown was acclaimed for the Atlantic seat.

Tara Williams & Kelly Storie were acclaimed for the at-large seats.

David Lobie Daughton moved, Lissette Lemus seconded, the acclamation of all four seats respectively. Carried.

Thursday, November 16th, 4:00 pm ET

Part IV: Other Business

12. Appreciation for departing director(s). (Reba Plummer, President)

Reba appreciated Jared Bluestein, who served for 3 years and decided not to re-offer.

13. Seek volunteers for 2023-24 Nominating Committee, and Conference Planning Committee (Reba Plummer, President)

Reba noted that these committees need new volunteers and to inform her or the staff of their interest in either of these committees.

14. Announce next AGM (Reba Plummer / Hazel Corcoran)

The next AGM to be held virtually, dates TBD. The 2025 AGM will be in either Ontario or Manitoba.

15. Other Business / Question and Answer period / (Reba Plummer, President)

THANKS: huge shout-out to the staff team here (Hazel, Kaye, Chloe & Janielle), Réseau COOP staff who also attended (Isabel, Mathilde & Gabrielle), Co-op L'Argot for interpretation, the A/V team, the Monastere's staff, including the cooks, the cleaners and administration staff.

16. Adjourn AGM

Vesta Sahatchi moved adjournment at 4:12pm EST