

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday, 28 May 2022,1400 hours ADT (1430 NDT) Via ZOOM (Chaired from Moncton) 

## MINUTES

1. Call to order: Ted Bartlett welcomed members, visitors and panel members
2. Present: Tim Hayman, Michael Perry, Marcus Garnet, Christine Mills-Garnet, Hon. Gerry Byrne, John Cormier, Dr. Deatra Walsh, Howard Easton, Justin Tinker, Yves Bourgeois, Stan Choptiany, Allan Mac Donald, Mary MacPherson, Tom Beckett, Don MacLeod, Ashley Morton, Mike Cassidy, David Brake, Bob Johnston, Sharon Roseman.
3. Ted called on us all to remember the late Clarke Morris, a TAA member for many years and a veteran member of the Board of Directors.
4. Motion to Adopt Agenda: moved Ted Bartlett, second: John Cormier: agenda adopted.
5. Minutes of previous AGM (15 May 2021) - as circulated. Moved acceptance: Michael Perry, second: John Cormier: minutes accepted as circulated.
6. Business arising from minutes: none
7. President's report (separately attached) - Ted Bartlett
8. Vice-President's report - Tim Hayman. Tim had some brief comments as Ted had covered most of the highlights in his report. The website has been extensively updated and has been functionally improved making it easier to keep current. It is now possible to complete membership applications through the website which should make recruiting new members easier. Please help us to keep the monthly newsletter current by submitting news items. The Bulletin will focus on items which are not time sensitive and will include more "op-ed" articles. The Bulletin will be published in both a print version and electronically on the TAA website. Ted thanked Tim for his efforts to improve our communication strategy.
9. Treasurer's report - Don MacLeod: Don moved adoption of the Report. Second Tim Hayman. Adopted. Don gave a summary of his report. We are in surplus with $\$ 7,292$ in the bank. This is mainly due to COVID limiting travel by board members and the use of Zoom for meetings. The proceeds of a legacy from the estate of the late Karen Pearce added to the surplus.
10.Auditor's Report - Allan MacDonald: Allan examined the current financial record and expressed satisfaction with the accounting procedures followed.
10. Appointment of auditor - Don MacLeod moved that Allan be appointed auditor for 2022-23. Second: Christine Mills-Garnet. Appointment approved.
11. Membership Report - Christine Mills-Garnet: Christine reported that we now have nearly 100 members in the four Atlantic provinces, together with some members outside the region including the United States. There are corporate members also. Christine urged everyone to recruit more members. This should be easier now that the up-dated website has simplified the membership application process. Christine moved adoption of her report, second: Don MacLeod. Report adopted.
12. Nominating committee report/election of directors - Michael Perry read the names of those who had been nominated to the Board of Directors and asked the floor if there were any other members in good standing to be nominated. There being none, Michael moved that the members listed be elected as a slate rather than individually. second: Tim Hayman. This was approved. The list of nominees was then elected as a group. Board of Directors for 2022-23: Mary MacPherson, Ashley Morton, Marcus Garnet, Christine Mills-Garnet, Ted Bartlett, John Cormier, Allan MacDonald, Michael Perry, Tim Hayman, Tom Beckett, Jim Roche, Justin Tinker, Yves Bourgeois, David Brake.
13. John Pearce Award - This award, for outstanding public transport advocacy, was presented to Yes Bourgeois by President Ted Bartlett.
14. New business: None

