



# **2015 Annual General Meeting / l'Assemblée générale annuelle**

## **Minutes**

**17 September 2015  
5:30-6:30pm  
Summerside, Prince Edward Island**

### **CRRF Members Present**

Heather Hall, Al Lauzon, Sean Markey, Sarah Breen, Terri MacDonald, Bojan Furst, Bruno Jean, Bill Reimer, Rob Greenwood, Craig Pollett, Kelly Vodden, Heather Clemenson, David Douglas, Bill Ashton,

### **Guests**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Al thanked everyone for attending.

#### **2. Review and approval of agenda**

Al asked whether there were any additional items for the agenda. Hearing none he sought a motion to accept the agenda. Deb moved that the agenda for September 17, 2015 be accepted; seconded by Sean and approved by all.

#### **3. Review and approval of 2014 CRRF/FCRR AGM Minutes**

Al explained that the 2014 AGM was held in Prince George, B.C on September 26, 2014. Al asked whether there were any changes for the 2014 CRRF/FCRR AGM Minutes. Hearing none he sought a motion to approve the minutes. Bill R. the 2014 CRRF/FCRR AGM Minutes be approved; Seconded by Sarah and approved by all.

#### **4. Report of President**

Al noted that over the course of the last year the Foundation has been engaged in leading, supporting and collaborating on rural research and working with our stakeholders to ensure they receive the benefits of ongoing research through knowledge mobilization and transfer.



A hallmark event over the last year for the Foundation was the release of the report *State of Rural Canada: Rural Challenges and Opportunities*. Through the efforts of 33 volunteer authors we were able to create this report in the hopes of highlighting rural issues in the upcoming federal election. Al acknowledged the efforts of the editorial team: Sarah-Patricia Breen, Sean Markey, Laura Ryser, Ryan Gibson, and Ruth Mealy and their willingness to “herd cats”. The willingness of the editorial team and the authors to take this project on in what are already busy professional lives embodies the spirit of CRRF/FCRR and its culture of volunteerism, dedication and commitment to rural and remote Canada.

One of the other major objectives of this year was working on the development of a new strategic plan for CRRF/FCRR. This was a large undertaking and we benefited through the willingness of Joy Dornian who volunteered to bring her experience to facilitate this process.

Al also recognized the great success of the 2014 Conference that took place in Prince George, BC. It saw 172 delegates gather and participate in 25 workshops/presentations and five plenary keynote speakers. It was truly a remarkable event that demonstrated the benefits of forging new partnerships.

Finally, CRRF in partnership with the upcoming Building Community Resilience conference, received to host a Rural Policy Capacity Building Initiative for graduate students. The program is an opportunity for 20 graduate students to build networks with senior rural scholars and leading rural policy analysts and knowledge mobilizers and to prepare a policy brief for publication in an edited volume on a topic of their choice related to the conference. Through the program, each graduate student will be paired with a senior scholar and a senior policy-maker/knowledge disseminator to provide guidance, enhance networking, and strengthen the policy brief output. Al thanked Ryan, Heather and Laurie for organizing this initiative.

Kelly V. thanked everyone for their hard work on the *State of Rural Canada*; it was very needed and very timely. Ryan noted that there was 377 downloads in the first hour.

Heather Clemenson explained that CRRF releases a report in 1993 called “A profile of Rural Canada” and it had a large impact because people wanted that kind of information. She hoped that this report will have a similar impact.

## **5. Report of Treasurer**

Sean noted that we \$27,252 in our account. There will be expenses for the SORC and travel for the conference. Our audit was completed by Harris Ryan for 2014 and all is in



accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Sean thanked Bill A for his continued assistance.

## **6. Approval of audited financial statement**

Al sought a motion that we accept the December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 CRRF Audited Financial Statements report. Sean moved a motion that the December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 CRRF Audited Financial Statements report be accepted; Seconded by Bill A and approved by all.

