

WFNS Annual General Meeting on Zoom  
7:00PM, June 16, 2025

*In attendance:*

<p><b>Directors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joanne Gallant (Chair)</li> <li>• Whitney Moran (Vice President; Chair of Fund Development Committee)</li> <li>• Carol Shillibeer (Treasurer, Chair of Finance Committee)</li> <li>• Philip Moscovitch (Past-President, Chair of Personnel Committee, Chair of Recruitment &amp; Nominating Committee)</li> <li>• Becca Babcock (Secretary, Chair of the Strategy &amp; Policy Committee)</li> <li>• Kevin MacDonnell (Member at Large)</li> <li>• Danica Roache (Chair of Membership Committee)</li> <li>• Steve Vernon (Member at Large)</li> <li>• Cory Lavender (Member at Large)</li> <li>• Lindsey Harrington (Chair of Programs Committee)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oriana Duinker (Executive Director)</li> <li>• Andy Verboom (WFNS Program Manager)</li> </ul>
<p><b>General Members</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kathy Mac</li> <li>• Marilyn Smulders</li> <li>• Larry Hicks</li> <li>• Barbara Hibbs</li> <li>• Sylvia Gunnery</li> <li>• Anne Smith-Nochasak</li> <li>• Devarshi Shah</li> <li>• Sue MacLeod</li> <li>• Robert de la Chevotière</li> <li>• Abby Whidden</li> <li>• Renee Hartleib</li> <li>• Gwen Davies</li> <li>• Sonja Boon</li> <li>• Dawn MacNutt</li> <li>• Shirley Godfrey</li> <li>• Wanda Taylor</li> <li>• Patrick d'Entremont</li> <li>• Meghan Marentette</li> <li>• Joanne Merriam</li> <li>• Teresa LaBella</li> <li>• Janet Hathaway</li> <li>• Roberta McGinn</li> <li>• Carol Bruneau</li> <li>• Barbara Elizabeth Stewart</li> <li>• Daniel MacGregor</li> <li>• Jan Hull</li> <li>• Tina Capalbo</li> </ul>

*Regrets:*

- Habiba Diallo
- Tiffany Morris

1. Welcome, call to order, and territorial acknowledgement (Joanne Gallant, President)  
Joanne welcomed members and guests and offered a territorial acknowledgement. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.
2. Adoption of Agenda for the Annual General Meeting 2025  
Moved by Carol Shillibeer.  
Seconded by Steve Vernon.  
Agenda adopted.
3. Approval of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024  
Moved by Kevin MacDonell.  
Seconded by Cory Lavender.  
Minutes approved.
4. Presentation of President's Report for 2024/2025 (Joanne Gallant, President)  
Joanne presented highlights from her written report. Strategic planning session was held in December; the visions generated at that session have been translated to a draft Strategic Plan assembled by the Strategy & Policy Committee. The Membership committee revised the Writers' Council application process to improve transparency and objectivity. One of the many successes of the Fund Development Committee was the Writing Rumble on the Road. Our last Board meeting of the year ended on a high note: next year is WFNS's 50th anniversary—an ad hoc committee has been struck to mark the milestone; general members are invited to participate. Joanne recognized the 2024/2025 Committee Chairs members, as well as outgoing Member at Large Kevin MacDonnell, and the WFNS staff Ori Duinker, Andy Verboom, Linda Hudson & Dea Toivonen.
5. Presentation of Annual Report for 2024/2025 (Oriana Duinker, Executive Director)  
Ori presented highlights from her written report. It's been a busy year with a lot of growth and engagement. Currently, we have 733 members—we are well on our way to reaching our goal of 800 members by the end of the year. Member retention is strong, and we've experienced high social media engagement. This was a year for staff growth in a part-time contact for Dea Toivonen after their summer contract in 2024; we will miss Dea, who is going to grad school in Toronto. Other highlights from committee reports: the new EDIA committee is working on recommendations. The Fund Development committee had some great initiatives, including Writing Rumble and Just My Type, and our fundraising team at Bluenose marathon. It was quite a year from Programs committee; they helped staff administer a survey for the Nova Writes competition to help shape the new competition. The Strategy & Policy committee has a new Strategic Plan draft to bring to the Board this summer. Program highlights from the year include Alistair MacLeod Mentorship program (founded in 2001); the funding landscape has been increasingly competitive (and

