RASC WINNIPEG CENTRE COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the council of RASC Winnipeg Centre held via Zoom on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Daemon Nightshade, Marc Sarrasin, Wing Kwong, Dennis Lyons, Stan Runge, Judy Anderson, Ed Wright, Kamala Kodi, Bryan Stach, Mark Irvine,

REGRETS: Mike Karakas, Scott Young, Michelle Boyce

1. Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement — Dennis
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2. Welcome and Introductions — All
3. Adoption of Agenda — Dennis
4. Adoption of previous minutes — Ed
   - Will consider them in the next meeting as people haven't had a chance to review. Ed: They were sent out Sunday evening 9:36 p.m.
5. Financial Report — Mark
   - Mark: No responses yet. Basically nearly achieved our target in membership revenues, nearly steady numbers. There is a small surplus but missing the bill for the officers and directors liability insurance. Dennis: I contacted the insurance broker again. We need to get our own officers insurance, we have not had this in the past. We have to get our own rather than it being distributed across Centres by a single account. Quan is the insurer (same as for site insurance). We do not have a bill or invoice yet. The surplus could be wiped out. We have gone a full year without insurance. The bill, when we get it, will go to 2024 budget item.
   - There was no miscellaneous revenue this year. (Previous year's had miscellaneous revenue, but we have better line items this year to classify revenue.) For the expenses for the year, outliers were the observatory and the outreach for replenishment of the materials like moon maps, glasses, and planispheres. Only used 100 of the eclipse glasses. Maybe defer more than ½ to next year. Have not done any of the accruals yet. Some income will affected by depreciation. Will add depreciation expense against facilities and assets that will eliminate the income line, as it is a non-cash entry. Depreciation is a necessity to be technically compliant with GAAP. It is not a reserve that can be spent, as it is depleted value of assets. However, we still have a cash surplus. We will have the first tax returns due this coming year. Have budgeted a bit more money for the accounting at year-end for our first filing at year end. I put $200 in for tax return processing. Mark has some professional friends who may or may not charge for advice. It was estimated as $250 for the audit in 2024 fiscal year. Forecast to lose $610 this year, but potentially we are $1,000 flush on the budget due to the $500 on the sale of glasses plus the change to not selling calendars. In 2023, we have not purchased any calendars, so we won't have the expense (or revenue) in 2024. Calendars are still available from National.
   - Dennis: Need a slide on the budget for next year. Mark: Has anybody asked about calendars. Dennis: No, just Abdul. They can buy from National. Daemon: Remember that about 50 glasses were given out. So about 859 remain in stock. Mark: Will therefore change the deferral of costs until next year.

- Ed: The $1,000 budgeted for D&O liability expense? Dennis: Could be realistic. It was $600 a few years ago.
- Ed: Why is depreciation so high? Telescopes don't appreciate that quickly and observatory has been there quite a while. Mark: Will be a proportion of what is in assets. $96K worth. The observatory life of 30 years, LX200, sound system, … it goes from the current market value. Same with the loaner scopes. We have to pick a reasonable period. We use the capital cost allowance rates for tax returns which the government accepts.
- Kamala: Registering with federal? Dennis: Later in the agenda.
- Judy: The $325 for the donated scope? Mark: That went into the fund for scopes for kids. It does not go into revenue. Also $40 donated at SWSP for Scopes for Kids. (This is still in the Scopes for Kids line item for November report, and is an as-yet uncashed cheque for postage for the donor scopes.)

