

**Agriculture Union
National Council Meeting**

May 27-29, 2025 – Delta South Hotel in Edmonton

MINUTES

<p>Milton Dyck, National President Patrick St-Georges, 1st NEVP Randy Olynyk, 2nd NEVP Audrey St-Germain, 3rd NEVP Aaron Swerdlyk, 4th NEVP</p>	<p>Jan Pennington, RVP Eastern Atlantic Dorothy McRae, RVP Western Atlantic Jannick Beurivage, RVP Eastern Quebec Séverine Guérineau, RVP Western Quebec Mairead Hannigan, ALT RVP Southern Ontario Kasia White, RVP NCR Stewart Spence, RVP Manitoba, NW Ont. Nunavut Curtis Veale, RVP Saskatchewan David Pearson, Alt RVP Southern Alberta April Roberts, Alt RVP Eastern BC Krysty Thomas, National Director Human Rights Sherry Hunt RVP Southern Alberta Don Jeansonne, RVP Western BC and Yukon Nadia Sokal, RVP Eastern BC</p>
	<p>Staff</p> <p>Luc Gour, Administrative Officer Mathieu Juneau, Labour Relations Officer Chantal Wilson, Labour Relations Officer Nathalie Cale, Labour Relations Officer Aaron Lakoff, Communications Officer Kate Bradley, Administrative Assistant – Minute Taker</p>

1. Call to order

Milton called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., Edmonton time.

2. Harassment policy

The policy was read aloud by Pat, and it was decided that he and Sherry would be the contact persons. They can be reached on their cell phones at - Pat: (613) 799-2962; Sherry: (587) 257-8522.

3. Opening Remarks

Milton stated that the new Prime minister will have influence over how we run our union. Budgetary restraints may come, which may result in members being terminated.

Bargaining for TB and CFIA is upcoming.

Land acknowledgement: *“Edmonton is located within Treaty 6 Territory and within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional territories of many First Nations such as the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot).”*

[https://cityplan.edmonton.ca/indigenous-acknowledgement#:~:text=Edmonton%20is%20located%20within%20Treaty,\)%20and%20Niitsitapi%20\(Blackfoot\).](https://cityplan.edmonton.ca/indigenous-acknowledgement#:~:text=Edmonton%20is%20located%20within%20Treaty,)%20and%20Niitsitapi%20(Blackfoot).)

Milton stated that this land acknowledgement is not a formality, and that we need to be cognisant that we are on stolen land. We need to have respect for the people and the land. Milton suggested we take a few moments to think about that.

Welcome to Aaron Lakoff, our new Comms officer. Aaron introduced himself.

We then did a roundtable of introductions.

4. Adoption of Agenda

A call out was made for further agenda items. Nothing was added

A motion for the adoption of the agenda was made by the Chair.

Moved by Nadia and seconded by Jan.

MOTION CARRIED – By a show of hands.

5. Hours of session

The following hours of session were proposed by the Chair.

May 27: 9:00am to 11:30 – 1:00pm to 5:00pm

May 28: 9:00am to 12:30pm / 1:30pm to 5:00pm - Standing committee meetings.

May 29: 9:00am to 11:30 – 1:00pm to 5:00pm

A motion for the adoption of the hours of session was made by the Chair. Moved by Jannick and seconded by Sherry.

MOTION CARRIED – By a show of hands.

6. Approval of previous Council minutes

Council had the opportunity to make any amendments to the previous minutes. A motion for the approval of the previous Council minutes was made by the Chair.

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote #1. See appendix 1

7. Business Arising out of Previous Minutes

All business from previous minutes will be covered in our session.

Point of privilege from Stuart – Loser of the prairies (re: friendly bet on a sports game) needs to wear the colour of the winner for the first day of council, so he presented Curtis with a jersey.

8. National's President Report

Milton presented the President's report orally. Pat chaired the committee meeting while Milton presented the report.

A discussion took place regarding Dayforce, and that nothing is happening. CFIA has published information in news bulletins, and it is confusing. Not all managers are well informed on this subject. Milton replied that most of the movement forward right now is who their members are and to gather their personal information. It was asked that when there is more information, things will be explained – to managers and members. Milton confirmed that we will continue to ask that managers get appropriate training. Pat added that he meets with CFIA monthly, so council can bring issues to him so that he can bring them up during those meetings.

