

FIRA Annual General Meeting (AGM) October 13, 2021

4:10pm: Andy called the outdoor meeting to order.

Executive Board in attendance were President Andy Valickis, VP Bill Odell, Treasurer Joe DiFrancesco, Secretary Carrie DiFrancesco, Member-at-Large Lynn Yake, Member-at-Large Wayne Mackenzie. In total there were 22 members in attendance for a quorum.

Approval of prior AGM Minutes

Due to COVID-19, we were not able to have the required 5 general meetings in 2021 so the last minutes for approval are from the October 20, 2020 AGM. That meeting was conducted via Zoom and minutes were available for review on the FIRA website. Bill Odell made a motion & Joe DiFrancesco seconded a motion to approve and the motion to accept last year's AGM minutes was unanimously accepted.

Presidents Message

~ Andy Valickis reviewed that we have a few **FIRA activities** running at the hall during our second year of limitations due to COVID-19 but we still are unable to return to all activities, such as our monthly pot-lucks and general meetings. The Executive Board's goal is to keep our members safe especially given our member demographic.

~ Even though activity was curtailed we do have **14 new members** and not all of them joined for the Propane Fixed Price Program so new member growth was strong at about 13%

~ A **FIRA Improvement Committee** was created in the spring and 68 people responded to their member survey. As a result of the survey, we are looking at making improvements to the hall. To help guide decision making on possible expenditures for improvements, a **capital plan** will be created to plan for replacements and improvements over the next 10 years or so.

~ The **proposal by Dysart to sell FIRA the property** we lease from them is an ongoing issue. The board has been developing a pros / cons list for members. Andy contacted Mayor Andrea Roberts requesting more information on why they would like FIRA to buy this property and what would happen if FIRA membership votes it down. Since this proposal was put on the back burner during COVID-19, the Mayor recently indicated she was interested in pursuing modifications to the lease rather than a sale of the property but council needed to give direction. Yesterday, Council insisted that we still need to purchase the land our building sits on. We are now waiting for council to explain their rationale and provide a detailed offer, including any relief from tax and other costs FIRA would bear. The Executive will take no further action until Dysart provides the requested information.

~ **Speed Limit Signs:** FIRA worked with HLCA, the Percy Lake Ratepayers Association and other area lake residents to get the new speed limit signs installed. The default speed limit was 80 km/hr so Council finally passed a bylaw that the speed limit is 50 km/hr and signs were then put around the lake near intersections in each direction.

~ FIRA had only 1 **Fundraiser** this year, the annual MacGregor Meat Sale, where \$1,300 was raised. Thank you Graham and all participants.

~ The **FIRA Annual Barbecue** was hosted this year by Andy & Deb Valickis on September 10, 2021. It was held outside with a great turn out and proper COVID-19 protocols followed

~ The FIRA board really needs someone to step-up for **Vice President**. This is our second year of no new nominations for this position. Last year the current board agreed to remain in their same positions for another year but we need a nomination for VP by January to serve in 2022.

Treasurer's Report:

~ Joe DiFrancesco reviewed the attached finance report (below): He highlighted that we collected 12% more dues than in 2020 for \$7,720 total. Expenses were kept to bare minimum being mostly for phone, hydro, propane and insurance. We expect to end the year with an additional \$4,000 in funds, despite only having one fundraiser.

FIRA Improvement Committee:

~ A review of the 2020 spring survey and the committee's ideas & recommendations were sent out before the meeting. Joe DiFrancesco led this discussion with an overview and explained some of the rationale.

~ Joe noted that 40% of our households are new since 2017 which was one reason to do the member survey to determine the interest level in various activities and in possible improvements to the hall to better serve our membership. 43% of our household membership responded to the survey so it is considered a strong sample size. The survey confirmed social reasons are the main reason members join, with the propane program also being popular. Following are a summary of the Committee's recommendations: (The complete recommendations are at the end of the minutes below).