6. Committee Work Reports
   a. Policies and Procedures Manual — Dennis – nothing yet
   b. Observatory Committee — Michelle/Scott – neither present
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   c. Member Meeting — Judy
      - Judy: Gail on Caprine and Ovine, then Bryan for What's Up, Danielle for What's New. Ron Breker cancelled due to death in the family. Looked on IPhys.com, Dr Dale Frail, "The Dog that didn't bark in the night".
   d. Finance Committee E Transfers, Budget Slide — Mark Irvine
      - Dennis: Mark had some ideas to use e-transfers. Ed not supportive. Realize that there is some risk. Mark: I turned it off. Dennis: Feel it is simpler if we can get away from cheques. Give back to Mark to discuss on the Finance Comm. Judy: Maybe could circulate an e-transfer by council. Judy: Approved expenses could be paid by e-transfer once approved by Council or the Executive. Ed: There is a dual signature required now for a cheque, but for an e-transfer it is possible by one person, so we need to be sure that in future this decision is sustainable. Mark: There are two types of controls: 1) preventative and 2) detective. Preventive controls restricts a mistake from happening, and detective controls to cheque for errors/discrepancies. We do not have either. If we waited for the annual audit, a lot of money could go missing. In the cases of fraud the best people are in the middle of it. The best path is to make an error or inappropriate action as very, very difficult. I have no concern about me managing it, but I am not comfortable of having that ability. The process would be to get permission from the executive. Dennis: Take it back to the finance committee. Other ways to put controls on like max amount and max transfers per month. Have the committee come back with 2 to 3 recommendations for Council. Mark: No problem.
   e. SWSP — Dennis
      - Dennis: Any names or ideas? (no response) Judy: Lets ask for volunteers at the meeting. Dennis: Silvia had no ideas for the chair. We need a chair. Will ask for volunteers again at the meeting.
   f. Explore the Universe — Stan
      - Stan: Nothing at this time.
   g. Eclipse 2024 — All
      - Dennis: Scott will be doing something. Should we do a joint event? Kamala: I will volunteer for an event to help Scott.

h. Fundraising — Daemon
- Wing: I will volunteer for that. Dennis: Need to have Wing.

MOTION Daemon moved and Ed seconded to appoint Wing as chair of the Fundraising Committee. PASSED

- Dennis: Be aware it is not a Council member's role to chair a committee. We have a lot to do, we got incorporated, want to ensure you know is not a normal expectation. We should expect a volunteer from outside Council, so Council members can continue to do the required business.

7. Business Arising
   a. Seasonal potluck — All
      - Judy: Will take place January 20, 2024 at Launch Co-Working. There is lots of parking (especially at back of building. Tables and chairs are on wheels to accommodate people collecting for small conversations, and setting up a table of food that people can reach. There is a coffee maker, but will bring our own for hot water. Wing is donating cocktails until his stock runs out. There will be food warmer trays, and people should bring their own wine/beer, etc., and serving implements. We will need to buy glasses and paper plates, napkins, as usual. People should bring recent or favourite images from astrophotography or of events, to put on a computer and project to the group. Looks like a good location that will work and fit our needs (even more than we might have had in someone's house).
      - Wing: Could take opportunity to do some internal fundraising, such as 50:50 and would need a license along with a liquor permit. Wing will coordinate that with the Launch Co-Working owner, who is going to register the facility with Liquor and Lotteries, so we can get a liquor permit. We need to approve the cost of the permit for Social Occasion Permit (Dennis looks this up on MLLC website, covering liquor and raffles – cost needs to be determined). Mark: Will we have to be registered as a renter for purposes of insurance coverage on Launch Co-Working's insurance as Wing is a member. Daemon: I have run dozens of events at bars and other places, and the site will cover that cost.

MOTION Dennis moved and Daemon seconded to spend up to $200 on the Social Occasion permit for the Jan 20 event. PASSED

      - Wing will fill out the application for the permit. Dennis will put a slide into the RASC meeting if we have the insurance.
      - Dennis: Somebody to send a slide for Friday's meeting. Wing: It would Wing renting the facility.

        Launch Coworking Space - Southside
        Suite 200 - 1460 Chevrier Blvd
        Winnipeg MB, Canada
        R3T 1Y6

   b. Telescopes for Kids — Scott
      - Dennis: Pushing off to the new year. Kamala: Was discussing with Scott how to do fund raising. Hopefully will have something to share.
      - Sale of donated Meade scope – person from New Brunswick bought it and had no problem with the price asked on Kijiji, or with covering the cost of postage
   c. NCC — Dennis/Silvia
      - Dennis: Moving ahead
   d. Glenlea, cleanup, damage repair — Ed

