

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and Agricultural Society held at 7 p.m. on Monday, November 22 2021 via Zoom

Those present: Roger Painter - President, Roy Davies - Vice President, Robin Brett - Treasurer, Laura Baird, Lynne Pohynayko, Mike Wilson, Jayne Shaw, Brenda Burch, Russell Dann, Linda Bilkoski, Dave Bilkoski and Gerry Giles - Secretary

Call to order at 7:01 p.m. by President Roger Painter who welcomed all to the meeting. He confirmed that all members had received appropriate email notice of the AGM and all had received copies of the agenda along with supporting attachments.

Moved Robin Brett
Second Lynne Pohynayko
the minutes of the 2020 AGM be adopted as distributed. MOTION CARRIED

President's Report: Roger Painter provided the following report: He said his report is intended to give an overview of the activities and actions of the Institute over the past year. With the restrictions we've faced over the past 20 months it's heartening to see what we have accomplished given the challenges we have faced. So, in no particular order I'm going to list off the activities, events and projects that were undertaken.

1. Cobble Hill Virtual Fair
2. The Car Show and Shine.
3. The Concert in the Commons
4. Bonfire for Halloween with hot dogs and chocolate.
5. Help out with Remembrance Day
6. Completion of all the renovations for the Youth Hall, including a new kitchen.
7. Some modest rentals are now starting to happen with some of our long-term clients
8. General maintenance parties have been busy cleaning up the grounds and buildings. This includes keeping the place clean with mowing, removal of the former heather display, replaced with a new one and other activities.
9. We've seen continued support of previous sponsors, both with the Fair and advertising around the Hall
10. We've been able establish 30+ blueberry plants and 10 fruit trees provided by the CVRD. All are doing well.
11. Our initial success with The Red Cross Grants for supplying almost 9000 meals in the mist of Covid shut downs was followed up with the production and sale of thousands of meat pies as a fund raiser to support our facilities.
12. We've seen continued support and success for the Seniors lunch program.
13. And we've done a lot of preliminary work to make it possible to begin construction in the future of our Centennial Project which is the addition to the Hall to improve the Kitchen and Dining area.
14. People in our community have donated \$42,000 towards the Centennial Project. SO FAR. And our opportunities for Grants to help out are looking hopeful.

15. I'm sure I've missed a few things but for us to have accomplished all of this is quite remarkable and speaks to the one asset that has increased. Our volunteers.

We're now on the other side of the Vaccine roll-out and things are starting to open up more. With all the restrictions and reduced contact that we've all had to endure during Covid, I've noticed that people are wanting to come out and be more active and do things. The Farmer's Institute has seen this and responded by opening up to the community. We've seen good attendance at the Halloween bonfire, The Car Show and Concert and Remembrance Day ceremony. People are wanting to be involved. With us in the institute this was true even before the vaccines started being administered. For us we have had a lot of volunteers for all of the items I listed up above. Part of reason was because we took good effort to make sure that when we worked together, we followed health rules. People felt reasonably safe when involved with Hall activities. Part of it was also because we were successful in our efforts to help others while raising funds for the hall. As I mentioned we've had a large group of people come forward and help with our various activities. Now I'm not going name anyone specifically in terms of volunteers. This isn't about recognition. People rarely do this kind of stuff for that reason anyway. I really want to take the time to thank all of you and those not here for all your help in going from keeping us afloat to moving forward in a big way.

Most importantly reaching back to March 2020 when we were facing some pretty difficult times financially. We've found the ways to mitigate this and have been very successful over the past 20 months and have even been able to work on some capital projects. The dreary outlook we faced at the beginning of the pandemic has been turned to a sense of moving forward. We're working on those plans to put an addition to the Hall, originally as a way of celebrating the Hall's 100th year. Just a dream at one point after Covid hit, but now this is very much on its way. You will hear more about this during the meeting from our Treasurer and Secretary.