~ In addition to the fitness, games and skills activities we now have, the survey identified significant interest in adding more regular activities such as group walks, darts, etc. The committee noted that FIRA is a member driven organization and suggested FIRA re-establish and communicate a clear structure for how activities that members want to participate in can be started and carried out. The committee suggested the following roles be established and the Executive Board approved:

- * A **Board Activity Coordinator** will be named to receive ideas from members for an activity and an **Activity Lead** will be identified to represent the participants. The Board Activity Coordinator will be the liaison between the Activity Lead, the Executive Board and membership to help make the activity happen. The committee nominated Carrie DiFrancesco to be the Board Activity Coordinator and the Board accepted her for the role.
- * **Social Event Coordinators** are to be the main point of contact for organizing the larger group events held at the hall such as Potluck Dinners, Happy Hours, Bonfires, and the Christmas Dinner. The committee nominated Irene Odell and Lynn Yake to serve as Social Event Coordinators and the Board accepted them both.
- * Many respondents were interested in having group excursions to specific destinations and in having speakers come to the hall for specific hobbies, interests, workshops, etc, such as wine tasting, cooking, etc. A **Special Events Coordinator** would be the main point of contact to receive suggestions for these events and work with membership volunteers and the Board to make the event happen. The committee nominated Merron Gottardi to serve as Special Events Coordinator and the Board accepted her for that role.

~ The committee recommended purchasing or upgrading the following items needed for existing and planned activities with approximate not to exceed cost listed:

Mahjong game	\$ 200 - Using a members now
Card tables (6)	1,200 - Current are in poor shape
Cribbage boards	200 - Using a members boards now
Dart board, darts, cork	300 - New activity, pending leader
Larger TV w/sound bar	1,500 - For fitness/events, possible put on side wall
Firepits	500 - Using members' now
Misc other activities	100 - Will check with other activities
Estimated max total	\$4,000

* Joe made a motion that the board be authorized to spend up to \$4,000 immediately on these items once specific items and costs are determined. A second was made by Barb Taylor and the motion was approved.

~ Discussion continued regarding the following suggestions for possible hall improvements the committee made for consideration based on the survey.

* Convert one washroom to a storage area for chairs, tables and activity supplies to free up space in the current storage room and front entry room for other uses as noted below. Discussion: There were concerns it could be a slippery slope to have just 1 washroom in the event the remaining washroom malfunctions. It was noted we have only been using one washroom with our restricted

COVID activities and have not identified either as Men's or Women's, but there was concern one washroom may not be enough for when we are able to have large gatherings of 40-50 people again. It was noted we could put 2 stalls in 1 washroom for backup but that would not be the same as the current 2 washroom arrangement. The Board also need to check with local regulations to be sure we satisfy handicap and other requirements for a facility our size.

- * Convert current storage room to a coat/boot room. Discussion: It may get too crowded for multiple people trying to get in and out of the room to take off coats and boots. Do we remove the door and/or widen the entrance to that room? We would also have to maintain 3 feet clearance around HVAC and/or partition them off.
- * Convert front entry room to a comfy sitting area along with existing bookshelves. Discussion: Will this be too crowded? It is noted the books are popular with members and we would definitely keep them but maybe adjust shelves if needed to fit higher books, etc. For comfy chairs we may be looking for donations of small used chairs that would fit the room as a start to try out the concept.
- * Storage - we do not have enough. The committee would like to reassess all storage needs inside and in the shed to determine what is needed and where items should be stored (high use items nearby, annual use items in shed). Once storage needs are reviewed, we could purchase clear bins, shelves, cabinets, etc to maximize space and utility.
- * Maryann Hodgins wondered if we could access our shed or add a larger one from inside the hall during the winter? It is clear that the first step is clean out what we have and assess. Dianne & craft ladies began the process and it was noted that we should be careful when sorting to not discard anything that is needed.
- * *The concerns of members raised at the meeting were duly noted and no conclusions were reached on the actions requiring alteration to the building. Further discussion is required and membership approval would be requested before any actions requiring building alteration would be taken on this issue. For now, the improvement committee and some Activity Leads will begin cleaning and organizing storage areas.

