

Nova Scotia Potters Guild
Annual General Meeting
The Findlay Centre, 26 Elliot Street, Dartmouth
Sunday, 16 April 2023, 2:00 pm

MINUTES

These minutes, and the full reports presented to the AGM, can be found under the AGM section of the NSPG website.

1. Welcome, regrets and call to order

The meeting was called to order by the President, Sheri White, at 2.10 pm.

Present

Executive and Board

President - Sheri White
Past-Presidents - Judy Gordon and Sharon Fiske
Treasurer - Carol Morrow
Secretary - (Susan Guppy - nominated)
Membership Coordinator - France Arruda (Acting)
Website Design - Jocelyn Fortier
Social Media - Madeline Tweel
Supply Coordinator - Natalie Burns
NSCAD rep - Kirsten Nichols (Acting)

Members

Dwayne Bartlett
Martha Coburn
Jolanta Jung
Trish Hattie
Sabina McManaman
Krissi Michaud
Nancy Roberts
Bunk Trinacty
Sharon Ward

Members present by Zoom

Monica DeCampo
Shauna MacLeod
David Morison
Karen Robinson
Donna Tyrrell
Lee Yorke

Regrets

Debbie Bull
Gerri Frager
Mindy Moore
Carol Morrow
Andrea Puszkas
Carol Smeraldo
Nancy Warnica

2. Approval of Minutes of 2022 AGM

Sheri White put forward two amendments to the minutes:

In Section 3, presentation of reports, Sheri White took over responsibility for the website in 2018, not 2015.

In Section 7, Elections, Roberta Forsythe was nominated for Secretary, not Treasurer.

These were accepted, and the minutes were approved unanimously (moved, Nancy Roberts, seconded Trish Hattie).

3. The year in review – Sheri White, Judy Gordon, Sharon Fiske

Sheri White reviewed her first year as President.

She spoke to her three main goals: sustainable pottery practices, mentorship and succession planning within the Guild board.

The Guild is planning workshops about sustainable practices.

Carol Smeraldo, Judy Gordon and Sharon Fiske and other experienced potters will form a mentorship team to help new potters.

Sheri is working on new bylaws for the Guild, which would limit the term of positions like the President. She is also planning to institute a Vice-President position to allow someone to prepare for the President's role.

Judy Gordon spoke about the planned show, "Layers" which was scheduled for last fall but had to be cancelled. The show was cancelled because there were too few entries. In retrospect, the impacts of both the Covid pandemic and the storm Fiona (just around the submission deadline) were both factors, but the organising committee took other lessons for the future from this disappointment – a time-line sufficient to allow for the preparation of work and to deal with unforeseen problems; invited entries as well as juried competitive entries; and workshops to help NSPG members prepare and present their best work with confidence.

Another show is being planned, but not for 2023.

There was discussion about future Guild shows, and about the best way to encourage all members to show their best work, including considering shows without a particular theme, open, non-juried shows, and Guild sales.

4. Presentation of reports

a) Financial report

The Treasurer, Carol Morrow, could not attend the AGM, and this report was presented by the President. At the end of 2022, the Guild had a balance of \$7145.

b) Membership report

France Arruda, the acting Membership Coordinator, presented her report.

The current membership is 131.

The membership form has been brought up-to-date to include social media sharing permissions.

c) Website and Social Media reports

Jocelyn Fortier, the Website Designer, reported that in the last year, there have been over 15,500 visits to the website. The website has been improved, and she is looking for broken links within the website.

Jocelyn is planning a members-only section, and welcomes ideas for it. She reminds members that they can have a page on the website to showcase their work.

She has noted that other guilds include on their websites a button for donations, and wonders if it would be appropriate for the NSPG.

There was a suggestion from the floor that there might be a section on the website for members to sell their work. This will be discussed further.

Madeline Tweel, the Social Media coordinator, has only been in this position since February this year.

The Guild has both a Facebook and Instagram presence, and Madeline is interested in linking with members' sites.

Both Instagram and Facebook provide statistics of use and interaction. In general, Madeline recommends using the medium with which you are most familiar, and notes that Instagram is very good for showing the work of potters.

d) Communications report

Carol Smeraldo has been taking care of email communication with the Guild and out to members. She is standing down from this task and, for the time being, Sheri White has taken it on in order to assess what might be needed in the future.

Sheri is going to look into the possibility of having a no-reply email system, to prevent inadvertent replies.

(Shortly after the AGM, Shauna MacLeod offered to take on email communications coordination.)

e) Group orders

Natalie Burns, the Supply Coordinator, reported that she is organising three group orders, two in the spring and one in the fall. She based her choice of suppliers on the Members' survey, (see item 5 below).

The first, to Tuckers, is underway.

She noted that Tuckers only sends the full order out once all individual orders have been paid, and this can cause some delay. The next order will be to Pottery Supply House.

f) Community projects

Gerri Frager, Member at Large, submitted her report to be presented by Sheri White. Gerri started producing touchstones in response to the tragedies at Portapique in 2020. Touchstones are small, easily held, bisque or glazed "stones" in various shapes, some with impressions or images. She coordinated their production (by Guild members) and distribution. There was a tremendous response from the public. Gerri and Andrea Puszkas are now expanding this to run touchstone workshops at Women's Resource Centres, of which there are nine throughout Nova Scotia. The first will be held in Sheet Harbour. Any member interested in holding a touchstone workshop at a Women's Resource Centre in their area can contact Gerri at gernwp@hangmail.com.

g) NSCAD

Kirsten Nichols, a NSCAD student working towards a Visual Arts Certificate for Teachers, reported that her fellow ceramics students are interested to learn about the NSPG and about the history of ceramics in Nova Scotia. She is spreading the word. She invited all present at the AGM to a show of ceramics projects at NSCAD, 18-20 April.

5. Survey results

Earlier this year the Guild ran an online survey about supply needs and other matters important to members. There were 92 responses, which are displayed on the website. The Board will use this information to guide the way forward, noting particularly the calls for workshops for members.

6. New directions

The President spoke to several new directions being considered by the board, based on the survey results and on discussions already underway.

a) The mentoring team (so far Sharon Fiske, Judy Gordon and Carol Smeraldo) has been mentioned in the President's report.

b) The next show will need an organising committee.

The Guild serves potters throughout a large area, and two initiatives are being considered to address this:

c) Gatherings of potters, both in person and online, to bring people face-to-face again;

d) Regional workshop coordinators.

7. Elections

Judy Gordon took over the chair for this.

Two acting positions needed confirmation: France Arruda as Membership Coordinator and Kirsten Nichols as the NSCAD rep. This was agreed to unanimously (moved, Sharon Fiske, seconded Shauna MacLeod).

Susan Guppy had offered to be Secretary. There were no other nominations from the floor, and so this was agreed.

8. Other business

Sharon Fiske spoke movingly of the death last December of her friend, co-worker and fellow potter, Suzie Cameron. The obituary can be seen <https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/obituaries/m-suzanne-suzi-cameron-86171/>.

9. Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 4.10 (with thanks to all present and to those on Zoom) followed by snacks and a swap meet.