



ST. CATHARINES ROWING CLUB
2025 Annual Meeting of Members
ALUMNI HALL, HENLEY ISLAND
Tuesday, February 4, 2025

In Attendance:

<u>2024 Members of the Club</u>			
Chris Blackwood	Brian Moukperian	Heather Talbot	Erin Crawford
Louise Hastings	Marianne Romak	Stephanie Mowder	Mike Petrychanko
Scott Anderson	Janet Lancaster	Lindsay Sferrazza	Liz Iannizzi
Tom Kent	Karl Bowley	Nicholas Murray	Kate Hingston
Andrew Barry	Catherine Barrow	Brian Thorne	Greg Szybka
David Wright	Lorna Hay Gaudet	Marion Markarion (by proxy)	Vanessa Thorne (by proxy)
Christina Phillips	Peter Somerwil	Brian Fisher	Michele Fisher
Andrew Carr	Travis King		
<u>Guests</u>			
Stephanie Robinson	Sam Baio		

ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
FEBRUARY 4, 2025 @ 7:00 P.M.
ALUMNI HALL, HENLEY ISLAND
MEETING MINUTES

1) Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by the Chair, David Derry, SCRC President at 7:00pm
- Brian Thorne, VP Membership was appointed as Scrutineer
- Chris Blackwood, Board Secretary was appointed as Recording Secretary
- David Derry recognized Sam Baio and Stephanie Robinson as guests. The recently hired new Head Coach, Greg Szybka was introduced to the members in attendance.

2) Recognition of Traditional Indigenous Territories (David Derry)

We begin this meeting by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and within the land protected by the *Dish With One Spoon* wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging this reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

3) Registration of Proxies

- Chris Blackwood reported that there were two proxies received for the meeting:

4) Filing Notice of Annual Meeting

- After having to adjust the date of the Annual Meeting from its normal January date, notice of the revised date for the St. Catharines Rowing Club Annual Meeting of Members, to be held in person at the Alumni Hall, Henley Island on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m. was communicated via email to all 2024 members on January 15, 2025 and again on February 2, 2025.

5) Confirmation of Quorum

- Quorum achieved with 30 members present or by proxy (25 required) – confirmed by Brian Thorne, Scrutineer.

6) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda of the SCRC Annual Meeting of Members of February 4, 2025. Moved by Kate Hingston, seconded by Chris Blackwood. No discussion. Motion carried.

7) Approval of Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting of Members January 23, 2024

- Minutes of the January 23, 2024 meeting were made available to all members via the SCRC website.

Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Annual Meeting of Members. Moved by Stephanie Mowder, seconded by Christina Phillips. No discussion. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Annual Meeting of Members. Moved by Brian Thorne, seconded by Andrew Carr. No discussion. Motion carried.

8) Business Arising from the Minutes

- David Derry noted that there was no business arising from the minutes.

9) Reports

- To facilitate the reading and acceptance of the 2024 Officer Reports the meeting moved into a “Committee of the Whole” for the Reports.

Motion to move the meeting into a committee of the whole. Moved by Chris Blackwood, seconded by Marianne Romak. No discussion. Motion carried.

President’s Report – David Derry

- Report as tabled.
- RCA records reveal that SCRC was the largest rowing club in Canada when one includes Summer/Fall Club, high school rowers and the St. Catharines Rowing League (Rec Rowing). DD thanked the coaches who dedicated many hours to training and competing, the volunteers for boathouse projects, regattas, equipment projects, and committees, and the individuals who served on the 2024 Board as Directors and/or Officers.
- Having served as Directors for the past three years, both Andrew Carr and David Winslade are stepping down from the Board. Andrew Carr was thanked for his construction skills during the completion of the boathouse concrete floor, and for his commitment to coaching. David Winslade was acknowledged for his leadership on the Communications Committee and social media posts.
- Thanks were given to Wendy Wiebe for the past five years serving as Co-Treasurer and handling bookkeeping and HR tasks. Wendy will be stepping down from this role, but has agreed to stay on until a replacement can be found.
- Aaron Thompson, past Club Captain and Equipment Manager, has decided on a career change, moving to become a Team Lead at Goodwill Niagara. DD thanked Aaron for all his work at the Club and wished him well in his new position.
- Peter Somerwil was recognized for stepping in the role of Club Captain in the Spring and filling that role on a voluntary basis. Peter has agreed to remain in the role of Club Captain for the 2025 year.
- Matt Hingston was recognized for all of his efforts to fulfill Jim Minard’s dream of a modernized shell house, as he continues to fabricate and install the new boat racks as part of Minard’s legacy gift.
- Scott Anderson was thanked for his continuous and timely efforts managing the Club Website
- Erin Sharpe (Youth Development and Youth Rowing Camp Program Manager) was acknowledged and thanked for managing the Club’s various rowing programs intended to attract youth to the sport of rowing, all while training and competing as a Masters athlete.
- The St. Catharines Alumni Association was recognized for their support in paying the entry fees for U19 athletes to participate in two US regattas. The HIH donated funds towards the purchase of coachboat motors and rowing equipment. One donation from a private donor resulted in the purchase of a new shell and blades. Donations were received in memory of past members and contributors, of note, Marilyn Hainer. And in 2024 a new Hosting Agreement was established between the St. Catharines Rowing Club

