

**Minutes**  
**Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association**  
**December 6th, 2021**  
**9:00 am – Noon on Zoom**

**Meeting id 858 5004 7046**  
**Pass code: 022361**  
**647-558-0588**

**Attendance:**

**Executive:**

Frank Heerkens	President: Eastern
Stephen Needham	First VP : Quinte & District
Ray Bonenberg	Treasurer: Ottawa Valley and District
Jules Rochon	Second VP: Eastern
Brian Bainborough	Past President: Algoma

**Directors:**

Kyle Gilbertson	Algoma
Clyde Bridge	Algoma
Michael Levitan	Algonquin & District
Andy Straughan	Algonquin & District
Anne Zoeller	Eastern
Bob Snider	Haliburton - Kawartha
Clancey Lavender	Haliburton - Kawartha
Michelle Sage	Grey-Bruce
Gail Cranston	Grey-Bruce
Nick Bereznick	Grey-Bruce, non-voting guest?
Leann Thompson	Lanark and District
Randall Goodfellow	Lanark and District
Mark Youmans	Quinte & District
Peter Lorriman	Simcoe & District
Jack McFadden	Simcoe & District
Bill Vandenberg	Southwestern
Phil Thomas	Waterloo Wellington
David Wagler	Waterloo Wellington
Kevin Snyder	Waterloo Wellington, non-voting guest

Jenny Liu OMAFRA, non-voting guest

John Williams Executive Director

1. Call to Order, Conflicts of interest, Approval of Agenda.

**Motion (2021-12-01)**

**Moved to accept agenda as presented.**

**Moved: Ray Bonenberg Second: Leann none against**

Frank requested if possible, could motions and seconds come from non executive members.

2. New members to provincial board -FH

- a. Formal welcome of Kyle Gilbertson and Clyde Bridge as new representatives from Algoma as this was missed at the last meeting
- b. Frank congratulated Michael Levitan on his election as the new president of Algonquin and District.

**Motion (2021-12-02)**

**Moved to accept Bill Hubbert as Algonquin & District Alternate to the provincial board.**

**Moved: Andy Straughan Second: Kyle Gilbertson none against**

**Motion (2021-12-03)**

**Moved to accept David Wagler as Waterloo-Wellington representative to the provincial board.**

**Moved: Brian Bainborough Second: Jack McFadden none against**

- c. John noted that we need a resignation letter from members leaving the provincial board before we can replace them.

3. Approval of the Minutes of Board meeting October 7th, 2021

- a. David Wagler asked about Frank's comment in his report: "we have listened to your concerns from the September 15 meeting and removed the possibility of a marketing board or section 12 organization from our governance agenda. However, they may return to be discussed. If we don't do something to fix our in house problems."
- b. Frank stated that he misspoken and asked that "However, they may return to be discussed. If we don't do something to fix our in house problems." be stricken from the minutes.
- c. David Wagler asked if it could be put in writing for Waterloo-Wellington and signed by Frank, John, Randal and Ray.
- d. Frank stated that something like that should go to all locals and differed to the Governance section of the meeting.
- e. There was some debate on how to remove the sentence. It was decided that since the minutes have not been approved, we can simply remove the statement.

**Motion (2021-10-04)**

**Moved to accept minutes as presented.**

**Moved: Randal Goodfellow Second: Clancey Lavender none against**

4. Business arising from the minutes/ Action items:

- a. HST on membership was voted on by email and passed. The membership has been notified through the e-letter and Mainline.
- b. Mainline, e-letter, and website advertising improvements, carry forward.
- c. Summer tour manual sent to Quinte. Fundraising tracker as a sap bucket has been placed in the e-letter and Mainline.
- d. CAP input to OMAFRA has been worked on by Randal, Bob Snider and John. Submitted.
- e. Best Practices Manual update/rework to be discussed. Carry forward.

