

## **Prince Edward County Arts Council Annual General Meeting Minutes 2024**

### **June 7, 2024 at 4:30 PM, County Arts Lab, Picton, Ontario**

Chair: Julia Howell

1. Call to Order:

Julia Howell introduced herself. To begin the AGM, the Chair called the CA board, staff and members to order at 4:37PM

2. Land Acknowledgement / Introductions/ Ted Norris:

Julia began the proceedings with a Land Acknowledgement and an expression of gratitude to all of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit who have been traditional and contemporary stewards of this land. She noted that CA is actively building relationships with Indigenous artists in the County and beyond, through our commitment to harnessing the power of art and storytelling to foster truth and reconciliation.

Thanks to our former Board member of Metis heritage, Ted Norris, the Calls to Action and UNDRIP Articles are the foundations upon which we build all of our programs that serve Indigenous artists including our Indigenous Voices Fund. Ted chaired our 2023 AGM. Sadly, he had to resign from the Board in November due to poor health and passed away in April. The Board was shocked and heartbroken to lose such a friend who still had so much to offer. CA has decided to honour his memory by donating 30 children's books by Indigenous authors to the Picton Library in partnership with County Kids Read. Ted was anchored by his belief in the transformative power of the arts and literature.

Julia then welcomed everyone and introduced the members of the Board: Erin Hewitson, Treasurer (sends regrets); Catelyn Thornton, Secretary; Andrea Piller; Talitha Tolles (sends regrets); Christine Winiarz Searle.

3. Approval of the Agenda:

The Chair called for the approval of the AGM Agenda 2024.

Motion – Chrissy Poitras, Seconded – Sarah Moran, Approved

4. Approval of 2023 AGM Minutes from May 26, 2023

The Chair called for the approval of the 2023 minutes.

Motion – Sarah Crawford, Seconded – Gwen Shandrovski, Approved

5. Presentation of 2023 Financial Statements:

James Williamson of Welch LLP was invited to stand and deliver the 2023 financial statements to the membership and presented his findings with a slide show of the financials for people to follow along.

He said that County Arts shows good growth as an organization, and the level of risk is low. He explained that as a non-profit, you want revenues and expenses to balance out and not go over. Some of the imbalances in the report are just timing issues with deferred revenues and deferred grants.

Some questions from the floor had Mr. Williamson explaining: 1) Restricted Funds were being held back for various CA programs. 2) Arts Trail money was spent and therefore not shown. 3) County Kids Read separated from CA part way through the year taking their revenues.

Mr. Williamson said that overall, the 2023 Financial Statements of County Arts were solid. Chair called for motion to approve 2023 Financial Statements.

Motion to Approve – Gwen Shandroviski, Secunder – Thomas Harrison, Approved

6. Nomination of Welch LLP to Complete 2024 financial review:

Motion to Approve this Nomination – Julia Howell, Secunder – Bill Stearman, Approved

7. Governance Committee Report:

The Chair invited Board member, Christine Winiarz Searle to the floor to give this report as the new Governance Committee Chair for CA.

Christine gave an overview of what the Governance Committee has been working on this year. The major focus of the committee this year has been working to get County Arts in alignment with ONCA (Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act). The deadline for this is Autumn 2024 and CA is doing well in meeting the ONCA requirements re: governance. The committee has created a work plan with key Board moments; reviewed fiduciary responsibilities and timelines; created Board member consent forms to sign; adjusted and added Terms of Reference for the Board; and are creating an organizational chart for CA. The Board approved the Governance Committee Report at their June meeting.

Christine then noted that CA is reaching revenues of over \$100,000 and she moved that the members waive a formal audit and have a financial review as usual for 2024. Before a vote, questions were asked and answered.

Q: Does a Review vs. an Audit affect grants?

Some grant organizations may ask for one. The threshold for an audit is revenues of \$500,000 which CA is nearing.

Q: How much does an audit cost approximately?