It was brought up that members talk about the labour code, not sections in the Collective Agreement (CA). Milton said that he will ask that the labour code and references to CA both be included. Council asked why the employer does not put the CA clause and code together in the software and Milton replied that it is because the labour code can change.

It was brought up that there continues to be a computer pop up regarding the maximum use of 641 union leave. Milton stated that we haven't had this issue in a while but will ask again about this. Pat added that PSAC has been working with TB on this, and that TB implied there was a limit on amount of union leave you can take. Council would like it sorted out. Milton stated that PSAC still says to ignore the pop up but will bring it up again at NBoD.

It was suggested that a communication from national could help with the code/CA issue.

A motion for the adoption of the President's report was moved by Stuart and seconded by Sherry.

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote #2

The report will be sent to Council members by email once translated. The Chair was returned to Milton.

9. Regional Seminar and RVP Expenses

At the last convention the money allotted for regional seminars was doubled. We are pleased to report that much of the money is being used, but we would like to maximize amounts.

A table was presented and explained to the council members, noting that the column titled The Funding represents how much each region is allotted; the column titled "Expenses" denotes how much, per region was spent last year; the column titled "Non members" represents what is spent to help with the membership, i.e. hotel meeting rooms, swag, hospitality room, etc.; The column titles "Funding for member participation" represents anything spent on the members, i.e. travel, per diem, hotel room, LOS, etc.

It was noted that new activist funding is not included since these funds come from the national office.

It was further noted that these amounts are based on reports received as well as receipts for expenses.

Council asked if the figures are based on the cycle or based on yearly use and Milton explained that this table represents what was spent in 2024. It was noted that this may not be entirely representative of spending for the three-year cycle.

Kasia asked if the regions can be broken down further into areas; and Luc replied that it would be too difficult to give a representation of what costs were for ONT and what was for NCR since many of them are shared costs.

Milton noted that many regions have not spent their full allotment of funding and asked for suggestions on what to do with the balance of the money.

A general discussion ensued with some ideas and comments regarding use of funding and challenges.

Jan stated that many locals are small, and do not generate much revenue. He suggested the use of regional offices as venues and use the money for hotels and food. His region tried to minimize the cost of the event so that money can be used to bring in more members and support the locals.

There was a discussion about travel costs since some locals are far. There was also a discussion surrounding leave as some members find it difficult to take chunks of time away from family or work.

Sherry suggested having more frequent, smaller meetings that can be done virtually instead of Regional Seminars

Jannick suggested working with the other RVPs who have locals in the same region. She noted that her larger locals are closer to QC city, but she has small locals located farther away from QC city. So, she gave more to the small, far locals so that they could send members. She works with Séverine who is willing to pay for the rooms because her locals are mostly large.

Milton stated that he will ask the finance committee to come up with some options on how to spend the money.

10. Political action

This topic was touched on in the President's Report. The previous political action that we had discussed was sending letters to members of parliament. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

Going forward with political action, Milton would like to promote the work of our membership and the value they bring to Canadians such as on food health and food safety.

Milton touched on how much the federal government has grown in the past few years. Public service has grown from 278,000 to 367,000 members between 2012 and 2024. With the employers we represent shrinking from 16,000 employees to 14,400. Milton stated that they are not all our members, there are some other unions represented, for example PIPSC. So, the Public Service has gone up by 32% but our departments have shrunk by 10%.

Jan mentioned that this is very noticeable. There is an increase in work, but they are reducing the number of people doing this work, but there are still so many people in advisory roles.

Milton gave the following statistics:

CFIA – 6,580 people in 2012, 6,030 today. If it had grown at the same rate as the rest of the Civil Service, they would have 8,800 people, an increase of 2,800 or almost a 50% increase of CFIA employees.

AAFC – 6,644 people in 2012, 5,774 today. If it had grown at the same rate as the rest of the Civil Service, they would have 8,844, an increase of 3,100 people.

CGC – 680 people in 2012; 467 today. If it had grown at the same rate as the rest of the Civil Service, it would have 900 people, an increase of 433 which is almost double the CGC employees.

The government has slashed numbers in food safety. As shown by numbers of CFIA employees dropping while expected duties rise.

There was a brief discussion regarding Worktask logic, (the tracking, ranking and designating of duties) which will be discussed further in the Employer section of the meeting.