- f. OMSPA jug work needed by Q&A and M&P committees. Carry forward
- 5. Board Meeting Dates for 2022: Proposed: Feb 7th, May 2, July 14 or 15th, October 3, December 5th.(21 min.)
  - a. Frank apologized for the lateness of reports out to the board but noted that there is a huge volume of work for John leading up to this meeting. Over 40 hrs. put in last week instead of 24. He suggested moving the December meeting to the 12th to allow for better timing. He wants to have information out to the board at least 3 business days ahead of the meeting. That also means any correspondence needs to be into the office at that time. Board reports need to be in 5 business days before the meeting.
  - b. Kyle Gilbertson asked if meetings will be virtual or hybrid. Frank answered that we are planning on a hybrid meeting for the Feb. meeting and for those after depending on the COVID situation
  - c. There were no objections to moving the December meeting to the 12th.
  - d. Final schedule for 2022: **Feb 7th, May 2, July 14 or 15th, October 3, December 12th.**

**Start here 25:38**

- 6. Local updates lead by Steve Needham
  - a. Eastern - Anne Zoeller
    - i. Annual General Meeting and info Day on November 27, 50 attendees
      - 1. Jules Rochon is now the president
      - 2. We had an excellent presentation from Jenny Liu on the LDD moths situation and the ash study for forest soil health as well as labeling requirements. COVID protocols were followed.
      - 3. The first one's being in February, February 5, we're holding a beginners course. And then February 6, maple flavor and judging course and then starting to turn the focus towards maple weekend.
  - b. Lanark & District - Leann Thompson
    - i. Hosted an in-person workshop, John provided the photos and updates in the e-news to the membership. About 16 people attended and the first half was on tree thinning and marking which was led by Eric Boyson. A brush saw demonstration was led by Ray Thompson. It was hosted at Thompson town maple.
    - ii. The board voted to not pursue an in person information day and we will be planning something virtually.
    - iii. Our summary tour and conference group has started their work as well.
  - c. Ottawa Valley - Ray Bonenberg
    - i. nothing to report at this time
  - d. Quinte and District - Marc Youmans
    - i. We had our second in person Summer Tour meeting, it was held at Harry Dennis's Sugar House, we've got our venue booked, the Harbor View and rack cards are completed. We're gonna be having some draws on our Facebook page, probably with some different maple tools and whatnot. And we have some sponsors lined up already.
  - e. Haliburton-Kawartha - Bob Snider
    - i. Local will have a virtual AGM and info day in January.

- ii. We are planning to do a first tap presentation ceremony. I believe it's going to be at Bob Staples.
  - iii. We have several participants willing to participate again in the maple weekend.
- f. Simcoe & District - Peter Lorriman
  - i. We've had to postpone our judging workshop twice now due to COVID issues
  - ii. For Fall in Love with Maple, We had seven producers and the results are in that everybody was satisfied. And we also had a Simcoe tourism grant for that.
  - iii. We are working on Maple weekend and we have 12 producers interested and we just sent out a letter to all people last night for that.
  - iv. And we're writing a grant to Tourism Simcoe. We are looking at a virtual Information Day and we're thinking of changing it from January 19 to a Saturday so we might be able to get some people that work full time. But we're also waiting to see if OMSPA's going to do something virtual this year.
  - v. We have set up a date for first tapping which is the 29th which will be at Maple Grove with Brent Beers.
- g. Grey-Bruce - Gail Cranston
  - i. We are going to have a virtual AGM on January 15.
  - ii. We have worked very hard this year to have more communication with our members and are getting very good comments on what we're doing.
  - iii. And we're also working on getting some members to stand and run for the election that we're having.
- h. Waterloo-Wellington - Phil Thomas
  - i. So just we had a good work workshop in person on the 27th held at Terry Hoover's place, close to 40 people attended and we had a couple of new members sign up.
  - ii. AGM is planned, it will be in the huge shop that Fred Martin has in January, so that'll be in person.
  - iii. I do want to bring forward there was general concern from the Waterloo- Wellington board that the communication on the sector development strategy is lacking. So we'd like to just bring that forward. I've probably been closer to a lot of people, and I think that work has been done very well. But clearly, the perception is that the communication is not what it needs to be in this. We need to avoid any sort of unexpected things coming up.
  - iv. David Wagler added:As many of you know, this local here has a lot of members that are unable to access through internet. So, it's pretty frustrating for those members. And their question is, why do we want to be a member?
- i. Southwestern - Bill Vandenberg
  - i. There are concerns of the impact of the new virus on our season next year again, We will have a maple judging workshop this weekend. We only have 13 participants so far. And we do have some of those producers who need to improve their product so I think that attending will be very beneficial.
  - ii. Planning for annual meeting and info days in person at this time, and I'm glad to hear that there will be executive attending and that Jenny plans on attending.
- j. Algonquin & District - Andy Straughan

