



Professional Organizers in Canada

Annual General Meeting

Thursday, November 3, 2016

Coast Coal Harbour Hotel, Vancouver, BC

Minutes

In Attendance

Bisera Baksa
Debra Bengtson
Diana Benson
Kathleen Boland
Nathalie Bureau
Peg Bradshaw
Heather Anne Campbell
Sarah Tudway-Cains
Bev Chandler
Linda Chu
Pearl Cluff
Dennise Conforti
Christine Costa
Stephanie Deakin
Janice Devries
Shawn Ferguson
Deb Fostera
Lynn Fraser
Dese Fulljames
Stephanie Galipeau
Emilio Jose Garcia
Sandra Grace Haining
Susan Herrmann
Kelly Hipkin
Agnes Hobmayer
Michelle Holmes
Soraiya Kara

Staff: Wayne Glover

Guest: Ellen Faye

Laura Kay
Cheryl Kennedy
Corinne Kewin
Janice Kirwin
Samantha Kristoferson
Diane Laflamme
Angie LeClair
Tamara Elias Liebmann
Merilyn Litster
Flavia Louzoda da Mattos
Maggie Megenbir
Cathy Mender
Kathleen O'Brien
Marie Potter
Deanne Powell
Jodi Robillard
Hilda Rodgers
Kyla Rozman
Donna Shukys
Wanda Smith
Julie Stobbe
Saija Tissari
Leslie Todd
Susan Toth
Jane Veldhoven
Elinor Warkentin
Alison Weigensberg
Cindy Wezenbeek

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Presiding as chair of the meeting, President Stephanie Deakin called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm with a welcome to all members in attendance.

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Introduction of the 2016 Board of Directors

Members of the 2016 Board of Directors were introduced.

President Stephanie Deakin;
Vice President and Acting Director of Education Janice Kirwin;
Director of Marketing Marie Potter;
Director of Membership Soraiya Kara;
Director of Finance Peg Bradshaw;
Director of Development Angie LeClair;
Director of Communications Pearl Cluff;
Director of Chapters Laura Kay;
Director-at-Large Susan Toth; and
Director-at-Large Samantha Kristoferson.

S. Deakin thanked all the directors for their hard work over the past year.

3. Minutes of 2015 Annual General Meeting

It was reported that the draft minutes of the October 24, 2015 AGM were posted to the members-only side of the website, and the link to the minutes was circulated to all members. The notice of the 2016 meeting was sent to all members in August 2016 and was also posted on the website. A limited number of hard copies were available at the meeting.

Motion: Moved by C. Mendler, seconded by J. Stobbe to accept the minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting as presented.

Carried.

4. Report of the President

President S. Deakin presented her State of the Industry (See Appendix A), which included a look at how POC has developed, and how it might grow. She also presented an overview of the POC Strategic Plan.

5. Presentation of the Financial Statements for the years ended December 31, 2014 and June 30, 2015

Director of Finance Peg Bradshaw provided members with an overview of the financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. POC's fiscal year-end was changed in 2015 to end on June 30 of each year to comply with the soon-to-be implemented new Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. The Act requires that non-profit organizations hold their Annual General Meeting and present the financial statements to members within six months of the fiscal year-end. To assist members with this change, the financial statements posted on

the website in preparation for this AGM were for both the six-month period from January to June 30, 2015 and for the first full new fiscal year of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Once the new Act is in place, POC will be required to have an annual review engagement and/or an audit done by an appointed public accountant each year. The accounting standards being set forth in the Act will require education, conference and membership money to be reported as deferred income when received in advance and not reported as revenue in the operating budget until the appropriate month.

Assets

POC ended the fiscal year with \$235,000 in assets. This includes \$177,765 in cash and \$3,800 in GST/HST rebates. It also includes prepaid expenses of \$5,000 which are for deposits for the conference, which falls in the current fiscal year. POC has \$48,000 in investments and equipment valued at \$266.

Liabilities

At June 30, 2016, POC had liabilities that included \$12,300 in accounts payable and accrued liabilities, \$80,000 in deferred revenues from TPO courses and membership that was collected in fiscal year 2015-2016 for fiscal year 2016-2017, and \$6,700 due to chapters for split payments.

