

# How to Run a CPF Chapter Annual General Meeting

The CPF Bylaw states that each CPF Chapter is required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). Ensuring that this statutory business meeting takes place is part of good governance, accountability and transparency as part of the democratic life of an organization.

## PURPOSE

The Annual General Meeting is to:

- Inform the membership, by presenting the annual activity and financial statement reports.
- Read, correct, and approve the minutes of the previous AGM
- Receive committee reports, including the nominating committee
- Call for nominations for the Executive
- Elect the Officers – Chair, VP/Secretary, Treasurer etc. for the upcoming year
- Transact any other business, share the news, challenges and successes of the Chapter, and hear from its membership.

## WHEN TO HOLD THE AGM

The AGM must be held within 18 months of the last preceding annual meeting, but no later than six months after the end of the preceding fiscal year.

## PREPARING FOR THE AGM

Consider your goals for the meeting: **What information should be shared? Are there any key announcements for the membership? Are any discussions or consultations required? Do you have controversial information to share? What preparation is required?** It is always wise to have a plan in place to handle dialogue respectfully for all members, and volunteer time.

Consider date, time, location, size of room to be comfortable and accessible to the most members possible. **Is child care an option? Will refreshments be provided?**

Prepare a written notice of the AGM to all members a minimum of 14 days prior to the meeting (and not more than 60 days prior). The notice needs to include the meeting's date, time and location and the minutes of the last AGM. Notices can be sent by email.

## SAMPLE AGM PREPARATION TIMELINE

<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
4 months prior	Discuss succession planning and the nominations process as required to fill Executive positions	Current Executive
3 months prior	Make arrangements for AGM location, choose date, time, child care options. Begin communications	VP/Secretary
2 months prior	Start preparing documents for presentation at the AGM; create draft agenda, consider if a guest speaker to be invited, request committee reports from chairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair- Activity Report</li> <li>• VP/Secretary – Past Minutes</li> <li>• Treasurer – Financial Report</li> </ul>
1 month prior	Send out 'Save the Date' notice of Annual General Meeting to membership; circulate or post agenda, past minutes and reports as required. Seek out or promote nominations submitted	VP/Secretary
15 days prior	Draft script with all details of the meeting; ensure materials are available; confirm attendance of all speakers; review roles for board members at the meeting; review voting process if election required	Chair
7 days prior	Assess RSVPs to help ensure quorum will be at the AGM; if quorum is going to be an issue, encourage and confirm participation of additional members. Have extra documents printed and available in case members forget their copies. Confirm refreshments/snacks, if providing.	VP/Secretary
Day of AGM	Arrive early and ensure room is prepared. Ensure technology/equipment is in place and in working order. Ensure a sign-up sheet is at the door to record attendance. Proceed with the meeting.	Current Executive
Within 30 Days Post-AGM	File post-AGM report to Branch, alongside any updates to executive and contact information.	New Executive

## DEVELOP AN AGENDA... AND A SCRIPT

The Chapter Executive is encouraged to prepare a script to follow for the AGM which helps keep the meeting on track, helps the Chair set the right tone and structure for the meeting, and ensures that all the proper meeting protocol is addressed.

A common AGM agenda looks like this:

#	Item	Lead	Time
1	Call to Order / Establish Quorum Land Acknowledgement - <a href="https://native-land.ca/">https://native-land.ca/</a>	Chair	
2	Approval of Agenda *MOTION	Membership	
3	Approval of Minutes of Previous AGM *MOTION	Membership	
4	Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair</li> <li>• Treasurer</li> <li>• VP/ Secretary or Nomination Committee Chair</li> </ul> *MOTION	Current Executive  Approval of Reports – Membership	
5	New Business (optional)	Chair	
6	Elections /Appointment to Executive Approval of the Executive *MOTION	VP/ Secretary or Nomination Committee Chair	
7	Questions from the Floor	Membership	
8	Recognition/Acknowledgments/Awards (optional)	Chair	
9	Special Guest Speaker and/or Membership Networking Session (optional)	Guest	
10	Adjournment *MOTION	Chair	

## REPORTS

As part of the AGM, it is common practice for different Executive members to report on the key activity and financial aspects of the Chapter. The Chair usually begins the AGM with an overview of the past year, highlighting the accomplishments and providing insight into the year ahead. It may inform the membership of key changes (both good and bad) that may impact the Chapter and the annual activity report which must be submitted to the CPF Branch to remain in good standing. The VP/Secretary or Chair of the Nominating Committee reports on the succession planning efforts and nominations process.

