



CURLING CANADA

ANNUAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

MINUTES

**ANNUAL MEETING - CURLING CANADA
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2024**

Meeting Chair: Michael Szajewski

ATTENDANCE:

Member Association Executives (Voting Delegates)

Dave Thomas (NF and Labrador)	Peter Van Strien (Nunavut)
Gail Samaan (New Brunswick)	Nick Saturnino (Northwest Territories)
Audrée Dufresne (Quebec)	Gord Copithorne (Alberta)
Rick Thurston (Ontario)	Hayley Smith (Northern Ontario)
Lynn Fallis-Kurz (Manitoba)	Helen Fornwald (Saskatchewan)
Lyle Sieg (British Columbia)	Bob Holmes (Yukon)
Rob Belliveau (Nova Scotia)	Jane DiCarlo (Prince Edward Island)

Curling Canada Board

Michael Szajewski, Chair	Ray Baker, Governor
Teri Palynchuk, Governor	Roselle Gonsalves, Governor
Jeremy Woo, Governor	Scott Hindle, Governor
Jennifer Howard, Governor	Laura Walker, Governor

Curling Canada Staff

Nolan Thiessen, CEO	Al Cameron
Karen Ryan	Oksana Ermolenko
Terry Smith	Hélène Paquet-Young
Prab Kalra	Andy Henry
Bobby Ray	

Other Attendees:

Beau Welling (World Curling)	Matt Allen (CurlION)
Craig Baker (CurlMB)	Scott Braley (CurlBC)
Daniel Baldwin (NSCA)	Erin Jarvis (Ontario Curling Council)
Jody Fisher Meli (Candidate)	Remy St. Pierre (Candidate)
Kerry Tarasoff (Candidate)	

Parliamentarian

Greg Gilhooly, Sport Law

Simply Voting – Subject Expert

Robin Witty, Sport Law

1.0 CALL TO ORDER, NOTICE OF MEETING AND PROOF OF MAILING

Chair Michael Szajewski called the Annual Meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked special guest Beau Welling, President of World Curling, for taking the time to join the meeting to provide greetings and an update from their organization.

Nolan Thiessen, CEO, reported that on September 1, 2024 notice that the Annual Meeting would be held virtually on Zoom at 1:00 pm ET on September 28, 2024 was emailed to the Curling Canada Board of Governors, Member Association Presidents and Voting Delegates, Member Association Executive Directors, Curling Canada National Staff, Affiliate Organizations, Francois Allaire (Sport Canada), Auditors (BDO Canada), Candidates for

Election and Sport Law. Background information was included with the distribution of the notice of meeting.

2.0 REPORT ON CREDENTIALS OF DELEGATES AND QUORUM

CEO Nolan Thiessen polled the meeting for voting delegates and a total of 13 votes were recorded (see attendance record for listing of voting delegates). He advised there was a quorum for the meeting, therefore, 7 constituted a simple majority. *It was noted that Alberta's voting delegate, Gord Copithorne, joined the meeting after roll call but prior to any vote being taken.*

3.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

The Chair called for any objections to proceeding with the meeting agenda as circulated and received none. The agenda was accepted.

It was reported by the Chair that no Notices for Consideration were received for the 2024 Annual Meeting.

4.0 MINUTE OF SILENCE FOR DECEASED MEMBERS

A moment of silence was observed in respect for members of the curling community who had passed away since the last Annual Meeting.

5.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The Chair called for any errors or omissions to the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes as circulated in the meeting package and received none.

MOTION: AGM 2024.01

Moved by Jane DiCarlo (PE), seconded by Gail Samaan (NB), that the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting be approved.

Carried

The 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes were approved as circulated.

6.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business from the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes that required further attention.

7.0 GREETINGS FROM THE WORLD CURLING FEDERATION

Beau Welling, President, WCF

Beau Welling, President of World Curling, brought greetings and made the following comments during his presentation:

- Curling Canada is both the largest member nation and business partner of World Curling and the work contributed by Curling Canada Governors, CEO and Commission representatives to strengthen their organization is appreciated.
- Curling Canada is thanked for hosting the largest World Curling Congress to date in Montreal earlier in the month. Member nation representatives from around the world were fully engaged in dialogue related to the advancement of the sport of curling.