One other item I'd like to address before closing my report. One of the items I noticed over the past 2 years as your president is that the negativity that used to be prevalent in the Society has been replaced with a "we can do it" and a "we are working together attitude". Those things that seemed to plague us in the past and led to a loss of our energy and volunteers, has seemed to be replaced with a Let's work together for the community approach. Many community organizations run with a few people to keep them going and are operated by a small handful of overworked long-time volunteers. We have many volunteers and supporters and should all be proud to be part of this organization that operates this wonderful Community asset.

As President I view my job as having several focuses, but first and foremost is the protection and maintenance of the physical assets of the Institute, the Hall with all other buildings along with the grounds and services that allow us to function. And keeping them in the hands of our community. I'm not alone in that responsibility but I view it as a President's primary task. I believe we are as strong now as we have ever been.

I want to thank all of you for supporting and working with our executive, our board and myself in operating the Society over the past year.

Moved Jayne Shaw
Second Robin Brett
the president's report be accepted as read.

MOTION CARRIED

Treasurer's Report. The following was provided by Robin Brett: As you are aware the Financial Statements are much more consolidated than the monthly statements you get. The breakdown of the Project totals are as follows:

Hall and Grounds	(18,477.98)
Institute	16,185.13
Fair	9,141.43
Miscellaneous Programs	42,922.40
Catering	23,256.18
Net Earnings	<u>73,027.16</u>

The Net Earnings of \$73,027.16 includes the \$42,000 donated for the Centennial Project, so our actual net earnings from all other programs equals \$30,104.76. This \$30,104.76 contrasts with the nearly equivalent loss in 2019, so we are in pretty good shape having weathered this second year of Covid.

There were times since Covid began when I doubted our ability to come through this, starting with a \$30,000 loss in our current earnings, and cancelled Seedy Saturdays, rentals, and 2 Fairs. But thanks to Jason urging a long hard examination of our finances when Covid first began, we've survived. And we survived not only the first lockdown but subsequent ones as well.

We've made money in several projects and the Finance Committee has paid close attention to make sure that everything we've done has made money, even if it's just a little bit. We've made do, and where we've spent money (such as the upgrade the Youth Hall) we've stayed within a very strict budget. And by reducing our spending to only essentials, we have extended the time to sustain the Institute until we can make it through.

I believe it's taught us something too: to live within our means, to save for things we want to do and then do them, to budget, to work together towards a common goal even when the work was messy and hard and we didn't really want to, and to celebrate small victories together. These are all qualities people 100 years ago cherished, and it's been both challenging and comforting to get back to those basic values ourselves.

Aside from keeping control of finances, we have been blessed by having a core of volunteers who have come back week after week to make and sell meat pies that have

not only helped the institute's finances but have helped the entire community get through some tough times. We've made thousands of meals for the food bank, Malahat Nation, and Cowichan Green Community (who supply meals to the Cowichan Tribes and homeless). We have also supported the South Cowichan Seniors who have prepared thousands of meals for the seniors during Covid.

We also had a core of volunteers who, realizing we could not have a regular Cobble Hill Fair, starting thinking outside the box that first year and pivoted to a very successful virtual fair and concert supported by the business community and then last year added to it by having a virtual fair, concert and car show.

Annual 2022 Budget

I prepared two budgets to the board of Directors as I was in a real quandary regarding which budget to present. One is based on having a 2022 in-person Fair and all the usual events and rentals, and the second one based on another Virtual Fair and some sort of entertainment like we had in 2021. Since we are still in a place where Covid numbers are rising and we won't get another change in the rules from Dr. Henry until the end of January, the Board adopted the leaner budget to present to the AGM because that is where we are right now.

