

Minutes
BCGREA Extraordinary General Meeting
Directors Meeting
April 25, 2023
Coast Tsawwassen Inn

1. Delegates Attending in Person (49)

Brian Green, President	Barbara Golder – Branch 1200
Patrick Harkness, 2 nd Vice-President,	Karin Heimlich – Branch 1200
Johanna Morrow – Treasurer	Laura Lam – Branch 1200
Kathy Torhjem – Secretary	Ed Forbes – Branch 1200
Ken Pendergast – Past President	Sonja Ruffell – Branch 1200
Al Barclay – Membership	George Bowden – Branch 1200
Jerry Gosling – Branch 100	Ray Cox – Branch 1400
Alan Kneeland – Branch 200	Bob Low – Branch 1400
Ron Kerr – Branch 300	Art Kaehn – Branch 1600
Debbie Kerr – Branch 300	George Foisy – Branch 1700
Dan Harlow – Branch 400	Bob Wilson – Branch 1900
Deb Barclay – Branch 400	Don McMillan – Branch 1900
David Labar – Branch 500	Brian Taylor – Branch 2000
Lawrence Johnson – Branch 600	Wilf Brodrick – Branch 2100
Roz Kennedy – Branch 600	Lu Gaudet – Branch 2100
Mary McDaid – Branch 600	Carol Paulson – Branch 2100
Barry Zacharias – Branch 600	Janice Leonard – Branch 2100
Alex Wallach – Branch 700	Dan Anderson – Branch 2300
Bonnie Billington – Branch 800	Pat Dickson – Branch 2400
Myrna Cresswell – Branch 800	John MacLucas – Branch 2500
Marilyn Melville – Branch 800	Don Wong – Branch 2500
Andy McColl – Branch 800	Elizabeth Wong – Branch 2500
Kathy Nelson – Branch 800	Al Coccola – Branch 2700
Maurice Davidson – Branch 900	Linda Hoel – Branch 2700
Glenn Hill – Branch 1000	

Note: Jean Sickman Branch 1100 arrived at 11:30 a.m. after EGM adjourned.

Delegates Attending by Zoom: (8)

Imre Horvath – Branch 900	Terry Prentice – Branch 1200
Zarina Sagoo – Branch 1100	Shirley Besler – Branch 2300
Bonnie Christian – Branch 1100	Merrilee Ashworth – Branch 1500
Sharon Fedorak – Branch 1100	Edna Park = Branch 500

2. Brian welcomed everyone to this meeting and introduced Michael Miller, our legal counsel. Patrick Harkness explained the meeting protocols., displayed on each table.

3. There are 49 delegates present in person and 8 delegates on Zoom with 35 observing on Zoom. A quorum is met (2/3 of possible 71 delegates = 50)
4. Brian then introduced Barry Zacharias on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. The committee consists of Jean Sickman, Alan Kneeland, Sarf Ahmed, Edna Park, Vince Sherry, Terry Prentice and Barry Zacharias. The constitution is being revisited because of the 2016 changes to the Society Act. Barry made a brief power point presentation on the required changes to our constitution.
5. Motion One – Moved by the Bylaws Committee that the BCGREA be declared by its members to be a member funded society and that the following paragraph be included in its constitution as therefore required by the Society Act:
This society is a member-funded society. It is funded primarily by its members to carry on activities for the benefit of its members. On its liquidation or dissolution, this society may distribute its money and other property to its members. 52 in favor. 75% required.
The motion passed.
6. Motion Two:
 - a. *The name of the society is the British Columbia Government Retired Employees Association.*
 - b. *The purpose of the Association is:*
 - i. *To promote and safeguard the interests and the welfare of its members,*
 - ii. *To promote the interests of seniors as defined by the Seniors Advocate Act,*
 - iii. *The protection and enhancement of our Public Service Pension benefits for the benefit of current and future retirees.*
 - iv. *To communicate to members on the activities of the Association and matters of common interest, and*
 - v. *To be non-partisan.*
7. Motion for amendment– M/S Wilf Brodrick/Johanna Morrow that section iii above read *To advocate for the protection and enhancement of our Public Service Pension benefits for the benefit of current and future retirees.* Carried.
8. Motion Two passed.
9. Motion Three – By-law motion.
Elected officers shall take office at the close of the Annual General Meeting and shall remain in office until the close of the next annual meeting subject to the following:
 - (a) commencing in 2024, the president’s term shall be two years, with each term continuing until the end of the second Annual General Meeting following the election of the president;
 - (b) commencing in 2025 the first vice-president’s term shall be two years, with each term continuing until the end of the second Annual General Meeting following the election of the first vice-president;