- Canadian Jill Officer has been elected to the Board of World Curling and her knowledge of the sport as both an athlete and administrator will be a great asset.
- Canada continues to host exceptional curling events as was shown at the 2024 World Women’s Championship held in Sydney. Teams from around the world are now looking forward to being in Moose Jaw for the 2025 World Men’s Championship.
- World Curling will be focused on two key initiatives for this year:
 - o to strengthen communication between the World Curling administration and their members as well as between the members themselves. A Board and staff member have been assigned to meet on a regular basis with world groups to leverage the expertise of all members and rally enthusiasm to advance the sport we all love.
 - o the second initiative involves a newly-formed Events Working Group. Several qualification events to determine teams for their championships are not financially successful for World Curling. The Events Working Group will investigate options to improve this area of their operation. All perspectives will be considered including those of athletes, local organizing groups and member associations in order to spur development, consider new ways to generate capital, further engage fans at events and increase the reach to an even greater world-wide audience.

World Curling is very appreciative of the intertwined relationship it has with Curling Canada and looks forward to the advancements of the sport as we continue this mutually beneficial relationship into the future.

8.0 REPORTS OF THE CHAIR AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Michael Szajewski presented the Chair’s report (*see addendum for text*) and then had each of the Curling Canada Chairs for the Governance, Enterprise Risk, Finance & Audit, Human Resources and International Committees give a brief update on their Committee’s work during the past season. Michael thanked the Chairs and committee members for being thoroughly involved in the work of these committees over the past year.

He thanked Janie Hobart (NWTCA), Keith Johnston (CurlMB), Tim McChesney (Curl ON), Laura Walker (Athlete Representative and Donna Krotz (Past CC Board Member) who sat on the 2024 Candidate Search Committee for taking on the challenge and successfully implementing a new process for candidate search.

On behalf of Curling Canada, Michael also expressed heartfelt appreciation to Governors Darren Oryniak and Kathy O’Rourke who were completing their tenure on the Board. He acknowledged their unwavering commitment and leadership that has impacted the CC Board, World Curling and the entire curling community. Governor Laura Walker was also recognized for her willingness to serve in the role of Governor for the 2023-2024 season at the same time in contributing as a leader on the Athlete Advisory Council. Her contribution on behalf of athletes brought a vital perspective to Board discussions across all areas of our mandate.

The evolution of the MA Presidents’ Group into the newly-formed Governance Advisory Council was only achieved with the efforts of Member Association Presidents Rob Belliveau and Jody Fisher Meli. Their contribution on taking the lead in this effort on behalf of the Presidents is appreciated.

CEO Nolan Thiessen was called upon to present his report (*text in addendum*)

9.0 REPORT OF THE ENTERPRISE RISK, FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

ERF&A Chair Ray Baker called upon CEO Nolan Thiessen to provide an overview of the audited financial statements with the group. These audited statements had been shared with the Member Associations in August with an invitation to bring any questions forward at that time. Following the CEO's presentation, and with no further questions raised, the Chair advised the meeting minutes would reflect that the Audited Financial Statements to April 30, 2024 had been received by the members.

9.1 Confirmation of Auditor's Appointment

MOTION: AGM 2024.02

Moved by Lynn Fallis-Kurz (MB), seconded by Nick Saturnino, (NT), that BDO Canada be appointed as Curling Canada's auditors for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Carried

10.0 RATIFICATION VOTE ON CURLING CANADA BYLAWS

On July 15, 2024 the Sport Governance Code Review Committee (which is comprised of MA Reps, CC Governors and Athlete Representative) presented their recommendations for updates to Curling Canada's Bylaws to the CC Board. The revised Bylaws were reviewed and approved by the Board. A blackline and clean copy of the revised Bylaws were then circulated to the Member Associations for consideration and are brought to the floor of this meeting for a ratification vote.

MOTION: AGM 2024.03

Moved by Helen Fornwald (SK), seconded by Rob Belliveau, (NS), that the Curling Canada Bylaws, revised and approved by the Curling Canada Board of Governors on July 15, 2024, be ratified as presented.

Carried

11.0 ELECTION OF GOVERNORS TO THE CURLING CANADA BOARD

Three elections were conducted under the supervision of Curling Canada's Acting Governance Committee Chair Scott Hindle. He reviewed the process for the elections and also advised:

- Parliamentarian Greg Gilhooly would act as scrutineer for the elections.
- The confidential Simply Voting software to be used by the 14 voting delegates to cast their ballots was managed by Robin Witty of Sport Law.
- One female must be elected at this year's elections to fulfill Board gender standards as outlined in the Curling Canada Bylaws.
- A separate election would be held for each of the positions on the Board; and
- a virtual Zoom breakout room was available for voting delegates to convene in privately at any time during the election process, simply by request.

