

Agri-Food Innovation Council

2021 AGM

Draft Minutes

MINUTES of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of Members of the Agri-food Innovation Council hosted via webinar on March 16th, 2021.

ATTENDANCE

Members:

Dr. Julianne Curran, Chair
John Hyshka, Treasurer
Dr. Tania Humphrey, Vice-Chair
Dr. Karen Churchill, Secretary
Dr. Rajasekaran Lada, Director
Darcy Herauf, Director
Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn
Byron Beeler
Dr. Caroline Begg
James Benkie
Karla Bergstrom
Dr. Josh Cowan
Dr. Lianne Dwyer

Graham Gilchrist
Bill Greuel
Lori-Ann Kaminski
Dr. Wilf Keller
Ralph McGiffin
Janay Meisser
Ryan Philippe
Dave Smardon
Brian Sullivan
Alison Sunstrum
Kelesy Tollefson
Dr. Michael Trevan

Non-Members – Staff:

Serge Buy, CEO
Karl Payeur, COO
Christine Helm, Event Manager
Chris Frantz, Governance and Recording Secretary



1. CALL TO ORDER

As quorum was easily met, the meeting was called to order by Serge Buy at 1:04pm EDT.

Serge Buy welcomed everyone to the AGM and announced that this is one the best attended AGM's he had seen. Serge Buy acknowledged past chairs of the Council, Dr. Wilf Keller, and Dr. Lianne Dwyer, who have been instrumental in the positive changes to the Council in previous years.

Serge Buy explained that everyone can use the Q and A option found at the bottom right of the screen. This can be used to ask questions and put forward motions as everyone is currently muted. Dr. Julianne Curran will acknowledge all movers and seconders. Once a motion has been seconded the poll function will appear on the screen and everyone will be able to vote on the motion. The Q and A feature can be used at any time.

Serge Buy introduced Dr. Julianne Curran who has been the Chair since January 2020. Dr. Julianne Curran thanked everyone for attending the virtual annual general meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Julianne Curran displayed the agenda on the screen and asked if anyone has anything to add. Dr. Julianne Curran gave time for members to ask questions using the Q and A feature then asked if someone could put forward a motion to accept it as is.

On motion duly made by John Hyshka, seconded by Byron Beeler, and duly carried, the following resolution was adopted unanimously.

Be it Resolved that the Agenda be approved as circulated.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM

Dr. Julianne Curran asked if there are questions regarding the minutes of the last AGM, which were circulated before the AGM. Hearing none, Dr. Julianne Curran asked if a motion can be put forward to approve the minutes from the last AGM from someone in attendance of the November 4th, 2019 AGM.

On motion duly made by Dr. Karen Churchill, seconded by Dr. Lianne Dwyer, and duly carried, the following resolutions was adopted unanimously:

Be it Resolved that the Minutes of the November 4th, 2019 AGM meeting be approved as circulated.



4. REPORTS

a. Report from the Chair

Dr. Julianne Curran reported that in 2020 the Agri-Food Innovation Council (AIC) celebrated its 100th anniversary, which marked a major milestone for the Council. Like most organizations, AIC has felt the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. This last year has been very busy. The pandemic showed the importance of research and innovation and its ability to adapt to improve resiliency and capitalize on opportunities. AIC has remained committed to its goals during the pandemic. Although AIC had to cancel the 2020 Summit, other online events were launched. AIC continued to take its message to key parliamentarians and government officials throughout the year. Other engagements by the CEO with officials and stakeholders have insured the core messages continued to be heard.

AIC's priorities for 2021 include:

- Growth of membership, while representing the diversity of the industry. AIC has grown by 23 corporate members in 2020. As a national voice, it is important that AIC reflects the voice of the industry it represents.
- AIC will modernize its strategy.
- Continue to review and refine advocacy to drive effective change. Members feedback is crucial to ensure AIC represents the needs of the industry.

As the pandemic is brought under control in 2021, AIC continues to lead the members towards a new and collective sense of optimism for the sector. Dr. Julianne Curran concluded by saying that these are exciting times for AIC and we are happy to have you with us.

b. Report from the CEO

Serge Buy thanked the Board and members for being involved and reported that AIC had good visibility with government through meetings, presentations at committees and participation in consultations. However, Serge Buy reminded everyone that real effectiveness lies in policy changes not the number of meetings held.

