



Calgary Co-operative Memorial Society Ltd
 58th Annual General Meeting Minutes
 Saturday, February 24, 2024–12:45 P.M.
 Zoom

Introduction	by:	Director, Susan Costello	Time:	1:00 p.m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting started at 1:00 pm by Director, Susan Costello Ms. Costello explained the webinar format, voting, question and answer structure 				
Land acknowledgement	by:	Director, Mike Meredith		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Meredith shared a land acknowledgement 				
Board Introduction	by:	Director, Susan Costello		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Costello introduced the Board of Directors to the members. 				

1. Call to Order / Quorum	by:	Board Chair, Terry Geib	Time:	1:10 p.m.								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Geib called the 58th Annual General Meeting to order at 1:10pm The voting procedure was explained to attendees 												
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>POLL QUESTION</th> <th>YES</th> <th>NO</th> <th>UNSURE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Are you a member of the Cooperative Memorial Society (56 votes)</td> <td>100%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					POLL QUESTION	YES	NO	UNSURE	Are you a member of the Cooperative Memorial Society (56 votes)	100%	0%	0%
POLL QUESTION	YES	NO	UNSURE									
Are you a member of the Cooperative Memorial Society (56 votes)	100%	0%	0%									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMS Bylaws require that 1/10th of members or 50 members, whichever is less, constitutes quorum. With 56 attendees, quorum is met and the meeting was duly constituted according to our bylaws. 												

2. Presentation of Agenda	By	Board Chair, Terry Geib
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Geib presented the meeting agenda 		



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3. Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting, January 28, 2023				By	Vice-chair: Sylvia Kasper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kasper presented a summary of the meeting minutes posted from the previous AGM on January 28, 2023 					
Moved by:	Sylvia Kasper	Seconded by:	Tim Duthie	YES	NO
Do you approve the minutes of the January 28, 2023, Annual General Meeting as presented? (103/112 votes – 9 abstained)				92%	0%
Motion carried					

4. Chairperson’s Report				By	Chair: Terry Geib
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Board report available on calgarymemorial.com Currently our board is composed of nine directors, with three vacant positions. Of those nine, we have two directors who are up for re-election. That means we have 5 positions to fill. Like any volunteer board, succession planning and board training are critical. This year we reached out to our members asking for candidates to step forward to help on the board or on one of our 10 committees. I’m happy to say, the response from our members was very good and later in this meeting you’ll learn more about our proposed slate for the election. In September our board met for a full day strategic planning session. During the day we reviewed our vision and mission and tweaked it slightly to update the wording and make it more inclusive of all members across Alberta and the services we provide. As you see on the screen our vision is “an Alberta where all citizens have access to dignified, person-centered funeral services.” Our mission is to “reduce the emotional and fiscal stress of end-of-life planning by providing our members with information, tools, and resources for planning, and access to affordable funeral services.” Our board made significant strides in fulfilling this mission and vision over the past year. Our dedication to providing dignified, person-centered funeral services has resulted in commendable achievements, though challenges persist. Key highlights of our board year include the renewal of 5 service provider contracts in Edmonton, Medicine Hat, and Central Alberta, successful AGM planning, extensive board and committee recruitment efforts, and new partnerships with the Palliative Institute and Laura Silver, a death doula who is speaking later in this meeting. The board has 10 committees structured to deal with the planning and operational work that needs to happen. Of these committees, eight are operational and two are not because we do not have enough members with the interest or skills to fill them. As a result, the outstanding work is completed mostly 					



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by myself and Sylvia Kasper, our Vice Chair, until we can recruit and train people with the skills and interest to take over.

