

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
April 8, 2021, 11:02 a.m. to 12:33 p.m.
Online, on Zoom Meetings

2021 MINUTES

PRESENT

Board of Directors

Marie-Claude Bouillon, Chair
Tim Roberts, Vice Chair
Christine Bouchard, Corporate Secretary
Éric Langlois, Treasurer
Natasha Drouin-Beauregard, Director
Emmanuel Bochud, Director
Marie-Ève Dicaire, Director
Anahareo Doelle, Director

Annie-Kim Déry, Director
Jimmy Gonzalez Palacios, Director
Karine Lavoie, Director
Stéphane Lavoie, Director
Andrée-Anne Simard, Director
Itzel Viruega, Director
Danièle Fournier, Director

Staff

Christine Bouchard, Executive Director
Valérie Bineau, Digital Development Officer
Nathalie Delorme, Communications & Community Engagement Officer
Paola Dugit-Gros, Administration & Membership Assistant
Nadia Drouin, Project Manager
Romain Meyer, Continuing Education & Development Coordinator
Anna Vigeland, Canadian Development & Training Programs Assistant

Participants

Sylvie Gamache, Chairperson
Roland Naccache, Auditor, Robert Naccache et Ass.
Christine Lewis, Interpreter
Hugh Ballem, Interpreter

MINUTES

1. Call to order

A motion to call the meeting to order was moved by Marie-Claude Bouillon and seconded by Annie-Kim Déry at 11:02 a.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Appointment of a chairperson

A motion to appoint Sylvie Gamache as chairperson was moved by Marc-Antoine Boutin and seconded by Martin Frenette. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Appointment of a secretary

A motion to appoint Paola Dugit-Gros as secretary was moved by the chairperson, Sylvie Gamache, and seconded by Bernard Lebel. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Declaration of quorum by the chairperson

The chairperson confirmed that quorum was present.

5. Acceptance of visitors

The chairperson mentioned that a number of non-members and non-voting members were attending the AGM. En Piste has always welcomed visitors. A motion to allow non-voting members and other visitors to attend the annual general meeting was moved by Itzel Viruega, seconded by Jade Dussault and unanimously approved.

6. Reading and adoption of the agenda

The chairperson asked AGM attendees for any corrections or additions to the agenda. The following items were added:

- Presentation by Aaron Marquise on his International Circus Awards project
- Briefing on the *Towards Our Recovery* Forum

A motion to adopt the agenda was moved by Anahareo Doelle, seconded by Nassib El-Husseini and unanimously approved.

7. Adoption of the minutes from the annual general meeting held on June 18, 2020

A motion to adopt the minutes from the annual general meeting held on June 18, 2020, was moved by Émilie Vachon, seconded by Rachel Gauthier and unanimously approved.

8. Presentation of the annual report for the fiscal year 2020

The chair, several members of the board of directors and the executive director presented the year's highlights to the assembly. Here is a summary of the presentations:

8.1. Chair's report

The chair of the board, Marie-Claude Bouillon, took the floor and addressed the assembly. Here is a summary of her speech:

"The first words that come to mind are, of course, 'What a year!' but also 'How proud I am!'

I think you will agree that in the current circumstances, our alliance has managed to adapt, position itself, take action and react in an absolutely exceptional way. En Piste has been nothing short of a life saver for many of you.

Because of this, our membership numbers have reached a record high! While this is important because all the work we do is on behalf of our members, it also validates and lends weight to our government advocacy work.

We wanted to ensure that the challenging economic situation did not prevent anyone from being able to pay their membership dues. That is why we introduced a membership campaign in solidarity with the community, which seems to have been appreciated.

While many professional associations simply relayed information from the government, Christine and the En Piste team sprang into action and shifted into problem-solving mode! Just reading the list of initiatives they undertook is enough to take your breath away and make your head spin! How such a small team managed to achieve so much is a mystery! What is clear, however, is that En Piste now plays a key role in our lives, from newsletters and workshops to the psychological assistance program and virtual activities, not to mention its surveys, studies, briefs, government advocacy and media communications. The alliance also defended our interests, continued to work on programs and projects that were planned before the crisis, negotiated to ensure that artists could resume training as soon as possible, ensured that studios were accessible, and much more.

I think one of the things that has encouraged and inspired the team has been witnessing the exceptional resilience of our community's artists and organizations. The circus community is, by its very nature, courageous. Dancing in mid-air, facing danger, being in constant motion, adapting, working with limitations to spark creativity... it's in our DNA, I suppose! And thank goodness for that!