Revenues

Membership revenue continues to be very strong, with membership revenues coming in over direct membership expenses by \$117,200. This includes both new members and renewing members.

The POC Education Program also continues to be an important revenue stream for POC, generating \$65,760 in revenue over expenses. The education program includes TPO classes and exams. Thank you to the facilitators for another strong year.

The Development Portfolio pertains to the associate member partnerships. These are critical to POC as associate members reflect the value of POC to suppliers of the professional organizing industry. The portfolio has been growing with \$3,550 generated in revenues in 2015-2016.

Education Acquisition, which includes the Comprehensive Training Program (now known as the Launch and Grow Your Business Program), business templates and manual sales, webinars and eNewsletter, made a \$730 surplus. There is potential for greater revenue here and, with the website project now complete, the focus for the Board will be on education, in particular the Launch and Grow Your Business Program, over the next 12-24 months.

Expenses

Administration expenses include the association management fees, phone, postage, office supplies – all of the elements required for the day-to-day business of the association.

The 2015 Conference ended up with an overall deficit of almost \$8,000. The deficit reflects the effort to provide quality programming at an affordable registration rate for members.

Marketing expenses reflect the public relations and social media outreach and the POC Post newsletter. Communication expenses include costs for the website hosting and maintenance, domain name registration, and the SSL certificate. In 2015-2016, POC also began translation of press releases to be posted on the website.

Special Reserve Fund

The association invested both time and fiscal resources in building the new website, with great results. The \$11,095 in special reserves reflected in the year-end financials was for the final work done on the website, which launched in March.

Year End Surplus

POC ended the fiscal year in a positive fiscal position with a surplus of \$1,300 of revenue over expenses. As a non-profit organization it is critical for POC to break even or post a modest surplus to meet its operational requirements. The Board remains committed to fiscal responsibility and ensuring the association remains viable and strong while meeting all CRA and government regulations and requirements.

Motion: Moved by S. Grace, seconded by N. Bureau to approve the financial statements for the fiscal year ended July 31, 2016 as presented.

Carried.

6. Recognition of Retiring Directors

S. Deakin thanked retiring Directors Peg Bradshaw and Soraiya Kara with a brief description of their accomplishments while on the Board. They were presented a card and a gift of appreciation for their work, time and dedication.

7. Nominating Committee Report

Janice Kirwin presented the Nominating Committee report to members. She noted that the ongoing volunteer outreach includes recruitment for members to serve on the POC Board of Directors. A dedicated call for nominations to the Board was issued in the summer and fall editions of the POC Talk. In addition, a call for nominations to the Board of Directors was included in the Notice of the Annual General Meeting sent out on August 29 and was posted online.

Biographies of each of the members standing for election were sent to members. Those not attending the AGM were provided an opportunity to vote electronically and it was explained that those votes will be tallied with the vote from members at the meeting today. The electronic votes were kept confidential and are only known by our Executive Director, Meghan Howard and Wayne Glover who is here today as the Acting Executive Director, both non-members of POC.

President Stephanie Deakin and directors Janice Kirwin, Laura Kay, Susan Toth, Samantha Kristoferson, Angie LeClair, Pearl Cluff and Marie Potter are entering the second year of their two-year terms and therefore are not standing for election in 2016. There are two POC members standing for election to the Board: Dennise Conforti and Maggie Megenbir.

J. Kirwin conducted three calls for nomination from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor.

Motion: Moved by J. Kirwin, seconded by C. Mendler to elect D. Conforti and M. Megenbir to the 2016 Board of Directors.

Carried

W. Glover confirmed that the results of the electronic voting were consistent with the vote just conducted.

9. Marketing Report

M. Potter provided members with an overview of the marketing report distributed to the members prior to the meeting. The new website was launched on March 31, 2016. It was with sincere gratitude that she thanked the following people for their countless hours of dedication to the project: Laura Kay, Peg Bradshaw, Susan Toth, Samantha Kristoferson, Pearl Cluff, Alison Lush, Wil DeGast and Meghan Howard. Phase Two will be the translation of the website into French. The translation team will be made up of: editor Sarah Baret; translators Elisabeth Alescio, Julie Forti, Mylène Houle Morency, Alain Lépine, Nathalie Pedicelli, Isabelle Paradis, Stéphanie Gallipeau, Marie-Claude Bourque, Caroline Bertola, Lisa Kelly, Marika Mouskardy, Tamara Elias Liebmann; and proofreader Marie Côté. The coordinator of the project is Alison Lush.

