

Comox Valley ElderCollege
Minutes of the Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting
Via Zoom
Saturday May 8, 2021

1. (from 9:45) Connectivity Time

Members connected promptly, with 38 members signing in.

2. Call to Order: Confirmation of quorum and meeting procedure.

Don Axtell introduced himself as Chair and called the 22nd annual CVEC AGM to order at 10:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone and then respectfully acknowledged that Comox Valley ElderCollege operates on the unceded territory of the K'omoks First Nation.

He declared that a Quorum was established and a majority vote of those in attendance is required for conducting business at the Annual General Meeting. He introduced John North, Vice Chair, who is helping with the slides for the presentation. Don Axtell also explained the voting procedure for this meeting on Zoom and covered Questions and Comments. All participants were able to see the agenda and power point slides on their screens. The Agenda was reviewed as well as the management structure of ElderCollege.

3. Introductions of the 20-21 Executive Members

Don Axtell introduced the members of the 20-21 CVEC Executive team who are:

Elected Officials

Chair: Don Axtell

Vice Chair: John North

Past Chair: Michael Syer

Members-at-Large: Dennis McMahon & Craig Bassett

Standing Committees Chairs

Curriculum Committee: Roger Taylor & Sheila Borman (Claudette Preece retired during the year)

Volunteer Support Committee: Louise Argyle & Ilona Horgen

Member Support Committee: Jan Harding

Communications Committee: Solweig Williams

Finance & Admin Committee Sandra Harrison

Finance Officer: David Clark

Co-Secretaries: Jackie Greening & Mary Gray

Main NIC contacts during the year were Bob Haugen of Continuing Education, and our NIC Liaison Julian Benedict, who is here as a guest.

4. Minutes of AGM 2020 MOTION: That the minutes of the Comox Valley ElderCollege Annual General Meeting May 16, 2020 be approved, as circulated. **M/S** Craig Bassett/Michael Syer None opposed. **CARRIED**

5. Operations Report

Don Axtell presented the Report which is attached at the end of these Minutes.

6. Financial Report

Finance Officer, David Clark, presented a Preliminary 2020-21 Year End Financial Statement as not all the information has been received at this point. He thanked Michelle Price and Julian Benedict of NIC for their help and he mentioned that CVEC finances are handled by NIC. When he receives the final numbers from NIC he will provide a final Year End Statement which will appear in the Connector. He reported that CVEC gave \$10,000 to NIC in lieu of their portion of the tuition fees they would have received in the Fall semester and the ElderCollege also bought new audio-visual equipment for the Stan Hagen Theatre at a cost of \$9,300.

David Clark also presented the Budget for 2021-22. Tuition fees are difficult to project. If classes are held on campus in Winter 2022 a new Budget will be prepared as the numbers will change.

7. Amendments to the Articles of Governance and Bylaws

Sandra Harrison outlined the two motions as sent out in the AGM package together with the stipulations required to make such amendments. She started with the amendment to the Mission Statement and the Vision and showed the current wording on screen. The changes are made in accordance with the 2021-23 Strategic Plan.

MOTION: that the CVEC Mission Statement be changed to *“Enhancing the quality of life for older adults in our community, by offering affordable opportunities for continued learning.”*

And

The CVEC Vision be changed to *“That CVEC is seen as a leader in providing programs that inspire and enable older adults in our community to continue learning and sharing their knowledge and skills.”* **M/S** Sandra Harrison/John North, none opposed. **CARRIED**

Sandra Harrison then reviewed the current structure of the Executive Committee and the rationale for the proposed changes to the committee structure.