That being said, fatigue is starting to set in. But the challenges facing our sector during this drawn-out pandemic are and will remain enormous.

That is why the \$10 million that En Piste secured from the Quebec government to support the community's recovery is a historic and vital contribution!

At the federal level, for the first time, our advocacy work led to genuine dialogue. Several key meetings were held with Minister Guilbault from Canadian Heritage, giving us reason to hope... at long last! We look forward to further developments!

As you will see, thanks to its efforts, En Piste has managed to secure additional financial support and has significantly increased its budget. These funds are being used to support the entire circus community and to organize more workshops, projects, and programs, and the benefits can be seen at all levels. This is truly extraordinary. On the other hand, each new project means more work for our small team to accomplish! While every member of the team is incredibly efficient, they are also tired, as we all are. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our truly extraordinary executive director, Christine! I would also like to thank Nathalie, Paola, Anna, Romain, Valérie – I hope you will receive additional support this year. Additionally, I would like to welcome Nadia, who recently joined the team.

Last spring, at the beginning of the crisis, we made the collective decision to postpone the elections, AGM and Forum. Although we are now holding them virtually, I feel that we are getting better at navigating these troubled waters. We are clearly making progress, despite the situation, and have not lost sight of our objectives. Thank you for being here this morning, thank you for answering the call, and thank you for being so involved. We are continuing to follow the situation and still seeking balance, in life and in the ring. Overall, though, I think we're doing a great job!

Of course, as we all know, we're not out of the woods yet. Discouragement often rears its ugly head. But I truly believe in the importance of what we bring to the world: beauty, poetry and community. Leaving an impression on audiences, making them reflect, moving them, and transporting them to new worlds. Our incredibly vitality. Let's not forget who we are. Let's remember what we're made of, and that we're in this together. That we're stronger together. Thank you!"

8.2. Executive director's report

Christine Bouchard thanked the chair for her remarks. She took the floor and gave an account of 2020. She told participants that they should have received a copy of the annual report prior to the meeting. The main highlights from 2020 were:

- 2020: In crisis management mode
- First study demonstrating the circus arts sector's economic contribution
- Intensification of government relations. New economic survey in December for the fiscal year 2021
- COVID-19 action plan
- Continuing education: a vital service during the pandemic
- A first step towards offering continuing education to professionals in Canadian provinces outside Quebec
- At RIDEAU, En Piste was proud to announce a new study on circus arts dissemination and an assistance measure for the circulation of circus shows. One week later: everything shut down because of the pandemic
- Higher attendance at consultation and networking events
- Support following the wave of harassment allegations and action to support diversity, equity and inclusion
- Insurance for artists: new immediate and confidential membership assistance program
- En Piste: a partner at various Canadian networking events and activities and a participant at various issue tables in the cultural community
- 43 committed partners
- More frequent and valuable communications and a greater media presence
- New premises, new website and a new brand image

She then presented the alliance's priorities for 2021:

- Contributing to the community's recovery and to work on the Status of the Artist Act
- More studies and advocacy work to ensure that the circus arts sector has the resources it needs to recover
- Work on a new strategic development plan
- Continuing to expand activities and services to meet members' needs
- Two new measures to support the circus arts sector:
 - o Artists Training Management Service: group workshops and individualized training support will still be offered
 - New reimbursement assistance program for artists' training expenses
 - o Upcoming CNESST protective measure
 - o Circus circulation support measure

Comments from attendees:

Yves Landry: He said that as a member of the association, he has never seen so much work being done to support members. Because of what a difficult a year it has been, he suggested a 20-second round of applause to show appreciation for the En Piste team. The assembly applauded the team.

Samuel Tétrault: What gives him hope is that the pandemic has helped En Piste make progress on issues it has been working to address for over a decade. Congratulations to the team and to En Piste's board of directors.

Dominique Bouchard: He greeted the attendees. He asked for more details on the Status of the Artist Acts. Christine Bouchard clarified that associations and alliances have not been provided with any information. In February 2021, the alliance filed a brief as part of this work. What is certain is that the crisis has laid bare the precariousness artists face. Hopefully, legislative changes will make it possible to improve their working conditions and establish a social safety net.

9. Presentation of the audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2020 by Roland Naccache

Sylvie Gamache invited Roland Naccache from Roland Naccache et Associés to present the financial statements for 2020.

