THE RASC WINNIPEG CENTRE
COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of the council of RASC Winnipeg Centre held via Zoom on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Present: gAIL Wise, Wing Kwong, Mark Irvine, Dennis Lyons, Marc Sarrasin, James Fast, Ed Wright, Daemon Nightshade, Judy Anderson
Regrets: Rhianna Cohen
Absent:

1. **Call to Order; Welcome and Land Acknowledgement** Mark
2. **Adoption of Agenda and Minutes** Mark

MOTION James moved and Judy seconded approval of the agenda PASSED

- Minutes – went to everyone on Council.

MOTION Judy moved and Gail seconded that the draft minutes from Judy be adopted PASSED

- Mark: Ed Wright has volunteered to take the role of the Secretary. He volunteered to take the role until March and then he will decide if wanting to be elected at that time.

MOTION James moved and Judy seconded for Ed to be Secretary until AGM. CARRIED

3. Committee Business Reports

a. Finance Committee & Budget 2026 James

- Mark: There was a lot of activity in November. Thanks to James for completing the reports. James: Set up a new asset for the new A/V equipment. (James shared his screen and described the Excel version of the B/S, cash flow, expenses, and revenues.) These are the transactions on the Visa card. $13,274 in the bank. There are GICs. Here are the transactions for the SWSP. Here is the assets tab. All of the A/V equipment received. Rhianna set up the laptops. Could use for tomorrow's meeting potentially. The Visa balance tab. This shows the Visa balance as a liability including the T4K purchases. The Visa purchases happened after the cutoff date so won't appear until January bill. The Visa balance will come out in January. The membership dues are at $4,487 to end of November, budgeted at $5K for the full year, should be close. Mark and Mike Karakas and I will clean up the assets. For example, the loaner scopes might get reclassified. Mark: The SWSP fund reflects the profit from last year. James: Yes, this is a separate account in our accounting software. The SWSP fund is sitting at $4,066. In last month's report it was $2,800. The SWSP revenue and expenses are now zeroed out because the net was transferred into the fund. Mark: We can go over the history to see the SWSP transactions, just the balances transferred. James: The Bank Rec files shows what is in the acting software versus what is in the bank. There is a discrepancy of just $20 between the bank acct and the GL balance. The difference is a $20 cheque to Judy.

MOTION James moved and Marc seconded to accept the financial statements ADOPTED

- James: It was quite an exciting month with buying all of the equipment. Judy: It was very professional. Ed: Budget 2026, there was a negative month.
- James: (Displayed the budget on screen.) Note that revenue budget is $2300 for SWSP, same for here. In expenses we zero that out, profits go to SWSP fund. Overall shortfall of $800, which is roughly same as the SWSP profit. Costs creeping up are insurance for Glenlea since COVID, will work with the broker next year to evaluate to see if under or over insured, this year $824 for insurance which was significant increase from $787 in 2024. It would be $875 next year. Cloud services are also increasing to $800. It consists of $229 to Zoom, Groups.io $322, and then web hosting for US$622 amortized over 3 years for a total of $900. We need to work on getting this into a balanced budget. Can we reduce insurance fees, we have Avion credits of $300+ to offset banking fees, and the SWSP profit. There is a philosophy to not fund centre ops with SWSP, and I agree personally. However, we have been relying on those funds to balance our budgets. Mark: Yes previous version so for the budget we did not have SWSP zeroed out. Last year SWSP was in the budget which was incorrect. Mark: Can increase revenue or decrease expenses. The expenses are pretty tight. (James walked through the revenue items including the membership fees ($5,000), we have more members than last year so might be realistic, publications ($0), calendars in publications at $25 should cover costs, donations ($200 but received $37 this year), events (OTM Daycare), investment income to be lower (Interest revenue is lower because $10K GIC was cashed in and the int rates are down. $325 in interest in 2026.)) Judy: Some people think we have excessive equipment at Glenlea.
- Dennis: You have control over the membership fee. Centre has not changed for years. You could adjust that. Also, where are the observatory repairs expenses? Mark: This is expense budget, not capital. Dennis: Should show the Observatory capital as separate item. You should mention that to the membership. Mark: Yes, it should be noted. We need a capital budget to go to long-term assets perhaps in a separate schedule. Dennis: Hopefully it is not delayed again. What about the revenue from grants from the G of M? James: We were reimbursed in 2024 for the expenses that we incurred. Mark: Those were expenses, not improvements. For the Observatory remediation that would be a capital. The capital is major improvements. And yes we should be transparent with the Centre. James: We will take that away.
- Wing: We could do a fund raising dinner in 2026. Mark: We would need to decide if we want to get into the habit of fund raising. Wing: There are many organizations that do this. James: It would be funding operations. Mark: It would be a strategy to employ, are we willing to do that? Wing: I disagree. We could do it once to see how it goes. Mark: To have a fund raising dinner to support the demands of the centre would mean every year we need to do a fund-raising dinner. As a long-term thought, if we decide to do fund-raising this becomes an income stream that we depend upon. Wing: There are way smaller organizations that do this every year to raise $1,000s. James: We want to be cautious of relying on that funding to balance the budget. We could have a fund raiser for specific initiatives, but not to balance our budget. Mark: It is not right or wrong, but it would be a strategy to deploy that we would come to depend upon. Are we willing to