Central to its activities is AIC's role in advocating on issues related to agri-food research and innovation (AFRI).

General situation:

- Prior to 2015, Canada's focus has mainly been on supporting manufacturing (especially in Central Canada) and natural resources (in Western Canada);
- Since 2015, agri-food is increasingly seen in Ottawa as an economic driver;



- Federal focus on AFRI programming and investments from 2015-2020;
- Pandemic has had an impact on government priorities. There are concerns that, after a year of record spending, the government will veer away from AFRI (and other priorities) to focus on:
 - Balancing the budget and repayment of debt;
 - Significant investments related to pandemic preparedness.
- AIC will continue to focus on positioning AFRI as supporting (1) economic growth and (2) essential to food safety and security.

In 2019, AIC went through a major reorganization and introduced “food” as part of its mandate. This was to recognize that the “whole food system” is a continuum where the various stages are increasingly linked and do not exist in isolation.

There has been an effort to include issues related to “food” (such as processing capacity) in AIC’s lobbying activities. AIC has successfully done so but would benefit from increased input from players in the sector.

Advocacy in Ottawa has changed as a result of the pandemic. There is increased access and capacity to have discussions with politicians and senior bureaucrats (no need to run from meeting to meeting!).

The agri-food sector is too divided and lacks cohesion. This has a detrimental impact on its capacity to be effective.

However, the government’s focus has been on the pandemic with significant efforts to develop programs and regulations to support the economy.

Since the latter part of 2020, there has been a switch to a “post-pandemic” focus.

Communications:

- AIC continues to support the dissemination of AFRI news on social media with close to 3,500 followers and successful social media engagement.
- We are visible in some media outlets including Ottawa-centric media (such as National Newswatch).
- We are “fine-tuning” a newsletter that is targeting government officials and will advance our key priorities.

Membership:

- The 2019 reorganization meant switching from a focus on individual members to corporate memberships; Thanks to efforts (especially from Dr. Keller), our membership has grown significantly in 2020.
- We will continue our work to grow membership.



c. Report from the Chief Operating Officer.

Karl Payeur provided a brief report of the planned activities for this calendar year:

Events:

- Planning the annual conference in October in Toronto, if we can hold in-person events by then.
- Virtual summit series – The 3rd webinar will be held in May. We currently have over 15 confirmed speakers.
- Organizing 6 webinars dedicated to the future of AFRI in the age of the pandemic. The first one will be next week.

Membership:

- In January AIC launched consultations on the effectiveness on government funding for research and innovation.
- AIC held its first dialogue series to engage AIC stakeholders. The intent was to find out what others think of AIC's priorities and where they can join AIC's efforts.

5. TREASURER REPORT

John Hyska reported on the 2020 finances and stated that there was a small deficit of \$20,000 and thanked management for reducing expenses. The loss was due mostly to the pandemic and thinks they can turn it around as corporate membership continues to grow.

Regarding the balance sheet there has been no significant changes since 2019 and even though there was a slight deficit last year the future looks positive for AIC.

Dr. Julianne Curran asked if there were any questions regarding the financial report or the reports by Serge Buy and Karl Payeur. Hearing none, Dr. Julianne Curran asked if someone could move a motion to accept the financial statements as presented.

On motion duly made by Dr. Tania Humphrey seconded by Dr. Rajasekaran Lada that the 2020 Financial Statements be approved as presented.

Resolved that the 2020 Financial Statements be approved as circulated.

6. BOARD ELECTION



Dr. Julianne Curran reported that Dave Smardon is looking to obtain a seat on the Board of Directors for the first time (2021-2024) and Dr. Rajasekaran Lada is looking for re-election for this 3rd term (2021-2024). Dr. Julianne Curran asks for a mover and a seconder.

On motion duly made by Dr. Tania Humphrey, seconded by John Hyska, and duly carried, the following resolution was passed unanimously

Resolved that the slate of directors be approved as presented.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

No new business was discussed.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the meeting, on **motion was made by Byron Beeler** and duly carried, at approximately 1:42pm Central Time, the meeting adjourned.