Scott explained that, in consultation with our Member Associations, a shifted approach to a slate-recommendation process for the recruitment and nomination of Board members had been implemented this year. This foundational shift in how we ensure people with the right skills and experience are presented for consideration by the voting delegates ensures the

right leadership will be in place to continue to guide Curling Canada to a prosperous and innovative future.

The slate of candidates selected by the 2024 Candidate Selection Committee for presentation for the 2024 election are:

Jody Fisher-Meli
Rémy St. Pierre
Kerry Tarasoff

Calling for further nominations from the floor, none were received.

The elections were held with the following results:

Election 1: Female Governor's position on the Board for a 4-year term was held:
Candidate elected for this position: Jody Fisher-Meli

Election 2: Governor's position on the Board for a 4-year term was held:
Candidate elected for this position: Rémy St. Pierre

Election 3: Governor's position on the Board for a 4-year term was held:
Candidate elected for this position: Kerry Tarasoff

With the elections completed, Parliamentarian Greg Gilhooly was asked to maintain in confidence the votes and to erase all electronic ballots and results from the Simply Voting platform.

12.0 NEW BUSINESS

A call was put forward for the members to bring any general announcements or questions to the floor and there were none.

At this time Governor Teri Palynchuk took the opportunity to recognize and extend heartfelt thanks to Michael Szajewski who was also completing his four-year tenure on the Curling Canada Board.

For his role as Board Chair over the past two years, Michael was acknowledged for his unwavering dedication, vision, integrity and passion. Under his guidance incredible milestones were achieved and challenges navigated with fairness and determination. We will continue to build on the foundation he has set.

13.0 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was announced that Curling Canada's 2025 Annual Meeting would take place via Zoom on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

14.0 CONCLUSION OF MEETING

Having dealt with all items on the agenda, the Chair presented his closing remarks (*see addendum*) and announced the meeting was concluded.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Michael Szajewski

This past year has been an eventful and busy one for the Board of Governors. While each committee chair will present a detailed report, I'd like to highlight some key developments.

Following last fall's election, we welcomed back two governors for extended terms and welcomed a new member to our ranks. Though the election yielded a strong board with diverse expertise, we identified a gap in the High Performance area. To address this, Laura Walker was appointed to a one-year term. I'll elaborate on Laura's valuable contributions later in the meeting.

A significant portion of our year was dedicated to finding a new CEO following Katherine Henderson's departure. Governor Jennifer Howard will provide an overview of this process in her HR committee report; however, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Danny Lamoureux for serving as Interim CEO. Danny's willingness to step in allowed the search committee ample time to conduct a thorough search and recruitment process.

In collaboration with Association Presidents Rob Belliveau and Jody Meli, we engaged with Member Associations to enhance alignment within our governance system. This led to the establishment of the Governance Advisory Council, a new group composed of representatives from both Member Associations and the Board of Governors. Its purpose is to formalize communication channels.

This council quickly demonstrated its value by forming a working group to review Curling Canada's bylaws and policies in light of the Canadian Sport Governance Code requirements. While the review found our bylaws to be largely compliant, the group recommended some amendments. The Board initiated these changes, and the process will conclude today with member ratification.

Notably, one amendment includes the addition of an athlete council representative as an observer at all board meetings. This, along with the Athlete Council's efforts to finalize and implement new terms of reference, including the election of a chair and vice-chair, ensures the Curling Canada Board maintains a direct connection to athletes and their concerns. I extend my thanks to both the working group and the Athlete Council for their dedication and efforts this past year.

Of course, we also celebrated the achievements of our Canadian teams on the international stage. We are immensely proud of their commitment and representation.

This concludes my report.

CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

This marks the end of our agenda and my time with the board. I want to share some final thoughts.

This year, we focused on building a strong foundation, establishing structures like the Governance and Athlete Advisory Councils and the recruitment and selection of a new CEO. One goal common to all was to create systems that would enhance communication and build a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities we all face. To ensure that all voices are heard. Our federated model empowers independent organizations to address their members' unique needs, but it also

requires alignment in areas of interdependence. This can only be achieved through robust, open communication, which I hope our work this year will support.

Over the past four years, I've often been asked about my work on the board. Regardless of how the conversation starts, it always ends with the question, "Why do you do it?" My answer has always been the same: it's because of the people. It's people like Karen, Oksana, Nolan and the entire staff. It's Rob and all the MA Presidents, Laura and the Athletes' Council members, and my fellow board members. It's people who prove that curling matters because it matters to people. I will miss you all.