do that? Wing: I am for one willing to do it. James: I will put that to Misc income. James: We would need $800 revenue from that to not lose money. I am more comfortable doing a fund raiser, maybe $8K, that would go to a special fund that we would not rely on. Ed: Up until now we were not willing to fund it for regular expenses. Could increase the membership fee as Dennis mentioned. We have about 250 members. James: Yes, we could increase the membership fee from $111. Ed: How many dollars per member? Marc: Currently the Centre fee is $23 per member. Ed: So increase by $4 per member, so $4 times 200 members is $800. If the organization has not increased its fee in years, it is quite justifiable. I don't think there is a lot of elasticity there at $4 per year, we would not lose a lot. The discussions we have been having were that if it is a capital program item, then we do fund raising for it. But if it is ongoing operations, then not so easy to justify. In my mind the organization should have the baseline revenue to cover the baseline operations of the organization. Mark: We should see when the last was that the fees were increased. James: I have been paying from $86 in 2020 up to $111 this year, but that is all national. Mark: We would need to talk to the membership, would say we will get a deficit without raising, we would not even be raising at inflation. We need to stay in line with the other centres and the economy. We are way below inflation.

- Mark: Other options were cloud services and the SWSP. James: For cloud, budgeting $800 for next year. Between Facebook, website, and groups.io, Is the website worth $207 / year for three years? Mark: We are committed for the next 3 years. Wing: I don't think we should shut down the website, terrible idea. Facebook is getting less popular by the day, a lot of people are not using it. The website is how the world finds us. James: The Website is $200 per year with the exchange rate. Mark: Groups.io and Zoom are mandatory. Marc: It is the content on the website that is worth preserving, talks about our history as a centre. We could look at other website providers for a better rate. So just finding a cheaper web hosting. All of the email addresses are included under SiteGround. Could look at this in the future. James: We could check into MS Teams. We would have to check with Rhianna on whether MS Teams included. Judy: Likely we would be limited in audience size. Selling equipment would generate revenue for one year. But we have to declare that we must budget money for Glenlea repairs, and we need to show the deficit in the budget. **ACTION FinComm to investigate how to raise the monthly fee through National**.
- James: We could use SWSP to fund operations for the centre. We could use SWSP profits to fund operations of the Centre. Mark: We would have to decide what to do with the surplus, for example next year could allow $800 to come from SWSP, or we could say none to be taken. Ed: There was a surplus and money in the bank. James: Yes, there is a surplus and it was kept in the SWSP fund. Mark: About $2,000 was taken in from the SWSP which was about 5 years of profits. Each year we can say d do we preserve it or not, say as a cushion. gAIL: Could justify it by saying it is for the public events that we get the park for free. We could what we would have charged for the public events and stick into the general fund. Mark: Yes but we have a reciprocal arrangement with the park for its use. Wing: We could always raise the fee for the SWSP by $10 per person, so 50 attendees would be $500. Judy: When we took SWSP organizing into Council, there was a commitment that SWSP would be separate and self sufficient. So, the previous organizers would significantly object. I would rather the centre came up with

