

NB Media Co-op
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 5 p.m. (via Zoom)

Members present: Tracy Glynn (TG), Aditya Rao (AR), Sarah Kardash (SK), Susan O'Donnell (SO), Jean-Claude Basque (JCB), Sophie Lavoie (SL), Tom McLean (TM), Gerry McAllister (GM), Julie Gillet (JG), Dirk Groenenberg (DG), Mary Reid (MR), Renee Davis (RD), Dave Thomas (DT), Arun Budhathoki (AB), Tobin Haley (TH), Daniel Tubb (DT), Dani Godbout (DG), Chris Wanamaker (CW), Noah Pleshet (NP), David Gordon Koch (DGK), Wilfred Alliston (WA), Bernadette Landry (BA).

Regrets: Kylie Bergfalk (KB), Jean Desrosiers (JD), Matthew Hayes (MH), Carole Tranchant (CH)

Non-members present: Michèle Caron (MC). Simultaneous interpretation by JC Bourque and James Couture.

1. Appointment of meeting chair. AR appointed chair, adopted by consensus.
2. Appointment of minute taker: DK appointed minute taker, adopted by consensus.
3. Approval of meeting agenda: Moved by JCB, seconded by SL. Adopted by consensus.
4. Introduction of members present (see list above): Members introduced themselves in a round of introductions. (List includes members who joined late.)
5. Approval of the 2021 AGM minutes: minutes circulated via email and website before meeting. Moved by TG, seconded by JM, adopted by consensus. SL abstained.
6. Annual report for 2021-2022 presented by SK. The report was previously circulated via email and website. The report highlights: NBMC's most-read articles ("RCMP have begun amassing in Houston and Smithers" and "Hospital worker blows whistle on spread of New Brunswick's mystery illness"); increased followers on social media (totalling more than 3,000 on Twitter, more than 4,800 on FB); high volume of articles published on website (300 from Sept 2021-July 2022) including stories picked up by mainstream media; the loss of Brian Beaton, social justice activist and champion of the NBMC, expressions of sympathy for his loved ones; increased number of monthly donors, totalling roughly \$600 per month; donations from 23 labour unions, whose contributions are being acknowledged on our social media; hiring of first paid staff member, the p/t manager; establishment of French editorial board and expansion of French-language content; hiring of first paid journalist, on a contract with funding from the federal govt's Local Journalism Initiative; airing of second season of the NB Debrief on CHCO-TV; distribution of *The Brief* across the province every two months; production of a book by SO and DGK in collaboration with CUPE covering the events leading up to and including the 2021 strike; continued partnership with RAVEN project at UNB; and

various events.

JCB asked for information about NBMC's participation in the Indie Growth Program via Indiegraf. AR provided background on the program, which aims to help independent media boost membership/subscribers and to generate revenue over the course of three months; changes included using the MailChimp system for newsletters; cost was about \$500 in exchange for about \$2,500 in advertising on social media; board of directors found that it was a successful effort; no decision yet on whether or not to continue with IndieGraf. TG added that results of the Indie Growth campaign will be reflected in next financial year's report.

SL moved to accept the report, DT seconded. Adopted by consensus.

7. Update from manager. DGK made a brief presentation. Highlights include working with both English and French-language editorial boards; hard to overstate the importance of solidarity between coalitions of people different backgrounds when fighting for social and economic justice: French, English, Indigenous, newcomers etc. Issues that we need to address with our reporting notably include racism, poverty and women's reproductive rights given current social conditions. Also welcomed the hiring of first reporter. Noted two fundraising campaigns in 2022 raised approximately \$5,400 and \$3,000 respectively, with many first-time donors. Noted contribution of labour historian David Frank in the production of the CUPE 2021 strike chronology, which has been sent to the union for layout. Also commented that the decision of JD Irving to sell its newspapers to Postmedia, and the subsequent appointment of Jamie Irving as executive chairman of Postmedia, shows that media concentration remains highly entrenched in Canada. As a former reporter for the Times & Transcript, DGK noted BNI soft-pedals social justice issues. NBMC helps build the power of the left, which is necessary in the face of current conditions including neofascist extremism. We have consistent support from membership, and there's a hunger for us to take this work further.

JCB moved to accept the update, JG seconded. Accepted by consensus.

