



Annual General Meeting Minutes - Approved

June 8, 2024
Fort McMurray

Housekeeping Items

The Boreal Room at the Oil Sands Discovery Centre in Fort McMurray was opened to members at 9:30 am with the coffee on and time for networking. Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director, gave a 2-minute warning to the room at 9:58 am. At 10:00 am, she pointed out health and safety before introducing Dan Moore as the AWC President and meeting Chair.

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

As Chair, Dan welcomed everyone and called the 2024 Athabasca Watershed Council's Annual General Meeting to order. He thanked everyone for joining us, both in person and for those online today.

TREATY LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dan acknowledged that we are meeting today in Fort McMurray, which is in Treaty 8 Territory. He noted that, traditionally, the lands of the Athabasca watershed were important to many Indigenous groups including the Stoney, Cree, Dene, Secwepemc, Blackfoot, Ktunaxa and Métis. Today, the Athabasca Watershed Council acknowledges that the Athabasca watershed is located on Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories, and the homeland of the Métis.

The Chair then invited everyone to a round of introductions.

2. Confirm Quorum, Review and Approve Agenda

Petra confirmed that we had quorum (>10 members present). Dan noted that the meeting agenda was circulated thirty days prior to today. He asked if there were any addition, deletions or other edits. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ida Edwards moved to approve the agenda as presented; with none opposed, the motion was approved by consensus.

3. Approve 2023 AGM Minutes

Dan noted the minutes from the 2023 AGM were circulated with the agenda 30 days prior to today. He asked if there were any errors or omissions or any other discussion points? Hearing none, Dan asked if there was a motion to approve the 2023 AGM meeting minutes. Rob Minns so moved, and with none opposed, the 2023 AGM meeting minutes were approved by consensus and will be posted to the AWC website.

4. 2023-24 Year in Review

Dan noted that the AWC had an incredible busy year in 2023-24 and as always, it takes a lot of people to make that happen! He thanked fellow board members for meeting regularly and providing advice and direction to

staff. Dan also thanked Alberta Environment and Protected Areas for providing core support and other AWC funders and supporters, including the many other agencies we work with, which staff will provide more information on shortly as we hear project updates and the financial reports.

Dan then handed it over to Petra Rowell, AWC Executive Director, to provide staff updates as follows:

- Petra noted that rather than an annual report, staff are just finishing a 15 year summary report that will be shared at the September board meeting in Hinton, where we are co-hosting the ALMS conference.
- Petra noted that staff, in deciding which projects to take on, are guided by the board, as well as the board approved 4 year strategic plan, which has recently been updated to align with our 4 year grant agreement and mandate and roles document with Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.
- She then share a slide with the 5 goals in the AWC strategic plan, noting that AWC goals 1 & 2 speak to educating ourselves and others. She then invited Ashley Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator, to provide an update on 2023-24 communications, education and community engagement activities.
 - Social media, website and our reach continue to grow.
 - Major 2023-24 events included the canoe brigade, WPAC Summit, and a series of community information sessions.
 - Youth events included a growing number of Pond Days, X-Stream Science classrooms and other outreach events
 - We are looking forward to an even busier 2024-25! We greatly appreciate funding from Alberta Conservation Association, TD Friends of the Environment and Canada Summer Jobs. This funding has allowed us to hire Margaret Cross to help out this summer.
- Petra then noted that AWC strategic goals 3 & 4 speak to our role in assessing watershed health, as well as developing and implementing our Integrated Watershed Management Plan. She then invited Sarah Shortt, Senior Watershed Science Coordinator, to provide an update on this area of our work.
 - Sarah reviewed the 8 goals of the IWMP and then invited staff to provide updates on various projects as follows:
 - Caity Zimmermann provide an overview of several pieces of work to characterize drinking water as well as impacts to it such as climate change, ponds and dams and spills; Caity has also delivered several talks on the current drought situation.
 - Shayla Watson shared her work looking at small municipal and private drinking water systems.
 - Sarah provided an overview of the Healthy Shorelines Initiative, and several projects associated with it including riparian intactness assessments, on the ground projects, outreach, and formation of Pembina and Tawatinaw Working Groups. Ethan shared the Tawatinaw video he is working on.
 - Sarah finished the presentation, noting several other projects the AWC is involved in.

Dan thanked staff for the updates and invited Petra to provide a financial report.

5. 2023-24 Financial Report

Petra noted goal 5 in our strategic plan focusses on maintaining a strong organization, including a stable financial base. She then reviewed a *draft* report on AWC assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Kendra motioned that today's overview of the AWC 2023-24 financial position be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Janice and approved by consensus.

Unfortunately, the final financial package from the accountant was unavailable in time for the AGM. Petra suggested that since no concerns are projected, the board make a motion that, barring any significant issues being found in the final documents, they approve the financial report, and instruct staff to post it to the AWC website, as soon as it is received.

Ida so moved that barring any significant findings of the KRP financial statement review, that the 2023-24 financial statements be approved and posted to the website. Alternatively, if there are any significant findings that the 2023-24 financial statements be brought before AWC members at the September board meeting. Rob seconded the motion, and it was approved by consensus.

Dan motioned that Kingston, Ross, Pasnak LLP be appointed the AWC's accountant for 2024-25. After discussion, Dan also moved to have Petra review our needs and investigate options for accounting needs moving forward. Rob seconded the motion, and it was approved by consensus.