- Some highlights of our committee accomplishments over the year include:
- Our Administrative Liaison Committee renewed the Membership Services Coordinator contract.
- Our AGM Planning Committee secured technology advisors for this and future AGMs in addition to planning and executing this event.
- Our Board Capacity Committee attracted 17 members for recruitment to the board and committees.
- Our End of Life Advisory Committee helped define the educational content for our website and established an information-sharing partnership with the Palliative Centre. The committee also obtained the services of 2 Social Work students from Mount Royal University who will be doing a practicum working on special projects under the direction of Michael Cacace, a previous director and a current member of the committee.
- Our Executive Director Recruitment Committee met with the Memorial Society of BC for insights on operations under an executive director and I was fortunate to be able to attend their AGM in-person in Vancouver at no cost to the CMS. This committee is also working with an HR advisor to create a job description for a new executive director and solidify the hiring process once we are confident we have the financial ability to move forward.
- Our Financial Oversight Committee had an extremely busy year managing the transition to two new Treasurers. Following a review of our enabling legislation (the Alberta Cooperatives Act) the committee determined that the CMS is required to have its Annual Financial Statements audited, rather than the Financial Review that has been done in previous years. As a result, the Board appointed a firm of auditors to perform that service for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. To ensure compliance with the Income Tax Act, the Financial Oversight Committee assisted the Treasurer to prepare and file with Canada Revenue Agency a number of Annual Income Tax Returns, together with a Voluntary Disclosure Application, to clarify our status as a not-for-profit organization. The CRA is currently reviewing that information. We registered for a GST account, effective September 1, 2023. To provide simplicity to members and their estates, the committee recommended and the Board agreed that revenue from both membership fees and record fees would be inclusive of GST, rather than adding GST to each transaction.
- Our Legislative Review Committee reviewed funeral legislation and cooperative legislation to ensure we are in compliance with government requirements in the Acts. We anticipate there will be a few changes to our bylaws next year as a result of this work - but it is nothing major that needs immediate attention.
- We do not have an active member engagement committee at this time because we did not have enough interest or skill from our members and board. As a result, we did not make much progress on our social media strategy - though we continue to add occasional posts.
- On behalf of CMS I wrote and distributed 3 newsletters over the course of the year, and we ran advertisements in newspapers targeting older adults in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. Sylvia and I both did a number of presentations to groups and clubs and we manned a booth at the Unison Expo in Calgary. Ruth manned our booth at the Seniors Expo in Red Deer.



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- Our Service Provider Committee also had a busy year negotiating several new contracts in Edmonton, Medicine and Central Alberta and closing the contract in Taber and some small towns in central Alberta. After my report, Tim will provide you with an update on the new contracts.
- On March 9th and 10th our practicum students Nichole and Natalie are planning to host a couple of zoom focus groups. We are looking for members who are willing to participate by giving us their feedback. The purpose of the focus groups is to gain a better understanding of member experience and wishes for CMS. The link to sign up is on our website home page at calgarymemorial.com.
- I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members who dedicated their time to volunteer this year. Your invaluable skills and knowledge have significantly contributed to our work, and we are truly grateful for your commitment.
- In past years, we reported membership at about 35,000 based on the members in our database, marked “active”. Over the past 2 years, Sylvia and I (mostly Sylvia) went through many of these records to determine their correct status. This resulted in almost 10,000 members being marked deceased because the record was not updated prior to being transferred to CMS from Edmonton or Red Deer Memorial Societies, or because the death was not reported to us by the funeral home or the family, when the service was not planned through CMS.
- In 2023 we received 1599 new memberships for a total of about 28,000 active memberships. The number of deaths per year is similar to the number of new memberships, so we expect the overall growth in active members to be minimal.
- Of all our service providers across Alberta, the top two plans purchased by our members at time of need or pre-purchased were by McInnis & Holloway in Calgary. These plans were for basic cremation and basic cremation with a funeral.
- Over the next three years, our organization is set to embark on a strategic journey aimed at achieving significant milestones in three key areas:
- First and foremost, our commitment to governance excellence will be underscored by a dedicated effort to strengthen our board. This involves the strategic recruitment of skilled directors which I explained earlier, providing governance training for our board, and implementing knowledge transition and succession plans to ensure continuity and effectiveness in leadership.
- Simultaneously, we will focus on enhancing memberships to increase our revenues so we can continue to expand our services. This work includes an investigation into charity registration to potentially unlock additional funding streams and the improvement of member access to crucial information. Our goal is to fortify the financial foundation of the organization, ensuring sustainability and growth.
- Furthermore, a pivotal aspect of our strategic priorities is the improvement of member access to affordable funeral services. This entails a deeper look into members' needs for funeral plan contracts, expansion of partnerships to increase member services, and the addition of an Executive Director to make a positive impact on this crucial aspect of our offerings.
- However, we acknowledge that these strategic priorities come with challenges. To address these challenges head-on, we are focused on developing a robust succession model for sustained leadership,



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and enhancing our brand identity through website improvements, collaborative initiatives, and social media.