and the St. Catharines Rowing League (Rec Rowing) which will be financially beneficially to the Club.

- DD introduced the Club's new Head Coach, Greg Szybka who began his duties late in 2024. He finished by asking the members to support the proposed membership fee increases which have been approved by the Board, and will bring about a financially stable approach to the fiscal health of the Club.

Vice-President Rowing Report – Janet Lancaster

- Report as tabled.
- The 2024 rowing schedule was put out of sync by the 2024 World Championships which occupied most of August. Several SCRC athletes competed at the regatta while many of SCRC volunteers offered their time and skills.
- U23 Team included: Owen Bartel in the M8+ with coach Scott Anderson; Giancarlo Di Pompeo and Owen Kudreikas in the M1wt2x with coach Mike Petrychanko; Teaghan Orth in the W4-; Niko Schramm in the M1wt4x; Seraina Dell in the W4+; and Cait Whittard in the W8+
- Canada's Sr. Nation Team included: Kristen Kit in the Olympic W8+; Laura Court, Dan DeGroot and Jeff Buczek in the M8+
- The CanAmMex Team included Aiden Djerfi and Jack Ciocca.
- The SCRC Masters captured 5 gold medals at the RCHR and the Masters Regatta Efficiency Trophy.
- The SCRC Junior, Senior and U23 won 7 Henley golds and 6 second place finishes. The Sr/U23 Men won 4 of those gold medals and helped put SCRC in 7th place for the Efficiency Trophy.
- Janet proceeded to recognize and thank the SCRC Summer and Fall coaching staff.
 - 2024 Summer Coaches include:
 - U17 Men: Jacob Tyrer, Hunter Young, Mike Di Benedetto, Owen Powell, Evan Freeman, Alex Hardy
 - U17 Women: Rich Moreau, Paul Bartel, Pat Morris, Hailey Haymes, Nathna VanderVaart, Meredith Hilmeyer
 - U19 Men: Brian Fisher, Jim Finley, Andrew Barry, Nick Murray Coplen
 - U19 Women: Liz Harold, Janet Lancaster, Christina Donley
 - U23/Sr Men: Tom Kent, Jared Boles
 - U23/Sr Women: Liz Iannizzi, Petra Plat-Dekoter
 - Masters Men/Women: Brian Moukperian, David Wright
 - 2024 Fall Coaches include:
 - Jr Women: Michele Fisher, Jim Finley, Liz Iannizzi, Liz Harold, Kestra Harris, Mike Di Benedetto, Owen Powell, Pat Morris
 - Jr Men: Brian Fisher, Nick Murray Coplen, Andrew Carr, Andrew Barry
 - Sr Women: Joslyn Galloway
 - Sr Men: Peter Somerwil
- JL acknowledged the efforts of Peter Somerwil for his efforts to encourage coaches to continue with their training and certifications beyond the minimum ECC (Every Coach Certified) RCA/RO initiative. Peter was also recognized for his willingness to step into the

Club Captain role, bringing with him his energy, experience, knowledge and his 'get it done' attitude.

- Under the direction of Erin Sharpe the Youth Rowing programs continue to grow in popularity, attracting young athletes to the sport and preparing them for the high school and Club rowing programs. A fall 2024 novice program was initiated to give high school athletes the opportunity to try on-water rowing prior to committing to winter indoor training.
- Funding from RCA and Sport Canada in 2024 was received to host a second Community Sport for All Initiative, providing opportunities for under-represented sectors of the region to try the sport of rowing. JL thanked Laura Gadsdon and Erin Sharpe for leading this initiative.
- JL finished her report by welcoming Greg Szybka to the role of Head Coach, looking forward to him leveraging his extensive training and experience to move the Club in a forward direction.