6. Elections

Before moving to the election of Directors, Dan acknowledged outgoing directors. On behalf of the board, he thanked Lorin Tkachuk, Lac La Biche County, who resigned from the board last November (replaced by Sterling Johnson). He also provided a heartfelt thanks to Paula Evans, one of the AWC's longest serving directors. He then turned it over to Petra to act as Presiding Officer of board elections.

Petra noted that as per the Board Terms of Reference, nominations must be received by Administration seven (7) days prior to the AGM and that nominations will not be accepted from the floor. Thank you to all that have put your name forward as per the slate of nominees on the slide. The following board seats that are up for election have received a single nomination, and hence the nominees can be accepted as a single slate and through a motion for acclamation. This slate of nominations includes:

- Federal or Provincial: Dean Litzenberger
- Indigenous: Alyssa-mae Laviolette
- Environment: Julie Hinks
- Stewardship: Kendra Gilbert
- Member at Large: Laura Pekkola

Petra then asked for a motion to accept by acclamation the slate of Directors as presented. *Janice made a motion that the slate of nominees be accepted by acclamation. Dan seconded. Any Discussion? There was none. Any opposed? Hearing none opposed, the motion was carried by consensus.* Petra then returned the chair to Dan.

Dan reminded everyone, there are still several board vacancies which the board can fill between AGMs via appointments. If you are interested, please do not hesitate to contact Petra. Also, a reminder that you do not have to be a board member to attend board meetings or join a committee.

Before breaking for lunch, staff drew the door prize. Petra encouraged everyone to view Oil Sands Discovery Centre displays over lunch and after we adjourn at 3:00 pm.

LUNCH BREAK (12:15 – 1:00)

7. Guest Speaker Elliot White, RMWB Flood Mitigation Projects

Moving on to our next agenda item, Dan introduced our guest speaker, Elliot White with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. He delivered a presentation on flood mitigation efforts in Fort McMurray. The presentation included an overview of historical flood events, a description of the unique hydrology of the area, an overview of land use bylaws around flood mitigation, and info on current mitigation efforts including berms.

Dan thanked Elliot for his presentation, noting how it is reassuring to know how much RMWB is doing to mitigate flooding in this area.

8. Recognition and Question Period

Dan noted the importance of taking a few moments to appreciate where we've been, some of the achievements of the last year, and some of the folks who have helped us get to where we are today. He then turned it over to Petra to start recognizing several staff achievements over the past year.

Petra noted that although we are always looking at the long list of things to do in front of us, or things we would like to add to our organization, it's really important that we take a little bit of time to celebrate our achievements. She then thanked everyone who has in some way, large or small, been a part of our successful past year. She also recognized a couple of individuals and some particular achievements of this past year including:

- Dan Moore, for chairing the organizing committee of the 2023 Fort Assiniboine Bicentennial Voyageur Canoe Brigade, a very successful week long event with 140 participants and several hundred more spectators as the brigade made its way from town to town.
- Brian Deheer, for his many years of work via Healthy Waters Lac La Biche, the Lac La Biche Watershed Management Plan Implementation Committee and other local initiatives, which have contributed to a very strong watershed awareness in the Lac La Biche sub-basin.
- Sarah Shortt, AWC Senior Watershed Science Coordinator, who recently celebrated her five year anniversary with the AWC. Sarah currently oversees all field staff and has been instrumental in growing our technical programs such as the Healthy Shorelines Initiative and the East Slopes Biomonitoring Collaborative.
- Ashley Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator, who is coming up on her third year anniversary and has been instrumental in growing our reach through several communications and education initiatives.

- Caity Seifert, who did an excellent job assisting us this year as all of the WPACs pivoted to provide our partners with information on drought conditions and mitigation.
- Shayla Watson, Ethan Zapach and Margaret Cross, our seasonal staff who really made it possible to get out across the watershed this summer with a large number of activities in many communities.

The Chair noted that it is a requirement of the AWC bylaws to include a section for members to ask questions at the AGM. He then invited questions about today’s proceedings or about the work of the AWC. Several suggestions about future AWC work included the following suggestions:

- Promote more drinking water well testing via social media, newsletters, working with Ag societies; could also research a source of home well testing kits that people can do on their own / do not have to submit through Public Health
- Do more articles on the impact of climate change on drinking water (public and private systems)
- Watch for the Alberta Water Council’s source protection tool coming soon
- Provide lake owners packages to lake groups
- Partner with off-road recreational associations more; promote responsible recreation
- Track kilometers to show the challenges of serving all communities in the Athabasca
- Consider how to include human health in outreach and program areas
- Organize a fall board strategic planning session (retreat)
 - Include a discussion of meeting preferences (day of week, locations, etc.)

9. Closing Comments / Acknowledgements

Before asking for a motion to adjourn, Dan thanked everyone for taking the time on a Saturday to join us. After one last draw for a door prize, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ida so moved and the AGM was adjourned at 2:24 pm.

Appendix 1. Attendees

Amanda Buchanan	Ashley Johnson	Danna Schock
Margaret Cross	Janice Linehan	Caity Seifert
Brian Deheer	Sarah MacDonald	Sarah Shortt
Ida Edwards	Rob Minns	Abdi Siad-Omar
Paula Evans	Dan Moore	Douglas Thrussell
Jamie Giberson	Laura Pekkola	Shayla Watson
Kendra Gilbert	Walter Preugschas	Elliot White
Julie Hink	Petra Rowell	Ethan Zapach