~ The survey identified interest in fresh paint and replacing the existing chairs. We plan to remove the wall A/C units and replace with siding/drywall, which would require interior paint anyway. The committee will review possible paint schemes for the Board to approve. Chairs will also be researched for comfort, durability, appearance, clean-ability, storage and cost.

~ It has been noted the building's floor is too cold in the winter. There is 12" of insulation from when the hall was built but the wind still penetrates. Further review will be done to evaluate the cost and benefit from skirting the perimeter or covering the existing insulation with 2" energy board.

~ Other discussion on building possibilities occurred. Past Boards have evaluated additions to the hall but financing was an issue. In the past, FIRA has requested grant funding from the provincial government to improve the building. However, we've never asked for federal government funds so it could be that there may be money out there. Irene Odell had done some research with small towns where municipal funding is accessed and needed for matching funds from other sources. At this point, the Board would like to get clarity on the property purchase/lease issue before considering any major changes so we know where we stand and what how our operating costs may change if we were to have costs for water system maintenance, property taxes, etc.

Committee/Activity Reports:

~ **Current Activities** - Carrie DiFrancesco

Mondays

1:30pm **Mahjong** - Activity Lead: Bonnie Beaudoin

7:30pm **Bid Euchre** - Activity Lead: Brenda Carey

Tuesdays

9am **Zumba DVD** - Activity Lead: Carrie DiFrancesco

10am **Walking Fitness DVD** - Activity Lead: Barb Taylor

* **Wednesdays**

9:30am **Ladies Craft Group** - Activity Lead: Dianne Kelly

* **Thursdays**

9am **Zumba DVD** - Activity Lead: Carrie DiFrancesco

7pm **Cross Cribbage** - Activity Lead: Sue Mason

COVID protocols

~ Bill Odell explained that our current status remains that we limit the use of the hall and all activity participants must be double vaccinated.

~ The board is now requiring that proof of vaccination is required for 2022. Members only need to show their vaccine proof once to a board member or activity leader and it will be checked off on the member list. The list will be updated and provided at the hall for activity leaders to monitor.

By-Law proposals/discussion:

~ Our bylaws were reviewed and following suggested changes proposed:

~ Executive Board:

* A second Member-at-Large needs to be added, which we started having in 2018.

* Change "three members" for check signing to a "minimum of three members".

* Current authority is for "necessary expenditures" but that is not defined so there was discussion on setting a limit. A \$500 limit was approved in past meeting but no limit is currently specified in bylaws. Graham Newton suggested raising this amount to \$2,000 so the Executive could act as needed between member meetings with the caveat that there is full disclosure at subsequent member meetings of major expenditures.

~ Treasurer:

* Current requires audit by 2 members in good standing or 1 qualified non-member, selected by membership at AGM. It is proposed that 2 members in good standing or 1 qualified non-member selected and approved by Executive Board (as has been the practice lately).

~ *Irene Odell made a motion and a second by Andy Valickis to approve all of the above by-law changes and the changes were unanimously approved.*

Dues 2022

~ A motion was made by Graham Newton and a second by Glenn Smith to keep the dues the same for 2022: \$70/person, \$140 for couple, less \$10 if lake association member. The motion passed.

~ Lynda Newton inquired as to why we no longer give out master membership lists. Joe explained that the board began wondering if all members were ok with their information going out to everyone as we do not have a signed authorization for all members and some are concerned with getting unwanted emails. The board will review this issue further.

Executive Board 2022 nominations

~ The 2022 slate of officers is as follows. This normally is voted on at the annual AGM but due to our lack of a Vice President, an email vote will be conducted before January 1, 2022 once we have a nomination for this position.

President: Bill Odell for 2022 (then Past President 2023)

Vice President: OPEN We need a nomination for VP in 2022, becoming President in 2023 and Past President in 2024,

Past President: Andy Valickis for 2022

Treasurer (2 yr term) - Joe DiFrancesco will stay on for 2022 & 2023 unless there is a new nomination.

