

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 2024
9:00 a.m. -12:00 a.m. (EST)
Zoom Video Conference

ATTENDANCE

Present:	Peter Nitschke, R.P.F.	President
	Douglas Reynolds	Public Councillor
	David Goldsmith	Public Councillor
	Janice Tiedje	Public Councillor
	Brandon Williamson, Associate. R.P.F.	SW Councillor
	Lacey Rose, R.P.F.	Vice-President
	Chris McDonell, R.P.F.	Past-President
	Wendy LeClair R.P. F.	NE Councillor
	Maegan Ciurko, R.P.F.	CW Councillor
	Sally Krigstin	Public Councillor
	Dayna Griffiths, R.P.F.	NW Councillor
Absent:	Ritikaa Gupta, R.P.F.	CE Councillor
	Malcolm Cockwell, R.P.F.	SE Councillor
Staff:	Louise Simpson	Executive Director and Associate Registrar
	Fred Pinto, R.P.F.	Registrar
	Brittany Tartaglia	Assistant Registration Manager
	Priscilla Doyle	Office and Registration Coordinator
Guest:	Larry McDermott	Former Public Councillor, for item 1 a. only

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. Opening Remarks

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- Peter Nitschke called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting, including former Public Member, Larry McDermott.
 - Peter Nitschke, which was echoed by other Councillors, thanked Mr. McDermott for his service since 2016 on Council as well as his service on the Equity Inclusion Task Team and his role in helping establish the new OPFA Indigenous Knowledge Standard.
 - Mr. McDermott thanked Council and left the meeting.

b. Record Attendance and Confirmation of Quorum

- The President determined that a quorum had been reached and the meeting could proceed.

c. Conflict of Interest Declaration

- The President asked that anyone with a conflict of interest regarding any item on the agenda please declare it.
- There was none.

d. Other Business Items

- The President asked if there was any other business or if anyone wished to bring an information item into the discussion items.
- An update on registrant renewal was added to the agenda.

e. Finalize and Approve the Agenda

- **Motion:** That the agenda is accepted as amended. LeClair and Tiedje
- **All in favour. Carried.**

f. Approve the minutes of September 17, 2024

- A revised draft (version 4) of the minutes were sent to Council after the initial agenda and materials were circulated.
- **Motion:** That the minutes of the September 17, 2024 meeting are accepted as circulated and will be made accessible to members on the website. Reynolds and Williamson.

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- **All in favour. Carried.**

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Financial Update for the Current Fiscal Year

- Led by Peter Nitschke, Louise Simpson and Fred Pinto.
- Council was provided with the Financial Statements as of October 31, 2024.
- Signing authority for the various financial institutions is being done to give Louise Simpson signing authority.
- Revenue from membership fees and conference registration has increased. The treasury fund, which is used to manage cash flow, has also had better returns.
- Staff salaries, annual conference expenses, and KPMG (financial auditors) expenses have increased. Changes to the generally accepted accounting principles now require more rigor, increasing the cost of the financial audit.
- An \$80,000 surplus has been estimated; the true amount will be determined by the auditors. The auditors will revise expenses and revenue to reflect the correct fiscal year in which they occur.

b. Reserve Fund Guideline

- Led by Peter Nitschke and Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a revision of the Reserve Fund Guideline.
- The Reserve Fund Policy was revised and renamed a guideline by the Finance Committee because the committee felt it was too prescriptive.
- **Motion:** That the existing Reserve Fund Policy is repealed, and the Reserve Fund Guideline is approved as circulated. LeClair and McDonell.
- **All in favour. Carried.**

c. Work Plan 2023-2024 Summary

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a summary of the 2023-2024 Work Plan and a link to the full 2023-2024 Work Plan on Google Drive.
- Louise Simpson reviewed the main aspects of the Work Plan Summary.
- Competency 1 of the OPFA Indigenous Knowledge Standard has been in place for some time. Competency 2 is expected to be ready for use within the next two weeks. Competency 3 should be ready in the spring of 2025.
- The Registrant Survey was completed in August. Louise Simpson will report the result of the survey to Council and Registrants soon.
- The communication materials have been developed for students and those working in allied occupations. A distribution plan is in development and will be completed in the winter of 2024.
- The OPFA Bridge Training modules offered through Lakehead University were removed by the university. The OPFA developed a new forest policy and legislative training course and has made it available to candidates. Staff and volunteers have also created a screening test. To ensure the authenticity of the answers to the test, Fred Pinto and Tom Ratz, R.P.F., also conduct a 15-minute interview with candidates.
- Cybersecurity insurance has been purchased and the insurance provider has conducted an assessment of the OPFA's potential risks. All areas of concern have been identified and resolved. Staff are currently looking for a cybersecurity service provider for 2025.

d. Changes to Legislation

- Led by Louise Simpson and Fred Pinto.

