

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2025  
9:00 a.m. -12:00 a.m. (EST)  
Zoom Video Conference

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### ATTENDANCE

#### Present:

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
Dayna Griffiths, R.P.F.	NW Councillor
Malcolm Cockwell, R.P.F.	SE Councillor

#### Regrets:

Peter Nitschke, R.P.F.	President
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#### Absent:

Sally Krigstin	Public Councillor
Ritikaa Gupta, R.P.F.	CE 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

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

#### a. Opening Remarks

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- As President Peter Nitschke was away, Vice-President Lacey Rose chaired the meeting. She called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**b. Record Attendance and Confirmation of Quorum**

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

**c. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

- The Vice-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 Vice-President asked if there was any other business or if anyone wished to bring an information item into the discussion items.
- There was no other business.

**e. Finalize and Approve the Agenda**

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

**f. Approve the minutes of December 3, 2024**

- **Motion:** That the minutes of the December 3, 2024, meeting are accepted as circulated and will be made accessible to members on the website. Williamson and Tiedje.
- **All in favour. Carried.**

**2. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Financial Update for the Current Fiscal Year**

- Led by Malcolm Cockwell, Chair of the Finance Committee and Louise Simpson.

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- Council was provided with the financial statements as of November 30, 2024, which are currently being audited, and December 31, 2024.
  - The Finance Committee has met and has no concerns about the financial statements. Based on the unaudited financial statements, there is an approximately \$80,000 surplus, and everything is tracking as expected.
  - Council members have been invited to a portion of the next Finance Committee meeting on March 18, when RBC Dominion Securities will present the year-end results and answer questions about the funds invested with them.

**b. Update on 2023-2024 Financial Audit**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- The financial audit for the fiscal year ending November 30, 2024, is progressing well and is expected to be completed mid-February before the next meeting of the Finance Committee on March 18.
- The audited financial statements will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and then sent to Council via email for approval.

**c. Annual Membership Renewal Update**

- Led by Louise Simpson and Fred Pinto.
- Council was provided with an update on the annual renewal.
- In early December, about 20 percent of practising members and 50 percent of Provisional Members had not completed their annual renewal requirements.
- In mid-January, Tim Caddel, Enforcement Coordinator, emailed and called 102 registrants who had not completed their annual renewal obligations. Currently, 37 registrants have not completed their obligations.
- Council discussed what could potentially be causing this issue which included the lack of understanding of registrants of what it means to be a registrant of a regulatory body and issues with the

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software (Membership Works) that some registrants have had difficulty navigating.

- Staff are looking for an alternative to Membership Works that is intended for use by a regulatory body that will be more intuitive and will prompt the registrant when they have not fully completed a requirement such as their competency reporting.
- Fred Pinto asked that members of Council assist in addressing the issues that may be causing registrants to not fulfill their obligations. He invited Dayna Griffiths and Sally Krigstin to help with this task. Brandon Williamson also agreed to help. They will bring their recommendation to Council before the next annual renewal period in the fall.

**d. 2024-2025 Work Plan Summary**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a summary of progress on the 2024-2025 Work Plan.
- Louise Simpson reviewed some of the key aspects of the summary.
- The OPFA Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard training modules 1 and 2 are completed. Module 3 will be completed in April and ready for launch in May. This will be announced at the Annual General Meeting in Hamilton.
- The student and allied occupations communications brochures and video are complete and available on the website. Louise will have a booth at the ISAO's (International Society of Arboriculture, Ontario Chapter) upcoming annual conference. In exchange for this free booth, the ISAO will be given a free trade booth at the OPFA Annual Conference. The next phase in the communications plan is to engage employers and landowners.
- Cybersecurity providers are being reviewed with the expectation that one will be in place by the spring.

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- A volunteer section will be developed on the website with information on the various committees, working groups and task teams and how to volunteer for them.
  - A Professional Forestry Ambassador Program will be developed. Ambassadors will raise awareness, especially among allied occupations, of professional forestry, the role of the OPFA, and the pathways to becoming a registered forestry professional.
  - A review of regulatory membership management software, mentioned above in item 2c., is underway to assess whether a more suitable software is available that would improve the operations of the OPFA and member experience.
  - The mentorship program will be reviewed to identify potential improvements.
  - Existing practice guidance documents are being reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
  - There is an interim training module and exam in place for the Ontario Forest Policy and Legislative Framework that is followed by a 15-minute interview with Fred Pinto and Tom Ratz, R.P.F. to ensure that the candidates understand the content and how to apply it. Lakehead University is currently updating its training modules, reducing the number of modules from 4 to 2.