other ideas to balance the budget. We could ask about raising the rate and have a fund-raising event. All of our costs have gone up. It has been an unusual year with all the purchases. Just state the obvious to everyone who is a member. They get value for their money. The council and volunteers work hard. We could compare with fees charged by other centres. James: We are amongst the lowest cost. Mark: I think it is palatable. But not do it every year. There will be people who will complain. Other things that we were going to look at. The biggest thing that we have is the observatory. If it burned to the ground, would we self-insure on it? Liability is the biggest issue. Dennis: Be aware that National does not cover Officers. Mark: That is a separate policy. Dennis: Was there any other cap expenditure planned for SWSP? Judy: have not planned anything though a shed was suggested for storage, but no traction. Dennis: In the past there was $1,000 budgeted for seed money for SWSP with intent it never makes a profit. So, from a budget with seed money. If there is a surplus above the $1,000 float, a decision can be made to transfer that into general revenues. Mark: I remember the float. We offset the SWSP costs by the end of the couple of months, normally not relying on the seed money. The CC has a $2K limit that can be used for that plus we have cash. We did buy a grill. We could say there is a max to have in the fund. If no capital expenditure, then transfer to general revenue. Daemon: I agree with Judy that there was promise money not going into general revenue. If did that would create bad will. Also, in past years had trouble keeping the chair. Have we looked at doing merchandise, e.g., T-Shirts? Mark: We have some confidence that the SWSP revenue will occur. We would need a plan to do the merchandise sales, get the track record. Daemon: The worry I have is if the merch turns into a liability. Dennis: We had an agreement with a place to manufacture goods as orders placed. It was a testbed. It turns out we had limited demand. You could promote that agreement. Some product was nice and some not so good. Likely would not see much difference today. Wing: The SWSP is a private member's event. It is a huge revenue generator. What if we did a star party for the public. That could be a greater potential. Mark: I am not against these ideas but should we put them into the budget, because we don't know if they will pan out. We don't want to rely on them. Wing: We need to put a plan together. Mark: But not budget for them. It is risky to rely on fundraising because can disappear in a flash. James: We currently have 217 active members plus 16 to pay in next 30 days. For the $800 difference, would need to increase by $3.43 per member. That would take it to $115. Mark: **ACTION FinComm to take it away**. Marc: We would not be raising the fees too often. Mark: So, for now we are looking at a deficit. If we are increasing the rate, we would need to disclose before the AGM. Can say have not had a fee increase in so many years. Bring forward in January meeting. No increase in 10 years, and one of the lowest rates in all centres today. Need to bring back to next Council meeting. Not sure that we need consensus from the membership.

- Daemon: Is National increasing its rates this year and if so, how much? Dennis: Cannot reveal until it goes through National Council. Mark: We can plan for the February membership meeting. Dennis: Our membership since 2020 was about 190 and it has gone. We are one of the few that has not lost members with fee increases. Mark: Yes, we have to be prepared for some people leaving. January might be too early, but we can

tentatively plan for that. Mark: We do not need a motion to pass the budget. We have a deficit, but we will have a plan to make the budget zero.

b. Observatory Committee Ed

- Ed: Have had the ongoing "ghost in the machine" issue. It wipes out half of the electrical in the buildings. The U of M Operations people did attend the site on Nov 20 and replaced the connectors at the hydro pole. Mark: They did everything outside the building. Might not have confirmed that the power is back on. They did not do it when I was there. They needed the bucket truck. We have not confirmed that the power is back on inside the building. If we still have power in the buildings, the change they made might have corrected the issue. Ed: Yes, the theory is that this was caused by corrosion in the connectors. They connect Al to Cu. The gel that is used can dry out over the years and decades and you can get an open circuit. I have not been out there yet to check the power.
- Ed: We did not get much done on the build for this year for remediating the flood damage. We did some planning. I believe that we will need a contractor to come in to raies the building. Then the 2x6 plates at the bottom of the walls need to be replaced. The skirting also needs to be replaced. We did not do well working with the contractors this year. It was an issue of workload. Need to take another crack at at that next year to work with the contractors sooner than later. We need to get a build plan together for 2026. Hopefully in the next couple of months need to have a couple of committee meetings.