Council asked where the increases are if we are not seeing them in our departments. Milton confirmed that Immigration has 6,000 terms and that employers are piling more people into other departments.

Audrey mentioned that at CFIA they are taking things seriously. There was discussion about many things during the NUMCCs.

Milton stated that we will be going forward with political action surrounding the ostrich farm issue. We need to protect our members. Hopefully we will get political resources for funding for CFIA from PSAC.

It was mentioned that avian influenza could be something that is dangerous if we do not contain it. Our members are trying to protect Canadians. We have seen news that it could be mutating to affect humans. Is there concern from members about this? To what extent has Health Canada been involved? The jump from birds to humans could be dangerous. Milton said that CFIA members must be protected and that we must keep things fact based. Nadia mentioned that one teen was diagnosed with avian flu in BC, and Don suggested that CFIA needs to do education on bird flu.

Council discussed statistics on avian influenza and how the numbers have changed over the past few years. Audrey suggested people do an ATIP because she believes that the numbers can be acquired.

11. Local Finances

It was brought up to Council that some locals have not submitted local financial statements for quite some time. We are working on doing follow-ups with those locals.

Some local financial statements are missing for only the past year. We are not too concerned about these ones, but we are still doing follow-ups.

RVPs have been notified if there is a local without an executive, in their region.

12. Employer Updates

Common for all Employers:

As per the Treasury Board instructions on the hybrid work, employees need to be in the office 3 days per week. Working on the road or in another office can count towards this requirement. There has been a lot of talk about moving forward to more than 3 days presence, and the Union has pushed back on this.

Grievances have not been filed on anything more than 3 days. People don't want to file grievances. Committees were set up for non DTA grievances for return to work. Members can file a grievance but instead of going to third level, the member can choose to go to a panel. Unfortunately, we are running out of time for panels as they were only established until June this year, although we have asked for an extension. Pat had one grievance go to the panel with AAFC and despite the employer being provided a list of reasons to work from home, the response was not favourable.

A discussion ensued regarding the telework panel, some council members were not aware that telework could be grieved if it was not a DTA. Others asked if there are any telework grievances currently. It was reiterated that it is the member's responsibility to ask for the panel. Milton stated that we did broadcast it and followed up with TB. PSAC has also been pushing it.

Milton reminded council that return to work is at the employer's discretion and the question is how much discretionary power do managers and supervisors have as it is not explicit in the Collective Agreements. PSAC is working to have some direction put into the Cas because this will be important going forward. Of note is that AGR does not have a lot of members who can work remotely, so the message needs to be increased flexibility.

It was noted that members are difficult to mobilize if the process is long. Others mentioned that they are glad the focus is on flexibility and not specifically days spent at home. Some members are frustrated because many cannot work from home, and all they hear about is return to work issues. The choice of words and messaging is important to keep conflict to a minimum. Some noted that some employers are reducing the amount of office space but still want members to come in as often as possible. Some offices are used by members from different areas. Causes confusion, lack of space and safety issues.

There was a discussion around budgetary restraints. Most employers are tightening expenditures with the exception of CGC because they cover their own funding. We were expecting decisions in April, but with Trudeau's resignation, it was put on hold. We are in limbo regarding cuts. Waiting is stressful; members are watching terms go, and are wondering what will happen. DND's budget won't be impacted as much as other departments because the government has granted them an exemption (only up to 2% cuts).

A discussion was then had about AI. TB is in consultation with PSAC, but departments seem to be doing what they want. AAFC spearheaded an AI committee for a values and ethics. This will be on the agenda with AAFC next week. PSAC should be told that AGR would like to take part in all AI discussions.

All employers are working on a new values and ethics code for mid-June, with the exception of AAFC, they have asked for our input. AAFC will move ahead without input.

Dorothy brought up the fact that CFIA has implemented their own security group. She noted that on all info bulletins for the past month, there are security notifications. They have repatriated the security screening; they are doing it all now themselves. Milton suspects AI is doing security screening but will ask about this during the next UMC.

Mairead is currently supporting a member regarding a security interview. The member received a letter signed by the member security division. Milton stated that this is a normal administrative investigation. Security will do it instead of the manager or HR. He indicated that Mairead should look out for loss of security clearance, which would result in the member not being able to work for ANY government agency.