The Treasurer must present the annual financial information to its membership at the AGM which is also to be submitted to the CPF Branch. As part of the financial report, the Treasurer will often share the balance sheet (showing the Chapter's assets and liabilities for up to not more than four months before the meeting); Statement of Income and Expenses (provides a general statement of revenue and expenses for the financial year that ended closest to the date of the balance sheet); and transparent financial information.

DO NOT take up the time at the AGM to read the reports that have been circulated or may be printed in an Annual Report.

## NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

The election of Chapter Executive members is an important democratic process for a non-profit organization. It begins with a nomination process that is often coordinated by the board's Nominations Committee. In the case of small Chapters, it is often the responsibility of the VP/Secretary. Prior to the Annual General Meeting and the Election, the positions which will become vacant and the names of the nominees should have been presented to the membership.

All the Chair is required to do is make sure that the members have a reasonable opportunity to nominate, and the process is not rushed. When the nominations process is complete, the Chair can make a motion to close nominations.

The Chair should provide clear instructions on the voting process - Voting can be done by raised hand or by voice (aye or nay count), secret ballot (a written slate of

candidates, or individual ballots where names are written), or roll call (each voter is called and submits their choice).

In the case of secret ballots, it is important to provide a secure ballot so that the correct number of votes are taken from the membership. Also, be sure that what is required as a legitimate ballot is clearly defined to voters (i.e. write down the complete name of the candidate). The ballots are then collected usually into a ballot box (it is best not to pick up ballots by hand). Identified scrutineers take the ballot box to a secure location for counting. The Chair can proceed to other meeting business during the count, if required.

The information is compiled onto a tally sheet which includes the number of votes cast, number of votes required to elect and number of illegal/spoiled votes, as well as the number of votes for each candidate. The tally sheet is then signed by the scrutineers, and given to the Chair for announcement. The Chair announces the result.

Once all the votes have been counted and the board positions filled, the Chair makes a motion to destroy the ballots. The Chair also has the option of making a motion to hold the ballots for 30 days before destroying. If members question the validity of an election or the procedure in taking the vote, a member should make a motion to recount the votes.

Overall, there are no hard and fast rules governing the proper conduct of elections. The key word is democracy. If the rights of your members are respected, allowing equal and fair opportunity for each person to nominate, run and vote, then your elections should be successful. If problems arise, be sure to announce when and how they will be addressed before the next meeting.

The Chair should meet with the new executive immediately after the meeting to welcome new and returning members and set a date for an orientation meeting.

## **CALL FOR A MOTION, MOVE AND SECOND A MOTION**

The person presenting a report will end by asking for a motion to accept the report. Any voting member may move or second a motion. All reports require approval by the membership. Only the motion to adjourn, does not require a seconder on the motion.

## **MINUTES**

It is important to record the minutes of the AGM as they are required as part of the Chapter remaining in good standing with the CPF Branch.

The minutes are a record of the things that were agreed to while the members were gathered together, so while they do not need to be a word-for-word account, it is good practice to get exact wording of decisions/motions made.

## **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

The final work of the Chair is to call for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Before doing so, the Chair will often thank everyone for attending and encourage members to keep open dialogue throughout the year. Please follow up with your Post-AGM reporting within the 30 day period, and circulate the minutes to anyone who missed the meeting!

## **HOW TO FACILITATE A VIRTUAL AGM**

For a variety of reasons, CPF Chapters may be required to hold their Annual General Meeting virtually to adhere with the legal and CPF Bylaw requirements that state, the meeting is to be held within 18 months of the last preceding annual meeting, but no later than six months after the end of the preceding fiscal year.