Recently, I've added a new part to my answer - a question. When people ask me why I dedicate my time and energy to the board, I ask them, "Why don't you?" The rewards far outweigh the effort.

If you have a passion for the sport, a willingness to serve, a curious nature, and skills or experiences that can benefit the board, I encourage you to put your name forward.

I thought a lot about what I would say at this point. I considered telling a story that would loosely tie to the topic but at this point I think most of you have heard them all. I considered making a profound and inspiring statement that would be quoted for years but I just can't pull that off. In the end, I decided to end my time on the board the way I started it: with saying thank you.

Thank you to Amy Nixon and Hugh Avery who first encouraged me to put my name forward. Thank you to Hayley Smith who agreed to finish my term as NOCA president so I could step out of that role. The irony is that I am all done now, and she is still going!

Thank you to Stacey and the rest of my family who have been so generous with their support.

And finally thank you to the Member Associations for placing your trust in me.

CEO'S REPORT

Nolan Thiessen

It was a year of uncertainty but also an exciting year for Curling Canada. Not often do you have a year where you change both the CEO & CFO. We have worked to fill in and grow our organizational structure. We have worked to clearly define the leaders within the National body in each area of our sport from Grassroots to High Performance and Organizational Excellence. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the efforts of Kathy Henderson during her seven plus years as CEO and Danny Lamoureux who acted as Interim-CEO prior to my hiring in January. I also want to thank the outgoing members of the Board of Governors: Kathy O'Rourke, Darren Oryniak and Michael Szajewski who all joined us during the pandemic year and helped lead us forward in a new and exciting direction through trying times.

We had great success on the ice this year. We had the most medals of any country at the World Championship level and strong showings from all our teams to set us up for direct qualification for all disciplines for the Olympics and Paralympics. However, our entire HP program is not just the results of on-ice championships. It is the hard work that the athletes and coaches are putting in behind the scenes to set us up for success, not only in the short term but long term as well, with an aligned system from the Next Gen up to the National Team Programs.

The 2023-2024 fiscal year was a year where we made many investments into the system based on many of our strategic priorities. We invested in improving our data collection, security and governance. There were investments in the diversification of our broadcast offerings in order to provide as much coverage as possible to curling fans. We also invested heavily in the advancement of the daily training environment for more athletes through investments in our National Team Program, Next Generation and Podium Pathway athletes and our Wheelchair National Team Program.

However, similar to many of our counterparts in the sport system, we have financial strains that need our attention. We are not alone in this, as the Canadian Olympic Committee released a report in March of 2024 outlining a projected \$104 million dollar shortfall in the Canadian Sport System this year that will grow in the future.

The demands on National Sport Organizations in areas such as data collection, safe sport, grassroots, sport for life and helping our athletes stand on the podium are all valuable goals. Our core funding levels from Sport Canada, however, have not increased since 2005. This has amplified the strain on our system and where Curling Canada is able to invest. The communication to Sport Canada by National Sport Organizations is that as they continue to decrease funding levels, the cost of sport will continue to be driven down to the user.

We have been fortunate to have marketable events which has supported our ability to invest. The level of profitability in these events is strained due to the ever-increasing costs of delivering the events as we traditionally have, which is something we all see in all our daily lives. While we have been able to keep the profitability of the four largest properties fairly steady, the increasing costs in all other areas is increasing the risk in our events model and these increases are unsustainable on a go forward basis. The competition for the entertainment dollar and changing consumer habits does increase uncertainty and risk in our financial status. We have to be proactive in getting ahead of this.

What we invest in at Curling Canada tells a story of our strategic priorities and we need to proactively plan and project into the future. Our new finance team has helped to elevate our daily financial reporting so that we have timely and accurate information to help our decision making. We are already planning and projecting our plans for the next quadrennial so that we can share our plans earlier. In order to grow the game, the impact we make with our dollars need to be longer term and not focused on short term, one-off, projects. You will continue to see accurate, timely and transparent financial information from Curling Canada that showcases both where we are spending our resources and why.

In closing, I do want to say I'm excited for the future. I will be our sport's biggest cheerleader and will fight the negative narratives in the public. Our sport is not dying. We, as leaders in the system, do need to come together in an aligned way and can do that by listening to each other, making informed decisions based on the data and being courageous. I can promise everyone that you have a group of people at Curling Canada that has immense passion to do the hard work, and we have the courage to elevate our historically Canadian game through unique and impactful experiences.