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- Council was provided with a newsletter article published by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) and a verbal update on changes to FARPACTA (Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act) and the OPFA's responses.
 - The Office of the Fairness Commissioner has conducted various reviews and there have been changes to FARPACTA over the past year.
 - The changes affect the data that the OPFA staff must provide in the required annual Fair Registration Practices Report. This requires changes to our database and more staff time. The changes mostly revolve around reporting how long it takes a registrant to be licensed.
 - The OFC has added parameters for the Credential Assessment Process (CAP), such as training for the assessors and an appeal and complaints process.
 - A new requirement means that the OFC must approve OPFA policies for registration.
 - Louise Simpson and Brittany Tartaglia met with the Fairness Commissioner and staff. The OPFA is considered low-risk and has been praised by the OFC for using the Associate Membership category as a stepping stone to Full Membership. The OFC has also commended the OPFA for its Shadow A Forester Program. Both of these items were featured in the October OFC newsletter.
 - Bill 228, Resource Management and Safety Act is an omnibus bill that covers changes to the Forest Fires Prevention Act and the Surveyors Act among other Acts
 - Changes to the Surveyors Act will exclude professional foresters from the act. The new Surveyors Act has also removed the requirement that registrants must approve Bylaw changes

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- Changes to the Forest Fires Prevention Act will require municipalities to have a wildland fire management plan in place and include forest fire prevention measures.

e. Bylaw Revision

- Led by Peter Nitschke and Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with the Executive Committee's recommendations on whether changes to Article 6.3 of the Bylaw are required, the appointment of the President & Vice-President, and the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard.
- Louise Simpson reviewed each suggested change which Council discussed and suggested changes. David Goldsmith and Lacey Rose agreed to work with Louise Simpson to make further revisions for Council to review at their February meeting.

f. Review of the Task Teams, Working Groups & Committees Terms of Reference

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- The Chairs of the various groups were asked to review their Terms of Reference
- Council was provided with the terms of reference of the Finance Committee, Registration Appeal Committee, Human Resources Committee, Nominating Committee, Editorial Board Working Group, Social Media Working Group, Annual Conference Working Group, and the Professional Networking Task Team.
- These Terms of Reference were also available for review on November 18 on Google Drive.
- **Motion:** That the Terms of Reference of the Finance Committee, Registration Appeal Committee, Human Resources Committee, Nominating Committee, Editorial Board Working Group, Social Media Working Group, Annual Conference Working Group, and the Professional Networking Task Team and are approved as circulated. Williams and Reynolds
- All in favour. Carried.

g. Statutory Committee Membership 2024-2025

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a proposed motion to approve the members of the statutory committees.
- **Motion:** That membership of the following statutory committees for the 2024-2025 (December 1, 2024, to November 30, 2025) fiscal year is confirmed as:

Registration Committee:

Christine Leduc, R.P.F., Chair
Jim McCready, R.P.F.
Ulf Runesson, R.P.F.
Frank Knaapen, R.P.F.
Andrée Morneault, R.P.F.
Krish Homagain, R.P.F.
Sally Krigstin, Public Councillor
Donna Lacey, Associate R.P.F.
Natasha Machado, R.P.F.
Wendy LeClair, R.P.F., Elected Councillor

Discipline Committee:

Tim Lehman, R.P.F. Chair
Malcolm Cockwell, R.P.F., Elected Councillor
Arben Pustina, R.P.F.
George Graham, R.P.F.
Janice Tiedje, Public Councillor
Douglas Reynolds, Public Councillor

Complaints Committee:

Dave Puttock, R.P.F., Chair
Jeff Barton, R.P.F.
Allan Foley, R.P.F.
Gordon King, R.P.F.
Vacant, Public Councillor
Douglas Reynolds, Public Councillor
Chris McDonell, R.P.F., Past-President
Donna Lacey, Associate R.P.F.
Natasha Machado, R.P.F.
Peter Nitschke, R.P.F., President
Brandon Williamson, Associate R.P.F., Elected Councillor

Executive Committee:

Peter Nitschke, R.P.F., President

Lacey Rose, R.P.F., Vice President

Chris McDonell, R.P.F., Past President

David Goldsmith, Public Councillor

Malcolm Cockwell, R.P.F., Elected Councillor

- Rose and Reynolds.
- **All in favour. Carried.**

h. Working Group, Committee, and Task Team Chairs 2024-2025

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a proposed motion to approve the Chairs of the working groups, committees, and task teams for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- **Motion:** That the Chairs of the following committees, task teams, and working groups are appointed for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (December 1, 2024, to November 30, 2025) and are authorized to confirm and/or recruit membership in accordance with membership criteria in their respective approved Terms of Reference:

Nominating Committee (Past President): Chris McDonell

Registration Appeal Committee (President): Peter Nitschke, R.P.F.

Finance Committee: Malcom Cockwell, R.P.F.

Editorial Board Working Group: Betty van Kerkhof, R.P.F.

2025 Annual Conference Working Group: Arben Pustina, R.P.F. (Co-Chair) and Timea Filer, R.P.F. (Co-Chair)

Social Media Working Group: Ritikaa Gupta, R.P.F.

Human Resources Committee: Chris McDonell, R.P.F.