- Through this comprehensive approach, our board is confident in our ability to navigate the complexities ahead and emerge stronger and more resilient.
- In conclusion, the CMS has shown commendable progress, tackling challenges and embracing opportunities. The dedication of our board, our membership services coordinator and our volunteers has propelled us forward. As we move ahead, we remain committed to being a reliable and compassionate resource for end-of-life planning. We express gratitude for the collective efforts and look forward to a future marked by continued success and service excellence.

5. New Service Provider Contracts	By	Secretary: Tim Duthie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMS finalized three-year agreements with providers in the Edmonton and surrounding region, namely Foster & McGarvey Funeral Home, Trinity Funeral Home, and Serenity Funeral Home, effective until June 2026 • Starting January 1, 2024, a new three-year contract was established with our longstanding Medicine Hat service provider, Cook-Southland Funeral Chapel • Our Taber service provider, Southland Funeral Chapel, chose not to renew their contract, which ended on December 31, 2023 • On February 14, 2024, existing contracts in Central Alberta expired and were replaced by a single contract with CENTRAL ALBERTA FAMILY FUNERAL SERVICES LTD., locally-owned and operated by Gordon Mather and family. The contract runs through to December 31, 2026. 		

6. Financial Report	By	Treasurer: Deb Patterson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full copy of the 2023 Annual Financial Statements can be found on calgarymemorial.com • In accordance with our bylaws, the CMS Annual Financial Statements for the year ended October 31, 2023 have been Audited by Anthony Chiu, Chartered Professional Accountant. As you see here in his opinion letter, dated February 7, 2024, Mr. Chiu expressed a qualified audit opinion, in view of the fact that revenues reported are not susceptible to complete audit examination, as is usually the case with non-profit organizations where it is usually not possible to predict revenues with certainty. • On some pages in the financial statements, you will see reference to Notes. These notes can be found on Pages 8-10 of the full financial statements and include more description on the items referenced. • I would like to take this time to thank our Financial Oversight Committee for their work in reviewing the financial results on an ongoing basis. Five members served this past year: Sylvia Kasper, Peter Stacey-Salmon, Gordon Marconi, Mark Farris and Ross McNichol. • Revenues for the last fiscal year ending October 31, 2023, totaled \$124,607 which was a small decrease from the previous year’s revenue of \$124,799 (after adjusting entries for accruals). The relatively small year over year total change can be mainly explained by the transfer of bank balances (included as donations in 2022) from the Red Deer Memorial Society and Edmonton Memorial Society following 		



their decisions to transfer members to CMS. In 2023 there were no such large transfers and this shows business as usual across our new territory of the whole province of Alberta.

- Membership Revenue increased year-over-year due to new members joining, especially the online memberships purchased. Donations in 2023 were the normal small amounts collected as donations.
- Breaking down the revenue into a little bit more detail, we show 4 categories: interest income, memberships, donations and record fees.
- Interest income for the 2023 fiscal year was higher than for the previous year. For the past few years, interest rates were historically low, but rates improved substantially in the 2023 fiscal year. Changing the financial statements over to the accrual basis means that Accrued Interest on GICs that had not yet matured by each fiscal year end is included in Interest income for the year and in accounts receivable at the year end date.
- Membership revenue totaled \$62,021, a 5% increase from the previous year.
- Record fees are the monies collected by our service providers on our behalf when a member pre-pays for a funeral or at their passing. Record fees are collected by all service providers including Calgary, Southern Alberta, Central Alberta (which includes Red Deer and area) and Northern Alberta (which includes Edmonton and area).
- Expenses are next and for the latest fiscal year, total expenses were \$83,594, an 25% increase from the previous year of \$66,417. Expenses are broken down further into 4 broad categories and these include Contract Services, Outreach, Technology and Board Expenses. The remaining accounts are considered Administration Expenses. We will go through all of these expenses in more detail in a moment.
- The category of Contractors are costs associated with our Membership Services Coordinator, Barb Montgomery, who operates under the company name of Montcare Services. Contractor costs were up year-over-year given an inflation adjustment. As a reminder, if you do move or change your contact information, please call Barb or go online to update your member profile.
- The next large category on our Expense Summary is Outreach Expenses which can be viewed as our marketing and advertising category, as this mainly includes advertisements in publications such as the Kerby News, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat newspapers, and now Red Deer and Edmonton. Year-over-year Outreach costs almost doubled to \$17,933 from \$9,545. This is attributed to additional advertising we did in areas outside of Calgary for newly acquired members around Alberta, mostly in the Edmonton region. We also participated in more trade shows in 2023 to widen our presence in Alberta where we were not known previously. In 2023 we contracted a Social Media Contractor and purchased a Cloud-based storage subscription. These large costs are also reflected here.
- The second last large category is Technology which includes maintaining our member database, sending communication to members through newsletters, initiating a Social Media strategy and board tools such as Zoom and Survey Monkey. For the year, our Technology expense slightly increased to \$12,169 from \$11,831.
- Our last category is Board Expenses. For the latest fiscal year board expenses decreased to \$3,584 versus \$3,969. There was no significant change as the Board continues to keep tight control over its own expenses.



