

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and Agricultural Society held on November 25th 2024 at 7 p.m. in the Cobble Hill Hall located at 3550 Watson Avenue in Cobble Hill, BC.

Those present: Roy Davies – Vice President, Robin Brett – Treasurer, Marian Davies, Lisa Davies, Russell Dann, Scott Robinson, Michael St. Clair, Betsy Burr, Shirley Cook, Linda Bilkoski and Gerry Giles – Secretary.

Apologies: Roger Painter - in Australia.

Vice President Roy Davies called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and explained the agenda was set in accordance to the bylaws of the society.

The minutes of the November 27, 2023 Annual General Meeting had been distributed by email.

Moved/second
the minutes be adopted as distributed.

MOTION CARRIED

There was no business arising out of minutes.

President's Report: Roger provided the following report via email, which Roy read to those present: Greetings to all from Perth Australia. We are visiting family. We have two young grandchildren we haven't seen in two years and Wow have they grown. It's so nice to be dressed in shorts and a T-shirt. That is a true pleasure. However, I won't continue down that vein as you'll only throw things at me when I get home.

The past year of the Farmers Institute has been very successful. Our usual events have all progressed with great success. Our signature events which include Seedy Saturday, and the Show and Shine were quite successful. I would like to thank the main organizers and all the volunteers for their hard work. Among other activities we also held an Easter Egg hunt and a Halloween Bonfire for the community. The 115th Cobble Hill Fair continued to grow back after the impacts of Covid, even if we were all looking at the sky and listening to the rain on our roofs the night before the Fair. In the end the sky opened up by late morning and we had a wonderful day. Some points of interest outside of the usual program saw an increase in food, a miniature horse show and a full poultry competition. Although I don't intend to steal our Treasurer's thunder, the Fair did well last year financially, thanks not only to our wonderful leaders and volunteers and our host of community sponsors, but to the community that comes out to support our event. Improvements in our technical capabilities, including improved Wi-Fi facilities, ability to manage electronic money through squares and the increase electrical capability on the grounds have greatly increased our ability to put on a successful event. Like everywhere in our society, costs are up but we continue to make enough with our various financial commitments.

Aside from the events we continue to improve and expand on our food services. The pot pie program has continued to provide good financial returns and some of the food catering events have resulted in very positive responses from such organizations as WiGA and the local Legion. This can only get better as the word spreads. Again, I will leave the financial response for our treasurer to expand upon.

We continue to host the Seniors Lunch Program by providing them with the use of our facilities and utilities.

As to our facilities and grounds, we have been able to raise enough monies both donations and fundraising, to move ahead with replacement of the floors in the Main Hall and other. This will begin on December 10th.

Other items of note include:

- upgrading and replacement of the Main Hall security system and the Youth Hall this year
- underground wiring to provide greater electrical distribution on the site.
- replacement of the stove fire suppression system in the kitchen.

Our past success with grant applications has provided us with the revenue to make a number of improvements of the past few years including the above-mentioned electrical upgrade. Although there are other items that will need to be worked on in the coming year there are none that are significant. We will be doing some waterline repairs in the 4-H area, and some possible upgrades in the kitchen if money permits.

Our Rentals continue to be quite successful and although they don't fully offset our overall maintenance and operations requirements, our rentals do provide much needed revenue to the Institute. I will leave this to the Secretary, who among her many other duties has been managing rentals portfolio to provide an overview.

Now to the future. Recently our Treasurer and Secretary have indicated that they will not be continuing in their positions with the Institute. After all the hard work and long hours, they have put into the Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers institute, this is more than understandable. They recognize that it's time for others to take up the torch. Their outstanding and broad spectrum of involvement for the Institute will leave a big hole. We are currently looking at the activities and work that Gerry and Robin do and finding new ways for taking on the responsibilities that they have taken on over the years. Theirs is a story of dedication and hard work. Of never saying no and picking up many tasks that would not have happened if they hadn't stepped up. Although we are grateful for their efforts, in retrospect, we as an organization need to review how we operate and spread out the workload. This does not speak to their abilities or skills. Both Gerry and Robin have left an incredible mark on the organization and guaranteed our future for the foreseeable future. But the very nature of volunteer work and the tendency of burdening people with way too much work is not good for the individual or the Institute. My main goal for the coming year, aside from the usual responsibilities, will be to focus on putting the efforts into reorganizing how we do things and who we can find to do them, and to spread the work load out. I am hopeful that the Board will support me in doing this. We need new blood as many of us are getting past our best before date. As I see it, our job now should be to reorganize what we do and recruit new people and pass the torch to them for managing this community treasure. We need to consider what we do and how we do it. So, in moving forward we will need to consider all of the work that both Gerry and Robin were responsible for, including their Fair duties, find out what is the best way to share the workload, and find new volunteers for the work. That in itself will be quite a task. In doing that we will at other tasks as well to see how they fit in with our needs.

I am confident that there are lots of people in our community who would be glad to come on board. This organization and its resources hold a very special and important place in our community, and it is our responsibility to make sure that it continues robustly into the future.

