

**THE OTTAWA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

September 16, 2013

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, CEF, Ottawa, 7:00 p.m.

Chair: Fenja Brodo

Council Members Present: Annie Bélair, Dan Brunton, Carolyn Callaghan, Barbara Chouinard, Owen Clarkin, Barry Cottam, Don Hackett, David Hobden, Diane Kitching, Diane Lepage, Ann MacKenzie, Lynn Ovenden, Rémy Poulin, Jeff Skevington, Henry Steger, Ken Young, Eleanor Zurbrigg

Council Members Absent: Ian Davidson, Karen McLachlan Hamilton

1. Minutes of the June 17, 2013 meeting

Moved by H. Steger/D. Hackett that the
June 17th minutes be accepted as distributed.

Carried

**2. Minutes of Email Discussion and Vote regarding the Estate of Violetta Czasak,
July 11-16, 2013**

Eleanor pointed out that there is a typo in Violetta's last name in the first paragraph; Annie will make the correction.

Moved by A. Bélair/K. Young that the
minutes be accepted with this modification.

Carried

3. Venue for OFNC Monthly Meetings J. Skevington

Jeff and Fenja had a conference call with Nathalie Boulet, CMN, who told us that a new contract with the CMN would require us to pay \$400 + tax per event, and that next year it would be \$500; the full cost of renting the CMN facility is in fact \$1500. We agreed to \$300 + tax per event for a contract for the rest of 2013 and said that we would seek another venue for our meetings in 2014. Jeff has therefore booked a meeting room in the Neatby building for the monthly meetings, until June 2014. There is no cost for the facility, parking is free, and it is on major bus lines. However, an AAFC employee must be responsible for each meeting.

4. 2013-2014 OFNC Budget B. Chouinard

- a. Barbara sent the Finance Committee's report to Council (see [Annex 1](#)), along with the draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year, prior to the meeting. Committee chairs have reviewed the draft budget; changes can still be requested. Council will vote on the approval of the draft budget at the October meeting.

ACTION: All committee chairs to send revisions to the budget to Barbara prior to the October meeting.

- b. Council then had a long discussion on the FWG's finances (see [Note 4](#) in the Finance Committee's report to Council and the section on [Committee Budgets](#) in

the Treasurer's report). In the past, funds were forwarded by the club to the FWG's bank account per the budget. However, David pointed out that the funds were not transferred for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

MOTION: That Council approves a transfer of \$2000 for the fiscal year 2012-2013 to the FWG's bank account.

Moved by A. MacKenzie/D. Hobden

Vote: 12 in favour; 2 opposed; 2 abstained

CARRIED

There was general agreement that in the future each committee should present a budget covering its complete expected expenditures, itemized to whatever degree seems reasonable. These Council-approved expenditures will be paid by the Treasurer as receipts are submitted.

Some committees also engage in fund-raising, and the OFNC receives grants and donations from donors who specify a use for them. Council did not decide how to treat these in the budget process; this issue was put aside for further discussion. It was also suggested that Council devote most of February's meeting to discuss the FWG strategic plan.

- c. In [Note 1](#) of its report to Council, the Finance Committee mentions that the fact that online access to the CFN is free might explain why electronic subscriptions to the journal are down. Dan said that it is not supposed to be that way and that making the CFN available *only* to subscribers is the #1 priority for the Publications Committee this fall.

5. Treasurer's Report / Estate of Violetta Czasak K. Young

See [Annex 2](#) for Ken's report.

Carolyn added that we should think of a way to publically thank Violetta Czasak for bequeathing her estate to the OFNC, and include her friends in the celebration.

6. Remembering Departed OFNC Members

The Birds Committee is writing tributes to Gordon Pringle and Bob Bracken for T&L.

Ken asked the Birds Committee to let him know what the club should do with donations made in memory of Bob.

7. Ontario Nature D. Lepage

Diane reminded Council that the next Eastern Ontario Regional Meeting is on Sept. 21, in Bloomfield, Prince Edward County.

8. Other Committee Reports

See [Annex 3](#) for the FWG report and [Annex 4](#) for the Macoun Club report, sent prior to the meeting.

9. Motion to adjourn:

Moved by H. Steger/L. Ovenden that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Recording Secretary: A. Bélair

Meetings in 2013:

October 21

November 18

December 16

Finance Committee

Report to Council/Minutes of the OFNC Finance Committee Meeting August 28, 2013

Finance Committee members present:

Ann MacKenzie, Ken Young, Remy Poulin and Barbara Chouinard

Absent: Dan Brunton

Budgets for each of the accounts comprising revenues and expenses as listed on the financial statement were reviewed and discussed.