(c) commencing in 2025 the second vice-president's term shall be two years, with each term continuing until the end of the second Annual General following the election of the second vice-president.

10. Motion to close EGM at 10:30 a.m. – M/S Barry Zacharias/Jerry Gosling. Carried.
11. Draw for new member prizes – Al Barclay.
 - a. \$ 250 Jocelyn Jolicoeur - Branch 1200
 - b. \$ 500 Susan Stevenson - Branch1200
 - c. \$ 750 Heidi Bell - Branch 1200
12. Michael Miller (lawyer) and Brian Green had a discussion on the legal opinions we have received over time. Many of those present participated in discussion of branch authority/provincial authority and the allocation/spending of funds.

Directors Meeting

1. The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.
2. President's Report – Brian Green - see attached. M/S Ron Kerr/ Wilf Brodrick. Carried.
3. 1st Vice-President – Patrick Harkness - see attached. M/S Lawrence Johnson/Pat Dickson. Carried.
4. Membership Secretary – Al Barclay – see attached. M/S Dan Harlow/ Dan Anderson. Carried.
5. Treasurer's Report – Johanna Morrow – see attached. M/S Pat Dickson/Pat Harkness. Carried.

PRESIDENT REPORT

This is the President's report for the April 2023 BCGREA directors meeting. This is a high-level summary. You will also receive other reports from the table officers under separate emails.

A SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Since our October AGM, we have successfully recruited over 3600 new members. While this is more than welcome news in helping revitalize our organization, it brings a series of challenges regarding integrating our new members and involving them in our association. At the local level, branches have reported seeing new faces at their meetings, which can only be a good thing moving forward. At the Provincial level, we are working on adopting a new database/email system that will provide better opportunities to manage our membership and provide enhanced tools for branches to communicate with members.

REACHING THE MEMBERSHIP AND WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

We are reaching most members based on the number of people looking at the Pen and other electronic messages we send. Many comments have been received, complementing the new format and increased communications. Our relationship with the Pension Corporation and the Board of Trustees is solid. We are strengthening our alliances with our sister retiree associations, COSCO, the National Pensioners Federation, and affinity partners. We all benefit from the outstanding service provided by Josie Byington and her associates, who provide our essential central support.

WITH SUCCESS COMES CHALLENGES

Overall, things are going well, and there is much to celebrate. There is, however, a growing issue we need to address. We have a shortfall in the Provincial level bank account as a result of our major campaigns and initiatives, while at the same time, there is a growing surplus in most Branch bank accounts. The *Income Tax Act* limits how much excess accumulated income is acceptable before an organization's non-profit status is placed in jeopardy, and/or we are subject to a taxation audit and possible assessment.

This is not new for us. . Albert Peeling, our lawyer, along with our accountant, flagged that we needed to address this more than five years ago. However, we think naively felt safe, and our priorities were clearly distracted by COVID. That clearly isn't the case today.

Today, the surplus is primarily gone. This has resulted in a more reasonable overall cash balance. It could be a year or two before we have a clearer picture of Branch operating costs, considering the recent increase in our member base and increasing costs for meeting room rentals and liability insurance. However, I am confident that even with these uncertainties our Association's cash balance is sufficient to meet our operating costs. There is no need to contemplate any dues increase at this time.

A PATHWAY FORWARD

We need to do two things simultaneously and in a coordinated manner.

1. Ensure all levels of our association have sufficient reliable funding to meet their operating needs and
2. We plan to ensure that cash balances over time align with what the Income Tax Act considers reasonable and appropriate for a non-profit.