Vice-President Membership – Brian Thorne

- Report as tabled
- BT listed the programs and athletes that get registered with RCA under the SCRC 'umbrella'. He described the 2022 fee pilot that saw 2K athletes and Masters rowers pay a basic membership fee and a deposit towards racing entry and seat fees. The purpose was to implement a 'pay to race' system for all athletes. Each athlete would have their racing/seat fee account reconciled at the end of the season. Now in its third year, this method of membership fee and racing entry fees paid by each athlete is working very well.
- BT provided the number of registrations in the various programs for 2024 (registrations for 2023 are carried forward from the 2024 Annual Meeting for reference). The decline in Youth Rowing was caused by the reduction of available water time created by the World Championships in August:

For 2023

- High School 231
- Masters 54
- Junior/Senior 154
- Youth Rowing 218
- Rec Rowing 227

For 2024

- Coaches 72
- High School 238
- Masters 53
- Junior/Senior 177
- Youth Rowing 198
- Rec Rowing 220

Vice-President Fundraising Report (Louise Hastings)

- Report as tabled

- LH began her report with a summary of the 2024 Fundraising results which totaled \$67,355.55. The three most successful activities were Tag Day (organized by Kate Hingston) which raised \$11,472.85, Club Sponsorships (lead by Louise Hastings) which raised \$19,650, and Grants totalling \$23,896.00.
- Other activities for fundraising in 2024 included the on-line merchandise agreement with Regatta Sports, a 50/50 Draw to support coaching development, Mother's Day Regatta Parking, and the Captain's Dinner Silent Auction.
- A summary of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grants (current and future opportunities and the Canada Summer Jobs programs for 2024) was included in LH's report. The Committee will continue to investigate and apply for grants from both agencies in 2025.
- LH completed her report by thanking the members of the Board for their ongoing support and to the Fundraising Committee (Kate Hingston, Travis King, Stephanie Mowder, David Winslade) for their efforts in 2024.

Vice-President Special Projects Report (Kate Hingston)

- Report as tabled.
- KH noted the major events that the Club hosted in 2024:
 - Boat Christening on June 9 attracted a modest crowd who witnessed seven boats christened along with two coach boats. Louise Hastings and Stephanie Robinson were recognized and thanked for managing the event.
 - "Thank You Coaches" BBQ held on July 27 recognized the efforts of our coaches. Forty-nine coaches and guests attended. Thanks to the HIH and their new patio for cooking and to the Alumni for tending bar.
 - The Captain's Dinner was held on November 30 at the Holiday Inn and Conference Centre. Two hundred and twenty rowers, coaches and guests were in attendance to see awards presented. KH thanked Louise Hastings, Stephanie Robinson, Melissa Cooper, Marissa VanderVaart and Jacqueline Ciocca for their assistance.
 - KH noted that the Special Projects Committee works closely with the Fundraising Committee.

Club Captain Report – Peter Somerwil

- Report given verbally.
- PS began by stating how pleased he was to be back as Club Captain after many years at Brock University. He has noticed however that there has been a great loss of momentum, knowledge and experience caused by the COVID pandemic. Having been in his role for 8 months he has noticed that there is much work to be done with the fleet of boats, many Kaschpers and older boats need to be replaced. The new boathouse concrete floor and racking systems are working as planned.
- PS intends to remain as Club Captain into the new year and is committed to acting as a mentor and adviser to the new Head Coach and future Junior Lead Coach.

Vice-President Finance Report – Brian Fisher

- Report as tabled.

- BF began his report by reminding the members that the 2024 budget was projecting a year end deficit, but circumstances throughout the year modified that financial forecast. Aaron Thompson transitioned to Equipment Manager in June and Peter Somerwil stepped up to take on the Club Captain role on a voluntary basis. This reduction in salary costs, combined with significant revenue from equipment rentals at the RCHR and World Championships, an unexpected increase in Youth Rowing and Junior Development Program participation resulted in a significant year end change from the projected budget deficit.
- In addition a large donation from the HIH supported the purchase of coachboat motors and NK equipment. The St. Catharines Rowing Alumni Association agreed to pay the entry fees for the Junior Crews rowing at the Head of the Charles and Head of the Schuylkill Regattas. And a new Hosting Agreement with the St. Catharines Rowing League (Rec Rowing) firmly established their financial contributions to the Club.
- BF announced that Coaches were being recognized for their continuing time and dedication to the sport and SCRC athletes. Coaches were also reimbursed for travel expenses to away regattas for the second year in a row.
- The Boathouse Racking Project continues to move forward with just Bays 1 through 4 to be completed. BF thanked Matt and Dave Hingston and the install volunteers for the racking work complete thus far, and recognized Jim and Marilyn Minards for there financial donation which has made the improvements possible.
- BF noted that many of our fortunate financial circumstances in 2024 are not repeatable and 2025 will see some financial changes and challenges which will be part of Karl Bowley's presentation. The Board of Directors has made some key changes with respect to the financial management of the Club.
- Finally BF thanked Wendy Wiebe and Karl Bowley for continuing in their roles as Treasurers and their financial guidance and attention to Club finances.