## **7. Appointment of auditors for 2015-2016**

Al sought a motion to appoint Harris Ryan as the auditor for the 2015 fiscal year; Sean moved the motion to appoint Harris Ryan as the Auditor for 2015; Seconded by Sarah and approved by all.

Sean noted we should, however, start looking at what different auditors charge for 2016 but we. It currently costs CRRF around \$1697.

## **8. CRRF Strategic Plan (2015-2020)**

Al explained that our strategic plan expired in 2015. Joy Dorian volunteered her time to facilitate an engagement process with the board. Al and Joy then crafted the plan and sent to the draft to the executive for review. It was then brought to the full board for review. At the board review, members suggested that we send it to several people for an outside review. It was sent to Bojan Furst and Andrew who made recommendations to change the language to make it more clear and user friendly.

Al went through the strategic plan. With regards to membership – Kelly asked how many members CRRF currently has. Ryan noted that the current number is 94; last year was 62; and previously it was in the 30s.

There was a suggestion to add the membership fee to the conference cost to increase the membership numbers. We were also asked about the fee structure and whether there was a differential fee structure for community institutions etc.

With regards to partnerships – it was noted that we need to continue the great work we're doing. Al indicated that he is really interested in the knowledge mobilization



piece – getting information out to practitioners in a format they can use, which is something we will look at this year in more detail.

There was a suggestion to have influence and making a difference as an objective or within Goal #2 or 3 in the strategic plan. It speaks to researchers, but also to people in community that it really is about making a difference in people's lives. Right now it is written as inform practitioners but that is a weaker word compared to influence. We explained the caution about advocacy and our charitable status. Al asked for ideas to change the wording but there was no consensus.

Bill A noted that in Goal #4, all the objectives are expenditures related and there are no revenue related objectives. Al noted that there are some actions to generate revenues in goal #2. Bill R also raised the issue of the relationship with RPLC and CRRF – RPLC is a time limited initiative; CRRF can be the RPLC institutional legacy, which gives us 6 years to leverage and take over the RPLC pieces. The question then becomes generating enough to keep the RPLC website going Al noted that he and Bill have had some discussions – might need \$20,000 a year to manage the website. However, this item exceeds the life of this strategic plan and we can evaluate that later.

Ryan noted that we could create a broad vision for the strategic plan that takes into account the suggestion about influence or a bold statement about what we do.

Terri suggested that we add an action under Goal #2 – that our revenue generation strategy extends beyond charitable donations.

Al asked for a motion to accept the CRRF Strategic Plan as amended. Terry moved the motion to accept the CRRF Strategic Plan; Seconded by Kelly and approved by all.

Ryan suggested that we should send a note of gratitude to Joy from the board.

## **9. Committee reports**

### **a. Membership**

Ryan provided the information on behalf of Ruth Mealey. There are 94 members in good standing. We need to update membership information for a few folks. The membership committee is exploring sending out more communications on how they can engage with CRRF and our committee's. We are also looking at how to connect with renewals and updating.

Al asked whether we have a breakdown by stakeholder group. Ryan noted that two-thirds are academic and one-third are community practitioners.



Bill A recognized the work of Eileen Silvius at RDI who assists with managing the registration. The board thanked her for her hard work and dedication to CRRF.

#### ***b. Communications***

Ryan explained that an unexpected task involved a website redesign. We have roughly 1000 unique visitors a month. The website has turned into a pathfinder to get people to where they need to be. The other objective is the e-newsletter. It goes out once a month with great info on rural events and stories from across the country. Please send any information to Ryan. Our listserv has 500 federal employees and goes out to 2,000 people across the country. 75-80% open the emails. We also have the online calendar of events hosted on the CRRF website in partnership with RPLC. Al mentioned the e-newsletter that profiled the work of grad students and community researchers. Ryan explained it was the first time we did this and it was a great experience for the students. We are planning to do another in a few months.