A discussion was then had regarding security of working in the office; Jan mentioned there are a lot of people you don't recognize. Anyone can work in any office, which is a security issue. Milton asked what the security protocol is for offices with no swipe cards. Jan brought up the worry regarding the power that the security teams have. During security investigations, there could be disciplinary actions because the end result could be loss of security.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) – Milton has been very disappointed in the interactions he has had lately with this employer. Deputy Minister Hanson has completed his first year, and in many instances, there has not been any collaboration. Here are three examples:

1. Employer communications regarding budgetary restraint – AAFC gave us a few hours' notice, then put it out. AAFC did not even give it to their managers, who couldn't help members.
2. We asked for a list of grievances, at all levels. AAFC has not cooperated. They stated they have no way of telling us. Then they came back with a list of Phoenix grievances that they did not pass by us and asked for them to come out of abeyance nationally.

3. There have been some bad decisions regarding Health and Safety. The employer wants to remove any employee representatives who are not employees of AAFC, from the National H&S committee. They have claimed that Pat is not an employee, but those issues will likely be discussed prior to the next quarterly meeting.

So, relationships are not very good right now. They said no more travel with NOHS and decided that the PIPSC cochair would be punished for not agreeing with them and that he could performance managed. He's on leave and has temporarily stepped back from NOHS.

Milton informed council that the STB has created a tool for job descriptions (JDs). They have made up their own terminology, which no longer follows classifications. JDs that are being sent out say that the supervisor is supposed to sign off and not the employees. The STB meeting is coming up but we will need to send out messaging that tells our members not to sign.

There was some discussion around this new tool. Dorothy asked whether these generated JDs take into account all the correct equity details? If not, it would be a HR complaint. Milton confirmed that they have not done this. They are saying it's just a tool used to build JDs. Nadia thinks that some members will likely sign the JDs, such as new members who don't know any better, and people getting a higher wage will also likely sign. Milton stated that right now they're saying it's a pilot project, launched in Brandon, Quebec and Kentville. Jannick believes that this puts a lot of pressure on members to sign, and asks if there is there anything the Union can do? Milton replied that we cannot stop the employer from putting out JDs. We will need to put out a communication saying not to sign a JD that doesn't match what the member does.

Council asked if a policy grievance could be filed on technological change. Milton replied that although they created this JD tool, they used language without merit in the classification system. The classification needs to be done by a committee, not a tool. We will have to inquire about the point rating for the JDs then we can grieve it.

Audrey shared a screenshot of a JD that she saw recently and pointed out the contradictions, also that it was extremely vague.

Milton stated that this is why we have very old JDs, and the tool that they created does not have the basic wording that we use.

Krysty updated council that JDs are one of the main items at the bargaining table. If we are really serious about reclassification, we need to ramp up our demands.

Pat agrees that the JDs are so vague that they will not be able to be classified, and that they will need to reflect diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dorothy asked if AAFC has given point ratings for JDs. Milton replied that they have not, but they have provided us with the JDs, and we responded with changes. Then it will go to the committee for point rating and classification.

Council asked about the recent NUMCC. Milton stated that he asked about budgetary restraints. AAFC said the issues at Vineland are not about budgetary restraints, so it is not going to be on the agenda. Milton believed it should be on the agenda so there was a disagreement about this. He pushed to have Vineland on the agenda since it appears that they are setting up to close Vineland. The DG assured him that there is no plan to do that. Members are being told that there is no WFA, just that they are being transferred. This is another very blatant example of the employer saying that nothing is happening when clearly there is.

Council was concerned about these members and suggested we make them aware of the situation. It was stated that things like this are lifechanging when you find out last minute. Pat stated that he was very disappointed with the way things are happening for Vineland and the way the DG was speaking about it. Milton agreed that we must give the members the truth and some opportunity to deal with how they want to proceed.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) – There have been several UMC meetings. Agenda items such as staffing issues and avian influenza were discussed. The Pay Equity committee continues to do a lot of work and hope to wrap up by Christmas.

Work is being done on the modernized slaughter of beef committee. Some plants were so short staffed but finally have more staff. There are continuing discussions regarding high-speed beef plants.

Milton informed council that CFIA shared all EG JDs with us and we sent back quite a bit of feedback. We will see what input will be accepted. We may need to file classification grievances if they do not implement our changes.