Professional Networking Task Team: Mark Zhang, R.P.F.

Griffiths and Williamson

- **All in favour. Carried.**

i. Review of Travel Expense Policy

- Led by Louise Simpson.

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- Council was provided with a revised Travel Expense Policy for review and approval.
 - The expense policy will use the CRA (Canada Revenue Agency) Ontario rates.
 - **Motion:** That the revised Travel Expense Policy is approved as circulated. Griffiths and Reynolds.
 - **All in favour. Carried.**

j. Council Corner Article for *The Professional Forester* newsletter

- Led by Louise Simpson and Peter Nitschke.
- Members of Council were asked to volunteer to write Council Corner Articles for *The Professional Forester* newsletter in 2025.
- Louise Simpson will contact Ritikaa Gupta to see if she is willing to submit an article and will contact Dayna Griffiths to confirm for which month she would like to submit an article. Chris McDonnell volunteered to write the December 2025 article leaving one article still to be spoken for.

k. 2025 Annual Conference Update

- Led by Louise Simpson
- The conference will take place in Hamilton on April 8-10.
- The plans for the conference are progressing well, however, the costs are higher than for 2024. The budget is still being developed.

l. Annual Renewal (added to the agenda at the meeting)

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- As of December 2, 195 registrants had not fulfilled their membership requirements, including 103 Full Members, 8

Associate Members, 10 Inactive Members, and 74 Provisional Members.

- The Registrar has approved a policy that if a registrant's cheque and/or reporting was held up by the postal strike, any late fee imposed upon them will be removed if, when it is received, it is postmarked within 14 days of the end the strike.
- A member of the Council raised concern regarding the cost of mailing the renewal materials and asked if it is a requirement that they be sent in paper form or if they can be sent electronically. We introduced paper letters a few years ago because we have found many members are not aware of the 5+ email messages sent annually. Brittany Tartaglia agreed to look into that.
- Louise Simpson expressed disappointment in the number of Provisional Members who have not completed their obligations, as that is stressed in the orientation session (which is optional) for new registrants. Brittany Tartaglia will examine the correlation between those who did or did not attend the session and those who are delinquent in their renewal obligations.

m. Membership Statistics

- Submitted by Louise Simpson. This was brought into the discussion area from the Information Items.
- Council was provided with the membership statistics as of October 31, 2024.
- The number of practising members on the OPFA remained stable, while the forestry regulators in the other provinces have seen membership decline.
- Five Associate Members were approved within the last year, a number that has been stagnant for the last 10 years due to changes in focus and direction for members from non-CFAB accredited programs.

3. INFORMATION ITEMS (not for discussion unless elevated to 2. Discussion Items)

a. Executive Committee Minutes

- Submitted by Louise Simpson.

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- Council was provided with the Executive Committee Minutes of the November 5, 2024, Executive Committee meeting.

b. Council & Executive Committee Meetings 2025

- Submitted by Fred Pinto.
- Council was provided with the Council, Executive Committee and Finance Committee meetings scheduled for 2025 which the Executive Committee reviewed.
- The next scheduled Executive Committee meeting is Tuesday, January 7, the next Finance Committee meeting is Tuesday, January 7, and the next Council meeting is Tuesday, February 4 all via Zoom.

4. Termination of the Meeting

- The President congratulated Louise Simpson on a good first meeting of Council as the Executive Director and thanked Fred and other staff for their work.
- Fred Pinto commended Brittany Tartaglia on engaging students during their recent visit to Lakehead University and for her calibre of work on the OPFA Indigenous Standard.
- The President asked for a motion to terminate the meeting.
- Motion: That the December 3, 2024, Council meeting is terminated. Reynolds and Williamson.
- **All in favour. Carried.**

5. PROVIDED DOCUMENTS

- a. Agenda
- b. Council Meeting Minutes September 17, 2024
- c. Financial Statements as of October 31, 2024
- d. Reserve Fund Guideline
- e. 2023-2024 Work Plan Summary
- f. Office of the Fairness Commissioner Newsletter Article
- g. Proposed Bylaw Changes

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- h.** Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard Implementation Plan
 - i.** Finance Committee Terms of Reference
 - j.** Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference
 - k.** Registration Appeal Committee Terms of Reference
 - l.** Nominating Committee Terms of Reference
 - m.** Editorial Board Working Group Terms of Reference
 - n.** Social Media Working Group Terms of Reference
 - o.** Annual Conference Working Group Terms of Reference
 - p.** Professional Networking Task Team Terms of Reference
 - q.** Motion to approve Statutory Committee Members for 2024-2025
 - r.** Natasha Machado Resume
 - s.** Motion to approve Chairs of the Working Groups, Committees, and Task Teams for 2024-2025
 - t.** Travel Expense Policy
 - u.** List of Council Corner Authors
 - v.** Executive Committee Meeting Minutes November 5, 2024
 - w.** Membership Statistics as of August 31, 2024
 - x.** 2025 Council, Finance & Executive Committee Meeting Dates