

DRAFT MINUTES
Council of Canadians
Annual Members Meeting (AMM)
June 8, 2024, 12:02 pm – 3:30 pm EDT

Call to Order

The meeting began at 12:02 pm EDT

Land Acknowledgement (Chair, John Cartwright)

John Cartwright opened the meeting by acknowledging that we are gathered from across the country on treaty territories and unceded lands.

Keynote Speaker (Dr. Danielle Martin): Presentation + Qs and As

Author of the book: "Better Now: Six Big Ideas to Improve Health Care for All Canadians" ([weblink](#))

There is still much work to be done to support and enhance health care. Improving access to primary care must be improved. In the chart displayed by Dr. Martin, Canada ranked the lowest compared to many other Western countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated, "Primary health care is where the battle for human health is won or lost." Primary care is a relationship with a team that has known you over time. Research has shown that health systems based on primary care produce better healthy outcomes. Dr. Martin, who trains medical students, advised that the current education system cannot close the current gap between the supply of doctors and the huge number of people who need a family physician. Our Care is a national project, which took place across Canada during the last couple of years and was a huge public consultation. It was a huge study that asked Canadians what they want in a primary health care system. They arrived at a six-point standard, which the C of C could push forward as part of its political activism. When you move into a neighbourhood you should be able to access a high-quality primary care provider and receive ongoing care from that team in a timely way. Everyone should be able to access their health record online. The numbers for access to primary care have never been so low. They have lots of research to show that Canada is very behind across the country.

Highlights from the Qs & As:

- Data has shown that the upcoming generation of new graduates wants to be salaried and does not want to be small business owners. Female doctors also want to be eligible for maternity leave.
- It will take a long time to train more doctors. Nurse practitioners, family-practice nurses, and social workers who work together as a team are all part of the solution. Whoever is the most appropriate person would deal with the issue.
- Dr. Martin is disturbed by the proliferation of virtual walk-in clinics. This is because accessing public, relationship-based primary-care services is so difficult.
- The dream is to have a community health centre on every corner; however, that may not be possible everywhere and adaptations must be made.

Passing of Three Motions (John Cartwright)

MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members adopt the agenda for the 2024 Annual Meeting of Members.

-- MOTION CARRIED

MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members adopt the Rules of Order and Conduct for the 2024 Annual Meeting of Members.

-- MOTION CARRIED

MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members adopt the June 17, 2023, Annual Meeting of Members minutes.

-- MOTION CARRIED

Report from the Chair (John Cartwright)

John thanked Dr. Martin for her commitment to improving Canada's health care system. He also spoke of the time when Tommy Douglas was voted "The Greatest Canadian," in large part for his fight for universal health care for all Canadians. This same passion for improving Canadians' health care system is needed

John noted that if an election was held today, Pierre Poilievre would become the Prime Minister of Canada and reviewed how decisions made by previous Conservative governments in Canada made political decisions that negatively impacted the common good. He stated that "Profit is not the cure." Manufacturing has been sent off-shore, post-secondary institutions depend on the tuition paid by foreign students for their survival, and climate catastrophes have become the norm (e.g., atmospheric rivers, droughts and the resultant forest fires). There is a huge need to defend the commons.

John thanked outgoing Board members and welcomed incoming Board members. He thanked the Executive Director and the many C of C members who work so tirelessly at the local level to work for a better world and a better Canada.

Executive Directors Report (Christine Warner)

Many issues from last year are still a problem today. Many are still recovering from the health impacts and isolation of the pandemic. Inflation, the climate crisis, and the water crisis are still huge issues in Canada. Corporations continue to siphon off the public good for their own profit (corporate capture).

Christina made a presentation during which she reviewed which C of C staff members are working on the different activities of the organization and summarized the major accomplishments of the last year and the work that is happening at the national level on the Council's political campaigns and the work that is being done on additional political campaigns being worked on by members at the provincial and local level. She also presented activities that staff members and C of C members can work on during the upcoming year. The major accomplishments of chapters across Canada during the last year were celebrated and presented to AMM attendees.

The focus now is to grow the organization and create opportunities to on-ramp new members and sustain their engagement in the long run, for decades to come. It was announced that a Blue Communities campaign for schools will be launched later this year. Work will be done to prevent the rollback of advances gained by the progressive community in years past.

Report from the Director of Political Campaigns and Organizing (Robin Tress)

The recent passing of Pharmacare legislation and the establishment of a Pharmacare program was celebrated. It is a good start. More needs to be done to expand the program. We want to see the list of medicines covered to be expanded. We reached this point after decades of research and advocacy (over the past 60 years). Robin reviewed some of the recent highlights of that decades-long struggle.

The Council of Canadians wishes to be the political home for more people in Canada and the work that was done during the past year to work toward that goal. Much was done to call out the corporate capture of Canada. The C of C hosted 18 Town Halls across Canada. Members made almost 5000 phone calls to Cabinet Ministers and MPs at a key moment in the legislative process. The C of C released an expose about think tanks funded by the pharmaceutical industry (the link between big Pharma and so-called "Pharmacare experts.") We need the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) agreements to be completed and implemented before the next federal election. Robin reviewed the upcoming work that will be done by staff and members during the upcoming months.