After a detailed and thorough analysis of various options, the finance committee and the table officers recommend a new dues allocation approach. Details will be provided in the Treasurer's report. To indicate how it would work:

- Each Branch will send the Provincial Treasurer a copy of its February month-end bank statement.
- The Treasurer will compare this bank balance with the Branch's February month-end membership count.
 - Branches with a bank balance of less than \$10 per member will receive funding to raise their cash to \$10 per member.
 - Branches with a bank balance that exceeds \$10 per member will receive no additional funding for that year.

This approach is based on the fact that there is no need for any part of our Association to accumulate excess cash beyond its operating needs. This is why the sum of \$10/member was chosen. Records show that Branches typically spend \$6 or less per member, even during pre-pandemic years. If a Branch at any time has funding requirements beyond its available cash, the Directors have the capability to approve additional funds. This will ensure that no programs will suffer at the branch level.

This model won't immediately correct the legal issues about Branches' excess cash, but we see it as the most feasible approach. It is designed to reduce this liability using a predictable formula to ensure branches can plan and make adjustments without creating undue hardship. This model is flexible enough to be tweaked or completely changed in future years. It is much less invasive than seeking "clawbacks" or "taxing branches," both of which are administratively cumbersome or impossible given our volunteer nature and capacity. At the Provincial level, it ensures we can adequately fund our central support services and communications and have our traditional in-person Directors and AGM meetings rather than scale back any of these. As noted above, we don't need to make any cuts if we rebalance.

SUPPORTING THE PATHWAY

When someone attends a directors' meeting, they attend as a governing director of the overall Association. This is the case, be they table officer, branch chair, or designated alternate. That is how our bylaws are written.

Being a director has certain obligations under the Societies Act and common law. Directors are expected to act in a manner that is in the best interests of the overall Association and exercise due diligence in doing so – including accounting for and addressing identified risks to the Association. By analogy, this is not unlike how the executive of a strata corporation functions. It is a different and separate role from being a branch representative or spokesperson.

Please keep this in mind during our discussions. It's important. I am confident that you will act from this perspective when addressing the issues at our upcoming directors' Meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all.

Respectfully yours,

Brian Green, President



BCGREA Communications Committee Report to the 2023 Directors' Meeting

April 25th and 26th

by: Patrick Harkness, Chair

A look back

Following the 2022 Annual General Meeting, we completed and published the 2022 Fall/Winter edition of *The PEN*.

Early in 2023, we successfully developed two electronic messages (E-Blasts) named “*The Virtual PEN*.” These were sent to everyone in February and March. April brought many projects and planning for the EGM and the Directors’ meeting, so we stepped back and supported those efforts.

Currently

A project dealing with how we conduct ourselves at meetings was developed and approved by the Table Officers. It is named “*Meeting Protocols*” and outlines what is expected of each of us at these meetings. At the start of each meeting, we will display these points and place a reminder on each table. All branches will receive a copy.

In the future

We are finalizing the Spring/Summer edition of *The PEN*. That should be published by late May.

We received some feedback concerning the name we chose for our E-Blast. The name we chose implied that we planned to stop the printed version. Such is not the case, and we are planning a name change. One popular suggestion was used in an earlier version of *The PEN*, “*The Jay’s Nest*.”

