

**Gwynne Valley Rural Education Association
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
November 28, 2024, 7:00pm**

AGENDA

1.	Call to Order	Chair	7:00pm
2.	Adoption of Agenda	Chair	7:02pm
3.	Statement of Quorum	Chair	7:05pm
4.	Chair Report	Chair	7:07pm
5.	Grant and Budget Update	M. Bjoern	7:20pm
6.	Approval of Appointment of Auditor for 2024-25	Chair	7:30pm
7.	Adjournment	Chair	7:40pm

Next Regular General Meeting:
Thursday, December 19, 2024

MINUTES • ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING • November 28, 2024, 7:00pm

Board Members Present at Call to Order:

Ben Christenson
CHAIR

Dallas Lofgren
VICE-CHAIR

Faye Ambler
SECRETARY

Jody Kohut
TREASURER

Tara Persson
DIRECTOR

Administration Present at Call to Order:

Dr. Karen Penney
SUPERINTENDENT

Melanie Bjoern
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Members Present at Call to Order:

Membership was invoked during the AGM for eligible persons who completed a Declaration of Understanding, therefore the only society members present at the Call to Order were Charter Board members (directors).

1. Call to Order

Chair Christenson called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

2. Adoption of Agenda

7:03pm

Motion 2024-11-28-01 Motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

*Amended Moved: Director Kohut
Seconded: Director Persson
Motion Carried*

3. Statement of Quorum

7:05pm

It was confirmed that 100% quorum was present. The Chair welcomed attendees and noted the importance of keeping the meeting focused on the society's business.

4. Chair's Report

7:07pm

The Chair provided an overview of the state of the school and society. Key updates included:

- Progress made since the building's temporary closure in October 2021.
- Formation of the charter board as the governing body for the school.
- Overview of membership structure, emphasizing volunteerism and community involvement.
- Updates on modular classrooms and the Gwynne Legacy Foundation.
- Recognition of extraordinary volunteer efforts in remediating the heritage building.

The Chair concluded with announcements of upcoming events and the intent to hold an election for new board members in the new year.

5. Grant and Budget Update

7:16pm

Secretary-Treasurer Melanie Bjoern provided updates on grants and the budget:

- Startup grant: \$215,000.
- Career and technology grant: \$100,000.
- Furniture and equipment grant: \$250,000.
- Operational budget adjusted to \$1.4 million with a transportation grant of \$159,000 pending.

6. Approval of Appointment of Auditor for 2024-25

Chair

7:18pm

Recommendations were made in writing (attached) by Secretary-Treasurer Bjoern for the appointment of an (external) auditor for GVRA's finances in the 2024-25 year.

Motion 2024-11-28-02 Moved to approve the appointment of Yaremchuck & Annicchiarico LLP as the auditor for 2024-25.

Arguments in favor highlighted the firm's experience with charter schools and competitive pricing.

*Moved: Director Kohut
Seconded: Director Ambler
Motion Carried Unanimously*

7. Adjournment

Chair

7:21pm

Motion 2024-11-28-03 Moved to adjourn the meeting.

*Moved: Director Ambler
Seconded: Director Persson
Motion Carried Unanimously*

Next Board Meeting: RGM Thursday, December 19, 2024 @ 7:00pm.

Approved by

Ben Christenson, Chair
GVREA

Dallas Lofgren, Vice-Chair
GVREA

The Gwynne Valley Rural Education Association (GVREA) is the governing body of the Gwynne Valley Rural Academy – a school dedicated to Early Vocational Exposure and the advancement of public education in Gwynne, Alberta and surrounding area. The GVREA was created through registration under the Societies Act, RSA 2000, c S-14 and is comprised of a Board of Directors and members. Parents and guardians (as defined in the Education Act, SA 2012, c E-0.3; Family Law Act, SA 2003, c F-4.5; or any superseding statute thereof) of students attending Gwynne Valley Rural Academy are eligible for membership in GVREA, with membership fees waived. Subject to approval by the GVREA Board of Directors, other persons may become Community Members by paying a membership fee, donating or volunteering.

As a member in good standing of the GVREA, I understand I may:

- stand for election to the Board of Directors;
- speak at Board and General meetings in accordance with Society Bylaws;
- vote on special resolutions at General meetings; and
- request the Board's consideration of additional agenda items for Board and General meetings.

I understand the terms of membership are defined in the GVREA Society Bylaws. I have been informed about how to access the GVREA Society Bylaws. Furthermore, I understand members of GVREA have a responsibility to be active, informed, and supportive participants in GVREA affairs.