- Presentations and Discussion
- Transit Challenges and Opportunities - a panel discussion featuring:
- Yves Bourgeois, academic and transit advocate, Shippagan, NB
- Mike Cassidy, transportation executive, Charlottetown PEI
- Deatra Walsh, municipalities federation official, St. John's NL
- This discussion was very ably moderated by Ashley Morton.
- Mike Cassidy opened the discussion with a description and explanation of the "Toonie Transit" programme on P.E.I. He credited the financial support of the provincial government and especially the premier for instituting the scheme. Adding to the attractiveness of the service was the rising price of fuel which has tipped the scale slightly in encouraging commuter ridership but what was really needed was attitudinal change. 1200 persons are booking the service weekly, but more were needed before the three journeys a day frequency could be considered a successful project. The "Toonie "scheme also extended to Charlottetown transit which was now attracting a much larger ridership in proportion to the frequency of the service.
- Deatra Walsh pointed out that at this time of rising inflation, especially fuel prices led people to consider alternative and cheaper ways of getting to work, and that this was probably a very opportune time to encourage people to leave their cars at home and take public transit.
- Yves Bourgeois pointed out that there needed to be a mechanism for the Department of Health to work with transportation agencies as missed appointments caused by transportation difficulties for patients was resulting in considerable additional costs for the health budget.
- A Solution to the NL Ferry Paradigm: Is it Hiding in Plain Sight? (1520)
- The Honourable Gerry Byrne, NL cabinet minister
- Gerry Byrne pointed out that there were many modern precedents relating to the assistance provided by the Federal Government for ferry services in other provinces and he listed these as alternatives to the frequently cited original Act of Union undertaking. He described some of these at length,
including for example, those which Prince Edward Island and British Columbia presently enjoy which even include the Confederation Bridge toll price increase limitations. If a similar limitation were applied to the Newfoundland ferry service, the prices for freight etc. would, he estimates, be reduced to $50 \%$ of the present cost.
- Passenger Rail Post-pandemic (1600)
- Bob Johnston, passenger rail journalist, Trains magazine
- Bob was questioned about AMTRAK services especially in relation to CSX and Norfolk Southern by Howard Easton.
- Ted asked Bob about the availability of Viewliners in relation to their possible use as replacement stock on Canadian long- distance services. Bob replied that there had been no further builds of Viewliners beyond those presently in service, so the question would be, "Who would build them?".

16. There being no further business Marcus Garnet moved adjournment at 1740.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

28 May 2022
This being my ninth and final President's Report, I'm taking a somewhat different approach this year. In a sense it's a farewell message, but I will not be patting myself on the back. Rather, I will toss out a challenge to our TAA members. This will not be a summary of what we have accomplished together during my watch, but instead I will focus on what remains to be achieved.

I wish I could tell you that during the past eight and a half years we doubled our membership, and acquired thousands of new followers on Facebook and Twitter. Although our social media following has indeed grown, we actually have fewer active members today than we had in the fall of 2013 when I succeeded the late Harold Nicholson.

I also would have very much liked to be able to report some or all of the following achievements:

That all cities in Atlantic Canada had convenient and affordable public transit running from early morning until midnight, seven days a week.

That smaller communities throughout the region were connected with the cities and with each other in a manner that permitted rural residents to live comfortably without depending on private autos or the goodwill of their neighbours.

That the Government of Canada had committed to a comprehensive rebuild of VIA Rail in Atlantic Canada, including new equipment, infrastructure upgrades, and a return to a minimum of daily service between Halifax and Montreal.

That all major centres not served by VIA had convenient connections to a modernized daily Ocean.

That Marine Atlantic rates between Newfoundland and the mainland were respecting the spirit of the 1949 Terms of Union, and the cost of transporting a car or a trailer-load of freight by ferry was now no more than travelling the equivalent distance by highway.

That transit systems throughout the region, including Maritime Bus and DRL Coachlines, were exempt from provincial and federal fuel taxes, as well as property taxes.

That the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia had agreed to rehabilitate and reactivate the railway line through Cape Breton as a safer and climate-friendly means of delivering intermodal freight to both the Sydney area and to Newfoundland.

That the people of Campobello Island had the year-round reliable ferry link to the New Brunswick mainland that they deserve.

Quite an extensive laundry list indeed! But one that clearly demonstrates the need for an organization such as ours. And while the sheer volume of unfinished business appears daunting, we can certainly point to incremental progress, and take pride in the fact that our advocacy has arguably played a part in making some things happen.

A wonderful case in point is the progressive public transit policy introduced by the Province of Prince Edward Island. The so-called "Toonie Transit" makes it possible for Islanders who live in small communities to actually consider living without a car - or with one instead of two. We applaud Premier Dennis King and his government for what they have achieved. Instead of grumbling about carbon levies, and pleading that federal money earmarked for transit should be diverted to supporting the car culture, they have chosen climate friendly solutions.

The Atlantic Mayors Congress is meeting this weekend, and transit is prominent on their agenda. No doubt the astronomical cost of motor fuel is the primary driver behind it, but public transportation really does appear to be gaining unprecedented momentum. Concern about climate change is also playing a part of course, and there's the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic as well, but perhaps all these factors have combined to produce the perfect alignment that will result in affordable, convenient and sustainable public transportation for all Atlantic Canadians. We can only hope.