A strategic objective is to promote awareness of POC as the national authority and resource, representing the diverse nature of our profession. Public relations has been an important part of increasing awareness. We have generated 43 stories and reached 11.9M impressions (eyeballs) on POC from January to September 2016. The great news is we have just surpassed our total impressions for 2015 in just nine months of this year. Monthly statistics are shared with the membership in the POC Talk.

We also expanded our media ready spokesperson list from 22 people to 31 in 2016. Thank you to all the spokespeople for all the time they have invested in representing POC and being ready at a moment's notice.

Another effective channel which increases awareness for POC is social media. This year, Pinterest was added to the portfolio of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social media advertising was used to solicit conference attendance and sponsorship. The following statistics are for the month of September 2016:

- Twitter - 11% increase in followers from 1,858 to 2,087
- Facebook - 12% increase in followers from 1,241 to 1,415
- Pinterest - 100% increase in followers from 0 to 129

10. Other Business

Cathy Mendler, on behalf of the membership, thanked the Board of Directors for their diligent work to further the association.

11. Adjournment

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at the Westin Prince Hotel in Toronto, ON. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Soraiya Kara.

Appendix A: State of the Industry 2016

2016 has been a good year for POC. We launched our new website; formed an Education Committee and a Nominating Committee; we're seeing continued increase in our PR reach; we have a full and active board of directors; and membership and associate membership continues to grow. With the bulk of the website work behind us we will be changing our focus to education and to revamping our education offerings so that they are more modern, relevant, accessible and expandable.

Thank you to all of our Trained Professional Organizer facilitators and the members of our Education Committee for shouldering POC's biggest ongoing project.

Most of us in POC are in business for ourselves, as sole proprietors, partnerships, or micro businesses. If you are in business for any length of time, and you're any good at what you do, sooner or later you reach a point where you have more work than you can manage yourself, but not yet enough to support another person. You run yourself ragged, everything non-urgent falls by the wayside, and you feel like you're racing just to stay in place. When you get to this point, you have three options:

One. You can continue as you are, working all-out until you collapse. Burn out. Quit. Take a job at Tim Horton's. Or, if you are a business or an institution until you lose all your volunteers or staff, your membership or client base flounders because of poor service, and your reputation suffers. It's not really a viable option, but one that many businesses, individuals and organizations choose by default.

Two. You can choose to stay small. There's nothing wrong with this choice, if you make it intentionally. It's what I've chosen for my own business. You'll need to reduce the services you offer, turn away some clients, perhaps refer them to other businesses or services. Focus on what you do best, determine how many people you can do that for, and stay within that range. You'll never grow, but you'll stay sane.

Or option three. You can embrace growth and change. You can look for ways to manage the growth to minimize the risks. You can take a leap of faith and hire that extra person, trusting that he or she will only increase your business more, and will earn his or her own keep. You

can engage contract workers on an as-needed basis, trusting that they'll generate the income to pay their fees.

POC started in 1999 as a small group run by volunteers. In 2008 we took a leap of faith when we engaged Associations First. We contracted out to them much of our administrative functions, trusting that membership would continue to grow and support the expense – and it has.

In 2012 we took another leap and contracted out our marketing and PR. We've seen huge growth in this area, and in the resulting awareness of our industry, leading to increases in membership, associate membership, and business for our members.

I believe that POC is on that critical place again. Professional organizing is growing. POC is growing. We are on track to exceed 700 members by the end of this year. We are members of a growing international federation. Some time in 2017 we hope to have our own industry code. As all of these things happen demand will increase for well-trained, well-educated Professional Organizers, and we WILL be the go-to group for that.

It's time for us to grow again. It's time for us to decide what sort of growth we want, and how we'll manage that growth. We know there will be risks, and bumps along the way, and we need to plan for them. And we know that we will become a stronger and better association.

Look out world – Here comes POC version 4.0.

Let's embrace the excitement and the fear, and step into our own growth with passion, positivity and confidence!