We continue to work with the JLP to bring CFIA courses. Unfortunately, there has not much movement because there have been many terms and high turnover. We are hoping to get the JLP program running well, since there are many valuable courses for members.

Individual departments were doing secondary language testing. This has been transferred to the Public Service Commission and CFIA will cease this.

Pet certificates need to be written by a vet even though other places are doing hundreds because there is no way to charge or refund these services; tracking payments is difficult.

There have been rumours of virtual inspection done with photos. However, inspections cannot be done with just a picture as there is so much more to it, for example, smell.

We put them on notice because they have tried to do this. There was a pilot project which entailed installing cameras in a plant. The pilot was pulled because so much of the meat was rejected.

Information was given regarding preparation and washing up time. The last CA had an article about this, and members should not have to use their own time for this. CFIA is not being forthright with information. Bargaining is coming up and this will be an issue again.

There are concerns about training being online when it should be in person. The appropriate time needed is not being allotted for training.

Audrey mentioned a pilot on certifications in Ontario and does not want the information to be lost. Asks that Mairead/Bralavan stay on top of things.

A discussion was had regarding a special project. CFIA sent a letter of interest to EGs, but the work is EG4 work. They are asking lower level EGs to do EG4 work and not paying them for it. Audrey said they have discussed this issue at their executive meetings, and they are putting together an email to the employer.

Jannick asked how many grievances were heard from her region at third level. Pat said he would look into whether any 3rd level grievances from QC were denied at the third level. If we don't have them, it is because we are not getting them. Or perhaps they are not priority grievances. We ask the employer to treat priority grievances first, but sometime the employer does not want to hear that specific grievance but will offer to hear another one.

A brief discussion was had regarding lack of presence at some plants. Led to the almond milk issue.

Mairead circled back to Audrey's comment regarding a pilot program on certificates. Milton said it would be discussed further at the Ontario Regional Seminar. He suggested that if people were getting poor performance appraisals because they were completing other work, they should grieve them.

Dorothy noted that pilot projects are supplemental work that could potentially affect their workload. Could easily be added to the job description and we should be careful about this. Suggests that inspectors should be doing their jobs properly and not just looking over their areas. If they are doing an in-depth review, and noting issues, then the work takes longer.

Randy suggests people track the amount of time it takes to do each job, and not just rush through. He suggested tracking follow ups and would like RVPs to inform the executive if they hear of things like this happening.

Dorothy suggests that we raise awareness of how long it takes to complete certain tasks in order to keep positive performance reviews.

Randy reminded council that ANY employer policy is grievable.

Don commented that some employers are strict about time tracking. His supervisor told him that he needed to google map traffic delays.

Dorothy reminded everyone that we cannot use a cell phone in a government vehicle. She suggested group education is more beneficial than individual, and that it is a good idea to do at least a debrief after individual training.

Milton said he will continue to advocate for in person training.

Mairead suggested a course named Verbal Judo as it had a situational component. Teams have not been sharing successes and failures since covid, and she feels there is a need for this to come back. Severine said that the course Verbal Judo became interpersonal communication in QC.

A point of privilege was brought forth by Sherry:

Motion: SJF Request – To provide support to the *Association for Fundamental Rights for Household and Farm Workers*, with their political action initiative. The support would be to provide past related information and some financial assistance: \$15K per year, for two years. <https://dtmf-rhfw.org/en/home/>

Proposed by Sherry Hunt, seconded by Jannick Beaurivage.

Discussion on the motion:

Milton asked for clarification on whether this comes from the political action budget or the SJF budget.

Pat said he will send a link with more information. This request is different from any other request because this request falls under political action.

Milton suggested that this request be made in writing, and that it could be sent out to council for a decision instead of trying to figure things out right now/here. Perhaps council could set a date for a later vote on this so that people can have time to have a discussion/information on this.

Curtis asked if this request has already been looked at by the SJF committee. Milton confirmed that it has been at SJF for a while, and instead of waiting 6 months, we need to decide sooner. There is plenty of money in the political action line item in the budget. We should have enough information to give a response in a few weeks.

Nadia asked how this can be motivated administratively, and Milton said it can be done by email. It will all be public and there will be no secret vote on this.

Nadia noted that the finance committee was presented with this yesterday and had a discussion. She feels it is important that we take a stand and support the workers to show we do not agree with this.

