

Minutes of the Annual Meeting Tuesday, December 7, 2021

The meeting came to order in an upstairs classroom at the International School of Denver at 6:15 pm with about 25 Alliance members, board members, and staff present. Copies of the Meeting Agenda, the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes, and the board election ballot were handed out to all in attendance.

Welcome to the Meeting: Board President Chris Poulet welcomed those attending the annual meeting, explaining that this meeting was postponed this year about one month to gather information on our progress dealing with future plans for our Galapago Street *maison*, and to organize the annual election of our board of directors.

Chris invited all current board members present to introduce themselves, tell when they joined the board, and describe their roles in board committees and other board responsibilities.

Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting: President Poulet asked everyone to review the minutes of last year's annual meeting as printed on the back of the meeting agenda. After a few minutes a motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the minutes as written.

Distribution of Election Ballots: Board election ballots had been handed out as the meeting began. Chris asked attendees to complete their ballots and hand them to the board secretary for tallying, so the election results could be announced at the end of the meeting.

President's Statement: President Poulet reviewed his letter sent recently to the membership. He said that the past year was the third challenging year in a row as we dealt with the emergency of our building's wall collapse. We have held 19 executive team meetings since June to address such topics as finding temporary office and classroom space (gratefully moving to the International School of Denver), building insurance, engineering reports, requests for proposals from architects, and Denver city code and procedure requirements. Chris said that we have been "working all angles" with our own and our insurance company's structural engineers, architect proposals, commercial realtors, and our attorneys to weigh the options of repairing our building or selling our property and moving to a new location.

Two years ago the board had to respond to the end of the French program sending us a school director (detaché) and hire a local executive director, and last year we were forced to move our classes and events online to respond to the COVID pandemic.

Chris thanked our membership and donors for their strong support during this unique time, and he praised our staff for their hard work to transition to our new temporary location.

Executive Director's Report: Executive Director Zoé Hess echoed the president's thanks for such strong member support, and she presented highlights of her regular director's report. In school news, Zoé reported that the fall term so far has reached only 88% of the revenue received in the 2020 term, our goal is to have classes with at least seven students, we have opened a satellite class and event location in Evergreen, and education coordinator Angélique is working on the winter term schedule. Also, a teacher overdue pay increase has been included in the new budget, and we will offer an open house for those curious about our French classes and events.

Events, including 5 à 7, Café Culturel, and the Book Club, have drawn members, and membership sales are good. Exam and translation income is good, and we have received almost \$5,000 in donations plus about \$3,300 so far from ColoradoGivesDay.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Reynald Bodeux gave a budget update, saying that the past year ending August 31 produced revenue of \$550,000 compared to the pre-pandemic year's \$750,000. Expenses were managed to produce a net income of \$48,000 with the Payroll Protection Program loan. Reynald said that this year we hope to break even, raising class tuition by 3% and increasing average class size. The loan-forgiveness application for the second PPP has been submitted.

Addressing the building options, Reynald said that the finance team is considering possibilities of using our savings, acquiring loans, and fund raising.

Election Results: The president asked the secretary to announce the results, and all candidates on the ballot were elected to the board for two-year terms. Continuing board members are Fritz Bart, Reynald Bodeux, Catherine Deschamps-Potter, Jean-François Duclos, Emma Glass, Linette Hayat, and Elizabeth Ward. Ex officio board members are Jeffrey Richards (Honorary Consul of France in Denver) and Zoé Hess (Executive Director).

Questions/Discussion: The president invited questions for the board, and it was asked if we had regular sponsors/donors like corporations or the State of Colorado, and about fund raising. We have been receiving \$40,000 to \$50,000 yearly grants from SCFD, and our fund raising campaigns have mostly been by mailings because the pandemic has prevented us from holding such events as our past Gala celebrations. We hope to hold a Gala next year and raise about \$5,000.

A member asked if we have had a response from our insurance company about the building wall collapse, and we are supposed to receive their answer by December 15. If not, our attorneys have said that litigation with the company could take as much as 18 months, although there is often a quicker settlement if one sues. The building has been winterized and secured, and the remaining two-thirds of the building are still good, with a few small repairs needed. A question about suing the contractor “causing” the wall collapse was asked, and the answer was that, if our insurance company pays us, they will probably then sue the contractor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Fritz Bart, Board Secretary