Some of the comments below are observations of the FC and some comments will require further action by the Finance Committee or Committee Chairs or even further discussion by council.

Membership Revenues are down – there may something we can do but this may require further analysis by the Membership Committee or a group tasked with the analysis. There may be larger implications for the club in the future.

Here are some “heads up” issues that need attention

1. Electronic Subscriptions are down possibly, in part, due to the fact that the electronic version of the CFN is freely accessible to non-subscribers and non-members. Begs the question: why pay for electronic CFN when it can be obtained for nothing? Every organization is looking for places to cut to save money and this is an obvious item where savings to subscribers to the electronic CFN can be realized. In order that members, but not non-members, can access the electronic CFN, maybe a Members-only protected website is needed. Extra has been set aside for work on the website.
2. Author Charges Revenue have also dropped. Invoices have not been paid, and it is unknown whether reminders are or are not being sent out. This should be addressed at the council meeting to understand the process. The alternative is to start writing off Bad Debts as expense.
3. Printing Expenses for CFN have also decreased and there are fixed costs whether there are electronic or print versions. On average the pattern for 126 and 127(1) the production cost is approximately \$10,000.per issue with the editorial costs of \$4,000.
4. Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Revenue estimate and expenses are estimated pending word from Fletcher. This is one area that was discussed that has to be addressed. Over the last couple of years, accounting procedures and allocations etc have been addressed and brought to council in order that the Finance Committee and the OFNC meet certain requirements of basic accounting principles. In particular for Fletcher and Macoun, funds are forwarded by the club per the budget rather than waiting for approved expenses to be paid. This current process for Macoun and Fletcher does not meet the transparency test. These two committees

should be treated as every other committee under OFNC. While it is a long standing practice, it is no longer an appropriate way to transfer funds. It is time to address this issue. With the Macoun Club, it was originally a joint venture with the Museum of Nature which is no longer the case. This is similar case with Fletcher as it was a joint venture with Ag Canada. Fletcher has funds and perhaps really doesn't need the money right now. The Finance Committee requests that this item be put on the September Council agenda for discussion and a motion by Finance Committee. Just a general comment on the Macoun Club membership – how are the numbers for the Macoun Club? There are lots of kids at the Museum of Nature and it looks like there should be lots of potential Macoun Club members.

5. Museum of Nature monthly rentals – we have not been advised of the room rental rates for the coming year and would like to be updated on this. The FC is not aware of the terms and the amount to include for the budget for this item. (shortly after this meeting we were informed of a discussion with the CMN)
6. The MOU with Ag Canada is up next spring and we need to form a small committee to meet with Ag Canada regarding the new MOU. It should have the President or VP as a chairperson and a member from the Fletcher Committee who is familiar with the day to day activities of Fletcher.
7. Pelee Trip Issue – we can't lose money on this so anyone who cancels should find a replacement or there is a waiting list. The costs are fixed here pretty well.
8. Advertising –After each issue of T & L is published, Focus Scientific and Wild Birds Unlimited get an invoice. The bills for the last issue [47(3) have not been paid, but they were only sent a month ago. The Ads help the club pay for the room rental at the Museum of Nature. There is a rebate of 10% when an advertiser advertises four times during the year.
9. The FC was advised that the Bird Status Line will be an agenda item at the next Birds' Committee meeting in September and there is a good chance that the BC will subsequently recommend to Council that the BSL be discontinued. Should that occur, and Council agrees, then the BC's ToR and budget would need to be adjusted accordingly. In that event, the FC suggests that a taped message be played on that line for a couple of months advising callers of the plan to discontinue the service.

Treasurer's Report to Council

September 16, 2013

Financial Position

Our financial position is quite strong, even though the figures show a deficit. First, we have investment income to come, and second, bequests have been made to the Club.

However, our main operating revenue sources are membership fees, CFN subscriptions and CFN author charges. Membership revenue has declined about \$2,000 in each of 2012 and 2013. CFN subscriptions and author charge levels are also a concern.

Canada Revenue Agency

In the June report to Council I mentioned that CRA seemed to think that we had employees. I spoke with them about this, and they seem to have accepted our statement that we have no employees.

Committee Budgets

An issue has developed about the nature of our budget items, specifically that of the FWG Committee. The previous Treasurer had an agreement with the FWG Committee to transfer the amount of the FWG budget into the FWG account, where it remained regardless of whether purchases were made against the budget during the fiscal year. Other committees don't have their own bank accounts, so this practice isn't even possible for them. Although, I was told that something similar was done with the Macoun Club.

