The Friendship Force of Ottawa

Annual General Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, October 30th, 2024

Riverside United Church

3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa

Call to Order: 12:02 pm

1. Welcome Anna Van Adrichem Rochon - President

Anna welcomed all and gave her introductory report to the 2024 Annual General Meeting, which marks the end of her three-year term. She was applauded heartily by the members. She reflected on the club's challenges which were met by best possible solutions including, for example, the daily adjustments to the inbound journey during the time of Queen Elizabeth's death and funeral. In 2024, three inbound journeys had to be cancelled as a result of travel restrictions, but an outbound group is going to Costa Rica soon. She noted that Friendship Force is more than a travel club, both inbound and outbound journeys makes us a force for friendship.

In September 2024, the executive team introduced the idea of associate membership. The discussion was tabled. At the FF North American Conference, Anna determined that the FFI board of directors plans to introduce tiered membership in 2026. In response to this, the FFO executive decided to pilot associate membership in order to maintain connection with members whose activity level may have changed. Finally, Anna said that we need more members to share the goals of building peace through friendships, and that Friendship Force will continue to thrive because of members' efforts.

Anna said thank you to all of the team who have helped her. She personally appreciated the opportunities and challenges that the president's role presented, and she will support the new president in her new role.

2. Approval of Agenda
   Motion: To accept the agenda as presented.
   Moved: Valerie Wright Seconded: Marie France Horton. Approved and carried.

3. Approval of AGM minutes of Dec 14th 2023

Motion: To accept the minutes of December 14th 2023.
Moved: Alain Dawson and Mary Jane Kelleher. Motion Carried.

4. Board Reports

Prior to the meeting, all members were sent reports from the Board's officers and asked to read them. The President asked for questions.

a. Treasurer – Colin Leech

Colin noted that everyone has received the Treasurer's report and reiterated the end-of-year surplus. With respect to the budget for 2024-25, he noted that recently the Canadian $ has gone down, the US election is next week, and 2/3 of our budget income from membership fees goes to FFI.

Colin expressed his concerns about recruiting new members, and because of our aging demographics we may be more prone to losing members. He encouraged members to please recruit wherever possible, and we have tote bags, pins and business cards to support recruitment efforts. He encouraged members to offer to help FFO, and speak whenever you can.

Colin asked members to renew memberships on November 1st.

Question: (Donna Nicholson). For the last five years the budget line for miscellaneous items has been empty, but expenditures have been evident ($775). She suggested adding some money to this line. In response, the Board noted that it covered some of the 2024 conference costs to Anna. Donna noted that attendance at FFI conferences has been very useful in the past, for maintaining relationships with FFI, and the visibility of our club.

Anna thanked Colin for his work as Treasurer.

b. VP Journeys – Joan Kinnie

The VP Journeys asked for questions. There were none. Joan asked for people to sign up for the Medicine Hat/Missoula journey in June 2025 with 6 people currently showing interest. She said the journey seems like a lot of fun and very interesting, including the chuck wagon races - a forerunner to the Calgary Stampede. She encouraged people to join. Other journey information included sign-up for the Inbound Kern County (Bakersfield, CA) May 3-10 2025; the Outbound to Missoula, Montana June 12 -18 and Medicine Hat, Alberta June 19-26, as well as the Outbound to Ghana – Mid October, 2025.

c. VP Membership – Marie France Horton

No questions were asked. Marie France introduced three new members and asked them how they found out about Friendship Force. Claire met her in the

pool and joined as a result. Rejean Levesque and Lloyd Cross were FF members, and met Janice Leroux on the FF cruise and thought FFO might be a better fit. Marie France gave new members new tote bags. New members will have mentors. Marie France thanked her husband for his help maintaining the membership list, and also thanked Anna who was the best mentor according to Marie France. Thanks were extended to both Marie France and Bryan. Members were asked to please fill out the surveys for 2026 travel by Julie Breeze.

5. Election of Board of Directors 2024/25 – Lynda Heffernan

   Lynda named those who were retiring (Anna, Joan, Gertraude Martin, and Marie France).

   Returnees: Secretary Vivien Runnels; Treasurer Colin Leech, Director-at-large Pierrette Benoit.

   Slate: Joan Kinnie – President; Julie Breeze VP journeys; and Valerie Wright – Director-at-large. Lynda asked for a VP of membership as the position is currently vacant.

   The motion to accept the slate of directors as presented was unanimously accepted by the members.

   Departing President Anna proffered many thanks to husband Paul for his hard work behind the scenes.

   Joan Kinnie as new president offered a few words in closing the meeting. She said she was looking forward to her term building on the strong work that has been done already and then gave thanks to Anna for her work and dedication and efforts during the pandemic. Anna's hard work, thoughtful approaches and commitment to Friendship Force exemplify friendship throughout the world. Anna accomplished this with thoughtfulness and with grace. Joan said that we will miss Anna as President and she deserved this break. She sincerely thanked her for her time and efforts to keep the club the best it could be.

   Joan presented Anna with a small gift and reminded everyone that there is an opportunity for everyone to sign up if they haven't signed already.

   Anna thanked Joan.

Meeting Adjournment at 12:35pm.