- **What do you think of the name “The Jay’s Nest”?**

Share the stories

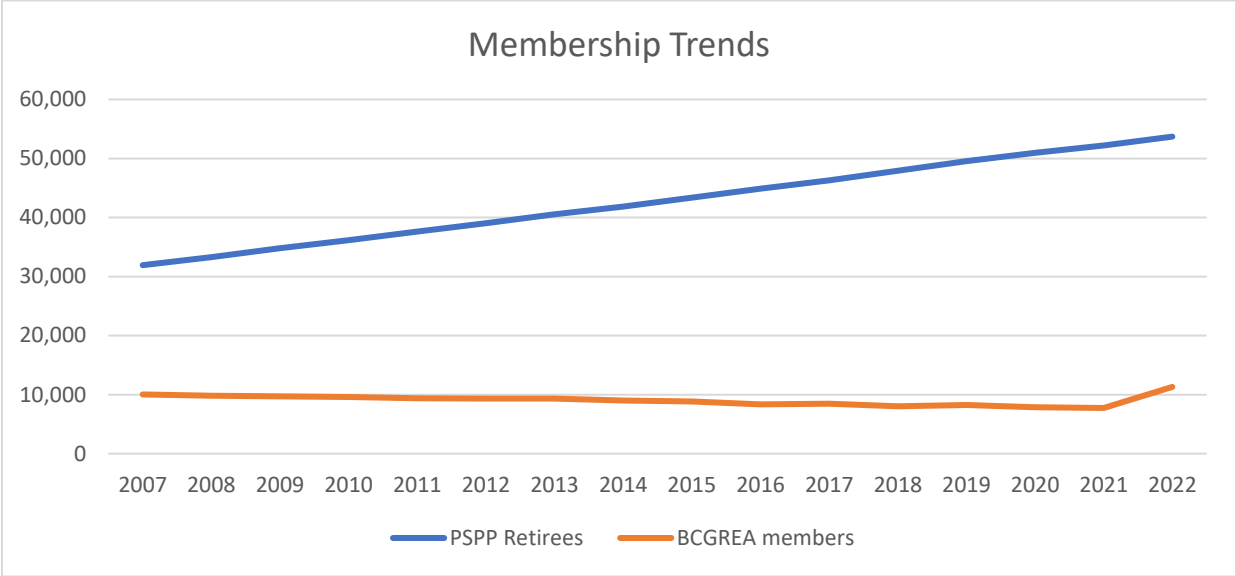
Finally, we want you to share stories of interest. 300 words or less, along with a picture of the storyteller. Send them to thepen@bcgre.ca

Membership and Central Support Report to the April 25, 2023 Directors Meeting

There have been many changes with respect to the membership since the report to the October 2022 AGM.

The 75th Anniversary recruitment campaign successfully brought new members into the association. Our current membership is 11,302, which is a 46% increase compared to my report to the AGM. A detailed breakdown of the membership numbers by branch is included in Appendix 1 of this report. The direct cost of the campaign was approximately \$58,000 for the PSPP to mail 48,000 flyers to retired potential members. A rough estimate of the indirect costs (printing and mailing membership cards, welcome letters, welcome gifts, and prizes) for new members is \$15,000. Since the campaign began, 3,914 new members have joined, and their annual dues should generate \$78,280 annually for the foreseeable future.

This is a graph of the membership trends since 2007, as our membership declined from 10,049 to a low of 7,725 despite the increased pool of potential members from 32,000 to nearly 54,000 retirees.



The surge in membership applications in October through December pointed out limitations in the online database we had in place last year. However, the ability for new members to complete the application form online was a major component of the campaign’s success.

There were significant delays in processing the applications, requesting and adding missing information, and mailing out the membership cards due to a large number of applications. Josie and the helpers she brought on to assist with some portions of the workload did a great job overall, and I thank her for her efforts.

We could not handle all the tasks to properly manage our database and communications with the resources we had in place when the new members responded to the 75th Anniversary Promotion. In early December, we were forced to take the previous database offline and work with individual Excel branch spreadsheets to manage the information.

December through February involved researching and viewing 5 different Client Management Systems to determine which would best meet our needs at a reasonable price. **Findjoo** was selected as the most appropriate platform based on several factors.

We started our 30-day free trial on March 2 with Josie and me initially using the trial database with membership records from 2 branches loaded into the system. We have an assigned account support person, and we had weekly meetings/training sessions with him.

We invited several branch people who currently fill membership or communication roles to join the trial in mid-March to ensure that people who would also use the system had the opportunity to provide feedback. All the feedback to date has been positive, and we made the commitment to adopt the platform and get all our data uploaded.