4. **Member Meeting schedule**, meeting agenda (Judy A.)

a. (skipped)

5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

b. Calendar deficit recovery Mark
   a. Mark: Had deficit this year. Sold for $15. Cost was actually $20. Where possible asking folks to fill the gap to help the Centre out. Our stewardship of them will be stronger next year.

c. Telescopes for Kids - update Judy
   a. Wing: We are doing 5 presentations tomorrow to children. We finally got a hold of Shya who is 15 yrs old and she confirmed will be there. One is confirmed for Saturday at 11:30 a.m., and the last not confirmed. (The discussion continued on the various children, and the scopes and binoculars involved.) Wing: The 6" Dob goes to the sisters. The others get the new scopes. I will bring Stan's donated binos. We need a laser collimator for all of the scopes. James to bring the 5 collimators and the 5 telescopes.

d. Expired member notifications update James
   a. James: The expired members, after sending that out we had one person unsubscribe from groups.io. Mark: Some people had already paid but not cleared through POS system in National. There have been POS issues with National.

e. Glenlea Anniversary 2026 update – planning Wing
   a. Wing: I want to ask the membership what they want to do through a survey. For a fund-raising dinner there are three venues: Eastview Church (liquor not allowed), the Planetarium conference room, or the Degrees Diner at UMSU. Degrees is run by the students' union. I contacted the manager at Degrees. It fits 100 people comfortably.

Full kitchen, licensed (could do a cash bar), they have a balcony that could be used for scopes. Want to set up the three options and do a survey as well. Mark: Call it a *celebration dinner* rather than a fund-raising dinner. If we raise funds great, but purpose is the celebration.

f. Green Laser Pointer training – update, another session? Dennis
   a. Dennis: Will update the training program this weekend. Then tentatively plan for one on Dec 17, 7:00 local time. Put it in your announcements. I need to update it. People would need to email me. Mark: I might send it to the main membership email group as well.

g. Update – Technology Committee James
   a. James: The equipment is all purchased. The laptops are back from Rhianna so office software is all installed. Kris is out of commission for a little while. We would like to do a trial run separate from a meeting night. I can bring laptops to test tomorrow, but would be the first time for that. Judy has the equipment for tomorrow. **ACTION Ed to see if Judy needs Ed to pick up the equipment**.

h. **Year end celebration - Pot Luck Mark**
   a. Mark: Sat Jan 10 is tentative. Wing: I will confirm with the Launch Coworking people. It will be at the Exchange. Mark: Please let me know for sure once you know. Wing: I can confirm before tomorrow's meeting.

6. New Business.

- **Spring Tune up / Outreach James**
  - East view Community Church – James: Will consider doing a hybrid, members only what we have done in the past and then a scope showcase for the public. It makes it a very long day. I have reserved the church from 2:00 to 10:00 on Mar 28. Will continue discussing.

7. Round Table discussion – General

- Marc:
  - Will come tomorrow early as well to help set up.
  - About the website, let's talk at next meeting.
- Wing: Because we have one more recipient for T4K, asked Ivan Yuen to come. He has agreed to come to help.
- Dennis: Is the church outside the 10 km radius. James: It is not. Dennis: So you cannot use the green laser. Dec 13 for the MON. James: Yes it is advertised that way.
- Daemon: For next month's meeting agenda, need to vote on a new chair for the SWSP, whether me or somebody else. Sure, I am willing to stand.
- Dennis: With the resignation, you have an open director's position. The BOD needs to decide whether filling that position and appointing. You need to discuss for the minutes. You can recruit and appoint or delay until the AGM. It would be a director. Mark: For now, we need to look at the NomComm. We need a potential nominating committee. Ed: We need another director. (They go to the Cos Office report.) Mark: I will take away to see who can go on the NomComm for the next meeting.
- Ed: Scott had the annual activities list. Should follow that close to the AGM.
- Wing: Several members looking for keys to the warm room. Do we have a key for the warm room? Mark: Stan has them. Send him a note.

8. MOTION to adjourn – Moved by James.

NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL – THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

Zoom meeting Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88003372631?pwd=mWVijapQYA19utuVdFVFm3Gxvq9m6S.1