

**Canadian Astronomical Society**  
**Société Canadienne d'Astronomie**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference**

Minutes for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024, 15:00-16:00 Eastern

– including special meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 15:30-16:30 Eastern (further below)

Present:

Sarah Gallagher (President)  
Adam Muzzin (Vice President)  
Chris Wilson (Past President), until 15:30  
Karun Thanjavur (Director)  
Maria Drout (Director)  
Matt Taylor (Director)  
Renée Hložek (Director)  
Rob Cockcroft (Secretary)  
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)

Regrets

None

1. Adoption of agenda
  - a. Moved by Karun; seconded by Matt; adopted.
2. Approval of minutes from February meeting
  - a. Moved by Maria; seconded by Karun; approved.
3. President's report
  - a. Mission and values' statements
    - i. Broad agreement that these are in a good state
    - ii. No need to vote because this is a draft to share with CASCA members
    - iii. Proposal: Host documents for the AGM, such as the mission and values' statements, via the website (which could point to the Google doc which a viewable-only link).
    - iv. Send via the exploder every time a new document is posted.
    - v. Google Form would be provided for comments from the CASCA membership to the Board.
    - vi. **Action: Renée** to work on providing and sharing the above.
  - b. Proposal: amend by-laws to split business meeting from annual general meeting and allow virtual business meeting.

Discussion:

    - i. CAP already distinguishes between CAP AGM (CASCA's business meeting) and CAP congress (CASCA's science meeting)
    - ii. The separation could streamline voting and accessibility.
    - iii. The business meeting could be longer.
    - iv. If business meeting was kept in person at the AGM, you already have a captive audience.
    - v. If the split happened, we would need to get postdoc and grad student committees to advocate attendance from their respective members.

- vi. This proposal means that the business meeting doesn't \*have to\* be virtual – this change just gives us the option to do so.
  - vii. Business meeting needs to be in the first six months according to the bylaws, and it makes sense to make it after the AGM, so that people can discuss topics at the AGM first.
4. VP's report
- a. All award winners have now been notified by Adam by phone.
  - b. Citations will be posted shortly to the CASCA exploder
  - c. **Action: all** are invited to provide Adam with comments on the exec award citation
  - d. GSC request a meet-and-greet with the Board on Monday of the AGM (2-2:45 pm) – it's a ~5-minute walk between meeting locations of GSC and the Board
5. Action items' update
- a. Discuss/approve vAGM report for wider circulation in prep for proposed townhall gatherings. Discuss nature of proposals being brought (see VP report)
    - i. Preference of order (items 1 and 2 could swap)
      - 1. Motion to go out from the Board – or could go out from Sustainability. The motion is \*only\* to consider the vAGM for 2025 (it is \*not\* to consider the cadence of vAGMs beyond 2025).
      - 2. Sustainability/GSC (with independent chair) will co-propose town hall(s). Each committee provide their reports/statements to the general membership. Town hall(s) would invite people to present/discuss.
      - 3. There could be two town halls – one for the general membership (which will include GSC), and one just for the GSC. Or there could be one town hall, which GSC has a dedicated time to present. Karun will ask GSC what they would prefer.
      - 4. Consensus: sustainability and GSC co-organize and co-chair a townhall (plus a separate, GSC-only townhall if they would want to do that).
6. AOB
- a. Renee: By-Laws have now been adjusted
    - i. Online voting is important part of by-law review changes. Points to consider: you don't need to be in person; you need a quorum (e.g., 50% of membership); business meeting can happen outside of AGM.
    - ii. Have two motions so that the motion to change the by-law is decoupled from the motion to allow the EIC/LCRIC to make further changes to the by-laws.
    - iii. How to streamline language to make it less clunky.
    - iv. Renee has a lawyer who can check current language – will do so next week.
    - v. **Action: all** read by-law changes and suggest edits via the documents already shared by Renée by Friday 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. **Action: Rob** to start compiling list of items to prepare for AGM
    - i. Adam: Need to approve both Dec and May committee reports
    - ii. Renée: EIC session planning
    - iii. Rob and Sarah: agenda
7. Adjourn
- a. Moved by Renee; seconded by Lewis; approved.

Next meeting: **time TBD (but all day)**, Monday 3rd June 2024 (pre-AGM)

#### Action item log

#	Assigned	Working with	Description	Updates
180	Renée		To provide space on the CASCA website to share documents ahead of the CASCA AGM	
181	All		To provide Adam with any updates needed for the citation of the executive award	
182	All		read by-law changes and suggest edits via the documents already shared by Renée by Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> April	
183	Rob	All	Compile list of items to prepare for AGM	

#### Special meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 3:30-4:30 pm Eastern

##### Round of intros:

- Sarah Gallagher - chair of the CASCA board
- Karun – CASCA board director
- Dennis - member of sustainability committee (org and ran 2020 vAGM)
- Matias - member of postdoc committee (at McMaster)
- Chris - chair of sustainability committee (prof at U of T)
- Lewis - CASCA treasurer (astronomer at HAA)
- Renee - member of CASCA board (prof at U of T)
- Mubdi - CASCA sustainability (at Sidrat)
- Maria - CASCA board (U of T prof)
- Matt - CASCA board (Calgary prof)
- Adam Muzzin - vice pres of CASCA board

Minutes below taken by Deb Lokhorst in Rob's absence (and anonymized)

##### Introduction to what we are talking about:

##### Tasked with coming up with proposal for vAGM

- According to bylaws vagms not allowed unless worldwide catastrophe, so need to change the bylaw first (draft revisions to the bylaw and get approved)
- Wanted to have this big change endorsed by membership before changing, put to a vote
- Want a proposal so people know what they are getting into before they get into the vote
- Would put to a vote at the meeting - during a hybrid business meeting

from chat "Also we have no choice to vote for the bylaws under the current bylaw procedures... which is why we are trying to change them"

from chat “note that the revised and approved Bylaws need to be submitted to Corporations Canada.”