Around \$10,000.

Motion – Christine Winiarz Searle, Secunder – J.C. Sulzenko, Approved

8. Election of the Board of Directors:

The Chair invited Board secretary, Catelyn Thornton to the floor to present the 2024 slate of Directors and officers. She named the nominees and a detailed description of the nominated Board members was in the AGM package sent to all members attending the AGM. Catelyn presented the slate and then invited nominations from the floor. She did this three times. As there were no nominations from the floor, Julia proposed that the membership accept the 2024 slate as presented.

Motion – Julia Howell, Secunder – Sarah Moran, Approved

9. Executive Director's Report:

The Chair invited Executive Director Janna Smith to give her annual report. Janna welcomed the gathering into CA's new Arts Lab space in the Armoury Building and discussed plans for the new space noting a wish list as CA continues to grow. Loyalist College has donated 6 computers, which could be used to start a Media Arts program. She noted that this new space offers many new opportunities for CA in terms of programs, symposiums, live performances, as well as housing our own Art in the County exhibition and sale starting next week.

Janna also detailed the various grant applications submitted by CA this year. She noted that FedDev ON was offering a matching grant to bolster the Tourism sector, which we applied to in partnership with Visit The County and Stay PEC to help attract more arts & culture tourists and assist artists be market ready. She also reported on membership growth this past year with 312 members, up 30% from 2022. The Programs Committee celebrated an annual surplus in CA's signature programs, except for AITC which used a previous surplus to pay for new branding and signage. Janna also thanked the previous and incoming AITC committees and Chairs for their incredible hard work, expertise and dedication. The Maker's Hand is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and visual 2-D art will be on offer for the first time this coming fall. The PEC Studio Tour has 55 artists this year and there is a new app available to plan your tour digitally. The Taste Trail is returning to PEC, so the Arts Trail has decided to reconnect with that and partner with Visit the County. Janna read a message addressed to the council from Tara Wilkinson, Chair of the Arts Trail, thanking CA for their partnership and support over the last few years. The new arrangements will start September 2024.

The Impact Report was shared via email to all CA members. Janna proudly noted that in the past year, CA ran 17 programs which created opportunities for PEC artists to earn \$298,170 in total, and if you include the salaries of the CA staff and workers in the Arts and Culture sector, the total is \$481,000. With this good news came some bad news. CA along with some other anchor organizations in PEC received no funding from the municipality this year. The council has received between \$15,000 - \$25,000 annually over the past several years. This was a shocking blow to CA given that CA makes a crucial impact on art and artists, but more importantly on the PEC community as a whole. With that in mind, this year Janna invited a number of PEC artists to give testimonials at this AGM. The membership heard from Natalie Finkelstein, Sharon Hart, Lucy Sterezlyo, Georgia Papanicolaou, Bill Stearman, Chrissy Poitras and Kyle Topping, and finally, Leigh

Nash. All of them gave moving and inspiring testimonials on the major impact CA has had on them as artists and the community. It was shared that CA makes the artist the central focus of its work and the values embodied by CA are important. CA supports through concrete actions. It was pointed out that people live in PEC because they can as artists, because of the arts community, and because of the financial and moral support of CA. There was a great deal of emotion during this part of the meeting.

Janna thanked each of the speakers, and went on to thank all of the donors and sponsors of CA. The Fund Development committee is a huge focus of the staff and Board, and the job is more crucial than ever. The Ontario Arts Council grant makes up only 2.9% of our funding. With a very high ratio of artists in our community, Janna and the CA staff and Board see this as an opportunity for CA to lobby for multi-year operating funding tied to per capita rates just as many other small communities have. CA is currently building a case for this to present to the Municipal Council.

10. Close:

As Chair, Julia thanked Janna for her report and the artists for their testimonials. She also thanked the staff for their on-going hard work. She then called for a motion to adjourn from the floor.

Motion to Adjourn – Sarah Crawford, Seconder – Sarah Moran