## **CHOOSING THE TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORM**

It is important to have a reliable platform and to consider AGM specific requirements such as the ability to identify voting members from non-voting members and guests; a simple voting process; and providing accessibility modifications for active member participation as required (consider if closed captioning or translation is required).

Many platforms can be used including: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Goto Webinar, Callbridge, AdobeConnect, BigMarker, Google Meet, etc.

Consider whether to use a meeting or a webinar platform: the two main differences are polling and survey functions which may be helpful for voting process, and the host's ability to mute participants. The Branch is able to provide support, and access to GoTo Meetings for your use. Although having active participation is a benefit, not all attendees will remember to mute themselves or know how to use these functions which may cause background noise and distractions during the meeting. Using the chat, question and poll functions can foster member engagement.

## **CONSIDER THE FUNCTIONS NEEDED**

Tracking Attendance / Meeting Quorum: Important to request that attendees use their full names when registering – to easily identify if they have voting privileges.

Voting: The polling function allows users to create a question with multiple answers for attendees to choose from – once a poll is launched, attendees can vote on answers. Some platforms allow for “break-out” rooms, allowing to assign voting members and non-voting members to different “rooms” where the poll is only administered within the voting member room. Once voting closes, total responses can be shared while individual responses remain confidential.

- By inserting the motion you want to pass in the question area of a poll and setting the answers to “favour”, “opposed” or “abstain”, the polling function can be used to complete voting for passing motions.
- The chat function can be used to record motions. A member can type “first” or “second” in the chat box to indicate their support to move or second a motion.
- The question area allows members to type their questions throughout the meeting, for the moderator to respond directly by message or to have a speaker respond to the question during the Question period for everyone in the meeting.

## **PROVIDE A PRACTICE TEST SESSION**

Completing a mock AGM to ensure all speakers are comfortable multi-tasking and with their technological requirements is a good idea to build confidence of the speakers.

It is also important to offer an opportunity to sign-in, test the connection and experience

the functions of the platform before the actual AGM for members who are less technologically skilled. The test session information and links to online 'how to manuals' may be included in the 'Save the Date' meeting information circulated to members along with a name to contact for technical support prior or during the meeting.

Complete technical testing an hour prior to the start of the AGM. Have an alternate plan if audio cannot be fixed – Provide the alternate call-in number prior to the meeting.

## SECURITY MEASURES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Require prior registration for participants to access the meeting. DO NOT post the link to access the meeting publicly.
- Assign a meeting administrator (tech support) who will screen entry of participants (based on registrations), hold the muting controls for microphones as well as webcams, and will assign screen-sharing permissions.
- Use the chat to provide a name and information to contact should a member experience difficulty with sound quality.
- Identify a meeting moderator to track and identify members wishing to ask questions or who are recording comments in the chat.

## ASSIGNING SUPPORT ROLES

These roles may help with the smooth transition from in-person to online meetings:

- Master of Ceremonies – Meeting Chair. It is important to gauge the Chair's comfort level in hosting a virtual meeting who may decide to assign a designate.
- Meeting Moderator – Track order of speakers, time keeper, slide advancer, chat manager
- Meeting Administrator – Tech support, poll manager, voting tracker
- Phone / Email Support – Tech support for members not able to access the meeting

## PRESENTATION

- Keep the AGM as concise as possible.
- Use clean, easy to read slides – less words per slide, more images, and contrasting colours.

As people get tired easily and have lower attention spans on virtual meetings, it is important to provide a clear, visually engaging format to help members follow the



sequence of the meeting.

Virtual meetings provide a lot less room for the presenter to ramble! Although the number of speakers should be limited, the speaker must work with the meeting moderator when responding to members' questions or comments - It is important to track the order of questions and state the individual's name before reading the question.

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This Guide is meant to assist CPF Chapter leaders in carrying out their responsibilities. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact your CPF Branch directly.