

Minutes of Meeting

BLBRA Board of Directors Public Meeting

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 1:30 – 4:00 PM

Bras d'Or Hall Community Centre, Little Bras d'Or

We envision the Bras d'Or Lake as a special place where communities are joined together in thoughtful promotion of environmental assets and responsible economic development.



Attendance:

DIRECTOR NAME (Exec) (Delegate)		DIRECTOR NAME (Exec) (Delegate)	
Allison McIsaac	R	Perla MacLeod (Victoria County)	R
Brian MacDougall (Treasurer)	Y	Pierre LaRoche (Secretary)	Y
Eileen Crosby (Chair)	Y	Rodney Chaisson	R
Eliot Frosst	Y	Stan Johnson (CEPI)	Y
Elizabeth MacCormick		Steve Parsons (CBRM)	R
Foncie Farrell	Y	Tracy Marshall	R
Gordon Kerr	R	Tyler Mattheis (Cape Breton Partnership)	Y
John MacLennan (Inverness County)		Vacant	
Kirsty Lock (NSCC)	Y	Vacant	
Maureen Cameron-MacMillan (Vice Chair)	Y	Vacant	

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of 50% of the Executive Committee plus 2 non-executive Board members. (Y= Present; R= Regrets sent)

Observers: Candace Christiano, Kelly Deveaux (Parks Canada); Rosella Born, Chris King and Liz Campbell were invited as potential Board recruits.

1. Call to Order at 1:30pm by Chair Eileen Crosby who began the meeting by acknowledging that “all sites designated by UNESCO in Canada as Biosphere Reserves are located on Indigenous lands. The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.” ([Pessamit Call for Reconciliation](#)).
2. Additions to the agenda – No additions.
3. Approval of the agenda - Motion to approve by Eliot, seconded by Foncie. Approved unanimously.
4. Approval of the minutes from the February 15th meeting. Motion to approve by Brian, seconded by Pierre. Approved unanimously.

5. Business arising from last meeting (not dealt with elsewhere)

i. **BLBRA Meeting Folder:** Eileen reviewed that all Directors can view support documentation for Board meetings in the BLBRA Meeting Folder on our BLBRA shareable Google Drive platform. If Directors have any issues connecting to the shared drive to place, edit or retrieve documents please email our [Google Workspace](#) Administrator, Maureen, at Vice-Chair@blbra.ca to get connected.

ii. **Meeting schedule:** Eileen noted that the meeting originally listed **Tuesday, Nov. 16** but should be **Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021**. It will still be in person, 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at the Wagmatcook Heritage Centre, Victoria County.

A virtual meeting may be held in June to settle any last-minute AGM issues ahead of the June 17th meeting.

Morning versus afternoon meetings were briefly discussed but no change.

Still looking for a recommendation/venue for the January 2022 meeting.

iii. **CCA Guidelines** hard copies were made available to the Board Members for themselves or to bring to **community groups or organizations** not yet in receipt. They were asked to review and update/sign the distribution list for any they were going to deliver.

iv. **Citizen Science Initiative** - Actionable goals. Kirsty used her [Citizen Science Initiative](#) Powerpoint presentation to review the work that the Forest Watch Committee and others have been doing regarding the citizen science concept concerning scope, data collection, data storage, data retrieval, analysis and distribution. Johnathan Buffett of [Cape Breton Mesonet](#) and [his scores of sites around and now beyond the Cape Breton Island](#) as an example of an opportunity to address many of these scope issues.

Kirsty also outlined that there needs to be more discussions around the most effective organizational hierarchy for individuals and committees dealing with Outreach and Citizen engagement as well as BLBRA citizen science initiatives such as Bras d'Or Watch, Forest Watch and Trail development for example. Fred Baechler and Jim Foulds have both offered to participate in these discussions.

Action: Eileen will look at inviting Johnathan Buffett to make a presentation on the Mesonet at the AGM meeting in June.

v. **Bras d'Or Watch:** Eileen reported that there is currently no committee chair and 2021 plans are not yet set. Only St. Peter's held a citizen participation event in 2020 under COVID-19 conditions. There is still funding in place to support 2021 events. Could also be an opportunity to do some type of event during first Explore the Bras d'Or event in 2021. In 2020, ACAP however did visit the other sites for their annual scientific monitoring needs and recommend that any plans for Bras d'Or Watch also respect the mid-July scheduling to maintain the potential to make year to year data comparisons.

There was a Motion to make an addendum to the Bras d'Or Watch scope to include an iNaturalist photo event by ACAP during the Explore the Bras d'Or (Wjinine'n Pitu'poq) and that

passed unanimously.