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- Of the remaining expense accounts, rent, accounting and bookkeeping fees are the largest of the expenses. We had a bookkeeper for part of the year, monthly subscription to our accounting program Quickbooks Online, and the cost associated with our annual financial audit of this past year.
- In summary then, total expenses for the year were \$83,594 versus \$66,417.
- At the very bottom you will note the surplus, or excess revenue over expenses. For the latest fiscal year, the surplus, is \$41,013, a decrease from the previous year surplus of \$58,382. Much of this decrease can be attributed to the advertising spent on the Central, Southern and Northern territories of Alberta, as well as the accrual costs of year end Audit.
- All in all, it was another good year for CMS and its members.
- Next is the Balance Sheet, which is a summary of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets.
- As of October 31, 2023, Assets for the Cooperative Memorial Society totaled \$622,964 versus \$572,495 the previous year. The increase in assets year-over-year is attributed to the surplus that was reported this year and although there is some change in the Servus Credit Union checking account balance, there was an increase in GICs or Guaranteed Investment Certificates. CMS only invests surplus funds in the safety of GICs and we currently have various maturities between 2024 and 2026.
- There are some liabilities for CMS in Accrued Liabilities such as Prepaid Insurance and Prepaid Advertising and therefore with Net Assets, Liabilities and Equity equal to the Total Assets which is \$622,964.
- Pages 8-10 of the full report online provides a description of the Notes that are referenced throughout this financial report.

Moved by:	Sylvia Kasper	Seconded by:	Ross McNichol	YES	NO
Do you approve the financial statements for the year ending October 31, 2023? (114 votes – 2 abstained)				98%	0%
Motion carried					

7. Appointment of Auditor			By	Vice-chair: Sylvia Kasper	
Moved by:	Ross McNichol	Seconded by:	Sylvia Kasper	YES	NO
Do you approve the appointment of Anthony Chiu, Chartered Professional Accountant, be appointed as auditor to audit our records and financial statements for the fiscal year ending October 31, 2024? (112 votes)				100%	0%
Motion carried					



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8. Retiring Directors	By	Vice-chair: Sylvia Kasper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This meeting marks the end of the term of Mark Farris, who has served most recently as Chair of the Board Capacity Committee and Legislative Review Committee, and for several years before that as Treasurer. Over the past year, he served on the Financial Oversight Committee and worked tirelessly to hand over knowledge to a new Treasurer. His contributions to CMS have been invaluable. We will miss his wisdom and work at the Board table but are pleased to know that he will continue to work as a volunteer. • Ruth Wall, who hails from Red Deer, joined us when the Memorial Society of Red Deer ceased operations, and she facilitated our welcoming of the members from that society. Her local knowledge has been very useful and we are pleased to know that, although she is resigning from the Board, she will continue to work for us as a volunteer. Our sincere thanks go out to those two Directors who are leaving the Board. • Richard Godwin, hailing from the Edmonton area, became a valuable member of our board in 2022, assuming the role of Treasurer in 2023 for a brief period. Regrettably, Richard tendered his resignation from our board in late January, citing health reasons. We extend our heartfelt wishes for his well-being and a swift recovery. 		