MOTION: That the Finance Officer position be removed from the Finance and Administration Committee and instead report directly to the Executive. With this change, the position will become an Executive appointment of the CVEC’s elected officers, and will have voting privileges. The Finance and Administration Committee will henceforth be named as the Operations Support Committee. Its roles and responsibilities will be reviewed to be consistent

with the functions of this committee. Responsibility for policy development and monitoring will remain. M/S Sandra Harrison/Michael Syer none opposed. **CARRIED**

A question was raised from the floor as to whether the Finance Officer will be working alone. David Clark answered that he has always worked with the Executive, Standing Committees and others so he has never worked alone.

8. In Memoriam: A moment's silence was observed to remember, with gratitude, the contributions of ElderCollege Volunteers and Members whose deaths occurred during the year. Every year the Executive, on behalf of all the members, makes a \$250.00 donation to the NIC Foundation on behalf of those members lost in the year.

9. Recognition of Retiring Executive Members

Don Axtell thanked four volunteers retiring from the Executive this year. They are Louise Argyle whose last position was Co-Chair of Volunteer Support, Jan Harding whose last position was Chair of the Membership Committee, Sandra Harrison whose last position was Acting Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee and Claudette Preece whose last position was Co-Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Volunteers like these are what keeps ElderCollege young and inspiring. Don Axtell congratulated Sandra Harrison on her appointment to the Board of the NIC Foundation.

10. Nominations for 2021-2022:

Sandra Harrison stated that each year we are required by the Articles and Bylaws to elect our Executive. She mentioned that she was presenting the slate on behalf of Michael Syer, the Chair of the Nominations Committee. She presented the following slate of officers:

Chair – Don Axtell

Vice Chair – John North

Members at Large – Craig Bassett and Dennis McMahon

All these individuals were in these positions this year and have agreed to stand for next year. Because of Zoom it was not possible to call for nominations from the floor. Sandra Harrison explained the process for nominations that was sent out in the AGM package. She reported that she had received no further nominations by the deadline. Therefore she declared the slate of Officers elected by acclamation.

10. ElderCollege Strategic Plan 2021-23:

John North, Vice Chair of the Executive and Chair of the Strategic Planning Working Group reported that every 3-5 years ElderCollege convenes a group to develop a new Strategic Plan. This year, the Group reviewed existing strengths and weaknesses and tried to look into the future. It became clear that it is important to get back to face to face classes as soon as safe and

permitted. It also became clear that technology for online learning offers great advantages to ElderCollege. Going forward it will be important to take that into account as well as resuming face to face sessions. Recruiting volunteers is an ongoing challenge faced by ElderCollege, and many other organizations. It's also essential to maintain our current good communications with the leadership of North Island College, since the College is a crucial part of our existence. This last year has confirmed that we need to remain adaptable. The year has gone reasonably well considering the challenges, but flexibility and adaptability are crucial. The new Plan is available on the NIC-ElderCollege website.

Don Axtell thanked the Working Group for all their work in putting the Plan together.

11. Questions/ Concerns:

Don Axtell read questions and comments from the Chat box on Zoom.

Solweig Williams wanted to thank **Diane Keeling** for all her help in the past on the Communications Committee and especially her current work for the Committee on Face Book. Diane was also on the Strategic Planning Committee this year.

Jackie Graham appreciated the lighthearted section of **The Connector**.

Clarification was requested on the Budget and that as a non-profit organization are we allowed to budget for a surplus

ElderCollege is not a registered non-profit organization. It operates within North Island College's Department of Continuing Education. As such NIC manages the accounting for ElderCollege. Any annual surplus is set aside, and from time to time is used to support NIC projects such as the three EdlerCollege Bursaries and recent upgrades to the Stan

Sandra Harrison wanted to express her appreciation to the Executive Team for all their hard work. It's been a challenging and interesting year due to COVID and we came through with flying colours. We've been informed that some other Elder Colleges with a similar model have not survived. She congratulated all the Executive and assured all the members that they are in good hands going forward with the Executive Team.

Is there any way to see which members have passed away

Sandra Harrison responded that the Executive decided a number of years ago to introduce the donation and the concept of honouring and taking a moment to recognize our members. However, we know a few, but not all, of those who have passed so there is no list and we don't name those we do know.