drafting changes to the bylaw,

- Bylaw currently says AGM has to be held in person, can do proxy voting for those not there in person, says all votes have to be during AGM.
- Changing to allow votes to happen outside of the AGM, allowing votes to happen electronically, allowing meeting to not have to be in person

gave a 1-minute description of the proposal

Going through the proposal:

**Comment that not clear from proposal how these issues are not alleviated by hybrid AGMs**

- Brought up comment 1, “not clear from proposal how these issues are not alleviated by hybrid AGMs”
- The tiger team discussed hybrid meetings vs fully virtual meetings
- Karun’s comments [in the overleaf doc] address the main points (organization overhead, lack of parity between in person and virtual participants, etc.)
- Same problems happen for remote meetings (some people also say that remote meetings are impossible)
- Can make things better for hybrid meetings
- Fully support making conferences better for folks in general
- Comes to a matter of balance - the reason for virtual AGMs and why are superior to hybrid is because need to balance all constituents we have in CASCA
- Different types of meetings will work better for different people (some people can’t do in person meetings, some don’t like virtual) - trying to balance what everyone can get out of CASCA
- Great that continuing with hybrid meetings and supported by CASCA board
- Benefit to CASCA is having CASCA located all over Canada. Toronto can create good hybrid experience, but smaller places may not have the support/people to make a hybrid meeting.
- Agree that need to provide support for LOCs to set up hybrid meetings

**Comment on carbon footprint**

- Total decrease in carbon is not the right metric, total carbon per attendee is more relevant because can increase the number of attendees that will participate virtually rather than in person

**Comment on digital archive**

- Digital legacy doesn’t seem very compelling - too much to archive everything that happens in a meeting
- Don’t need to archive everything, can choose what is important

- Propose to focus conversation on frequency and format of vAGMs

From chat: “the important end goals here are that we can draft a proposal that the community sees at the business meeting this year. The two key concepts of that that we will absolutely need to decide are (i) the frequency of virtual AGMs (every other or every three years), and (ii) what the format of those meetings look like (do we aim as close to the ‘normal’ CASCA as possible, but just virtual, or in another format. So we should probably focus our discussion on comments from the board relevant for those two points?”

- Should include things that show people how this is a good thing to consider
- Grad students shared their report and have reservations for vAGMs
- Grad students saw a previous version
- GSC members wanted to continue with the vAGM proposal, but recused themselves because they felt a COI with a couple grad students who sent emails that they did not want vAGMs
- From the report: Grad students feel they are carrying the burden of sustainability, get removed from one of the biggest networking events they have available
- Way the plan is phrased now may not get out of the gate
- Optics of putting forward a proposal that grad students have removed themselves from is not a good look
- Need to get grad students on board, wording of report sounds like the grad students weren’t being listened to
- Restated that grad students who were on the tiger team wanted to say and pulled out only because of this COI they felt
- Timing is a problem. To get the proposal ready and vote on the bylaws.
- For now, could vote that just the 2025 AGM is virtual and see how it goes
- If not virtual, need to asap find someone else to host the AGM in person
- Voting just on the 2025 AGM gives time to develop cadence further
- People having a positive experience in 2025 at vAGM would go a long way to helping get support for a frequent cadence of vAGMs
- Lots of people have had bad experiences at virtual meetings
- Grad students rated the 2021 vAGMs positively (7.5/10)
- Always going to be some people who don’t like it
- Graduate survey went out with no context - none of them had seen the report that we had written
- Could we release the report in some modified format to the community?
- Could we hold a townhall where we open this discussion to the community? Forum where people can discuss concerns and have a conversation

over chat: “Personally I don’t think we should punt and just vote on 2025. I think the committee should help us design a motion they want. If it succeeds great, if it fails, it doesn’t

mean an updated motion can't be brought in a future year. If it fails, it helps craft a motion that is more palatable to the community. Democracy tends to work this way. Punting just continues this without taking the temperature about how people feel about this long term."

- Having virtual townhall well in advance of CASCA is a good idea
- Would need to have a discussion specific for graduate students (if they wanted to participate)
- Should be open to edits given concerns brought up
  
- Motion at AGM has to go before people 60 days before AGM - April 3rd deadline
- Don't think that can arrange a townhall in that time
- Should craft a motion and have a vote at the AGM
  
- Can introduce motion at the AGM
  
- Should defer longer term decisions until people are able to review proposal
  
- Don't want to vote on a full fledged proposal at this time
- Encourage sustainability to have townhall to solicit feedback from people and collect information
- Need somebody to host the next AGM - the urgent thing
- Up to the tiger team to show how good a virtual meeting can be
- Impression from grad students is that they did not feel respected and included in the decision - need to find a way to engage and meet with them and include them in the process
  
- What is being drafted and distributed in the next two weeks?
  - A virtual AGM for 2025 (nothing further than that)
  - Revision of the bylaw to allow virtual AGMs

from chat:

"And just to repeat - I do think this town hall must include space for the graduate students to present their points"

"Also, unless I'm super confused there's no 60 day requirement for motions (only elections)  
[https://casca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CASCA.ByLaws.Jun\\_1\\_2021.pdf](https://casca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CASCA.ByLaws.Jun_1_2021.pdf)"

- Bylaws need to be changed first, then vote on next AGM being virtual
- Can share with tiger team when draft text (or tiger team can draft and send along?)
- Recommend that tiger team runs the discussion/townhall