Later today you will hear some interesting perspective from a veteran Newfoundland politician who has been a close observer and critic of the Marine Atlantic ferry service. Although the Government of Canada has not taken the promised action to address the cost recovery demands that Justin Trudeau once termed "unreasonable", I firmly believe that our ongoing advocacy has been successful in preventing rate increases for the past several years. Meanwhile, Gerry Byrne believes that the ultimate solution is "hiding in Plain Sight", and we look forward to his presentation. We must continue to advocate for a solution - however achieved - that respects the spirit in which the Terms of Union were granted.

As of tomorrow, VIA Rail service to the Maritimes will effectively be back to its admittedly-inadequate pre-pandemic tri-weekly schedule. Many will recall that VIA immediately and abruptly suspended the service in March 2020. For 16 months no trains ran at all in this region, and then last summer came a rather pathetic once-a-week token round trip. Frequency was increased to twice a week in December, but to us the overabundance of caution on the part of the corporation's management merely added credence to our belief that in their view - and that of the politicians who give their marching orders - Canada ends at Quebec City. Addressing the issue isn't going to bankrupt the treasury. The cost of putting things right would likely be less than that of twinning 50 km of highway, and the outcome would be far more climate-friendly.

The most recent VIA development was the sudden and immediate resignation of CEO Cynthia Garneau earlier this month, a full two years before her term was due to expire. The full story remains unclear, but it's evident there were problems. Her tenure will not be a memorable one for our region. In the three years she held office we were unable to
obtain a meeting or conversation with her - neither in person, online or by telephone. COVID notwithstanding, I believe that gives an indication where her priorities lay. Our struggle continues!

After eight and a half years as your president, it is high time for me to step aside, and throw the challenge to others. If I have one regret about my tenure, it is this: I tried to shoulder too much of the workload myself. There are certain administrative responsibilities that the president is obligated to perform. But there are many other tasks that can be delegated, and I wasn't very successful at doing it. A case in point is our publications effort. My career was in journalism and communications, and because of my work experience I yielded to the temptation to become TAA's editor-in-chief. I've no doubt that in so doing I made a useful contribution to enhancing our reputation, but it added considerably to the demands on my personal time.

I discussed all this with the board this morning, and I share the challenge with our members and supporters right now. TAA needs more "boots on the ground" as the military saying goes. The workload needs to be shared; more volunteers need to step forward to offer their talents to the cause. I know there is a lot of support out there for our objectives - a lot of potential energy that could be put toward the cause. We just need to find a way to capture it.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to those who have supported me over the years. I would be less than truthful if I said I would not miss to some degree what I have been doing since 2013, but I will content myself by continuing my advocacy through writing. Yes, I will continue to be active on Twitter, and perhaps even a little more acerbic than before. And, I also plan to start a blog where I will ramble on - without deadlines, of course - about some of my favourite topics. You can rest assured that one of them will be transportation.

Speaking of rambling on - it's time for me to stop talking and let this meeting get on to the business at hand. We have a rather full agenda, and a few miles to go before I reach my destination and become your past president.

Thank you.

- Ted Bartlett

Transport Action Atlantic
Income Statement December 312021

Income

| Dues | $\$ 1,924.00$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| Donations | $\$ 4,562.74$ Note 1 |

Total Income
86,486.74

Expenses
Bulletin $\quad \$ 1,988.43$
Insurance $\$ 522.00$
-National Dues \& 993.00 Note 2
Postage (Inc Box/335.48
Supplies $\$ 590.64$
Misc Expense \& 132.92
Total Expenses
$\$ 4,562.47$
-Net Income
$\$ 1,92427$
Note 1 Includes $\$ 3,000$ donation Estate T Karen
Pearce Note 2 Our share of Dues to National
Mise Expense: \$ 115.92 WeE Support \$ 17.00 Bank

Transport Action Atlantic
Balance Sheet
December $315 t 2021$

Assets

Cask in Bank \& 7293.56
There are no receivables or other assets

Piafilitiss
The chapter has no liabilities,
-No Loans zither short or Cong term and No obligations of any kind

Equity \$7,203.56

IAAA Bank CPeconciliation
December 312021
Book Balance/December 312020 \&5,279.29