9. Director Election Candidates	By	Vice-chair: Sylvia Kasper			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board has proposed a slate of 5 candidates for election, two of whom are incumbents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mike Merdeith (incumbent) ○ Don Gnatiuk ○ Miriam Carey ○ Dianne Fehr ○ Terry Geib (incumbent) 					
Moved by:	Susan Costello	Seconded by:	Sylvia Kasper	YES	NO
Do you approve of the slate of candidates as presented? (104 votes – 1 abstained)				98%	1%
Motion carried					

10. Resolutions	By	Vice-chair: Terry Geib
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Resolutions were provided by member prior to the meeting 		



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11. Question and Answer Period		By	Vice-chair: Terry Geib
Question	What number do people use to reach the society in Edmonton?		
Answer	Our Cooperative Memorial Society is Alberta-wide: 1-800-566-9959		
Question	Should our main goal, at this time, be to strengthen our membership numbers to ensure our long-term sustainability? If so - what are the Board's plans to increase or preferably double the membership numbers?		
Answer	We are working on member engagement strategies, including social media, print media and other plans. Currently, word of mouth seems to be our best method. We welcome any suggestions from members.		
Question	Are the plans similar costs by geographic location?		
Answer	A list of our service providers and our member price plans are here: https://www.calgarymemorial.com/funeral-service-providers--plans.html		
Question	What are record fees?		
Answer	This is the administration fee of \$35 paid when a member passes away, and their file is closed.		
Question	Please explain the increase in professional fees.		
Answer	A slight cost of living increase for our Membership Coordinator.		
Question	Do you expect outreach expenses to continue to increase over the following year?		
Answer	Possibly, as many the cost of many services continues to increase.		
Question	A surplus of \$600,000 seems large given the mandate of the society. what the plan for these funds in the future?		
Answer	Those funds are invested in the event any of our funeral home partners disappear, we can still help our members		
Question	Could we clarify the surplus amount?		
Answer	This is the amount leftover after expenses are deducted from income. This is the net income from the year.		
Question	How long is our contract with McInnis and Holloway?		
Answer	Our contract with McInnis and Holloway runs until December 31, 2025		
Question	Is there an Edmonton contact or do we deal with Calgary?		
Answer	The Edmonton contact is same as us: 1-800-566-9959		



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Question	Do you feel that membership fees are reasonable now or should be increased?
Answer	We feel the membership fee is reasonable.
Question	Are expiring contracts usually renewed?
Answer	Yes, we work with all of our service providers to renew and extend the contracts.
Question	How do you attract service providers? They are agreeing to a discounted price. What is in it for them?
Answer	We offer an alternative market for them as there are many alternatives for funeral services in the larger market areas.
Question	Are membership fees annual, or a single payment?
Answer	Membership fee is \$40 one time only
Question	How many member do we have in total and what is the annual addition and annual number of deaths?
Answer	28,000 active memberships; 1899 new members added this year. As we audited the database and marked a large number of members as deceased, we do not have a number of deaths for the previous year.
Question	Is a list of prearranged funeral plans available?
Answer	All of our funeral plans details are available on our website: calgarymemorial.com
Question	Does the society have connections with other provinces eg. Saskatchewan?
Answer	BC has its own Memorial Society as well as Saskatchewan and Ontario. There is a list of Memorial Societies on our website.
Question	Is there any consideration about the green burials that we are hearing about?
Answer	Our service providers have options for green burial. Options vary by service provider.
Question	Can you explain [the admin] fee again?
Answer	There is a \$35 admin fee that our partner funeral homes pay back to us when a member passes away. This fee helps to pay us to process the status of the member.
Question	What social platforms are we on now or planning in the future?
Answer	Instagram and Facebook
Question	In Calgary then, what is the approximate current savings for basic cremation and service?
Answer	Approximately \$3,000



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Question	Do we subsidize funeral arrangements? If not what do we do with the funds?
Answer	The CMS do not subsidize funeral arrangements but instead we arrange much lower costs at our partner funeral homes.
Question	Any plans for a funeral home in Camrose to join?
Answer	We welcome proposal from any funeral home.

12. Other Business	By	Vice-chair: Terry Geib
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other business was brought forward 		

13. Next Annual General Meeting:	Saturday, February 22, 2025
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14. Meeting adjournment	Meeting adjourned 2:06 p.m. Chair, Terry Geib				
Moved by:	Terry Geib	Seconded by:	Susan Costello	YES	NO
Do you approve the conclusion of the annual general meeting? (108 votes)				100%	0%
Motion carried					

After the Annual General Meeting, CMS welcomed our guest speaker, Laura Silver.