Highlights from the Qs & As:

- There is a need to find a Board member from the Indigenous community in Canada because it is important for those perspectives to be heard. Remember that you are “walking beside” Indigenous peoples in their struggles. Indigenous voices need to be listened to and heard.
- A question was asked about what drugs the Pharmacare program covered. Contraceptive medicines and diabetes medication and devices (e.g. glucose monitor, insulin pump). We want Pharmacare to be universal, and to cover all medicines that could be prescribed by a family doctor (e.g., heart medicine, mental health care medication).
- There needs to be a fight against the tar sands in Alberta to protect the Alberta environment. Chapters in the Prairies Region (especially Edmonton) have found other partners with whom to collaborate. We are building for education and action.

Treasurer’s Report (read by Christina Warner on behalf of Steven Staples)

The Finance Committee is comprised of members of the Board of Directors. The current membership is made up of Jerry Mackinlay, Lily Chang, and Joe Mihevc. The Committee’s mandate is working with staff and the Treasurer, to receive and assess financial reports in relation to the financial position of the Council and our fundraising initiatives, to assist in the development of the annual budget, and to provide advice to the Board and Executive.

The Finance Committee presented the financial statements provided by our auditors, OUSELEY HANVEY CLIPSHAM DEEP LLP for the 2023 Fiscal Year. The auditors stated, “We are pleased to inform you that we had no disagreements with management during the course of our audit.” Their letter stated during the audit, they did not identify any significant accounting estimates that they considered to be unreasonable.

In recent years, the Board has expressed concern that as a result of the economy and pressures upon our donors (the pandemic, high inflation, rising interest rates), our revenue has not kept pace with spending on our campaigns and activities. To address the deficit, the C of C has decreased its staffing complement and operating expenses while trying to maintain our capacity and high level of impact.

In the current fiscal year, 2024, the Board adopted a budget with a much-reduced gap between revenue and spending, to bring them into balance in the next year. In the first six months of the year, fundraising met expectations, and the Committee continues to monitor finances closely.

The Finance Committee thanked staff members and our Executive Director, Christina Warner, for their steadfast commitment and outstanding work in fulfilling the mission of the Council of Canadians.

Auditor’s Report and Statement of Operations (Lesley Griffiths)

The Auditor had no issues in conducting the audit. They provided a qualified opinion regarding the collection of donations. They felt there were no issues to bring forth to the Board or the members.

Lesley reviewed the Statement of Operations. Expenses exceeded revenues by \$770,000. AMM attendees had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Auditor’s Report and Statement of Operations.

MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members receive the 2024 Report of the Treasurer.

-- MOTION CARRIED

MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members appoint Ouseley Hanvey Clipsham Deep LLP as the auditor for 2024/2025.

– MOTION CARRIED

Resolutions Committee (Joey Hartman)

Joey stated the names of the Resolutions Committee members and advised that two resolutions were received (in proper order) by the deadline. A Town Hall was held on May 25 regarding the resolutions to get more specifics and report back to Chapter members.

Resolution #1: Focusing on the Common Good

WHEREAS across the world the rise of right-wing populism and the spread of misinformation and disinformation over social media have resulted in the election of regressive governments, often including extremist parties rooted in intolerance and xenophobia and bankrolled by powerful corporate interests;

AND WHEREAS in Canada the Poilievre Conservatives are fueling a wave of discontent that puts them into serious contention in the upcoming federal election, which would have disastrous results for the people of Canada and for Canada's international commitments— unleashing a new era of privatization, corporate control and climate negligence while rolling back gains we have made in recent years.

AND WHEREAS some of those regressive changes would be irreversible;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of Canadians engage in a multi-faceted effort to clearly identify the danger posed by conservative forces and develop a plan of action that connects the real economic and social interests of the vast majority of Canadians and moves people's frustration into a direction that demands fairness, justice, democracy and inclusion. This includes exposing the corporate greed that is at the root cause of the crisis of affordability while highlighting the need to defend the commons: the natural environment and public services, assets and programs that benefit us all.

-- THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED

Resolution #2: Pesticide use in forestry

WHEREAS the federal government oversees the registration and use of all pesticides and has long promised to reduce the use of pesticides.

WHEREAS spraying deciduous trees and berry bushes puts the Canadian people at a higher risk for fire, and loss of diversity in our forests and endangers our health.

WHEREAS the use of herbicides, which are a type of pesticide, threatens the ability of Indigenous people to harvest traditional foods.

WHEREAS transforming our forests into tree farms has never had the informed consent of the public and pesticide use has been successfully banned in other jurisdictions, including the province of Quebec.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Council of Canadians organize and lobby the federal government to ban all herbicide and pesticide use in forestry.

-- THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee confirmed there were 10 candidates who meet the eligibility requirements for a Director-at-large position on the Board of Directors.

One of the eligible candidates withdrew their candidacy on May 5, leaving 9 eligible candidates for 9 Director-at-large positions to be filled. The following candidates were therefore acclaimed:

(John Cartwright, Lily Chang, Phil Dawes, Sam Hammond, Malcolm Lewis-Richmond, Diwa Marcelino, Bianca Mugenyi, Aditya Rao, Tara Seucharan)

MOTION: MOVED THAT Council of Canadians members receive the 2024 report of the Nominating Committee. – MOTION CARRIED