8. Presentation & adoption of the 2021-2022 financial report: Presented by TG, previously circulated via email/website. Financial year runs from June 1 to May 31. Revenue from monthly donors increased significantly. There was also an increase in membership and the total number of members. Union donations doubled compared to the previous fiscal year. The CUPE 2021 strike book also generated increased revenues. We also received more than \$2,500 in donations for the Brian Beaton Prize.

In terms of expenses, costs were down slightly for printing and mailing the Brief, as there were fewer editions. We increased the amount being paid to the designer for the Brief. Debrief expenses amounted to about \$650. We saved some money compared to the previous year on AGM since it was online only. Salary for the p/t manager was approximately \$4,500, and separately about \$3,000 in payments for his work on the CUPE

2021 strike book. We purchased a laptop and Microsoft Office for the part-time manager position. (Computer remains property of NBMC.) Other smaller expenses include a subscription to the MailChimp service (about \$50, representing one month), and a thank you gift for SO for her pro bono work on the CUPE 2021 strike book project. Bank Account Balance at End of Fiscal Year May 31, 2022 reached \$69,144.

TM asked if there's a goal for the organization's bank balance. SK agreed that it's something the next board should consider. She added it's a good idea to have a cushion of funds especially given we have paid staff.

SL moved to accept the financial statements; DG seconded. Accepted by consensus. CW abstained.

9. Presentation of budget for 2022-2023. TG presented projections for the year, including memberships and individual donations, union/org donations, funding from the Local Journalism Initiative, and remaining income from the CUPE 2021 strike book project. Overall an income of about \$78,000 expected. The expenses include LJI journalist salary/travel expenses and manager salary. The latter includes a raise, partly to reflect supervisory duties for the LJI hire. Other new expenses include payroll fees and board insurance; NBMC is also working on getting commercial general liability insurance. Some money has also been allocated for Debrief expenses. We are also looking at getting a fresh logo designed, and some redevelopment of the website. AGM costs increased to cover interpretation costs. Some money also set aside for a solidarity fund. Overall the expenses amount to about \$77,000; a balanced budget. AR noted this was an information item, and a vote isn't required.
10. Bylaw amendments. Previously circulated by email/website. SK presented an overview of the proposed changes: bylaws reference various types of members, but in practice these aren't tracked - changes therefore reflect current practice. Other changes to language are meant to allow flexibility in the number of editions of the Brief annually produced, etc. Reference to the database being maintained "by the Co-op" also allows for more flexibility. Under the law governing cooperatives, we are required to have a maximum number of board positions, so that is specified in the updated text. We are also required to include a section on the distribution of property in case of dissolution. AR helped draft the update.

Changes moved by SK, seconded by SL. Adopted by consensus.

11. Special resolutions on the audit. Previously circulated by email/web. Presented by TG.

Special resolution to appoint an internal auditor for 2021-2022. Due to the high costs of having the NB Media Co-op's financial books audited, members of the NB Media Co-op resolved at their 2022 AGM not to appoint an auditor for the financial year 2021-2022. The 2022 AGM will appoint **JCB and NP** (NB Media Co-op members) to do an internal audit of the NB Media Co-op's 2021-2022 financial records.

Special resolution to forego auditing for 2022-2023 Due to the high costs of having the NB Media Co-op's financial books audited, members of the NB Media Co-op resolve not to appoint an auditor for the upcoming financial year 2022-2023. The 2023 AGM will appoint a member to do an internal audit of the NB Media Co-op's 2022-2023 financial records.

Moved by TG, seconded by DGK. Both motions approved by consensus. TM abstained.

12. Approval of Articles of Amendment (Transition). Previously circulated by email/web. TG explained the form is now required under law governing cooperatives. Moved by TG, seconded by SO. Motion approved by consensus.

13. Board elections. Statements of interest received prior to meeting.

1. Board of directors

a. Returning board members: TG, SK

b. New board members: TH, DT, CT

2. French editorial board

a. Returning board members : JG, BL, JD, CT

3. English editorial board

a. Returning board members : TG, SL, DT, KB

b. New board members: NP, DG

Moved by WA, seconded by JB. Accepted by consensus.

TG thanked former board members Matthew Hayes and Aditya Rao for their service on the board.

14. Brian Beaton Annual Prize in Journalism for Justice. Amy Floyd was named as the winner for an article about the Wabanaki Forest. Congrats Amy!

15. Other business: None.

16. Adjournment moved by SO, seconded by SL. Approved by consensus.