

**National Association of Federal Retirees  
Ottawa Valley Branch (ON53) 2025 Annual General Meeting  
5 May 2025  
Carleton Place Canoe Club, 179 John Street, Carleton Place, ON K7C 1N7**

### **Call to Order**

Ian Bennett, president of the branch, call the business portion of the 2025 Annual General Meeting to order at 14:12. This was preceded by a presentation by Jack McCarty, Vice Chair of Compassionate Ottawa, on “Advance care planning”, and a presentation by Steven Chapman, president of the NAFR Ottawa Branch (ON43), on “Mobilizing retirees through volunteering and events, and opportunities for partnerships and sharing”.

Ian Bennett presented the other members of the branch board of directors: Paul Langham, vice president; Mike Hawkes, treasurer; and Pat Davies, director. He also presented two members of the Association’s National Office who have provided support to the branch: Aaron Wise, corporate services officer; and Lionel Raymond, governance officer.

### **Recording of Members Present**

There were 39 members in attendance. Based on the by-laws, the quorum required for this meeting was 1% of the Branch’s membership. Ian Bennett explained that this by-law was changed by the branch board of directors to help the branch achieve quorum at its meetings, as it has been a challenge in recent years. The branch board is authorized to make such changes to the by-laws, but they will need to be approved by a vote later in the meeting.

Since the Branch has 1,710 members, 18 members were required to be in attendance to achieve quorum. Quorum was reached.

### **Approval of consent agenda items**

Ian Bennett noted that the consent agenda items included the agenda for this meeting, as well as minutes of the previous Annual General Meetings held on October 25, 2023; March 24, 2024; and June 27, 2024. There were no comments or questions on these documents.

<b><u>Motion:</u> It was moved by John Coderre, seconded by David Briand, to approve the consent agenda items for the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Ottawa Valley Branch as presented. <u>Motion carried</u></b>
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### **Overview of the branch’s activities and priorities**

Ian Bennett presented his report to the members as president of the branch. He noted that the main motivation for the current board of directors was to return the branch to sustainable operations for its members after several years of inactivity.

The branch has faced some challenges, and the newly formed branch board asked themselves how they can contribute to engage members. What is the branch’s value proposition? It’s local interests and concerns, bringing issues to local politicians and allowing them to interact with the members. Communication is also important, so the branch must inform members of initiatives, opportunities that affect them, and highlight the local aspects of the Association’s work. Local programs or preferred partnerships could also be valuable to members.

Without quorum or a functional board, the branch has been idle and stuck in inactivity. Ian Bennett noted that the branch is currently under administrative suspension by the Association, which means that its finances are being handled by the National Office. This was due to the branch failing to submit financial records on time in previous years. Once the branch is back with a functional board, the suspension can be lifted.

The current branch board of directors has been meeting since December 2024 and has held regular meetings to take measured and important steps to provide a foundation for the branch to resume operations and better support its

members. This included amending the branch by-laws, notably to relax the quorum requirements and allow nominations from the floor to make the branch elections more likely to succeed; planning and organizing an annual general meeting in 2025, which would be engaging and attract members to attend; and reviewing the branch's finances to ensure that they are in order.

The branch board made the conscious decision to remain under the administrative suspension and to leave the financial control to the National Office for now, as the main priority was to get the branch back to a functioning state before thinking of taking back such control and develop operational plans and budgets until a new board is constituted.

Ian Bennett noted that there are two essential conditions to make the branch sustainable in 2025 and beyond. The first one is to hold a successful annual general meeting, which is being achieved here. The second one is the recruitment of new directors to sit on the branch board.

Depending on the outcome of this annual general meeting, the current board will consider several options. If there are enough members who accept to join the branch board, the current directors will determine whether they are willing to stay involved after a period of transition.

However, if there are no volunteers to join the branch board, the current directors will remain for a few months to explore the next steps for the branch, in consultation with the National Office and the branch's members.

The branch board will report to the National Office on the AGM and branch affairs, as required by the National regulations. Then, the new board of directors may choose to take back control of the branch finances in due time after the administrative suspension is lifted and continue to strengthen the communication with members and the planning of more engaging events. The branch may also want to consider strengthening partnerships with other branches in the district, including Ottawa.

### **Financial update**

Ian Bennett introduced Mike Hawkes, the branch's treasurer, who gave a presentation on the branch finances.

The presentation showed comparative numbers for 2023 and 2024 financial years, including revenue and expenses, and balances (assets and liabilities).

The branch is showing a small loss of \$334.87 on the balance sheet, which is acceptable. Overall, the branch is in a strong, positive financial position and a new board of directors will be able to resume activities without any issues.

