



PO Box 1617 Almonte, Ontario K0A 1A0

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MINUTES OF MVFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024
Nature Talks Meeting – 7:00 p.m.
AGM Meeting – 8:25 p.m.

Members' Night and the Annual General Meeting of MVFN were held in-person, on the above date, at the Almonte United Church Hall with an attendance estimated at 60 paid members. Total attending the AGM was 45. Rosalind Reid, Vice-Chair of the Nature Talks Committee, welcomed attendees and proceeded to explain that three speakers will be presenting tonight on topics of interest to Club members.

Before introducing the first speaker, Ron Williamson took this opportunity to extend birthday wishes to Cliff Bennett, one of the founders of MVFN, who turned 92 in December 2023.

Art Solomonian, Chair of the Paddle Committee, was welcomed to the meeting and proceeded to explain that the group is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers and that their objective is "Seeing Nature from the Water's Edge". Members were then taken on a photography tour of past MVFN trips, which total about 8 per year, and which are held during the period May to September.

The second speaker, Bob Stearns, Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT), was welcomed and introduced to Club members. He proceeded to explain MMLT's mandate, identifying its 12 conservation properties and outlined their acquisition and stewardship process as well as the ecosystem services provided. Also highlighted were their planned future membership activities.

The third speaker, Ken Allison, was welcomed to the meeting. He has been a significant contributor to MVFN over many years particularly with his popular "Nature Sightings" segment of the Nature Talks monthly meetings. Members were once again treated to bird/other sightings sent to Ken by members of the Club.

On behalf of the Club, all three speakers were thanked and presented with a gift of appreciation.

Ken Allison was asked to return to the front of the hall and Valerie Wilkinson, President of MVFN, then addressed the members. She proceeded to highlight Ken Allison's background and experiences as a "Wildlife Ecologist/Naturalist/Educator" saying that after first being a member of the Ottawa Field Naturalists Club, where he was President from 2008-2009, he became involved with MVFN in 2012 and has been an animator for the Nature Sightings portion of the Nature Talks meetings since 2017. He served on the MVFN Board of Directors for 4 years and served as our President for two years. He has had memberships as well as leadership roles in organizations such as MMLT, Ontario Field Ornithologists and MVFN's iNaturalist Project, to name a few, as well as acting as a resource person for many other volunteer groups. She highlighted the extra effort Ken made during COVID using ZOOM presentations to entertain and educate the MVFN members.

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Because of his dedicated work involving nature and education, and his extra dedication during COVID, Ken Allison was awarded the “MVFN Champion for Nature Award”. Louise Beckinsale came forward to present Ken with the framed Champion for Nature Certificate she had prepared and Bob Smith came forward with a carving of a nuthatch by a renowned Anishinaabe wood carver, which he had mounted on a tree root he had prepared and polished himself.

The Award information had been a well-kept secret and Ken was not expecting the presentation. He expressed his sincere appreciation to Club members for this honour.

Members were thanked for attending tonight’s presentations, despite the winter weather conditions, and encouraged to remain for the AGM meeting, which followed. The meeting was called to order at 8:25 p.m. with Valerie Wilkinson, President, in the chair. She reminded members that in order to speak to any given item on the Agenda, a member must raise their hand to be recognized. She then proceeded to introduce the current members of the Board of Directors present tonight.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved by Ed Lawrence, seconded by Sandra Duncan: THAT the Agenda be approved.

Moved an amendment by Nick de Boer: THAT item No. 6 “Change to Bylaws 1”, be removed from the Agenda. (There was No Secunder for the amendment).

Nick de Boer proceeded to explain the rationale behind his proposed amendment, pointing out that insufficient time had been given to members to review the By-law changes being proposed for removal from the Constitution. The President explained that the Agenda and its accompanying attachments had been made available to members within the timeframe stipulated in the Constitution.