This is my 7th year coming up as president. Originally, I had not planned to stay on this long. However, Covid kind of changed that as far as I was concerned. I too will be looking to the future and seeing what is best for the Institute. I know this is probably not the report you might have expected me to give. But we all need to recognize change happens even if you don't want it to. One way or the other I am hoping that the coming year will not be about change as much as it will be about Renewal. I am looking forward to working with our current members and the new board members that you will select tonight. Meanwhile we will continue to operate as usual this year but with a different set of faces.

Sincerely,

Roger Painter, President,

ps I would not be able to put this report together without recognizing our many volunteers and foremost our two most active volunteers Gerry Giles and Robin Brett. Long term, pivotal and influential.

Moved/second

The President's report be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Treasurer's Report: Robin said every year she presents a balanced budget for the board and membership to consider, and you have one before you now, that needs to be passed. When she says balanced, she means the revenue and expenses equal each other. You can see how close we came to ending up the 2024 year balanced – we were less than \$5 out.

As usual Gay Wise's statement has things consolidated so Robin referred you back to the statement she gives you, to see the breakdown of all the different projects we did during the last fiscal year. Gay also separates the Receivables into amounts owed to us (Assets) and deposits on rentals (Liabilities). Robin said she originally had the Receivables set up this way, but one previous Director insisted they be combined, so a change was made in the set-up of the bookkeeping. Gay has correctly separated them into these two categories on her statement.

Robin said, when she started as Treasurer the board had not had monthly financial statements for some time, even though it is required in the bylaws. She felt that it was impossible for a board to make decisions without understanding where they are at financially. So, one of her goals was to make sure they got an up-to-date financial statement every month and she has accomplished that.

Her other goal was to try and put the Farmers Institute on a firmer financial footing and she believes she has accomplished that too. But she said she didn't do that alone. That took many volunteers, and she wants to note two of them. One was Jason Walker who urged me early on to face Covid and start planning to get through what we thought would be a few months and turned out to be a two-year ordeal. And the other person is Gerry Giles who organized and ran nearly every event that got the Farmers Institute out of debt and into the positive financial position you see today. Every person in this Institute owes her a debt of gratitude.

Robin said, last year she was awarded a lifetime membership in the Farmers Institute. She thanked the membership for that honour and especially for the trust they have placed in her over the years.

Moved/second
the 2025 SCHFIAS Budget be accepted as presented. MOTION CARRIED

Moved/second
the treasurer's report be accepted as presented. MOTION CARRIED

Moved/second
Gay Wise of Wise Financial Services be appointed reviewer for the ensuing year.
MOTION CARRIED

Secretary's Report: Gerry said she was re-elected to the board of directors in 2014 and had the privilege of replacing Bonnie Wadds as secretary of the Farmers Institute in 2015. Bonnie had been a wonderful secretary of the society for many, many years. However, when she left the organization, it was in flux. Dave Bilkoski had become President and he recognized the need to modernize. At the very least updating the Cobble Hill rental system was urgent. Mainly because no one really knew who had keys to the buildings; consequently, no one knew who was coming and going.

Dave and Robin Brett worked for hours and days putting together rental calendars that made sense and they are still used today. But those did not do much to secure the buildings from the multiple keys floating around the community, and our insurance company was less than pleased with that situation. So, in came the door keypads and alarm systems which ran remotely through my home computer. The keypad system to the Cobble Hill Hall has recently been changed to Thorn Security. She said she now manages two door and alarm systems remotely. One for the Cobble Hill Hall and a different system for the Youth Hall and the Stu Armour Hall.

At this point she recognized both Dave Bilkoski and Robin Brett for putting the Farmers Institute on the solid business footing it is on and for the bookkeeping controls that are now in place. She said she hoped our organization never goes back to the day where the board and membership does not get monthly/yearly up-to-date financial statements.

Websites for the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and the Cobble Hill Fair are in place and these have been maintained by her with the help of Market 2 All. Anyone can look on the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute website under the DOWNLOAD tab to see most of the Farmers Institute business including minutes, financial statements, reports and reviewers' documents.

She said she could go on, but she thinks it is sufficient to say in one form or another, she has been involved with the Farmers Institute since moving to the Cobble Hill Community in 1972. She has worked on Fairs sweeping roads, washing dishes, cooking food, preparing catalogues, and selling sponsorships. She has been a convener for eggs, woodworking and honey along with a wide range of other Fair related activities including installing fencing, emptying garbage amongst other things... mostly what others did not want to do. For the organization, she has been the secretary twice now. She has written and obtained grants, looked after hall rentals, created historical articles and posts, arranged for insurance, taken the lead on special events and catering as well as making pot pies and doing the pancake breakfast and lunch at the Show & Shine.

She said she has enjoyed her involvement with this society and is pleased to be a life member of it. She said she is sure she will continue to be involved in one form or another; however, it is time for a change. She said she intends to travel more and enjoy what time she has left on this earth.

She thanked the members present for tolerating her for as long as they have. And said, this half a century has gone by far too quickly!

Moved/second
the secretary's report be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Election of Vice President and Directors:

Michael St Clair ran the election: Roy Davies was nominated as Vice President and elected by acclimation. Betsy Burr was then nominated as a director and she was also elected by acclimation. Both terms are for two years and will expire at the end of 2026.

New Business:

Moved/second
the Vice President be added as a signing authority on the society's bank accounts.

MOTION CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Submitted by,



Gerry Giles,
Secretary