By signing this Declaration of Understanding, I acknowledge and agree with the statements contained in this document for the purpose of seeking membership with GVREA. I hereby declare my support for the GVREA and agree to act in accordance with the GVREA and its Society Bylaws. I also truthfully declare statements about citizenship or permanent residence in Canada.

*If both parents or guardians desire membership, both must sign to indicate agreement with the statements in this document.

Member 1

Name _____

Address _____

Street Address

City

Postal Code

Phone _____

Indicate Mobile, Home or Work

Email _____

Membership Type

- ___ Parent/Guardian of a student at GVRA
- ___ Staff member at GVRA
- ___ Community member – *either a \$100 fee, **or** a previous donation over \$100, **or** 5+ volunteer hours for GVRA is required in the past year.*

☐ I am a Canadian Citizen or a Permanent Resident of Canada. *Leave unchecked if neither applies.*

Date _____

Signature _____

Member 2

Name _____

Address _____

Street Address

City

Postal Code

Phone _____

Indicate Mobile, Home or Work

Email _____

Membership Type

- ___ Parent/Guardian of a student at GVRA
- ___ Staff member at GVRA
- ___ Community member – *either a \$100 fee, **or** a previous donation over \$100, **or** 5+ volunteer hours for GVRA is required in the past year.*

☐ I am a Canadian Citizen or a Permanent Resident of Canada. *Leave unchecked if neither applies.*

Date _____

Signature _____

Name of Youngest Child at GVRA _____ Class _____

*This membership expires the day prior to the GVREA Annual General Meeting in the year **2025**.*

**Gwynne Valley Rural Education Association
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING November 28, 2024, 7:00pm**

CHAIR'S REPORT

1. State of the School

Friends, there is hope. In October 2021, this building was temporarily closed with the intent to cease offering public education in Gwynne. Now pushing back on the inevitable and forming a new path for our community has been very difficult, even painful for everyone in this room. This struggle includes families, teachers, staff, and volunteers alike. I think this is the perfect opportunity to take a moment for reflection, and to marvel that we are gathered together in this space once again.

- 2. Purpose of the AGM for the Society (GVREA):** is limited in scope to the affairs of the Society itself, and to ensure a governing Charter Board is implemented to function as the school authority for Gwynne Valley Rural Academy. Running a school is complex – something we learn more about every day, and school operations are handled by a Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer and Principal for many reasons. So an AGM normal doesn't deal with school operational matters. Nevertheless, our meeting tonight serves a critical function in having a school.

3. Membership of the Society

We have largely modelled our membership structure after other charter schools. This is different than voting for school board trustees in a municipal election. Members have the opportunity to be more involved as summarized on the Declaration of Understanding.

All Members must sign a Declaration of Understanding before becoming a Society Member. Community Members, those who are not Parents/Guardians or Staff are subject to approval by the Charter Board and must also fulfill requirements for volunteering, donating, or paying membership fees. We believe that actions speak louder than words, and contributing to the success of GVRA through the giving of one's time and finances demonstrates an invaluable commitment to GVRA.

For all Parents, Guardians and Staff who signed a Declaration of Understanding this evening, we welcome you as a Member of the Society. Anyone else who has joined us including community participants who signed a Declaration of Understanding, we thank you for being a part of our AGM.

4. GVREA Board Members and Terms

- Benjamin Christenson, Chair
- Dallas Lofgren, Vice-Chair
- Faye Ambler, Secretary
- Jody Kohut, Treasurer
- Tara Persson, Director

We currently have three of our original board members, and two other members who joined in 2023. In a previous board meeting, it was determined that the inaugural term for this Board would align with the start of GVRA school operations in September 2024. Currently, all terms are presently set to expire at the end of elections in October 2026. As needed, we will hold elections next October to ensure the Charter Board has staggered terms. Board Members' terms are two years in length with up to 4 concurrent terms allowed in our bylaws.

Size of the Charter Board is important. While 5 board members is a minimum requirement, a Board of 7 members has been found to be a more preferable, ideal target for GVREA. As a result, our intent is to hold an election in the new year. A nomination process will be presented to members for input in shaping the composition of our Charter Board.

5. Rasmuson Campus

Many of you might have questions regarding the status of our modular classrooms. We were moving forward very quickly, and then it changed. Here's the reason. For many months, we operated under very reasonable assurances that government capital funding was incoming at some point. Then as our school opened in September, we discovered that such funding wasn't going to happen, and that was tough pill to swallow. But that funding simply wasn't possible with the way that the Alberta Government administers modular classrooms, provides capital grants, or pays for the leasing of charter school facilities.

So, in the middle of our school launch, a few of us had to go start another non-profit that would own the modular classrooms and land. This was only way that our community would retain control of the assets, and that the Alberta Government would provide leasing grants to cover the costs.