Findjoo offers several advantages when compared to our previous systems. These include:

- Integration of our member database and email communications system to allow quicker updating of contact information. Previously, these were two independent systems that did not interact with each other.
- A member portal where members can sign in and update their contact information, email subscription choices, print off or download their membership card, and a number of other features if we decide to take advantage of them.
- Findjoo can be used for branch-specific communications where members can subscribe to branch newsletters, social activities announcements, meeting information, and branded merchandise offerings.
- Publication and distribution of this type of information can be done at the branch level if people are willing to train and take responsibility for the content or through Central Support if preferred.
- The platform has the potential to be used to conduct polls to determine members' interests or preferences with respect to a variety of topics.
- We have a dedicated account representative to assist with tailoring the system to meet our needs and provide training when required.
- There is the potential for setting up "chat rooms" where members with common interests can participate in discussions. Some examples include the merchandizing committee members, participants in the 55+ games, retired members from a particular organization who want to reconnect or discuss issues specific to their situation.

- Findjoo offers secure storage and the ability to upload and download sensitive material and will replace the current Sync platform.
- The cost is fixed and predictable at \$400 CAD/month. This is the lowest cost of the platforms that we compared. Our overall database and communications costs should be equal or lower than we previously experienced paying for the online database development and maintenance, Campaigner, and Sync subscriptions.
- Reports and access to data can be designed to meet the needs and preferences of branches. They can be flexible and different for specific branches depending on the branch's level of expertise and independence. Items such as branch membership lists, phone lists, etc., should be available for branches to download whenever they need to access the information.
- Findjoo is Canadian-based, and all information will be stored on secure servers within Canada.

The above points are intended to highlight some of the gains we expect to realize through this conversion to Findjoo. As we become more familiar with the platform, I'm sure other uses and potential time savings will be realized.

It is worth noting that the use of email campaigns to keep members informed has increased significantly in the past year. From 2018 through 2021, 117 campaigns were sent out. In 2022, there were 174 campaigns sent, and there have been 58 campaigns sent to date in 2023. This reflects the 2021 Member Survey responses indicating that members want to be kept informed.

Respectfully submitted,
Al Barclay
BCGREA Provincial Membership Secretary

(Including input from Josie Byington
Central Support)

2023-04-09

Appendix 1 – Membership Totals to April 8, 2023

Location	Branch Number	Total Pre-Oct 24 Members	New Members	Total Members April 8	% Increase
Fraser Valley (Abbotsford)	100	214	123	337	57%
North Island (Comox)	200	295	187	482	63%
Rocky Mountain (Cranbrook)	300	133	55	188	41%
Grand Forks	400	94	20	114	21%
Kamloops	500	364	188	552	52%
Nanaimo / Mid-Island	600	462	218	680	47%
Kootenays (Nelson)	700	156	83	239	53%
New Westminster	800	615	197	812	32%
S. Okanagan / Similkameen (Penticton)	900	188	86	274	46%
Shuswap Columbia (Salmon Arm)	1000	143	36	179	25%
Vancouver	1100	663	414	1077	62%
Victoria	1200	1878	868	2746	46%
Peace River (Dawson Creek)	1400	93	35	128	38%
Kelowna	1500	296	190	486	64%
Prince George	1600	327	91	418	28%
Cariboo (Quesnel, Williams Lk, 100 Mile)	1700	119	82	201	69%
Northwest (Terrace, Smithers, Pr. Rupert)	1900	128	42	170	33%
Cheam (Chilliwack, Agassiz, Hope)	2000	130	99	229	76%
Langley / Surrey	2100	408	303	711	74%
Mt. Arrowsmith (Parksville)	2300	155	95	250	61%
Golden Ears (Maple Ridge)	2400	144	87	231	60%
Peninsula & Gulf Islands (Sidney)	2500	222	155	377	70%
Western Communities (Langford, etc.)	2700	88	208	296	236%
Out of Province	5000	73	52	125	71%
Totals		7,388	3,914	11,302	53%
Notes:					
Based on CMD data to midnight, April 8, 2023					
Deceased and resigned members have been removed from the totals.					

Treasurer's Report 2023 is a separate document