How many people are in attendance

A few individuals joined after the start of the meeting, so the count is now 45.

Don Axtell reported that our relationship with NIC has been very good this year. He thanked all the committee Chairs for their contributions to today's presentation and John North for preparing the slides and he thanked everyone for attending.

12. Adjournment

M/S Craig Bassett/Claudette Preece. Meeting adjourned at 11:17a.m.

Jackie Greening (recorder)

THE 2020 2021 ANNUAL REPORT ON CVEC OPERATIONS

OVERVIEW

When we met last May the pandemic was in its early stages. The Winter 2020 semester had started as usual but was canceled in mid session. As a result the Comox Valley ElderCollege Executive Committee faced a dilemma. Do we stop all activities and wait for the return to normalcy or do we carry on using online learning? The Executive unanimously chose the latter, carry on with a pilot project using the newly introduced ZOOM platform. Why a pilot project? We recognized that moving to a new technology like ZOOM would not be easy. We would have to find course conductors willing to modify their material and techniques required for a new media and, our members would have to learn how to use the new technology to register and participate. To encourage member participation the Executive decided to take the controversial step of offering the 2020-2021 membership at half price and to offer the Fall 2020 courses at no cost.

The Pilot Project worked surprisingly well. A decent number of courses were offered and by year end over two thirds of our previous years membership had rejoined. In fact some popular courses quickly filled causing some angst among our membership and a realization that more seats can be offered when distant learning is involved. I am happy to report the recently finished Winter Semester marked a cautious return toward normal with a full selection of courses via ZOOM at regular cost. The Executive also agreed to a different Lecture format featuring a Blue Badge Guide, situated in the UK, giving eight Saturday lectures on London topics.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Following last years Annual Meeting the Executive continued its August through May monthly meeting schedule using Zoom. It developed Executive Objectives for the year which touched upon seven key areas and had goals and measurables. They were in brief:

1. Membership

Aim to have 75% or 900, or more, members by the fiscal year end.

2. Curriculum,

Maintain a minimum of course offerings using the Zoom platform as a pilot project in the Fall of 2020 and tuition paying Zoom offerings in the Winter 2021 semester.

3. Communications

Distribute the Connector to members via the internet six times a year with an average download by 60% of our membership and

Continue to place advertisements and articles in the Record.

4. Volunteers

Publicize volunteer opportunities through local media and ElderCollege publications and resolve the recruitment challenge by filling vacancies in leadership positions.

5. Finance and Administration

Work toward a balanced budget for the 2021- 22 fiscal year. and

Continue to ensure the Governance Manual is kept current

6. NIC Relations

Invite NIC staff to address monthly Executive Meetings and encourage semi annual meetings between the ElderCollege Chair and the NIC Senior Executive.

7. Planning

Complete and approve the new 3 year Strategic Plan and Develop a plan for implementation of a digital archival system.

I am pleased to report that most of the goals we developed have been met. The exceptions are membership which by fiscal year end was 826 just short of the 900 hoped for and Volunteer recruitment remains a challenge which is still a work in progress.

OUR COMMITTEES

As our Management Chart indicates the Comox Valley ElderCollege currently has five standing committees where much of the work is carried out. Without the time and dedication put in by our volunteer committee members the courses and programs we have all grown to appreciate would not be possible. I will now provide a brief review of each of the committee's activities and give credit to the strong group of volunteers who have worked all year to maintain

ElderCollege's legacy of providing educational opportunities to older adults. Obviously the pandemic has changed how our committees operate, some have had to scramble to adjust to the crisis others have been keeping in touch with their volunteers in order to resume their activities once we return to in-person meetings and classes.

The **Finance and Administration Committee** was very active behind the scenes this year. We were fortunate to have Sandra Harrison with her wealth of experience filling in as Acting Chair.