Eileen displayed and explained that Annamarie Hatcher with ACAP assistance put together (10) 10 bird related kits in bags initially designated for schools but can also be loaned out through libraries. She met with Jen Cooper of ACAP and. Will meet with her in the coming week to see what can be done for this year's Bras d'Or Watch event given that funding through TD Friends of the Environment was not applied for due to the resignation of the committee chair.

vi. NovaStream invoice: The Executive Committee discussed the background of the unexpected NovaStream invoice #1856. It had been received from their newly assigned project manager and covered miscellaneous website work (39 hours/\$2,925.00) and hosting (17months/\$425.00) from August 2019 to Dec 31, 2020, all since the site was redesigned and relaunched in August of 2018. There appeared to be no agreement with or understanding between NovaStream and the BLBRA on how to address maintenance work and changes to the website since then despite some queries from BLBRA. After a request by Brian, background timesheets and a revised invoice #1a were provided by NovaStream this past week and they proposed the hosting charges plus a single charge of \$1,500 against what had been calculated as updated 62 hours x \$75.00/hr. = \$4,650.00 for work until the end of February 2021. Pierre reviewed the detailed records with NovaStream's owner, Darcy Campbell, and they agreed that there were only 44.75 hours owing, due to a NovaStream miscalculation for a total of \$3,356.25. The \$1,500 charge still amounted to a 55% discount.

During review some directors/observers mentioned that perhaps there were other vendors to look at and that their website did not provide a good public facing image as to offerings/capabilities. It was also discussed that a maintenance agreement needed to be put in place with quarterly, if not monthly billing/statements.

The work had been done as manifested in the current website. Both Maureen and Pierre felt that NovaStream had responded quickly and effectively during past interactions to get miscellaneous work completed.

Motion by Brian that the BLBRA issue a cheque of \$2,300.00 to cover invoice #1856, dated 16/12/20 and including web hosting services for January 2021 to March 31, 2021. Seconded by Pierre. Approved unanimously.

Action: Brian will send the cheque to NovaStream with a covering letter addressing the maintenance agreement and requiring receipt of regular billing statements.

vii. Treasurer's Report for February 28, 2021

Brian gave a high-level review of the treasurer's report previously shared online and moved for its approval, seconded by Foncie. Approved unanimously.

Brian then gave a high-level review of the budget previously shared online versus actuals.

While the budget for the display changes at the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site

(AGBNHS) were discussed, Kelly Deveaux of Parks Canada was introduced by Eileen. Kelly explained that the building interior and exterior were being renovated this year and over several years to improve the visitor experience and access to the rooftop. [The current BLBRA display area](#) will be affected and needs to move this summer. Eliot said there is a \$1,351.25 in financial commitment for the new map however.

Action: Eliot and the BLBRA Museum committee will put the scheduled design and build work on hold for now. The touch screens planned for cannot be used and Parks Canada is planning on not using this technology any longer.

Eileen, after consulting with Kelly Deveaux, outlined the possibility and cost of installing a weatherproof display/stand on the rooftop patio area being renovated, with a view of the lake in the background to help visitors relate. The cost of the signage before installation has been estimated at \$1,700.00 per 36" x 28" plus approximately \$750.00 for a professional design for each panel. Parks Canada will install the panels without charge.

Eileen also spoke briefly of the Executive Operating Budget previously shared online.

- 6. CEPI updates** – Stan reported that CEPI is continuing its presentations to municipal councils on who and what CEPI and Pitu'paq are and how to differentiate the two. (They have done three presentations so far – to Port Hawkesbury, Inverness and the CBRM). CEPI continues to seek their annual funding support from the partners on senior council. The yearly notional workplan and budget was approved at January's senior council meeting for CEPI for the 2021/22 year. The job description for the Explore the Bras d'Or (Wjinine'n Pitu'poq) [Event Coordinator Contract Position](#) is posted on the CEPI website (and BLBRA website).

- 7. CEPI Youth** – No update available.

- 8. CBRA and/or UNESCO MaB updates:** Maureen reported there have been no recent meetings but one is planned for March 31, 2021.

Maureen also informed the board that the ["Bras d'Or Lake Celebrates MaB's International Year of Karst and Caves in Biospheres"](#) news item was added to our News & Events page. It provides a link to the CaveMAB international network video introducing their 2021 "Together for Caves" campaign designed to celebrate the International Year of Caves and Karst as well as the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program.