Pat stated that both the finance and the SJF committees have discussed this. More information will be sent by email. They asked for \$20/yr for 2 yrs. He mentioned that because of rules implemented (for the SJC funding) in January – funding caps for Canadian causes vs international funding. This is a unique request because it falls under Political Action but also has a SJF element. SJF struggled with this request because of the political action aspect.

Sherry wanted to motivate and agrees with taking time to discuss but wants to remind everyone that this is a labour union issue, specifically an AGR issue. We look bad as a union if we do not support this.

Milton stated that the information will be sent out as well as a written motion via email and council can vote by reply email by Thursday, June 12. He said everything needs to be done in writing.

Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) – They are doing a reassessment of training for PI1s and program inspectors. Traditionally it has taken 4 years to train the inspectors. If they fail, they are out. They are tested annually. This results in staffing issues.

In Quebec there was a huge issue with workload for one of the elevators. Employees were expected to work 12-hour shifts for 7 days, then start the cycle again. The employer blamed the Union. They are finally back on track and running 3 shifts per day instead of 2.

There are no budget cuts at CGC as they are wholly self-funded.

Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) – The School has been very forthcoming about potential cuts. They gave us information about how many cuts they need to make. Relations with the school have been going well and communication is improving. The first cuts made were to EX positions.

There are no longer any offices in Gatineau, they are now all in Ottawa.

As for grievances, the trend is above normal amounts of discrimination and accommodation grievances. They are a francophone employer so many of the grievances are in the NCR, and we do not have a local for them. Audrey and Pat have helped out with representing francophone members.

We are working hard on a mental health program for the school and just conducted interviews for Mental Health Champions. There will be employer, employee and committee members. There are 8 members for the committee, and are located in Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver. Mental health is considered the biggest issue for this employer, and we are working on revamping protocols.

Department of National Defense (DND) – Language professors are often allocated to UNDE. PSAC receives the requests for membership, so we are working with them to make sure that the members are assigned to AGR and not UNDE.

Managing of Asticou and St Jean 2nd language programs has historically been done by a military person, usually a Lieutenant Colonel for two years at a time so there is a lot of change. This time the lieutenant colonel will stay for an extra year.

There is an ongoing dispute on simultaneous interpretation for the OHS committee. The employer keeps stating that there are insufficient funds for interpretation. A complaint will need to be submitted under the *Language Act*. The employer has offered to use Google captions. This is insufficient. They also want to cease in person meetings and make them virtual only.

It is difficult for RVPs to support members who are in small locals. UNDE is looking to revive a UMC under the Canadian Defense Academy, which will include the second language programs.

Jan stated that one of the Halifax locals has a VP who is with DND, so he is very interested in more information on this.

Pat mentioned that he has asked for org charts because chain of command seems to be all over the place.

Milton was asked to elaborate on the professors. He stated that the biggest issue is the Arbour report which addresses the culture of harassment and sexism in the military forces. Unfortunate and surprising recommendations were that there was little value in the college remaining. Since many of our members are language teachers, this was a serious issue. Since then, the recommendation is that they will not shut down the colleges but will change to become more like a university. What would this mean for our teachers? With recent recommendations, second language is considered one of the four pillars of the college. The downside is that the professors may need to have high degrees to teach, but this is not necessary for language training. We are confident that members and professors will be needed going forward. We are in consultation with DND regarding what all this means for our members.

Federal governments have changed language requirements for managers. They will need CBC instead of current BBB. This will have an impact on our members.

Public Service Commission (PSC) – They released an update regarding oral proficiency. Some Employers have been doing their own oral proficiency testing, which came into effect because of COVID. There is now discussion regarding how it is being done across the country.

Measure 3, which deals with language proficiency, will no longer be effective after Oct 2025. The PSC is taking back control over second language assessments. Results from alternative assessment methods for A and B levels will no longer be carried over to other departments or agencies.

We currently have no further information regarding cuts at the PSC. There is a lot of instability and turnover at management levels and in human resources.

13. National Office Update

Bruno retired at the end of April, so a position was posted for a 2-year term LRO. Our current LROs consist of Nathalie, Mathieu & Chantal. We are in the process of conducting LRO interviews.

A clarification was brought about what the Designated Labour Relations Officer (DLRO) position is. It was explained that the DLRO position is a rotational position to facilitate workflow for the LROs. One LRO takes on the designated LRO position for two-month intervals. They are the ones who respond to day-to-day inquiries.