I have asked whether this practice was authorized by Council but have received no reply. The effect of this is that the OFNC budget becomes an amount that can be carried over from one fiscal year to the next.

For other committees, their budget is an amount that can be spent on authorized purposes during the fiscal year. Unspent budget amounts are not carried over, they lapse. For example, the FY2013 budget includes an amount of \$500 that the Birds Committee is authorized to spend on preparatory work on a bird checklist. It wasn't spent. However, the committee wants the work to be done in FY2014. The budgeted amount has lapsed; the committee has to come back to Council for re-approval, by having the \$500 in the budget for 2014.

The reason for doing it this way is so that Council knows what is being done by the Club. Council is responsible for the activities of the Club. Allowing budgets to carry over means essentially that Committees have access to money approved by a previous Council, but not the current one. And linking this money from a previous budget with the previous Council's intentions for how it was supposed to be spent would be rather difficult. Council control over Club expenditures would be more uncertain.

There are ways to effect carry-over of budgets if Council thinks it desirable. One is to establish a separate bank account for the committee/activity in question. This is the way that the FWG carry-over has been done.

Another is to establish a fund. This has been done for the Seedathon, for example.

With respect to the immediate issue, the FWG Committee has asked how it is to prepare a budget for FY2014. The answer is, the same way as other committees. Make up a list of expenses that the Committee would like the Club to pay for in the coming fiscal year. It is hard to imagine that Council would not support something that the FWG committee wanted to do.

Violetta Csazak Bequest

Violetta's funeral took place on July 19. Some immediate things have been done, such as some cleanup of the condo. The motion passed by Council by email was very helpful; it has been used in dealings with banks and court submissions.

However, until the court proceedings are completed to have me made executor, there is not much that we can do with the estate.

I have talked with Violetta's friends and her interests, in addition to the OFNC, included rowing. One friend said that she was interested in the Ottawa Riverkeeper program, a natural interest for someone spending time on the water.

Ken Young, Treasurer

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Report

The committee met monthly through the summer with various members volunteering to act as chair. The June meeting resulted in an informal discussion between the three people who attended. There is no sign of anyone interested in becoming chair.

The Friday morning volunteer group has continued to operate despite the absence of Sandra Garland, with a small group of volunteers led by Isabelle Nicol. In addition to routine tasks they have opened up the eastern end of the backyard garden to form the Plum Tree Garden. There will be more work to do next year.

Others in the Friday group have worked around the garden, including the Butterfly Meadow and the Ravine as needed. The Ravine is now being included as one of the FWG habitats as it now needs management to help establish the trees planted there last year.

The struggle to control invasive species continues, led by the Tuesday morning group. The hoped for biocontrol agent (a moth) is now ready for field testing. FWG is one of the sites selected.

Researchers from outside Ottawa have visited FWG to take samples to try to determine what is causing the DSV circles reported in June. We are waiting for their report. We will also do our own experiments to see if the cause can be transplanted to other areas in the hope that it too can become a control method.

A team of Ontario Stewardship Rangers spent two days working around the Butterfly Meadow. Some fruit trees will be planted to replace dead trees just north east of the Butterfly Meadow.

Our congratulations go to Renate Sander-Regier on completion of her PhD, with a thesis entitled "The Power of a Small Green Place – A case study of Ottawa's Fletcher Wildlife Garden" (<http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/en/handle/10393/24219>). She is scheduled to bring a class of 80 to work later this month.

We are receiving significant help from Agriculture Canada with mowing and digging post holes and replacing some posts. They will also look after ash trees.

The FWG is concerned that it still has not received the budget funds approved by Council last year as per existing procedures. If a change in procedure was instituted during the year, FWG believes that it, and indeed all committees, should have been informed in a timely manner. FWG trusts that full clarification will be provided at the Monday meeting of council. FWG spending for this year is, as usual, several times the allocated budget.

David Hobden

Macoun Field Club Report

We had two summer field trips to the Pinhey Dune, where we had a tour of the site and saw various tiger beetles; not many members were available, but those of us who were able to go found it very interesting. Our first meeting of the year, on the September 7th, was an “indoor” meeting held outdoors. We met at the picnic shelter at the Sarsaparilla Trail, went through names, explanations of how meetings and trips are organized, answered questions, etc. We then broke up into two groups, eventually all making our way to the dock, and then back to the parking lot at noon. On September 14th, we had a field trip to the Study Area. There were 14 children, and almost as many adults! We are looking forward to a busy year.

Diane Kitching