#### **e. Bylaw Revisions**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with proposed Bylaw changes for 2024-2025 related to the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard, which, if approved, will be in place in April.
- Louise Simpson reviewed the suggested changes to Bylaw Articles 11.5 and 11.6 and the rationale for the changes. These changes concern the requirement for new applicants and existing Provisional Members to demonstrate competency for the Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard before they can become a practising (Full or Associate) registrant.
- One minor revision was made to Article 11.5.

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- **Motion:** That the proposed Bylaw changes regarding the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Lands and Resources Standard are approved by Council as amended and are recommended for members to approve at the Annual General Meeting. LeClair and Ciurko.
  - **All in favour. Carried.**
  - Council was also provided with proposed amendments to the OPFA Indigenous Peoples, Lands and Resources Standard Implementation Strategy.
  - **Motion:** That the amendments to the Indigenous Peoples, Lands and Resources Implementation Strategy are approved as circulated. McDonell and Williamson.
  - **All in favour. Carried.**
  - Council was also introduced to potential Bylaw changes that have been suggested by OPFA legal counsel and a Public Councillor.
  - These changes include changing the title of President, Vice-President and Past-President to Chair, Vice-Chair and Past-Chair, removing the President as Ex-officio on all OPFA committees, the composition of Council and which membership categories have the right to vote.
  - Louise Simpson reviewed the potential changes for 2026 which Council discussed. These changes will be discussed more fully at the April Council meeting. Council will be provided with more background information and advice from legal counsel.

**f. 2023 Council Evaluation Survey Review**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with a review of the 2023 Council Evaluation Survey to determine whether any action is required.
- The survey results were provided to Council in December 2023, which Louise Simpson reviewed with Peter Nitschke.

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- It was identified that we do not have authors for the March, June and September 2025 issues of the Council Corner article of the newsletter. Brandon Williamson volunteered to write the March article, Janice Tiedje will write the June article and Danya Griffiths will write the September article. Chris McDonell volunteered to write the December article at the December Council meeting.

#### **g. 2025 Annual Conference Update**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- The program is developing well with good speakers. The audio-visual provider is in place.
- The budget is being revised to accommodate for the potential negative impact of trade tariffs imposed by the U.S. government on conference attendance.
- A field tour is planned and a social event is scheduled at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton.
- To offset the costs of the Sheraton Hotel, the Working Group is investigating donated swag.
- It was suggested that registrants be sent an email soon listing the confirmed speakers and topics to help generate interest in the conference.
- As some members find going to southern Ontario more difficult, the working group is asked to consider providing participants of the conference with transportation from the airport to the hotel.
- Tourism Hamilton is a sponsor of the conference. Louise Simpson will look into whether the City of Hamilton has any available funds that could further offset the costs.
- The ongoing trade war with the USA may result in lower revenue from conference delegates, exhibitors and sponsors, possibly resulting in a deficit.

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#### **h. Confidentiality Agreement**

- Led by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with the Confidentiality Agreement and was asked to complete and submit as is required annually.
- Priscilla Doyle will email the Confidentiality Agreement to Council Members.
- *Secretary's Note: The Confidentiality Agreement was emailed to all Council Members.*

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

#### **a. Executive Committee Minutes**

- Submitted by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with the Executive Committee Minutes of the January 7, 2025, Executive Committee meeting.

#### **b. Membership Statistics**

- Submitted by Louise Simpson.
- Council was provided with the Membership Statistics as of December 31, 2024.

#### **c. Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board (CFAB) 2024 Annual Report**

- Council was provided with the CFAB 2024 Annual Report.
- Submitted by Louise Simpson.

#### **d. Enforcement Summary**

- Council was provided with a summary of the enforcement activity.
- Submitted by Louise Simpson.

#### **e. Council & Executive Committee Meetings 2025**

- Submitted by Fred Pinto.



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- 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, March 18, the next Finance Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 18, and the next Council meeting is Monday, April 7, face-to-face and virtual (hybrid) in Hamilton

#### **4. Termination of the Meeting**

- The President asked for a motion to terminate the meeting.
- Motion: That the February 4, 2025, Council meeting is terminated. Griffiths and Reynolds.
- **All in favour. Carried.**

#### **5. PROVIDED DOCUMENTS**

- a. Agenda
- b. Council Meeting Minutes December 3, 2024
- c. Financial Statements as of November 30, 2024
- d. Financial Statements as of December 31, 2024
- e. Annual Renewal Update
- f. 2024-2025 Work Plan Summary
- g. Proposed Bylaw Changes 2024-2025
- h. OPFA Indigenous Peoples, Lands & Resources Standard Implementation Plan Amendments
- i. 2025-2026 Bylaw Change Discussion Points
- j. 2024 Council Evaluation Survey Results
- k. Confidentiality Agreement
- l. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes January 7, 2025
- m. Membership Statistics as of December 31, 2024
- n. CFAB 2024 Annual Report
- o. Enforcement Summary
- p. 2025 Council, Finance & Executive Committee Meeting Dates