Council was advised that there have been no administrative changes at the head office.

At this point of our National Office Update, Krysty and Aaron joined us from Bargaining and gave Council an update. They are currently finalizing non-monetary demands and will meet with other teams tomorrow to discuss key issues. The teams will be exchanging demands in June. They mentioned those with CFIA should push forward common issues table demands. The general consensus is that they are unhappy about not having representation for certain groups (CFIA).

It was asked if there would be a common issues table this year and council was told that there is not a specific common issue table, but there is a key issues area. Some council members are disappointed that there is no member representation at the CFIA key issues table.

14. Agriculture Union Social Justice Fund

The Committee has been meeting virtually or administratively for Social Justice Fund (SJF) requests. Two requests have been approved for the Atlantic region, one for \$500 and one for \$2,500. Of note is that the funded reserve is budgeted at \$25,000 per year is currently at \$46,000. There are a few requests that are pending.

There has been discussion on the cap for SJF Canada \$25,000 per year, international requests \$12,500 per year. This is new as there has never been a cap before.

There was a reminder for those who have had their Regional Seminars to get their requests in as soon as possible, because it's first come, first served for the funds.

Of note is that there are previous requests that roll over for more than one year. Previous requests will not be included in the cap for this year.

15. Standing committee reports

- a) General and Bylaws Committee Report – See appendix 2

The report was read by Curtis

Grassroots award was the only appendix to the report

Four training topics were suggested. There was discussion regarding the training topics, and it appears that there were preferences for Duty to Accommodate, UMC/OSH/AGM meeting and what is involved, and Resolution writing, with UMC/OSH/AGM meeting discussion seeming to be the preferred. Ultimately, the Executive will discuss and decide what training session will be presented.

A motion for the adoption of the General and Bylaws Committee report was Randy and seconded by Audrey.

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote

- b) Collective Bargaining and Health & Safety Report – See appendix 3

Milton read the report

The committee noted that all action items were either completed or removed.

There was a discussion around PPE and whether this constituted field identification. The committee sought confirmation that members will not be required to wear this identification where it will be unsafe for them to do so. Milton stressed that the safety of our members is extremely important, however we cannot send members to situations without identification and proper PPE, and that PPE should not be shared. It was noted that PPE is not an identifier but a protector. He agreed that this is a problem. Pat added that police escorts should be used when needed to keep our members safe. To further ensure our members' safety, Milton asked CFIA that the inspectors remain anonymous and CFIA confirmed that they are doing all they can to keep them anonymous. They did

mention that some names are already public. Milton will continue to follow up with CFIA to ensure that the members are kept safe.

A second discussion ensued regarding bargaining. Council asked if there would be training for bargaining and Milton confirmed that we will continue the bargaining training. It was asked whether a notice to bargain had been filed with CFIA yet and Pat responded that no, a notice to bargain has not yet been filed but that Milton has asked multiple times for it.

A motion for the adoption of the Collective Bargaining and Health & Safety Report was moved by Milton and seconded by Mairead.

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote

c) Finance and Communication Report – See appendix 4

Pat read the report.

The floor opened for discussion.

It was asked whether the executive will take into consideration to reinvest or separate the interest gained from the SPP investments, and Pat replied that we will wait until we have the details from the actuary.

Pat noted that there are a few motions within the report, and wanted clarification whether the committee can assume these motions or whether council needs to vote on them. Milton replied that due to the nature of the motions, the committee can assume responsibility for them.

A motion for the adoption of the Finance and Communication Report was moved by Patrick and seconded by Nadia.

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote

Following the presentation of the Finance and Communication Report there was a budget discussion.

Pat went through the budget with the council and explained things. He stated that funded reserves are in yellow. The council voted on blocks of line items.

A breakdown of the report is as follows:

Convention and Conferences – Lines 1 to 5

Vote – passed.

Salaries – Lines 6 to 10

Vote – passed.

National President Expenses – Line 11

First Executive VP Expenses – Line 12

Relocation, and Executive Officer Salaries and Expenses – Lines 13 and 14

Vote – passed.

RVP Salaries and Expenses, Family Care, Virtual Education, and air travel – Lines 15 to 17

Vote – passed.