Moved Roy Davies
Second Lynne Pohynayko
the treasurer's report be accepted as presented. MOTION CARRIED

Moved Russell
Second Jayne
the 2022 budget be accepted as presented. MOTION CARRIED

Moved Robin
Second Dave
2020/21 financial reviewers report be accepted. MOTION CARRIED

Moved Robin
Second Roy
Gay Wise of Wise Financial Services be appointment the financial reviewer for 2021/22. MOTION CARRIED

Secretary's Report was provided by Gerry Giles: In addition to being responsible for producing the agendas and minutes of the Society, and with the assistance of Glenn Terrell and Paul Mycroft, I now handle most aspects of managing both our Farmers Institute and our Cobble Hill Fair websites. This has resulted in a substantial savings for the Farmers Institute both in dollars and in frustration as changes to the sites can now be made in a timely manner, which is especially important around Fair time. Working with these two gentlemen has been an absolute pleasure and quite a learning experience. Both are willing to share their vast knowledge with the Farmers Institute which has resulted in significant savings for us.

While minutes and report do get posted on the website, articles written by me about the Farmers Institute for *South Cowichan Life* do not. Eric Yan purchased Cowichan Press from David Knott a few years ago, and Eric has carried on the tradition of providing free space to local groups and organizations to communicate with the community. Below is the article written that summarizes our past year and navel gazes about the year ahead.

As the daylight hours get shorter, one tends to settle in and reflect on the year gone by as well as think about the year ahead. We at the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute are no different.

As we look back we are again immensely grateful for the community we live in. The 'generosity of spirit' shown by our volunteers and businesses in the South Cowichan area knows no bounds. From our pot pie making and sales, which have kept us a float during these very difficult Covid-19 times, to our Virtual Fair, Day of Celebration and our Halloween Bonfire, we are grateful to those who have supported us when we have not been able to rent our halls or hold our traditional fundraisers.

Who would have thought in March of 2020 when this global pandemic was first declared that it would still be with us in December of 2021? We certainly didn't! Because of Covid-19, the wonderful Christmas Concert in support of the CMS Food Bank cannot be held again this year. Instead, the Farmers Institute will be gifting 500 of our delicious pot pies to the Food Bank for Christmas. Scheduling the very popular Seedy Saturday in March has its challenges: it usually attracts more than 2,000 people so unless we can manage attendance this event might also not take place in 2022. We are hopeful our Easter Egg Hunt (the best in the Cowichan Valley) will return in 2022 and we are looking forward to hosting our traditional Cobble Hill Fair in person on August 27, 2022. Our Show & Shine was a very popular addition to our roster of events this year so we would like to add another Show & Shine in 2022.

Of course we all want to see the return of the fantastic Seniors Luncheon inside the Cobble Hill Hall in 2022. These luncheons are now going into their ninth year and although the meals were adapted to take out during the pandemic, everyone is looking forward to renewing the social contact provided by meeting inside the hall.

As this year draws to a close, we hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season. Our appreciation goes to Eric and *The Cowichan Press* as well as *South Cowichan Life* for providing us with this community forum. Please stay safe and well.

In addition to the normal secretarial duties, hall rentals also fall under my purview which involves everything from showing the buildings to ensuring the damage deposits, insurance, rents, liquor licences and Covid-19 plans are in place and will be followed before the doors are opened. The Cobble Hill Hall and the Youth Hall now have computer controlled heating/cooling systems that are monitored from my home as is the keypad computer entry system that have replaced the need for keys to all three buildings. While this has served to modernized the operations, the halls still need to be monitored and checked after each rental to ensure they have been used properly and respected by renters before the damage deposit is returned.

As Robin has reported, the Farmers Institute was successful in applying for and achieving funding from the Red Cross to provide meals for the Malahat Nation, the CMS Food Bank, the Cowichan Green Community and through them Cowichan Tribes and some of the homeless population in Duncan. We also provided meals for families and individuals in need in the South Cowichan area. In total over 10,000 very wholesome meals were provided to community in a matter of months, and the Malahat Nation credits our program as one of the reasons Covid-19 did not hit their reservation hard during their 'Shelter in Place' order. The successful operation of the Red Cross program led to the Farmers Institute carrying on and with its Pot Pie program. With it we hoped to fill the financial void created by the lack of renters and our traditional fundraisers as well as continue to provide some meals to those in need in our community. While we have been able to achieve that goal, it would not have been possible without the support of a group of absolutely fantastic volunteers who believe in giving back to the community in which they live.