Secretary (2 yr term) - Carrie DiFrancesco will stay on for 2022 & 2023 unless there is a new nomination.

Members at large (1 yr term) - Lynn Yake & Wayne MacKenzie will stay on for 2022 unless there are a new nominations.

~ We continually have a hard time finding a new Vice President every year. This is the perfect time to get involved - we are tuned in and ramping up our new endeavors. A position on the board is a great way to meet new people and the positions are not a lot of work. If we can't find someone to fill this slot, we need membership to give us direction on how to proceed.

~ To try and attract more interest, it was suggested there be some compensation for the executive positions to try and attract candidates. As an alternative, a motion was made by Irene Odell with a second by Lynda Newton to allow the board to offer free memberships for individuals in the 3 president positions for their 3-year terms plus for the Secretary & Treasurer, 2 year terms. This motion was seconded by several people and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Dianne Kelly and a second by Maria Gresko to end the meeting and it was passed.

FIRA Improvement Committee Board Recommendation Summary (created prior to AGM & sent out with AGM agenda):

FIRA Activity and Improvement Committee

Recommendations to the Board - Summary

This committee was formed to engage membership in determining the interest level in current and past activities and to solicit ideas for new activities.

The survey was sent out to membership in the spring of 2021 and 68 responses were received, a significant response representing about 43% of the adult population of our household membership. The survey summary results are attached.

The survey confirmed that the main reason members joined FIRA is for the social activities and events. The propane program, although not a social benefit, was also a very common reason for joining. The survey also provided feedback on improvements that could be made to the hall to better serve the various events and activities of the membership.

Recommendations of the committee to the Board:

Caveat - *The committee understands that all recommendations are subject to the changing COVID restriction climate but are made with the vision that activities will ultimately resume in a fashion closer to our pre-COVID days.*

Activity and Event Leadership

FIRA is a member driven organization and the key to successful events and activities is cultivating leadership at the membership level to help initiate activities and establishing a simple structure within the organization to bring the activity to fruition. This has worked successfully in the past and should help encourage people to get involved. Specifically, it is recommended to:

- 1) **Establish a Board Activity Coordinator for scheduling and communications. Identify Activity Leads for each group activity.**

In addition to the fitness, games and skills activities we now have, there is significant interest in adding more regular activities such as group walks, darts, etc.

The Board Activity Coordinator would receive ideas from members for an activity and be the liaison between a lead person for the activity and the Board and membership to make the activity happen. The committee nominated Carrie DiFrancesco to be the Activity Coordinator.

2) Establish Social Event Coordinators for large group social events at the hall.

These coordinators would be the main point of contact for organizing the larger group events held at the hall such as Potluck Dinners, Happy Hours, Bonfires, and the Christmas Dinner. The committee nominated Irene Odell and Lynn Yake to serve as Social Event Coordinators.

3) Establish a Special Events Coordinator for events such as excursions and third party speakers at the hall.

Many respondents were interested in having group excursions to specific destinations and in having speakers come to the hall for specific hobbies, interests, workshops, etc, such as wine tasting, cooking, etc. The Special Events Coordinator would be the main point of contact to receive suggestions and work with membership volunteers and the Board to make the event happen. The committee nominated Merron Gottardi to serve as Special Events Coordinator.

FIRA hall improvements for consideration

The survey identified items the organization could invest in to further support the activities members want to participate in at the hall. Following were the committee's recommendations:

Phase 1 to do as soon as possible:

A) Upgrade and/or add items needed for existing and planned activities as listed below with approximate not to exceed cost:

Mahjong game	\$ 200 - Using a members now
Card tables (6)	1,200 - Current are in poor shape
Cribbage boards	200 - Using a members boards now
Dart board, darts, cork	300 - New activity, pending leader
Larger TV w/sound bar	1,500 - For fitness/events, possible put on side wall
Firepits	500 - Using members' now
Misc other activities	100 - Will check with other activities
Estimated max total	\$4,000

B) Create sitting room and reconfigure storage areas

Convert one bathroom to a storage area for chairs, tables and activity supplies.
Convert current storage room to a coat/boot room
Convert front entry room to a comfy sitting area along with bookshelves.