The vote on the main motion then CARRIED. The vote count was Yeas: 36 and Nays: 4

2. Declaration of Pecuniary interest: None

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: February 16, 2023

Moved by Brenda Boyd, seconded by Bob Smith: THAT the Minutes of the AGM meeting held on February 16, 2023, be approved. **CARRIED**

4. 2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following Committee reports were included in the Annual Report for ease of reference:

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| • Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary Fund | MVFN Birding Committee |
| • Conservation and Habitat Restoration Committee | Environmental Education Committee |
| • Young Naturalist Program | Nature Talks Committee |
| • Paddle Committee | Spring Gathering Committee |
| • Membership Committee | Financial Reports - 2023 |

Moved by Louise Beckinsale, seconded by Bob Smith: THAT the above-mentioned MVFN Reports for 2023, be accepted. **CARRIED**

5. 2023 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Moved by John Blais, seconded by Sylvia Miller: THAT the 2023 Financial Review submitted by Mr. John Moore, be accepted. **CARRIED**

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On behalf of the Club, the President expressed thanks and appreciation to Mr. Moore for volunteering his services once again.

6. **CHANGE TO THE BY-LAWS –1:** The President explained that the clauses referenced under this item related specifically to the Program Committee, which has now been replaced by the **Nature Talks Committee**, after considerable discussion at the Board level. It was further pointed out that a similar process will be followed by the Board regarding policies and by-laws for other Standing/Special committees and suggested changes will be forthcoming at future AGM meetings. She requested that Nick de Boer bring his concerns, expressed earlier, to the attention of the Board for further deliberation.

On a point of order, Cliff Bennett asked that the question be called on the motion.

Moved by Ron Williamson, seconded by Paul Frigon: THAT, whereas the program committee no longer exists, all references to the Program Committee in the bylaws shall be removed, including Item 22; p.12 (a); (title only); Item 22; p.12 (e); (title only); Item 23; p.12 (a); (title only); item 25 p.13 Item 30; p.15 (all content).

The motion **CARRIED**.

7. CHANGE TO BY-LAWS – 2:

Moved by Rosalind Reid, seconded by Pete MacEwen: THAT this By-law under Item 3 (a) read as follows:

- a) **Written “or electronic” notice shall be given to each member 14 days prior to any Annual General Meeting of members”.**

The intent of this By-law change will allow for the Agenda to be posted via **electronic** notice.

The motion **CARRIED**.

8. ELECTION OF MVFN BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024

A list of proposed Board members for the year 2024 was tabled. Four positions were vacant, viz.

- **2nd Vice-President, Director at Large, Treasurer and Conservation and Habitat Restoration Chair.**

The President explained that John Blais was currently filling the positions of Treasurer and Finance Chair – roles that are very important. She invited anyone interested in volunteering for the “vacant” positions to please contact Board members after they have had an opportunity to consider the roles in question. She then requested nominations from the floor three times. No names were forthcoming at this time.

Moved by Wendy Moenig, seconded by Pete MacEwen: THAT the current members serving on the Board be approved as follows:

President:	Val Wilkinson
• 1st Vice-President:	Paul Frigon
• 2nd Vice-President:	Vacant
• Past President	Brenda Boyd
• Secretary	Sandy Duncan
• Director at Large	Cliff Bennett
• Director at Large	Vacant
• Finance Chair	John Blais

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| • Treasurer | Vacant |
| • Membership Chair | Sylvia Miller |
| • Environmental Education Chair | Bob Smith |
| • Nature Talks Co-Chairs | Ron Williamson/Rosalind Reid (UNTIL June 24) |
| • Publicity Chair | Louise Beckinsale |
| • Conservation & Habitat Restoration Chair | Vacant |

The motion CARRIED.

In answer to questions of clarification, the President explained that a “Nominating Committee” and a “Tech Committee” as well as an “Outings Committee” have been made into full-time committees after discussions at the Board level. Also, Terms of Reference for vacant positions could be made available at future AGM meetings.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Val Wilkinson addressed her comments/events outlined in the “President’s Report” which formed part of the Annual Report. Please refer to the Annual Report for specifics on events held, progress achieved through the Club’s various programs and committees, volunteers involvement and future needs of the Club.

She thanked all the committee volunteers for the work they do, Brent Eades for his ongoing website support and Denis Gallant for his continuing technical contribution, also the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation for their agreement to supply second year undergraduate grants in conjunction with our Bursary program.

Finally, she expressed her sincere thanks to the Board of Directors for their hard work and support and as well to Beverly Blais, for her continued efforts as Recording Secretary.

On behalf of the membership, Val Wilkinson was thanked for her efforts in her role as Club President.

Moved by Pete MacEwen, seconded by Rosalind Reid THAT: the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Beverly Blais
Recording Secretary.