The Farmers Institute's hard work on behalf of the community has not gone unnoticed. A friend stopped by one day to ask what we were doing. When it was explained he asked what would make the life of the volunteers doing this work easier. When the Board thought about it, the natural was a storage room/kitchen expansion that would provide space for a walk in fridge/freezer so all of the finished food would not need to be wheeled down to the basement. This addition could also house the unused tables/chairs and a small office. Several donations toward this project have now been made and we have about half of the money needed for the project. Moreover, it appears one of the applications made for a federal government grant looks promising.

In order to proceed with the addition mentioned above, the CVRD requires the Farmers Institute property to be consolidated. Currently, the Cobble Hill Hall straddles 3 or 4 of our 6 lots. The CVRD will not issue a building permit for the addition unless the lots are consolidated or a firewall is constructed, which means the wall would go through the middle of the kitchen. In order to consolidate the property, all of the titles needed to be put into the correct legal name. That, in and of itself, was no easy task for an organization that is over 108 years old and has changed its name several times over the years. However, the property is now registered in our legal name, 'Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and Agricultural Society' and we are waiting for the lots to be consolidated. Our Farmers Institute member David Cherry, of DEC Designs, has designed the addition to the building and the drawings have been reviewed by an architect. We are just waiting for funding and the lot consolidation before we can proceed with this project.

The Seniors Lunch program is still going strong. When Covid-19 was declared a pandemic in March of 2020, the group involved in organizing it converted the Seniors Lunch program to a takeout service. We currently serve between 240 - 260 meals on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The menu is emailed out on Thursday and seniors have until Saturday to order their meals, which are \$6 each. Seniors can order up to 6 meals for pick up and they can choose to have them either cooled or frozen. These meals usually include a dessert.

The seniors are looking forward to getting back in the hall as they miss the opportunity to socialize with their peer group. Those responsible for preparing the Seniors

Luncheon meals thank the Farmers Institute for the use of the Hall and kitchen. They are grateful for the support shown to this program over the years.

Moved Russell Dann
Second Lynne Pohynayko

the secretary's report be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

CVRD Report 2021/22 distributed for information only.

Maintenance Report - Roger/Robin

- Youth Hall Heat Pump is not working properly and is being manually controlled to prevent the unit from freezing up
- Grounds Clean Up is working well and the grounds look very good
- A new List of Proposed Capital Projects has been developed and will be reviewed by the Board to establish some priority for the work to be done
- the Youth Hall interior has been painted and the has been kitchen redone. It looks like a totally new building.

Moved Jayne Shaw
Second Russell Dann

the maintenance report be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Elections for 2022 - Roy Davies reported for the nominating committee. He indicated there are six positions up for re election: The president, secretary and four directors. Currently Directors Russell Dann, Jayne Shaw, Lynne Pohynayko and Brenda Burch have another year to fill in their terms and all have indicated a willingness to continue on.

Call for election of President - Roger Painter was nominated and elected by acclamation
Call for election of Secretary - Gerry Giles was nominated and elected by acclamation
Call for election of four directors. The following individuals were nominated and elected to a two year term by acclamation.

Gord Dickenson, Blair Herbert, Nellie Poelman and Bill Wikkerink.

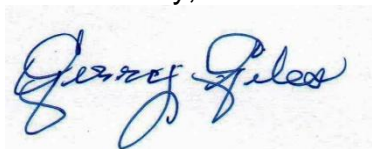
New business:

Mike Wilson updated the meeting by mentioning the issues of

- ✓ placing Memorial Benches in the parks at no cost to taxpayers; and
- ✓ the construction of a Band Shell in Memorial Park, which would face the Cobblestone

There being no further business, it was moved by Lynne Pohynayko at 7:47 p.m. the meeting adjourn.

Submitted by,



Gerry Giles, Secretary