Treasurer's Report – Karl Bowley

- Report as tabled.
- KB reported that the club remains solvent and in a positive financial position at year end 2024, but as noted by BF in his report, the Club greatly benefitted from several 'non-repeatable' circumstances in 2024.
- The Treasurer's report shows for the year ending December 2024:
 - Income \$ 286,796 (Membership and User Fees, Club-Organized Programs, Other Revenues)
 - Expenses \$ 294,090 (Direct Membership Costs, Shell House Operations, Refurbishments & Repairs, Indirect Club Costs)
 - Other Income \$289,491 (Fund Raising, Grants, Donations and Other Income)
 - Other Expenses \$183,745 (Capital Expenditures)
 - Net Income \$98,452 (2024 Budge was projecting a loss of \$12,400)
 - Year End 2024 Surplus \$342,903
- KB responded to several questions about the 2024 Club finances noting that the Club continues to require fundraising and donations to provide programs and purchase new

equipment. The Club is currently not covering its operating expenses with operating revenues.

Motion to move out of the committee of the whole. Moved by Marianne Romak, Seconded by Chris Blackwood. No discussion. Motion carried.

Motion to receive the 2024 SCRC Officers' Reports. Moved by Liz Iannizzi, Seconded by Brian Moukperian. No discussion. Motion carried. Reports will be posted to the SCRC website.

10) Constitutional Items

- Articles of Amendment were filed with the Ministry on October 2024 in order to comply with the newly enacted Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporation Legislation. DD thanked John Mirynech and his staff for their assistance in this filing.
- The Board reviews its By-Law and Policies/Procedures on a regular cycle. No changes to the By-Law are proposed at this time.

11) Approval of Actions of the 2024 Board of Directors

Motion to approve the actions of the 2024 SCRC Board of Directors. Moved by Lorna Hay-Gaudet. Seconded by Nicholas Murray Coplen. No discussion. Motion carried

12) 2025 Membership Fees – DD, JL, BF, KB

- David Derry began the presentation with an overview of government and membership funding for national and provincial organizations such as RCA and RO. SCRC is not funded through taxpayer dollars and must therefore acquire revenue from its members, programs, donations and available grants. Sport funding across the country is in a transitional state. The Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) is receiving more applications for grants and has a smaller pool of funding. The Club, for decades, has relied on grants, fund raising and donations to supplement the operating expenses, when a more sustainable strategy is to have the membership/operating revenues cover the cost of operations and programs.
- Janet Lancaster added that SCRC is the largest rowing club in the country and as such has large operating and capital costs. For the club to thrive it requires people with special skills and qualifications. Many rowing clubs are now hiring and paying full time and part time staff. The hiring of Head Coach Greg Szybka is only one step towards that goal. We are also hoping to hire a Junior Lead Coach, an individual for equipment repair, and a part time bookkeeper. Peter Somerwil repeated that he has a list of potential capital expenditures such as shells and blades, coachboat and motor needs, and equipment purchases that need to happen to renew the Club's fleet
- Brian Fisher noted that the Club has been relying heavily on volunteers and the pool of individuals who can devote time and talent is getting smaller. We must re-engage the community and bring in new people. We need to make the Club a desired destination for quality rowing and success. We must re-energize the U17 programs with both athletes and coaches. With Wendy Wiebe's resignation we must also look for bookkeeping and part time administrative help.

- At the January 2025 Board meeting the Board approved the financial strategy to cover operating expenses with operating revenue, rather than relying on fundraising, grants and donations to balance the yearly budget. KB estimated the increase in membership fees to achieve this would have to be approximately 30%. A motion by the Board to spread this increase over two years resulted in the recommendation for a 20% fee increase in 2025, followed by a 10% increase in 2026. Karl Bowley presented financial scenarios for 2025 depending on decisions surrounding staffing, operating costs, operating revenues and capital expenditures. Projections were based on the goal to cover operating expenses with operating revenue, and use fundraising, grants and donations for capital expenditure.
 - **2025 Scenario #1** examined no increase in membership fees, a realistic fundraising goal and capital expenditures:

▪ Total Operating Income	\$259,000
▪ Total Operating Expenses	\$-349,000
▪ Net Operating	\$-90,000
▪ Fundraising & Other Income	\$150,000
▪ Capital Expenditures	\$-100,000
▪ Year End Net	\$-40,000
 - **2025 Scenario #2** examined a 20% increase in membership fees, a realistic fundraising goal and capital expenditures:

▪ Total Operating Income	\$291,200
▪ Total Operating Expenses	\$-349,000
▪ Net Operating	\$-57,800
▪ Fundraising & Other Income	\$150,000
▪ Capital Expenditures	\$-100,000
▪ Year End Net Loss	\$ -7,800
- Brian Moukperian questioned the 20% increase and asked what other large clubs are charging. Janet Lancaster, referencing the Ottawa Rowing Club, stated that even with the 20% increase SCRC's membership fees will be comparable, if not lower, than most other clubs offering similar services and programs. RCA intends to raise its membership and seat fees by 7%. RO will be raising its membership fees by 4%, raising seat fees by 49%, and raising coach fees by 73%. The club has hired a full time Head Coach and is still hoping to hire a Junior Lead Coach. Racing fee deposits will be increased to reflect the RCA and RO proposed increases. Members were reminded that RCA/RO registration fees for 2025 total \$65 per member. The membership fee also includes a ticket to the Captain's Dinner in November. Athletes who order/purchase singlets will have that cost debited to their Racing Fee Deposit.
- The proposed fee structure for 2025 approved by the Board of Directors was presented. BT reviewed the 2025 fee structure that includes splitting fees into "Membership Fee" and "Racing/Entry Fee Deposit".

**Motion to approve the 2025 fee structure by Brian Thorne. Seconded by Brian Fisher.
Motion carried with one member opposed.**

13) Nominating Committee Report (DD)

- The Nominating Committee's mandate is to solicit, interview and endorse a slate of nominees for the position of Director. The Committee Chair was David Derry. Nominations were open in November and December 2024 for six (6) positions on the 2025 Board of Directors. The nominees, if approved, would serve a three-year term on the Board.
- The nominees recommended by the Nominating Committee included:
 - Sam Baio
 - Chris Blackwood
 - Brian Fisher
 - Kate Hingston
 - Janet Lancaster
 - Stephanie Robinson

Motion to approve the six nominees for 2025-2027 Directors. Moved by Louise Hastings, seconded by Michele Fisher. It was noted that there was no need for an election. **Motion carried.**

14) SCRC 2025 Board of Directors (RC)

- The 2025 Board of Directors, consisting of 15 Directors, was announced.
 - Sam Baio
 - Chris Blackwood
 - David Derry
 - Brian Fisher
 - Michele Fisher
 - Louise Hastings
 - Kate Hingston
 - Travis King
 - Janet Lancaster
 - Stephanie Mowder
 - Christina Phillips
 - Stephanie Robinson
 - Marianne Romak
 - Heather Talbot
 - Brian Thorne
- The first meeting of the new Board will be held on Wednesday, February 5 @ 7:00 p.m. at which time the Officers of the Club will be elected. As per the new Bylaw passed in 2022, Directors will be elected to a three-year term, with the intention of electing 5 Directors every year beginning in 2025.

15) Appointment of Auditors (BF)

- Karl Bowley informed the members that a Not For Profit Corporation whose annual income exceeds \$500,000 is required to submit an audit when applying for Ontario Trillium Foundation grants. For its 2024 OTF grant applications the Club was obligated to submit an audited financial statement for 2023. Upon the recommendation of the Co-

Treasurers, auditors were secured and the audit was completed in a timely manner. The 2023 audit can be used for OTF grant applications up to the end of June 2025. There is no case law yet in existence to assist with the definition of “income”, and because the Club has been successful in acquiring some large grants and private donations, he is unsure at this time if we will need an audit completed for the year 2024.

- **Motion to give the SCRC Board of Directors provisional authority to hire an auditor to conduct a financial audit on its 2024 finances if it is needed, at a fee to be determined by the Board. Moved by David Wright, seconded by Andrew Carr. Motion carried.**

16) New Business and Announcements (DD)

- The outgoing Directors were recognized by DD and thanked for their combined years of service to the Club
 - Andrew Carr
 - David Winslade
- DD expressed thanks to our Co-Treasurers
 - Karl Bowley
 - Wendy Wiebe
- DD thanked Peter Somerwil for his voluntary service as Club Captain, and thanked Aaron Thompson for his service a Captain and Equipment Manager
- DD welcomed SCRC’s new Head Coach, Greg Szybka.

17) Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the SCRC February 4, 2025 Annual Meeting of Members. Moved by Heather Talbot, seconded by Tom Kent. Motion carried.

Minutes by Chris Blackwood, Secretary

Minutes to be approved at 2026 Annual Meeting of Members.