- i. We had a hybrid meeting at Michael Levitan's on November 16. As you heard earlier, Brian O'Donoghue stepped down as president due to health reasons. Michael Levitan has agreed to take over as president.
- ii. We discussed our info day plan for the 18th of January. But we're going to make our final decision in a couple of weeks, whether it's going to be virtual or hybrid. The South River Arena will be used for an in-person or hybrid meeting. In terms of the agenda on that info day it's work in progress, basically going to depend on whether it's hybrid or in person.
- k. Algoma - Kyle Gilbertson Brian Bainborough
  - i. People are still cleaning up from some of the wind damage we had this past year.
  - ii. There was a little buzz in the area about Quebec releasing syrup from their maple reserve and some articles about that and wondering if there was a syrup shortage.
  - iii. Algoma is planning an in person meeting for January 22.
  - iv. And when Kyle says there was a little bit of wind damage he is downplaying that we're in the 10s of 1000s of taps that were lost on St. Joe's. There are four or five producers affected, and some may not even know if they will be able to get back into the bush to tap this year. So firewood is flowing out of some of the bushes that have been producing syrup for more than 200 years.
- l. request from John to forward dates, agendas and meeting reports to the office for publishing in the e-letter or Mainline.

#### 7. President's Report - no written report

- a. COVID has changed things. We can now meet from across the province on Zoom. OMSPA will have hybrid meetings in Lindsay soon. Some things in our association need to change.
- b. For one, more information needs to get out to our members. The web pages the Jules has worked on are part of this. Frank has asked Randal and Bob Snider to work on the governance committee, Brodie Berry will help with this as well.
- c. One of our biggest problems is money. We are trying to run a large organization with half an employee and a tiny budget. We need to find other sources of funds.
- d. We have created a new position for Steve Needham. He will work on this in the New Year...once he has his house built.
- e. Leann Thompson will be taking over M&P after this meeting. She will continue with the Events working group too. Thank you for all your hard work Leann.
- f. OMSPA has a strong and united Executive that has spent many hours strengthening our organization.
- g. OMSPA is an organization full of entrepreneurs this makes it hard to keep everyone happy.
- h. We have created an information highway to our members but we found that there was a road block at the last meeting. The Executive has decided to push more of the information directly to members to help with this.
- i. We have applied to OMAFRA for a grant to do an in-depth study of our industry. Much work has already been done. More volunteers are need to help. I may have gone wrong tackling large governance issue up front, but I wanted to be transparent. There is no hidden agenda or self interest. All members will help and have input with these changes.
- j. We need money, membership fees are not enough. Let's look at how other organizations do this.

- k. We have listened to your concerns from the September 15th meeting and removed the possibility of a marketing board or section 12 organization from our governance agenda.
  - l. In summary, we are all volunteers working to build a stronger, better organization. The Maple Sector Development bus is leaving the depot with 12 groups on board. However, we can back the bus up and change the number of groups. These groups will go out and collect information, returning to provide information to our membership, to see what they want for our organization, not what the executive wants.
  - m. Let's work together to build a stronger association.
8. Exec. Director's report
- a. See attached report with financial report
    - i. The only thing I would highlight maybe is the last item in the report on Membership Management System. There's a committee that we're going to be looking at this going forward to help streamline our renewal process and all our communications going out to the board. We're looking at a couple different programs in particular one the OWA is using to run all their membership stuff. It's called Wild Apricot.
    - ii. Frank mentioned that John has a new computer due to problems with the old one which was 5 years old. Jules and Phil helped with the selection process.
    - iii. John noted that the constitution requires sending out the minutes of the Executive Meetings. They are done, but John missed adding them to the reports. This will be done after the meeting.
    - iv. Financial: John reviewed the draft budget that also has the latest financial report built into. It was noted that we look like there will be a surplus this year, however John predicted we are likely to come out around a break even as we should. There are some expenses to come out and HST to be taken into account.
    - v. On to the budget itself. John explained that the requests for projects come in from the committees. The base budget is worked on by the Financial Group which is John, Ray, Brian and Frank. Then everything is put together to see where we are at. The December meeting is then usually used to prioritize projects and create the final budget.
    - vi. Projects are prioritized through the lens of the Strategic Plan.
    - vii. Jack McFadden asked how guaranteed the money on the grants are. Randall answered that we have a signed contract on \$83K for the Strategic Plan. There is also a verbal agreement for a further \$10K on another to be determined project.
    - viii. Jack also asked about the \$28K deficit that is now listed on the budget. How will we deal with this. John stated that this is just the draft that includes all the asks for projects. We may approve a deficit budget, which we did last year for \$9K, but we have not decided that. Ray stated that we often approve a deficit, or pressure budget, as we don't often spend completely on all our projects and expenses. We keep an eye on how we are spending and can pull back if we head too far into deficit. Jack asked if there could be a note about that deficit to explain this information.
    - ix. Bob Snider noted that the store is "underwater" on the draft budget. Why is that. John explained the costs will be higher in 2022 as we have to re-order some of our books. Frank

noted that it should be a balance sheet item. John said he would discuss this with Brian so the store is properly shown.