Aaron Wise noted that the branch's revenue is based on a portion of the membership fees received by the branch. The branch receives 20% of the fees paid by members (the rest is used to fund national programs, national office staff, and other national activities).

Mike Hawkes and Aaron Wise answered a few questions from members.

One member asked about the funds return to the national office by the branch. Aaron Wise explained that the branch can keep an amount in unreserved equity that is equivalent of one year of operation (based on the average of the past three years), some funds can be allocated in reserves, but any excess funds that aren't allocated must return to the national office, where they are used for the national Defense of Benefits Emergency Reserve (a reserve of funds that can be used to build a large-scale campaign in case a federal government decides to cut pensions or alter members' benefits), or for the Branch Infrastructure Reserve (branches in need of additional funding can make applications to receive money from this reserve).

Another member asked what "Other" means under "Assets". Aaron Wise explained that this was a quarterly remittance of the membership fees at the end of 2023 that was on the books but had not been received by the National Office.

Ian Bennett asked if there were any other questions on his report as president, or on the treasurer's report. Hearing none, he declared that, for the record, his report as president and the treasurer's report on the branch finances would be deemed received.

#### **Amendments to ON53 branch by-laws**

Ian Bennett explained that the branch board had made a few modifications to the branch's by-laws.

The first change was, as discussed earlier, to reduce the requirement for quorum at member meetings from 2% of the membership to 1% of the membership.

The second change was to add more flexibility for the branch board to select a date for the branch annual general meeting. The previous wording required that the annual general meeting be held no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>, and this was changed to May 15<sup>th</sup>.

The third change was done to allow nominations from the floor during the elections of the branch board at annual general meetings.

There were no questions on these proposed amendments to the branch by-laws, so Ian Bennett suggested approving all three of them in one motion.

**Motion:** It was moved by Barbara Whelan, seconded by Christine Walker, to approve the following amendments to the Ottawa Valley Branch by-laws as presented:

that section 8.5 of the ON53 by laws (Quorum) be amended from: "At any Branch Annual, Special or General meeting, the quorum required to conduct business is 2% of the membership at the time of the meeting." to: "At any Branch Annual, Special or General meeting, the quorum required to conduct business is 1% of the membership at the time of the meeting, but never less than two times the number of directors currently in office plus one."

that section 8.1.1 of the ON53 by-laws be amended from: "The Branch executive shall determine the date, location, and agenda of the meeting. The date shall be no later than April 15th." to: "The Branch executive shall determine the date, location, and agenda of the meeting. The date shall be no later than May 15th." And

that section 5.6.1 of the ON53 by-laws (Nominations from the floor or by the membership) be amended from: "Additional nominations from the floor at the Branch Annual General Meeting are not permitted. Members may nominate any member by submitting the nomination in writing to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, or to the Branch President, no later than 15 days prior to the Branch Annual General Meeting. The nomination must be supported by a written statement from the nominee indicating the nominee's willingness to serve." to: "Branch members may make additional nominations from the floor at the Branch Annual Meeting. If a member is absent when nominated, the nomination must be supported by a written statement from the nominee indicating the nominee's willingness to serve."

**Motion carried**

#### **Call for nominations & Branch board elections**

Ian Bennett noted that he received one nomination from Kathryn Hoyland. He added that the branch board must be composed by at least four members. Since the newly revised by-laws allow nominations from the floor, he asked if any other members present wished to be nominees.

The four members of the current board of directors advised that they would be willing to remain in office on an interim basis at least until September 2025 to help any new directors transition into their role as directors. They reserved the capacity to re-evaluate their commitment to remain on the board after that date. Mike Hawkes noted that he resides in

Ottawa and joined this branch to help during this transition phase, but would likely not stay on the branch board after September.

Pat Davies added that she saw a lot of potential for the branch, especially after hearing the presentation by Steven Chapman from the Ottawa branch, earlier.

Christine Walker and Joanne Shafer agreed to join Kathryn Hoyland as the nominees for the 2025 branch board elections.

As discussed above, Ian Bennett, Paul Langham, Mike Hawkes and Pat Davis also agreed to be nominees.

Since there were less than 10 nominees (i.e. the maximum number of directors in the by-laws), Ian Bennett noted that all nominees were acclaimed as directors. He asked for a motion to accept the results of this board nomination process.

**Motion: It was moved by Paul Langham, seconded by Pat Davies, that the following members be acclaimed as directors on the Ottawa Valley Branch board of directors: Christine Walker, Joanne Shafer, Kathryn Hoyland, Ian Bennett, Paul Langham, Mike Hawkes and Pat Davis. Motion carried**

#### **Next steps & wrap-up**

Ian Bennett thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting and called for adjournment unless there was further discussion. Hearing none, he declared the meeting adjourned.

**The meeting was adjourned at 15:17.**