Considerations in planning and implementing this project include:

- Degree of need for a second bathroom
- Handicap accessibility requirements
- Review storage needs and locate based on frequency of usage (inside or shed)
- Insure safe clearance of items stored near furnace
- Purchase clear bins, shelves, cabinets, coat racks etc as needed

Utilize used/donated furniture to start off sitting area

Estimated cost \$1,000 plus member donated labor

C) Paint/decor refresh and replace chairs

Authorize committee to develop a few suggested paint schemes to present for approval. Once approved, proceed with painting

Estimated cost \$800 plus member donated labor

If necessary, authorize purchase of 3-4 samples of chairs for evaluation of comfort, durability, appearance, clean-ability, ease of storage and cost.

Estimated cost \$400 but will try to obtain demo's.
Cost of replacing approximately 50 chairs TBD

D) Obtain estimates and determine viability on following building enhancements:

To improve cold floor during winter months:

Replace existing original floor insulation (12" fiberglass) with spray foam or,
Add energy board to existing insulation to block the wind and further insulate, or
Add skirting around building to block the wind

Replace wall A/C units and cover opening with drywall and siding.
Evaluate cost/benefit of upgrading windows.

Phase 2 - Spring/Summer 2022 - Evaluate cost, viability and member interest in:

Adding a BBQ deck and/or screened-in room
Kitchen upgrade/replace fixed island with portable
Lighting improvements
Add internet and/or TV service

Current Event/Activity/Fundraiser Status:

Hall Activities: Board Activity Coordinator - Carrie DiFrancesco

Mahjong: Mondays 1:30pm. Activity Lead: Bonnie Beaudoin

Bid Euchre: Mondays 7pm. Activity Lead: Brenda Carey

Zumba DVD: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am. Activity Lead: Carrie DiFrancesco

Cribbage: Thursday evenings. Activity Lead: Sue Mason

Darts: Planning. Activity Lead: Open

Crafts: On hold till Fall. Activity Lead: Dianne Kelly

Walking DVD group: Tuesdays 10am. Activity Lead: Barb Taylor

Zumba: May begin in the Fall. Activity Lead: Carrie DiFrancesco

Outdoor Group Fitness: Planning kayaking/walks. Activity Lead: Cindy Woodrow

Instructor Led Fitness: Vacant after Jane left. Activity Lead: Open

Instructor Led Yoga: Hoping to find instructor. Activity Lead: Open

Social Events: Coordinators - Irene Odell & Lynn Yake

Pot Lucks: On hold. In future, looking to combine with Silent Auction, bonfires, Casino Night & other themed activities.

Bonfires: Two have been held. Planning to implement on a regular basis (quarterly?)

Happy Hours: On hold. May combine some with bonfires as an outdoor activity. Gord Cochrane has been the past lead. Irene and Lynn to see if he is still interested in being involved

Christmas Dinner: On hold

Special Events: Coordinator - Merron Gottardi

Excursions: Planning to implement

Speakers & Workshops: Planning to implement

Other Activities, Events and Fundraisers: Executive Board Coordinates

Book Exchange: Lead: Sue Petit

Annual Events:

Member Barbecue: September 8, 4pm. 2021 Activity Lead: Andy & Deb Valickis

Fundraiser Events:

Meat Sale: Activity Lead: Graham Newton

Summer Fest: On hold. Activity Lead: Dianne Kelly

Quilting/Crafts: Activity Lead: Dianne Kelly

Pancake Breakfast: On hold. Activity Lead: Carrie DiFrancesco

Pig Roast: On hold. Activity Lead: Keith Clarkson

Club 200: On hold. Activity Lead: Graham Newton