- x. Andy Straughan asked for a further breakdown on the OMAFRA grant line. John explained there is the \$10K for our usual project from OMAFRA and is also \$10K for from OMSPA for expenses around the Strat. Planning project. The funding will not cover travel for consultations of OMSPA members so this will cover that. Randal recently stated that we won't likely need this much. It could come down by at least \$2.5K. He also said some may be needed for translation.
- xi. Kyle Gilbertson asked about the \$7k listed as owed to John. He stated that this was for two months of contract pay plus HST, internet and storage for October and November that hasn't been paid out yet.

b. review of committee asks in the budget

i. RTTC - Phil Thomas

- 1. Phil explained the numbers. Randal noted that the committee could still try and find third party money to help with or go beyond what is listed here. Phil noted that they are looking for third party money to help with the Buddy Sap project and the money budgeted here may serve as leverage for that. Unfortunately, NAMSC did not provide any granting this year due to COVID issues.

ii. M&P - Leann Thompson

- 1. Leann explained the M&P ask then noted that there was revenue in the budget for Food and Farm Care Breakfast from the Farm but no expenses. John said he would check this.
- 2. Randal pointed out that there may be some partnership opportunities with other commodity groups like the Beekeepers.

- c. Ray and John stated that we need to make some hard decisions and bring the budget more in line. We will work on that and bring the budget back to the February meeting is that is okay with the board. No objections.

9. Summer Tour

- a. already covered in the Locals updates

10. Information Days - John

- a. The plan we discussed at the executive committee was to provide on the first and second of February. A couple of hours each evening, probably a max 90 minutes in a format similar to what we did last year, where we'd have some OMSPA related business and, and a speaker or two each night. We have not confirmed those speakers, we have a couple of names to work with going forward on that. But we should have that solidified sometime this month.
- b. Locals could then do Info. Days in-person or virtually and tap into the Provincial program.

11. RTTC - Phil

- a. I'd like to thank OMSPA generally, specifically, certain locals and individuals for their donations to the Buddy Sap Project. We've made some good progress on the funding for the project just from for those kinds of contributions. Total contributions in donations about \$7800. That plus the \$7500 from OMSPA reserves puts us close to covering the first year.

- b. See written report
- c. Frank asked if all board members could reach out to the locals for a few more donations

#### 12. M&P- Leann

- a. see written report

#### 13. NAMSC - Brian

- a. North America has a new executive director Winton Pitcoff that changed over from Mike Gerard at the Virtual Conference, which now kicks in a new strategic plan, more engagement.
- b. One of the things that North American does is that delegates meet at least every quarter, we're probably going to increase that a little bit and try and get the delegates a little bit more engaged, which is a struggle even in our own organization.
- c. They have executive meetings the same as what we've been doing. Ontario is going to use the North American format for the executive minutes that can then be distributed to board members
- d. Outreach to the IMSI looking for collaboration where possible.
- e. COVID caused a cash flow issue for NAMSC. No fundraisers could be held, so no new research grants were given. We had applied on the Buddy Research Project
- f. Planning to hold an inperson conference in La Crosse Wisconsin in October 2022.
- g. Work is still under way on the North American Producers Manual.
- h. Brian did several interviews on the 50 million lb. syrup release in Quebec

#### 14. IMSI - Ray

- a. Ray did several interviews as well including one with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- b. Head of the Quebec Association, Simone Trepanier has left. He was good to work with.
- c. Strategic shift by the IMSI to work on and provide market and marketing information.
- d. AGM in June.
- e. New vice president coming on board.
- f. Randal mentioned that there is currently some conflict in Quebec between the hardwood lumber business and the maple folks.