- Ed: Received an email from Wayne Kuzak, of the EMO, requesting financial information (Mark provided receipts, cheques, etc.) and information on property tax bill (although most of the property is tax exempt, Judy retrieved the bill from University of Manitoba). Ed sent out a report to Council by email, with some background. Anticipating we will not see money before the end of 2023.
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e. Spruce Woods gift to casino $180 plus tax Dennis
   - Dennis: Emails went dead. Will leave there until the end of the year.
f. Website – Marc
   - Marc will Remove Russell and Abdul as moderators, and revise Council; change password so legacy users cannot enter; add Mark Irvine as Treasurer.
   - Marc: Added minutes for October. Also added the members who are new but a lot of work because people changed their names. We currently have 244 members including 213 paid members, 18 lapsed members, and 13 in the grace period.
   - Bryan: I can post pictures in Facebook. Dennis: Also, you could use the General Forum or you could start a Picture Forum. Bryan: For example, Boston Pizza and SWSP pictures.
g. Strategic Plan/Bylaws Dennis
   - Dennis: Nothing moved on that yet.
h. Scope for sale Judy
   - Judy: It was listed high, no bids, then got help on Kijij, sold for $325 including all accessories. Buyer was from New Brunswick. He had had one before. He paid the postage.
i. Quilak award Wilfred Buck Dennis
   - Dennis: Contacted Silvia. She knows where he lives. It is a distinguished award for public education in astronomy. He is from Opaskiiak Cree in the Pas.
j. NC Feedback Dennis
   - Dennis: Forwarded out the financials. Things are improving. CRA released the last bit of money, $1.5M of which $1.25M already spent. There was recognition that things got out of hand. Originally expected 330K but now about 280K deficit. Next year's budget for National will still be a deficit year, but the Board anticipates that they will bring in a balanced budget in 2025. Their goal is to by the end of 2024 that it will be a break-even budget. There is nowhere else to cut so they can only increase the revenue. The fiscal year for National is calendar year. Financials have to be prepared for board review by end of June. The current Board and the current Executive Director, Jenna, are doing a good job.
   - You should have the GA handbook by now.
   - Dennis: I am part of a group of people looking at where a digital book would be better, whether it has a cost benefit. First question is whether people are even using it. If not then no reason to produce it. The group will consider other options and whether there's a cost-benefit to changing the way it is produced and delivered. About half the people opened it. The paper is lighter and saved on shipping. 4,200 books mailed out to members. This is an example where Jenna made a decision.
   - The general trend in memberships is up. Long-term members generally renew in November. 4,850 members in National. People left and then came in. We are about where we always are. They make about $50K on US sales as well. The handbook costs

$4.00 to print and $12.00 to mail out. This is one part of why member fees don't offset the costs. The move is about does it serve all of the membership. Talked about the format of it. Nobody wants to get rid of it or digitize it right off the hop. If only the "old-timers" use it while younger people go online, then RASC can anticipate that the use of the Handbook will wane as the younger members age. Could probably have 100 questions on the survey but need to keep to 4 questions. Can ask how they read. The younger the person the more likely online. Also do we teach people what is in the handbook.

- Talked about NOVA program and the Eclipse update on the YouTube channel.
- The GA is May 4 and 5. The RASC National AGM is on June 22, 2024. Were told to not interfere with St Jean Baptiste.

k. Officers and Directors Insurance — Dennis

- Dennis: Still waiting on this, email sent to Kwon, the broker for National.

l. Award Nominations — All

- Dennis: National awards need nomination very soon. If anybody else's ideas, did we have anyone to nominate. Any member to recognize this year? Forward a nomination. Dennis: Put together a list of members. Contact Marc for the list. Bryan: Also a list of the presidents. Stan: Wants to explain to newer members of Council that the National Service award is for someone who has done something very significant for the Centre. It is very selective. Silvia got hers last year for the 15+ years of running SWSP. Send nominations to Dennis for National.
- Dennis: We also have club awards which might be appropriate. We also have an achievement award. Bryan: Could give Mike Karakas an award for service since he is not on council next year. Also could acknowledge older members with an award for 25, 30, 40+ year members. Dennis: Okay Mike Karakas for the Service Award. Judy: Mike could be better to win the Achievement award for his Planetary Photography. Dennis: You could check on the committees. Cannot nominate someone on council. Danielle Pahoud might be an option. So Danielle for service and Mike for achievement. Stan: People should write a brief note to identify why they select certain people.

m. Charity donations (Brevity) — All

- Dennis: Kamala asked about this. Kamala's company, via "Brevity", would give a donation to us as a registered charity. I submitted an application. About 6 or 7 RASC organizations are on there. It has brought up the discussion about … in theory any of us could donate through this. Two questions: 1) should we advertise this. Wing: Why wouldn't we do it. Judy: We would go to the members on whether to become a charitable organization. We need to ensure not encumbering. Dennis: that was the second question. Daemon: There is something in effect with National RASC, and as a government employee he can register to give a monthly amount to National RASC as a Charitable organization. Is good with Brevity as long as not an exorbitant amount. Kamala: I do see a lot of Centres for RASC, but Winnipeg is not there. Sometimes they can donate to, but must be a registered charity.
- Ed: Canada Life has a similar program that requires that we be a registered charity. Cannot risk again asking National to accept a donation and pass it onward to the Centre. Also noted that Daemon put together a proposal on fundraising policy for discussion.
- Wing: The U of M alumni relations dept has used Brevity. There are many people who can tell pros and cons of working with that service. There is also the RASC St Johns College fund that was used to pay for our meeting room. See >>