Sandra has carried out a comprehensive review of our management policies and stick handled a proposed reorganization of the committee and the attendant bylaw changes. David Clark assumed the role of Finance Officer where he has managed to put the important financial arrangement with NIC on a positive basis.

The Covid pandemic forced ElderCollege to modify how it provides courses to our membership. This put the **Curriculum Committee** right in the line of fire. Co-chairs Roger Taylor and Sheila Borman and their committee members rose to the challenge.

Not only did they find course leaders for the online pilot project but offered them training on using ZOOM. By January the experience of the pilot project led to a full slate of courses for our Winter Semester including a Saturday Lecture Series organized by Claudette Preece featuring Annamaria Dall'Anese a Blue Badge Guide who provided a virtual tour of London. Following the semesters the committee implemented online participant and course leader surveys. Due to Covid 19 restrictions course registrations had to be done entirely online.

Once the Executive agreed to the pilot project last year the **Communication Committee** chaired by Solweig Williams realized that with the Covid 19 imposed isolation and loss of on campus classes new methods would be required to keep in touch with members.

The Committee began producing a monthly newsletter called the Connector with a new format highlighting different volunteers, ElderCollege information, a sampling of upcoming courses, contact information and a lighthearted section. In addition to this ambitious project the Communications Committee continues to place ads and articles in the Record.

The Comox Valley ElderCollege's success over the past 22 years rests upon its base of volunteers who share a commitment to the goal of providing inexpensive learning opportunities for older adults. Due to Covid 19 the **Volunteer Support Committee** co-chaired by Ilona Horgen and Louise Argyle had to cancel in person gifting for course leaders and the special lunch for volunteers. In their place cards and gift certificates were mailed to retiring volunteers and course leaders. The Committee recognizes that recruitment and retention of volunteers continues to be a major ElderCollege challenge and to this end the Committee organized an orientation for new volunteers and held a brain storming session to generate recruitment ideas.

The **Member Support Committee** chaired by Jan Harding was particularly affected by Covid 19 isolation. Members who attended lectures in the Stan Hagen Theatre will remember the volunteers who answered questions, signed you in and organized the tea and coffee. The Committee members have stayed in touch and look forward to the day that lectures and courses are again offered on campus. I am sure all ElderCollege members share that feeling! Jan organized post registration review sessions for the Fall 2020 and the Winter 2021 semesters. Both registrations were conducted via internet and were conducted without major issues.

The **Strategic Planning Working Group** chaired by John North CVEC Vice Chair worked hard to put together the three year Strategic Plan which he will introduce toward the end of today's meeting. An **IT Working Group** was formed to look into online storage of important CVEC documents. This Committee included John North, Michael Syer, Don Axtell, Frank Mayhood and Terry Hooper.

Our two **Members at Large**, Dennis McMahon and Craig Bassett play a unique role in our organization. They along with our **Past Chair**, Michael Syer, were part of the Strategic Planning Working group and they serve as resource people for the committees and encourage cooperation and communication within the different parts of the organization.

Comox Valley ElderCollege is fortunate to have two volunteers, Jackie Greening and Mary Gray, who share the Executive Secretary role for the Executive.

OUR PARTNER

During the year we continued to have a very positive relationship with **North Island College** whose leadership has always been supportive of the ElderCollege experiment. Early this year we said goodbye to retiring NIC President and friend of ElderCollege, John Bowman, and in April we welcomed incoming NIC President Lisa Domae at our Executive Meeting. We look forward to working with Lisa Domae in the years ahead. Julian Benedict our NIC official liaison person has been a key player in keeping a positive working relationship between the two institutions. We appreciate his enthusiasm, helpful assistance and support of the ElderCollege vision.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the wild ride that Covid 19 has put us through, the Comox Valley ElderCollege has given our members, course leaders and volunteers an opportunity to stay socially and intellectually involved in such an important community institution! Its an honour to be part of the adventure!