9. Committee Chair Updates/Report Comments:

- i. Executive Committee reported that a Board Nominations 2021 committee was formed: Maureen Cameron-MacMillan (Chair), Gordon Kerr, Foncie Farrell, Candace Christiano, Eileen Crosby (ex officio). Eileen distributed copies of the [Recruitment Brochure](#) to all and these can be given to potential nominees before the June AGM. Eileen recognized Rosella Born, Chris King and Liz Campbell as potential Board recruits.
- ii. Periodic Review: Eileen reported that the interviews with the two Biosphere reviewers were still being planned. As to whether on-site visits would occur or be online was dependent on public

health protocols. The first initial interview by the reviewers will take place on April 12 with just Gordon Kerr and Eileen Crosby on Zoom.

iii. Trail Committee: Maureen reported that maps were available for fundraising. iv.

Nomination Committee: See above.

v. Communications Committee: Pierre repeated the call for contributors to a monthly newspaper column.

vi. Forest Watch Committee: See above.

vii. Museum Committee + Membership: Eliot reported that there are currently 19 lifetime, 103 annual, 14 member families and 3 business memberships for a total of 139.

The membership link is online at: <https://blbra.ca/join-the-association/>

New Business

i. Eileen introduced Eric Leviten-Reid as the guest speaker on Demographics, firmographics and similar metrics to SDG's including poverty, equality, rural economic development.

FYI: "Eric Leviten-Reid is Facilitator of Community Engagement and Collaboration with New Dawn Enterprises. Born and raised in Cape Breton, Eric has worked in the community development field for over 30 years much of that time here at home but also in other communities across Canada. His overall focus has been on developing collaborative initiatives to address complex community issues such as poverty, food security, community transportation and substance use." (Eric to BLBRA, 2021)

As Eric was setting up, Pierre explained that while working with Laura Syms of CBU on the Biosphere's demographic and firmographic profiles for the Periodic Review process, Laura spoke of the work Eric was doing to get various datasets populated and maintained relative to Cape Breton community issues. Laura is part of that team and once the introduction was made it appeared that the biosphere watershed would be a good candidate to add to Eric's geographical data definitions that include many discrete municipal and county boundaries. The purpose of the presentation was to share potential synergies.

Eric explained that the New Dawn initiative is developing a model closely based on the [IISD Tracking Progress model](#) and substantially manifested in the [My Winnipeg](#) example. [UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals](#) are included in that data model. The project that Eric has been working on includes sourcing, storing, retrieving, analyzing and distributing thematic data. Eric has good connections for reliable and maintained data from Census Canada relevant to many specifically defined geographies on the island. Eric is looking for local temporal data over extended periods of time and is searching out other reliable data providers. Environmental data, among others, is not yet included. Kirsty clarified that some of the Citizen Science committee monitoring data might qualify and Eric suggested to Stan that perhaps CEPI might have some data as well.

Complimenting the data will be distribution through a new 'magazine' that would present the data in a consumer-friendly manner. Resources are required to analyze and display the data. Still a work in progress. The Winnipeg site shows some typical analysis examples.

(Secretary's note: See <https://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/vital-signs/> and https://clayoquotbiosphere.org/files/file/5f34519fe3bab/Vital_Signs_18_web_final.pdf for related initiatives, opportunities and synergies being reviewed by the BLBRA).

Action: Pierre will continue to work with Eric to determine how Biosphere centric datasets might become part of the New Dawn project and report back.

- ii. **Strategic Planning:** Eileen reviewed her efforts to get competitive bids for facilitating the Strategic Planning session tentatively scheduled for completion by fall. Of three bids received, the Acadia Entrepreneurship Center provided the best pre-bid interview. It also provided the lowest bid. Given that there were only 8 voting Board members present, Brian suggested that we canvas the Board with an online vote once Board members had 10 days to review the proposal in detail.

Motion by Brian that "Given that the next BLBRA meeting isn't taking place until mid-May and given that we are seeking 50% funding for hiring a Strategic Planning Team through ACOA, and as April 1st marks the start of the next fiscal year, I move that the BLBRA Board approve hiring the Acadia Entrepreneurship Center after a 10-day online review in order to secure this firm to conduct our five-year strategic plan commencing in mid-September.

Action: ALL Directors: Review the three bids on the shared Google Drive within 10 days (April 4, 2021 and email your concurrence. **NOTE:** Per Eileen's email of April 2, 2021, "**vote on the motion on April 13 using reply to all to this email so that your vote is clear to other Board members (just as it would be at a meeting) stating if you are in favour or against the stated motion.**"

10. Correspondence – None presented.

11. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Foncie. 4:00 pm

Please email any clarifications or omissions to:

Pierre LaRochelle

pierreprfamily@gmail.com

BLBRA Secretary

and resident of the [Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve](#)

A place where the people live and work while attaining a balanced and sustainable relationship with the natural world.