https://give.umanitoba.ca/St-Johns-College-RASC. It has about $3,300 used for the room reservation. There are no terms of reference. It goes to St. Johns College main account. It goes to the U of M St. Johns College. Judy: We had a practice of donating $200 to $300 per year. That was in recognition of the meeting space. We should give them another donation.

MOTION Judy moved and Stan seconded that Winnipeg donate $300 to St John's College. CARRIED

- Dennis: Second part is finance committee to look at becoming charity entity. Wing will look at information on Brevity.

n. French Language school request — All
- Dennis: Had a request. Marc Sarasin was one of the people suggested, and Gil Raineault. Kamala: I could coordinate, but problem in the winter. Dennis: Okay will let Kamala do it. Kamala: Do we charge? Dennis: Yes, that was agreed at Council. It should be a $100 charge.

o. Workshop Proposal — Stan
- Stan: We should formalize the workshop concept, maybe 4 per year, focused topic/idea, so the topic and anticipated audience, schedule, and the presenter are provided to members. Only so many workshops a year. Three hours minimum, similar to what Darren had done. His was very good and more formalized. Who trying to reach and who working on it. Sent off to Council. waiting to hear from Michelle. Wing: The location is not an issue, the location being part of Launch Coworking. It is the outline of the workshop. Stan: My document was saying certain things to write up and a timeframe, and the rest is open for discussion. Dennis: I read it and liked it. Michelle needs to put the proposal. Needs to be soon because Wing needs to book the facility. Stan: If nothing by Friday, then into February. Wing: Something in February would be reasonable. Judy: I thought this was to be coordinated by Observatory Committee. Stan: It is not really an Observatory Committee issue. I volunteered to take a lead role for this. They have enough on their plate. We will approve it (likely by email); we're vetting that a proposal to RASC Winnipeg Centre is meeting the expectations with what we're trying to do.

p. AGM — Dennis
- Dennis: This is a placeholder. Next meeting to formalize this. AGM has president's report, treasurer's report, Ed: next council? Dennis: He has everything for the AGM. The AGM is not a large event. Will be Jan 12.

q. Elections/Recruiting — Dennis/Bryuan/Stan
- Bryan: Only 3 positions open. Mike K is not renewing. Mike's position. Ed: There are five existing positions that need to be voted on:
    - Mike Karakas
    - Marc Sarrasin
    - Russell Brown
    - Michelle Boyce
    - Scott Young
- Judy: Scott, Michelle, and Marc will need to be asked if they will stand for re-election (all can go for a second term). Kamala will continue to be outreach coordinator. Dennis: Stan is willing to work with Bryan on this; indicates it needs to be done on paper. Michele and Scott can renew. So, need a nomination for at least one more position.

Dennis: Will mention in the next meeting. So hopefully 3 to renew, and two new (one will be nominated for Wing).

r. Groups.io — Mark S.
   - Marc: Sharing screen. Filtered moderators and owners. Dennis: The reason we did this was to keep the send to the whole group to yourself and the executive. Changing the password for the RASC account and adding Wing.

s. Wild Outside — Daemon
   - Daemon: This is a group with Canadian Wildlife. They were on vacation, looking on Jan 19 before the potluck. Will look for volunteers. Mention at the meeting as well. Are we still charging other non-profits as well? Dennis: We are asking them for $100. Kamala: $100 for 2 – 3 hours and more than that is $200. Daemon: We are looking at La Barriere Park. An evening event on Friday Jan 19, 2024. Kamala: You will need to rent the park. They will have school insurance. Dennis: Can get from RASC.

8. Round table — All
   - Dennis thanks Wing for agreeing to stand as chair of Fundraising committee.
   - Ed: Just wondering about organizing the technology for the meeting this Friday. Dennis: Scott has not said he cannot come.
9. Next Meeting, Monday January 2, 8? 2024, 7 PM
   - Dennis: Let's make Jan 8 the next meeting.
10. Adjourn — 9:00 PM

	Name	Signature	Date
Secretary	Ed Wright		