#### 15. Quality Assurance - Brian

- a. Judging workshop ran at the Vandenberg's in Southwestern.
- b. Simcoe's was postponed due to COVID issues
- c. Looking at producing a beginners manual based on the North American Maple Manual

#### 16. Communications - Ray

- a. Continuing to think about changes to the Mainline.
- b. will dig out an earlier proposal and consider it.
- c. Name is good but feels we could do better on the content.
  - i. feels we need a good balance of technical content, current events and human interest.

#### 17. Membership - Frank

- a. Peavey Mart will give us the \$500 gift certificate for the early bird draw.
- b. Discount card for 15% coming to but may be digital

#### 18. Governance and Strategic Planning - Randal

- a. see Powerpoints, one on process, one on Working Groups
- b. Randal commented on how impressed he is with the member input on the Working Groups
- c. Frank thanked Randal for all the great work.



- d. Discussion about members who don't have emails, particularly in Waterloo-Wellington.
- e. Frank stated that OMSPA would pay for postage to get information around the strategic planning process out to those members without email.
- f. It may be possible to do some in person meetings in May, June too.
- g. David Wagler stated that his internet went down and he wanted to ask a question about when the last membership meeting was. Frank stated that it was in June or July. He asked if David's son would consider being the chair of membership.
- h. David asked how employees would be paid if we expand our staffing. Randal responded that he's looking at a number of ways from running programs for government like the silviculture program in New Brunswick. There are other sources than membership fees and the jug program. The Beekeepers have 7 staff that are employed by taking over extension and research roles. Frank encouraged David to participate in a Working Group.

19. 11:55 am the meeting went in Camera until 12:14 pm

#### 20. President's Report

- a. Frank stated that it was brought to his attention that the constitution calls for Executive Meeting minutes to be circulated to the members of the board of directors. Frank said he has never seen this done, but will make sure it happens going forward even though this will add to our ED's workload. There will also be changes to ensure the way board members are changed follows the constitution too.
- b. Transcript of Frank's President's Report: Last but definitely not least. In my AGM speech, I stated that we are at a crossroad and not out of crisis. Well, we can reverse that now. If anybody has been following the news. I have a cousin in Belgium has sent me a huge article about Canada sold out of maple syrup. Maple syrup, a news article in Europe. What the heck, it's like us wondering what the price of coconuts are in the Caribbean. The reserves are being pulled down in Quebec, Ontario can't meet its domestic demand. The world wants more syrup, more maple syrup and more maple syrup. What happens we have another bad year next year. In talking to a huge maple packing producer, they plan to increase production by 3 million pounds this year. That's equivalent to 1 million taps and they are looking to Ontario. So if we sit do nothing, they're coming. They've already tapped in New Brunswick that tapped into the main they've tapped into New Hampshire. They are now looking west to Ontario. And it will happen whether we want to stop it or not. It will happen. I've always been a firm believer believe, be close to your friends. stay closer to your enemies. So let us work with these organization in helping them find new markets and maybe making sure that most of this product is being shipped to the world. Belgium's looking for maple syrup. So and we could not do this by sitting on our hands and not going forward with the maple sector. Development Plan, the information coming out of this in the next year will progress this organization immensely. We are behind now, we will not even catch up with this. But it will help us get a good start. So we need to work as a team to get this done. We cannot have distractions. And I cannot have distractions in the steering groups. If we have distractions inside the steering group, I will handle it swiftly. I'm not making a threat, I'm just making a fact we need to work as a team to get through this. So I hope all of us can work together. We are we are listening to your concerns, we will take your written submissions, we will come to your your local to explain it to you, we will do everything that we can as a volunteer organization, to give you the information you need to make

sure that you run a profitable entrepreneur business, but at the same time grow the industry for the province of Ontario. Thank you very much for your time.

21. Other business

a. COVID 19 Protocols

- i. apparently there was an OMSPA meeting run that did not meet local protocols. The locals need to note that our insurance will not cover them if they do not follow local protocols.
- ii. Brian emphasized that you need to let the office know you are having a meeting and you must follow your local protocols.

b. Correspondence

- i. A letter was sent to the board by four locals and Kevin Snyder asked if there would be written response. Frank said there would be one written by the executive. A copy of the letter is attached.

22. Adjourned at 12.24 by Kyle Gilbertson .

Action Items:

1. Note on the budget to explain how any planned deficits will be handled.
2. BPM updates/rework to be discussed and direction decided.
3. More follow up needed by QA and M&P on the OMSPA jug issue. May not be possible until after Strat. Plan done.