



Annual General Meeting

June 11, 2022

Approved Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Dan Moore, Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) President and meeting Chair, introduced himself and called the meeting to order shortly after 10:00 a.m. He thanked everyone for attending (virtually via Zoom) and encouraged attendees to introduce themselves via the Chat box.

After confirming that a quorum of members was present, Dan explained that rather than accepting “all in favor”, he would facilitate consensus decision making by asking if anyone is opposed. Paula Evans made a motion to this effect. No discussion was required, and no one opposed this approach (motion carried by consensus).

Before going any further, the Chair acknowledged *that the Athabasca watershed encompasses portions of Treaty 6, 8 and 10 Territories and is home to many First Nation and Métis communities. The Athabasca Watershed Council respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all Indigenous people, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant watershed. We make this acknowledgment as an act of Truth and Reconciliation, and in recognition of those who came before us.*

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Chair noted that the meeting agenda was circulated 30 days before the meeting. He asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Brian Deheer so moved. There was no discussion, and the agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of 2021 AGM minutes

The Chair noted that the 2021 AGM minutes were circulated with the 2022 meeting agenda. He asked if there were any errors or omissions? Hearing none, Paula Evans moved to approve the 2021 AGM minutes. No one was opposed and the minutes were approved as presented. [Approved 2021 AGM minutes will now be posted to the AWC website.]

4. Staff Presentation on 2021-22 Activities

Before starting the presentation, Petra Rowell, Executive Director, noted the importance of being competitive in recruiting and retaining staff, as the backbone of the organization. She also noted how important it is to get staff (and members!) out into the watershed doing good work.

Staff, including Petra, Ashley Johnson (Education and Outreach Coordinator), and Sarah MacDonald (Watershed Science Coordinator) then gave an overview of their 2021-22 activities and how these activities contributed to the AWC's strategic plan, which is approved by the board annually. Some highlights of the year included:

- Over 120 meetings or events with members and stakeholders hosted or attended in 2021-22
- 830 event participants
- 3000 social media followers
- Almost 4000 kms shoreline intactness assessed
- 600 willow stakes planted
- 4 sites in the Upper Athabasca sampled; 12,865 benthic invertebrates collected and analyzed
- \$85,000 in-kind contribution by board and committees, event speakers, and working groups.

Additionally, SAIT student Laura Nethery presented the findings of her capstone project – a survey on community drinking water resiliency. Petra commented that it's good to kick off a drinking water project in the Athabasca watershed to get the conversation going. It was noted that Dan Moore and Brian Deheer both support the source water protection team with the Alberta Water Council.

Petra encouraged everyone to submit project ideas to staff for consideration. Petra then thanked several funders who made the year possible. The Chair then thanked staff for a great year.

5. Financial statements, review reports, and selection of accountants for 2022-23.

The Chair thanked staff for maintaining the accounting records and Kingston, Ross, and Pasnak for preparing and reviewing the year-end financial statements which were circulated prior to the meeting. Petra then provided the following report:

Starting on the revenue side, for the fiscal year of 2021-22, core operational funding of \$200,000 was again provided by Alberta Environment and Parks. This amount will also be received this coming fiscal year - the 4th and final year of the current grant agreement. After that, a new multi-year grant agreement will hopefully be negotiated, however keep in mind next year is an election year and funding beyond 2022-23 is not guaranteed. As always, we need to be looking for alternate funding. If you are thinking about becoming involved in the work of the AWC, we could use more volunteers on the Finance and Fundraising Committee. Or even if you have an idea about a funding opportunity, please contact me.

On the project side, we are very fortunate over the past two years to have received \$387,500 from the GOA Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program, as well as corporate donations from Plains Midstream and Trans Mountain for our Pembina and Tawatinaw riparian projects. All but about \$80k of these funds have now been expended. You can read about these projects on our [webpage](#), where you will also find the riparian assessment reports which these dollars have funded.

We also received \$7,500 from Alberta Ecotrust and \$3000 from the Alberta Conservation Association in 2021-22 to be used in the Upper Athabasca Biomonitoring benthic invertebrate sampling project.

These funds were fully expended in this fiscal year and new funds have been secured for the current year. Again, you can read more about the Biomonitoring project on our project webpage.