#### ***c. Policy and Advocacy***

Heather provided an update about the initial discussions including our concerns over advocacy and our charitable status. The Rural Policy Capacity Building Initiative for graduate students will provide a different approach to do policy and advocacy work. Al noted that we need more discussions about the importance of our charitable status and the impact we can have with or without it.

Bill R noted that RPLC can advocate in a different way because they fall under a different set of rules. Rob G noted some of the challenges in the past, including who speaks for CRRF? And how do we operationalize policy and advocacy? Ryan noted that we might not be the advocate but could be the vehicle to get information out. Heather also noted that the SORC falls under our efforts to have more policy and advocacy. Sean also included the election questions on rural.

#### ***d. Strategic Networks***

Lars is the chair of this committee. Al noted that we haven't accomplished a whole lot this year. There were some initial discussions with BC but they are on hold. They look forward to working on strategic networks over the next year.

#### ***e. Charitable Status and Endowment***

Ryan noted that this committee has taken a back seat over the last year as well. However a group of people are interested in looking at how we can use our charitable



status more strategically, including what are the options and what does it mean to pursue those options.

## **10. Election of Board and Officers**

### ***a. Nominations Committee Report***

Ryan explained how each board member sits for a two-year term and can be elected to serve a second two-year term. Current members of the board included: Ryan Gibson, Heather Hall, Terri MacDonald, Sean Markey, Sarah Breen, Al Lauzon, Chris Southcott, Laura Ryser, Lars Hallstrom, Ruth Mealey and Ramona Cameletti. Four members have terms that are expiring: Al Lauzon, Lars Hallstrom, Laura Ryser, and Chris Southcott. Al has indicated that he will run again, However, Lars Hallstrom, Laura Ryser, and Chris Southcott are leaving the board because their terms are up and they are not seeking renewal.

Ryan noted that CRRF is seeking the election of President, Secretary, Treasurer and three new members.

Ryan explained that the nominations committee has solicited a number of names and that we also needed to identify an election officer.

Heather moved a motion to appoint David as the election officer; Seconded by Sean and approval by all.

### ***b. Election of board and offices***

David indicated that the nominations committee is putting forward four names – Al Lauzon, Sarah Minnes, Bojan Furst and Craig Pollett. A nomination can also come forward from the floor.

David explained that there were five board positions open and that the Nominations Committee was putting forward four names - Al Lauzon, Sarah Minnes, Bojan Furst and Craig Pollett. He asked for any nominations from the floor. David called three times for the nominations from the floor. He called a second time for nominations from the floor; He called a third time for nominations from the floor. David declared by acclamation four new members – Al Lauzon, Sarah Minnes, Bojan Furst and Craig Pollett.

David noted that the President, Secretary and Treasurer positions were all open and Al Lauzon and Sean Markey noted they were willing to stand again. Heather has decided to step down as Secretary for her final year on the board. David called for any nominations from the floor for President and Treasurer; He called a second time for nominations from the floor for President and Treasurer; He called a third time for nominations from the floor for President and Treasurer. Hearing none, David



declared by acclamation Al Lauzon as President and Sean Markey as Treasurer. David indicated that the nominations committee nominates Sarah Breen for Secretary. He called for any nominations from the floor for Secretary; called a second time for nominations from the floor; called a third time for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, David declared Sarah Breen as Secretary through a unanimous vote.

Al thanked the 2014-2015 board for their service.

#### **11. Announcement of New Lifetime Members**

Ryan and Al announced our newest lifetime members - Bruno Jean and Bill Reimer. More information would be provided at the banquet.

#### **12. Reflections on the 2015 Conference**

Heather said great job to all the partners;

#### **13. Announcement of 2016 Annual Conference**

Al noted that we are working on a location and will have an announcement very soon. We do know it will be back in central Canada in October 2016.

#### **14. Adjournment**

Heather moved a motion to adjourn.