challenging). As a result, we've compressed the program for this year; fundraising is a priority. The new partnership with NS Talent Trust scholarship program will help. Book Awards (5 for Atlantic writers, 2 for NS writers): we've experienced renewed energy recently with new and engaged members for the Book Awards Board and close engagement with donor families. The Jampolis residency program is in its third year and going strong. In addition to existing sponsorships, we have secured some new funding. We also offer a self-directed retreat program, which continues to be popular. Managing the facility continues to be challenging; we are seeking funding for our next project (renovating bathroom accessibility). Nova Writes underwent a revival this year; every entrant receives feedback, and the winners now receive a manuscript review and advisory session. The published anthology includes all four winners—it is now for sale. WITS, another flagship program, took a hit during the pandemic, but we've rebounded significantly in the past year—there have been many new booking requests. We need to monitor the budget but are focusing on under-resourced schools. Please see the AGM report for info on all programs.

Event highlights include Message on a Bottle, Silent Write meetups, the reading event at Jampolis, Booktoberfest, our exhibitor table at HalCon, as well as many events at the WNFS offices in the Cultural Federations' space.

This summer, staff is devoting their time to some projects, including archiving records.

6. Presentation of Financial Statements for 2024/2025 (Carol Shillibeer, Treasurer) (motion required to accept)

Carol provided an overview of the report. Annual review engagement shows that our financial records are in good shape. We had a good year economically, despite national and global economic challenges. Financial margins are narrowing, though, leading to an operational deficit despite an overall increase in assets. We are not at financial risk, but need to increase operational funding. Carol summarized funding sources, noting that the four diverse sources help us to survive in difficult economic times. We had a stable year.

Carol also summarized the expense categories. Expenses increased slightly in the past fiscal year; Carol referenced the insights on these increases provided in the report.

Carol explained our investment portfolio, which has seen excellent returns. In the past year, we have changed the profile slightly to invest in more conservative ways. Overall, our investment portfolio is heading toward full sustainability, even if no further investments are made.

We are at no financial risk, but need to take precautionary measures to increase our operational funding.

Carol Shillibeer moves to approve financial statements as presented.

Seconded by Steve Vernon.

Motion carries; the 2024/2025 Financial Statements are adopted.

7. Appointment of independent auditor for 2025/2026 fiscal year (Carol Shillibeer, Treasurer) (motion required to appoint)

Michael Sutherland has performed our review engagements for the past few years. Carol and WFNS staff are in favour of reappointment.

Carol Shillibeer moves to appoint Michael Sutherland as independent auditor for 2025/2026

Seconded by Kevin MacDonnell.

Motion carries.

8. Election of candidates to 2025/2026 Board of Directors (Andy Verboom, support staff)
  - a. Summary of written candidacy statements  
Andy explained the document summarizing continuing directors and candidates, and the term periods, as well as the voting process.
  - b. Call for nominations (oral candidacy statements) from the floor  
Joanne called for nominations from the floor.
  - c. 10-minute recess for voting by digital ballot (motion required to recess)  
Motion to recess: Carol Shillibeer  
Seconded by: Whitney Moran  
Motion carries.
  - d. Reconvention
  - e. Declaration that voting is closed.  
Voting closed at 8:10 p.m.
9. Special Business
  - a. Presentation of Budget for 2025/2026 (Carol Shillibeer, Treasurer)  
Carol Shillibeer presented the budget, which has been approved by the Board of Directors. Carol pointed out that there are some provisions that seek to address shortfalls. Last year, we switched from an in-person to an online accounting system, which has made a big improvement to tracking and managing the budget; as a result, budget management has become more granular. Carol noted changes to address the Alistair MacLoad Mentorship program shortfall. The budget only reflects guaranteed funding, and not funding applications that are still pending. The staff strove for accuracy in budgeting expenses, trimming wherever possible. WITS fees have increased to reflect increased demand. Staff expenses: we cannot rehire for Dea's position until we are certain we can pay that salary.
  - b. Announcement of election results (Joanne Gallant, President)  
Joanne announced that have been elected Sonja Boon, Joanne Gallant, Renée Hartleib, and Danica Roache to the four vacant Board positions.
10. Adjournment  
Motion to adjourn: Danica.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.