For education and outreach activities for youth, we received a \$3500 grant from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, which funded the annual photo competition and printing of the calendar, with a focus on youth this year. It also funded the traveling watershed display that Ashley spoke of earlier.

As mentioned previously, in-kind contributions of time are a big part of our budget. In 2021-22 we conservatively estimated this to be valued at about \$85,000. This includes the time of board and committee members, speakers who gave their time to events like the WPAC Summit and WW Day and Working Group members on the Wildhay-Berland and Pembina Riparian working groups.

On the Expense side, I have talked a bit already about project grants and expenditures. On the operational side, staffing is our biggest expense (about 46% of our total budget or 80% of our core operations) but of course, without staff, we would not get as much done! The remainder of our core operational funds go towards maintaining our society status as well as our office in the Train Station in the Town of Athabasca, and towards the cost of board and committee meetings.

At the bottom of the income statement, you will notice that we show a small loss. This is due to having to pay GST out of savings as we cannot use GOA funds. At the end of the year (i.e., on March 31, 2021) as per the balance sheet, we had remaining savings (not dedicated to grants and project deliverables) of approximately \$70,000. With that quick overview, I will finish by noting that KRP, in undertaking their review, found no significant findings and stated that the financial statements, as presented “accurately reflect AWC position as of March 31, 2022”.

Are there any questions regarding this report? Hearing none, Paula made a motion to approve the 2021-22 financial report and statements as presented. Gary Cromwell seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any discussion or dissent: hearing none, the motion was approved by consensus.

Dan then made a motion to retain Kingston Ross Pasnak as accountants for the current (2022-23) fiscal year. Gary Cromwell seconded that motion. The Chair asked if there was any discussion or dissent: hearing none the motion was approved by consensus.

6. Elections

The Chair took a few moments to thank outgoing directors Marv Fyten, Robert Holmberg, Morris Nesdole, and Tim Polzin, noting their long-serving contributions to the Athabasca Watershed Council. Dan also thanked Tom Weber and Lavone Olson, both part of the initiators group, who resigned earlier in the year.

For the current year, the Chair noted that nominations were received seven days before the AGM, as per AWC policies. After a quick round of introductions by each nominee, the Chair asked for a motion to accept the following slate of nominees by acclamation:

- Industry Agriculture: Kennedy Deregt-Taschuk (new)

- Indigenous: Alyssa-Mae Laviolette (new)
- NGO/Health or Environment: Julie Hink (new)
- NGO/Stewardship: Kendra Gilbert (returning)
- Member at Large: Laura Pekkola (returning)

Brigitte Lemieux made the motion to accept the slate of nominees as presented. Brian Deheer seconded the motion. None were opposed, there was no points presented for discussion and the motion was approved by consensus.

The Chair thanked all new board members for putting their names forward. He noted that there are still vacancies on the board and also reminded everyone that you do not have to be a board member to be on a committee.

7. Question period

The Chair opened the floor to any questions members would like to ask. Staff were asked what projects they are most excited to work on this coming year. Ashley mentioned she's excited to apply for the TD Friends of the Environment grant in the hopes of getting dollars for equipment to support the high school 'X-stream Science' program. Sarah is excited about continuing work with the Pembina Technical Advisory Committee.

It was asked what the policy on membership renewals was. Do you have to renew every year? Ashley noted there is now an option on the membership form for automatic renewal. If members click on this option, they will not have to renew annually and will remain a member until they tell us otherwise. There was also a question about how we seek membership. Petra noted that we currently have issues with our membership system – once we get them ironed out, we look forward to doing more recruitment.

Petra asked how can we get more people involved? There were several comments in the chat box about getting more people out into the watershed.

8. Closing comments.

In closing, Dan again thanked everyone for coming and thanked everyone, including Directors, members, and committees, for their support in 2021-22. He then motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 am. Gary seconded the motion. None were opposed and the motion to adjourn was approved.

Attendees:

Aneilia Ayotte, Paul Belanger, Gary Cromwell, Brian Deheer, Paula Evans, Kendra Gilbert, Julie Hink Ashley Johnson, Jennifer Knieval, Alyssa-Mae Laviolette, Brigitte Lemieux, Janice Linehan, Sarah MacDonald, Dan Moore, Laura Nethery, Nancy Parker, Laura Pekkola, Petra Rowell, Abdi Siad-Omar Heather Stocking