As an auditor, he expressed an unqualified opinion on the organization's financial health on December 31, 2020. No material misstatements were found. There were no reservations on his part. The financial statements painted an accurate picture of the organization's situation. He went over the different sections of the financial statements and highlighted a number of significant changes, most of which were a result of the pandemic.

They included:

- Special assistance from the CCA - COVID-19: \$12,000
- Training: \$240,000
- Wage subsidy: \$ 16,900
- COVID-19 assistance grant: \$ 28,000
- \$813,000 increase in grants
- \$20,000 increase in revenue

Overall: net assets of \$145,000 plus the surplus, for a total of \$183,000. He described where it had been allocated internally (contingency reserve, development reserve). Everything was in order.

Nothing specific to mention. Roland Naccache asked if there were any questions or comments. Samuel Tétréault: He asked for more information about the association's long-term debt. Roland Naccache explained that this consisted of \$40,000 in COVID-19 assistance; \$10,000 could be retained if it was paid back before December 2022. Additional \$20,000 in assistance following the same principle.

The treasurer, Éric Langlois, confirmed that the board had approved the financial statements. He praised the executive director's excellent work and said he was satisfied with the alliance's financial situation.

The chair, Sylvie Gamache, thanked the auditor for his presentation.

10. Ratification of acts of directors

Sylvie Gamache informed the assembly that it was no longer necessary to ratify acts of directors, in accordance with current governance practices. As a result, this item will not be included in future agendas.

11. Appointment of an accounting firm for the fiscal year 2021

A motion to appoint the firm Robert Naccache et Ass. for the fiscal year 2021 was moved by Éric Langlois, seconded by Vincent Jutras and unanimously approved.

12. Presentation of the 2021-2022 board of directors following the election results

The chairperson invited the chair of the board of directors to present the election process and the nominations report for 2021-2022. She summarized the election process and presented the nominations report for each college. For the first time, the elections were held online. She thanked the outgoing directors whose terms of office were expiring:

College of individual members: Marie-Ève Dicaire, Jimmy Gonzalez and Itzel Viruega.
College of corporate members: Natasha Drouin-Beauregard, Anahareo Doelle and Karine Lavoie.
College of educational organization members: Éric Langlois.

The chairperson also thanked the directors who stepped down mid-term:

College of individual members: Claudel Doucet
College of corporate members: Emmanuel Bochud and Stéphane Lavoie

Finally, the chairperson presented the election results and thanked everyone who ran for a position (seven for individual members, seven for corporate members and two for educational organization members).

Due to expiring terms and resignations, some positions were elected for one-year terms and others were elected for two-year terms. The term length of newly elected members was decided by a draw.

Rachel Gauthier's name was drawn for a one-year term.
Anahareo Doelle's name was drawn for a one-year term.
Karine Lavoie's name was drawn for a one-year term.

The board of directors will now be as follows:

College of individual members:

Maude Arseneault (newly elected - two-year term)
Marie-Hélène Côté (newly elected - two-year term)
Annie-Kim Déry (term ongoing)
Martin Frenette (newly elected - two-year term)
Rachel Gauthier (newly elected - one-year term)

College of corporate members:

Rosalie Beauchamp - Le Monastère (newly elected - two-year term)
Marie-Claude Bouillon - La Luna Caballera (term ongoing)
Anahareo Doelle - Wonderbolt Productions (newly re-elected - one-year term)
Natasha Drouin-Beauregard - Cirque Éloïze (newly re-elected - two-year term)
Karine Lavoie - Cirque Hors Piste (newly re-elected - one-year term)
Ruth Juliet Wikler - TOHU (newly elected - two-year term)

College of educational organization members:

Danièle Fournier - École Horizon-Soleil (term ongoing)
Éric Langlois - National Circus School (newly re-elected - two-year term)
Tim Roberts - École de cirque de Québec (newly re-elected - two-year term)
Andrée-Anne Simard - École de cirque de Verdun (term ongoing)

The chair of the board invited the directors to introduce themselves to the assembly.

Finally, the assembly was reminded that executive director Christine Bouchard was appointed as corporate secretary and sits on the board of directors as an ex-officio member. She thanked everyone who ran for a position, the outgoing directors and all partners.

13. Other business

The chair invited Aaron Marquise to present his International Circus Award project.

Nathalie Hébert also applauded the alliance's work. She announces her six-month term at the Canada Council for the Arts. She invites members of the community to come together to join her.

14. Adjournment

As all items on the agenda were addressed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Samuel Tétreault, seconded by Nassib El Hussein at 12:33 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

These minutes were adopted at the annual general meeting held on April 11, 2022.