



ULKOSUOMALAISPARLAMENTTI
UTLANDSFINLÄNDARPARLAMENTET - FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT

Minutes of the FEP, Canada Region

Annual General Meeting

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Saturday, 15.5.2021

Present: Veli Niinimaa (Chair, Canada Region), Irina Ilmokari (Vice Chair, Canada Region, Toronto Finnish Advancement Association), Kelsey Pennanen (Calgary Finnish Cultural Association), Reijo Viitala (Finlandia Village, Sudbury), Kauko Ylinen (Finnish War Veterans, Thunder Bay Club), Nina Niemistö (Pelimanni Orchestra, Thunder Bay), Riitta Teini (Ostrobothnians in Canada, Toronto), Seppo Peuhkurinen (Finnish War Veterans, Toronto Club), Ulla Saarnio (Toronto Suomi Finlandia Lions), Seija Hyhkö (Finnish Social Club, Toronto), Liisa Qureshi (Vapaa Sana Press, Toronto), Minna Temisevä (Toronto Finnish Language School), Samantha Glass (Toronto Finnish Theatre)

Invited guests: H.E. Roy Eriksson, Ambassador of Finland, Tina Strandberg, Managing Director (Suomi-Seura ry), Sini Castrén, Parliamentary Secretary of the FEP (Suomi-Seura ry.)

1. The meeting was called to order by Veli Niinimaa, Chairman at 12.03 and he asked a permission to record the meeting. There was no objection.
2. Veli Niinimaa welcomed the participants to this historic meeting via Zoom, informing that notices had been sent out 60 days prior to the meeting as required by the Canadian operating policies. He also noted that Quorum had been reached as more than 7 voting members were present. The meeting was declared opened and legal.
3. Irina Ilmokari was appointed as the meeting secretary.
4. Veli Niinimaa noted that the Agenda and Chairman's report were sent out two weeks prior to the meeting. Sini Castrén showed the agenda on the screen. Veli Niinimaa added a review of Canadian Operating Policies for item #8 (c) - New Business. Tina Strandberg notified that she has another appointment after her presentation and have to leave. Irina Ilmokari made a motion that the agenda be approved with these changes, seconded by Seppo Peuhkurinen, all in favour.

5. Sini Castrén presented the video greetings received from Ambassador Eriksson. Veli Niinimaa thanked Sini and Kelsey for handling the presentation. Tina Strandberg, Managing Director of Suomi-Seura ry delivered her presentation, thanking Veli Niinimaa and Irina Ilmokari for her invitation and Sini Castren for hosting the meeting virtually for the first time. She noted that Suomi-Seura ry is changing with times and we need to keep in touch virtually. She also informed that Tauri Aaltio, a 30-year veteran Managing Director of Suomi-Seura ry had passed away recently at the age of 92. Tina Strandberg presented the highlights of the Finlandia Village (Suomi-Kylä) with a slide show. It is a virtual platform of various cultural programs, webinars, and a meeting place where expatriates can chat and meet Finnish officials and visit market places. It is open to everybody free of charge on June 7-13, 2021. The village has been built around the virtual Parliament Session taking place June 11-12, 2021. Tina Strandberg encouraged all to visit the village with a hope that 3000 visitors will be reached. Seppo Peuhkurinen had questions regarding his registration and Veli Niinimaa thanked Tina Strandberg for her informative presentation.
6. Introduction of meeting participants followed.
7. Chairman's report - 2021. Veli Niinimaa had distributed his report prior to the meeting and hoped that all had a chance to read it. Veli Niinimaa highlighted some aspects of the report. Seppo Peuhkurinen noted that his email address has changed. As there were no further questions or clarification required, the report was adopted as written, seconded by Irina Ilmokari, all in favour by show of hands.
8. Canadian Regional Items:
 - a) Suomi-Seura Awards. Veli Niinimaa explained the merits of the program noting that nominations for these awards can be made at any time and there is a cost associated with them. Reijo Viitala nominated Veli Niinimaa for an award, however, it was noted that Veli Niinimaa has already received one. Seppo Peuhkurinen asked if there is a form to apply and Sini Castren informed that the guidelines for application are on Suomi-Seura's website. Minna Temiseva asked if there is a deadline and Sini Castren informed that these nominations are open all year around. Ulla Saarnio asked if anyone had applied for themselves and Sini Castrén informed that is not the case, noting that usually organizations apply these medals for their accomplished members.
 - b) Canadian initiatives for the 2021 FEP Session. Veli Niinimaa reviewed the three initiatives brought forward.
 - 1) Edufi training program (Calgary Finlandia Cultural Association)
 - 2) Getting back Finnish citizenship of former Finnish citizens, their children and under-age children (Sampo Rhythmic Gymnastics Club)
 - 3) Care of burial plots and their contracts (Toronto Suomi Finlandia Lions)

Lisa Qureshi inquired the committee name for Edufi training and Sini Castren explained in which committee workshops these initiatives are discussed with further

information to follow for each participant. Ulla Saarnio made comments about the care of burial plots.

- c) New Business. Veli Niinimaa explained that the Canadian operating policy needs to be updated reflecting the changing times, especially the use of tools such as Zoom for virtual meetings. Proposal for updating the operating policy will be brought forward one month before the next annual meeting. No other business was presented.
9. Election of Chairman, Canada Region. Irina Ilmokari had been nominated for this position. Ulla Saarnio seconded. Veli Niinimaa called three times for additional nominations. There were no other nominations and Irina Ilmokari was elected by acclamation. The term of the new Chairman begins June 13, 2021 according the FEP by-laws.
10. Election of Deputy Chairman, Canada Region. Ulla Saarnio nominated Kelsey Pennanen, but she declined due to her workload. Seppo Peuhkurinen nominated Nina Niemisto but she declined. Sini Castren noted that a regional balance would be good and we can nominate a suitable candidate later at the June 8 meeting. Samantha Glass inquired about the job description.
11. The next AGM. Veli Niinimaa informed that the next annual meeting will be held in Sudbury, 2022 during the Finnish-Canadian Grand Festival, noting that it could be a hybrid meeting via Zoom. Seppo Peuhkurinen commented that a Zoom meeting is a good idea because we can gather more people together. In-person meetings are better but during pandemic virtual meetings will suffice.
12. The next FEP Session will be a virtual one on June 11-12, 2021. Further instructions and details to follow.
13. Sini Castrén, Parliamentary Secretary of the FEP delivered her presentation with a slide show. She commented on the historical aspect and growth of the FEP since inception, the importance of the regional voices and identities, Finnish language schools, duties of the representatives, and the overall process how the FEP works. Veli Niinimaa thanked Sini for her valuable update. There were no further questions. Both Reijo Viitala and Sini Castrén thanked Veli Niinimaa for his longstanding work as Chairman and his achievements in writing various publications.
14. Veli Niinimaa announced the adjournment of the meeting, seconded by Ulla Saarnio and thanked all participants for attending.

Respectfully submitted by

Veli Niinimaa
Chairman, Canada Region

Irina Ilmokari
Deputy Chair, Canada Region
Meeting Secretary