So, I'm happy to say that the Gwynne Legacy Foundation is fully incorporated and operational at this time. However, there are strict constraints on the flow of funding between our school authority (GVREA) and the Gwynne Legacy Foundation. Now GLF is its own separate organization and has its own board. So, it is improper for me to comment on their affairs. However, I know for certain that their team is working very hard to make the modulares available to GVRA sooner than later. Clearly, winter season creates additional issues to contend with as well.

6. Heritage Building Remediation

By all accounts, this facility, the GVRA Heritage Building was remediated for safe occupancy at a fraction of the expected cost. PGA Architects estimated we would be able to accomplish the work for \$200,000; and while some numbers are still coming in, the actual amount will be less than 50% of that.

Make no mistake, this was largely accomplished due to an extraordinary volunteer effort with thousands of hours to get this building ready for inspections and approvals. Part of the reason the Alberta Government has been particularly focused on how we've accomplished this is because the reported price tag has been so low compared to their expectations. There was a time not so long ago where the official narrative was that it would take millions of dollars to get this school through the next few years.

But so many people and organizations are aligned with our cause because they know the value of GVRA. As an example, I am pleased to announce that Fortis recently provided a service upgrade onsite. It was supposed to be around \$13,000, and they billed us for \$1. Chris Laing of PGA Architects has given hundreds of hours of his time and covered untold costs to ensure that GVRA is a success. Friends, this path hasn't been easy, but we are incredibly blessed. We look forward to putting a lot of tender loving care into this building in the coming months and years!

7. GVRA Volunteer Celebration

We haven't announced a date yet, but we will be hosting an event in the coming weeks to celebrate the incredible accomplishment our cause represents and to honour a number of individuals for their contributions. Stay tuned for that!

**Gwynne Valley Rural Academy
Briefing Memo**

Date: November 28, 2024

To: Board of Directors

From: Secretary Treasurer

Subject: Appointment of Auditors for the 2024-2025 School Year

The purpose of this briefing memo is to ensure compliance, transparency and accuracy in our financial reporting. It is critical that we engage a reputable accounting firm to conduct our year-end financial audit. I have summarized three firms below based on their qualifications, experience with public sector audits and ability to meet our specific needs.

The below quotes include the audit of the 2024-2025 financial statements, preparation of the 2024 stub period T2 and preparation of the 2025 T2. I have also requested hourly charge out rates as I will be requiring some input on control procedures and recommendations before the audit commences.

I will be preparing the financial statements, along with all the accompanying financial statement notes, control procedure documentation, system documentation, preparation of the GST rebate, Not-for-Profit return (T1044) for 2024 and the Charity return (T3010) for 2025.

I have also explained to each firm that this will be a virtual audit as all records are stored in the accounting system and can be accessed remotely so there will be no need for travel or onsite expenses.

Recommended Firms

1. Y&A LLP (Yaremchuck & Annicchiarico LLP)

Overview – Y&A LLP has extensive knowledge auditing school divisions including Charter schools with a 7 Partner firm. They are based out of Edmonton and Robert Hoar will be the Partner on the file.

Their initial quote will be \$12,000 to prepare the 2024-2025 audited financial statements along with a stub period T2 for the 2024 year and the T2 for 2025.



Additional charge out rates will \$200-\$250.00 based on the employee assisting. In recognition that GVREA is a Not-for-Profit, hourly rates are expected to be recovered at 70%.

2. Metrix Group LLP

Overview – Metrix Group LLP also has extensive knowledge auditing large school divisions with a 10 Partner firm. They are based out of Edmonton and Jeff Alliston will be the Partner on the file.

Their initial quote will be \$12,000 - \$14,000 to prepare the 2024-2025 audited financial statements along with a stub period T2 for the 2024 year and the 2025 T2. I have not been provided with rates for any additional work.

3. JDP Wasserman

Overview – JDP Wasserman has currently undergone a restructuring and is solely owned by Israel Wasserman. He has experience with audited financials statements of school divisions but has not engaged in a Charter School audit.

His initial quote will be \$12,000. This is based on a five-year commitment he requires and fees will increase by \$500/year thereafter. He will not charge extra for adjusting entries, assistance with supporting schedules or basic consulting. This is a fixed cost. He will also be performing the audit himself.

Any special projects requested over and above the audit will be at a rate of \$250.00/hr for Israel and \$100.00/hr for his audit associate.

Recommendations

It is recommended that we engage Y&A LLP. Robert was very accommodating and was very prompt in getting back to me with a quote. I feel they have the size of firm that can complete the work in the timeframe needed and have experience with other start up Charter Schools.