Staffing Appeals/Complaints, Regional Seminars, New Members, and Education and Assistance to Locals – Lines 18 to 22

Vote – passed.

Human Rights – Lines 23 and 24

Vote – passed.

Office Expenses – Lines 25 to 32

Vote – passed.

Communication – Lines 33 to 35

Vote – passed.

Other Expenses – Lines 36 to 45

Vote – passed.

Summary:

We came in very slightly under budget. Noteworthy is that the budget for salaries was insufficient as we have a new LRO and a Communications Officer now. Air travel is also over budget but should be low for the rest of the year since Regional Seminars are almost over. Professional fees are in the negative due to a timing issue. The amount will be reversed once we get the invoice. Charitable donations are high for the first half, but many came from regional seminars so that will taper out.

We appear to be on track for the year. We are under budget so far.

A vote was held on the budget in its entirety:

MOTION CARRIED – By recorded vote

16. RVPs agenda items

Milton opened the floor to discussion regarding which local members should be assigned to.

There was much discussion on this topic. Some were of the opinion that your workplace should not be where your local is assigned, rather your local should be assigned based on where you live. Others thought that members should belong to the local where they work so that they can be with their colleagues. It was questioned why a member cannot belong to the local closest to their home.

Milton stated that Bylaw 3 – section 1, talks to regular membership. There is no guidance on local assignment because there were fewer members who teleworked. Milton stated that he has started to write a piece on this and that the direction will be: if you are placed in an office, that is where your local is. This is done because then members can attend their own UMCs and have access to your own union representative.

It was discussed that yes, being assigned to the local where your workplace is located is useful for things like UMCs and access to the union rep., but for health and safety reasons, it could be better to be assigned to a local closer to your home.

It was noted that there could be exceptions to this general rule. That there could be accommodations such as retention of ongoing union work, or moving someone to a different local could cause them some trauma.

Council asked for good definitions for the terms when Milton continued to write this communications piece on local assignments and wondered if they could give feedback on the piece.

Milton stated that representation should always stay with the member, that he will not be making a new rule about changing structure. That we are just trying to get a rule for new members and where they are placed. Head office is trying to reduce the number of RAND members. He invited Council to send feedback once the document is circulated.

Roundtable Discussion

Kasia asked about the Executive taking a rotation on RVP questions and work and contacting AGR. Milton said that questions should still be filtered through the AGR general inbox for the DLRO to answer. Kasia clarified that definitely all technical questions should go that route, but that perhaps for general questions, the Executive could have a rotation to answer RVP questions also. Milton said he would discuss it with the Executives and get back to council on that point. Aaron added that it could be a way to filter general questions away from Milton and Pat who are fairly overloaded. Audrey likes this idea. She encourages more communication with the RVPs and would be very interested in building relationships with other RVPs. She feels it is a good idea and could alleviate Milton and Pat's workload. Pat stated that there is no restriction on RVPs approaching executives. Reaching out to the appropriate person on the Executive is encouraged.

Dorothy suggested that there was a need for anti-harassment training. Milton replied that he will look into that. We could certainly consider this.

Kasia asked if RVP Alternates could be included on website. Milton said he would think about it, but that the Alternates should not be contacted directly by members; that they should go to the appropriate RVP and the RVP should be delegating to the Alternate. Milton reminded everyone that all comms/website requests made directly to Aaron L will still need the approval of Milton/Pat.

18. Next Council meeting

Council was reminded about upcoming dates:

Virtual Council meeting: September 16, RVPs and alternates

National Council meeting: November 5-7 in Edmonton

National Council meeting: April 14-16, 2026, in Halifax

Standing Committee meetings: June 4-6, 2026, in Halifax

Convention 2026 is August 18-21 in Halifax, Council meeting on August 18, and the convention taking place August 19-21.

It was noted that PSAC Prairies and NCR regional conventions are in early June, so there is a conflict. There were suggestions that committee meetings take place somewhere easier to access than Halifax, at another time to avoid this conflict. This will be taken into consideration, but we may be limited by hotels, interpretations, etc. that are already booked.

A suggestion was made to let PSAC know when our events are so that they are included in the calendar of events, which would help avoid such conflicts.

Having dealt with all submitted items, the meeting was ADJOURNED at 3:55.

Minutes submitted by,

Kate Bradley
Administrative Assistant

National Council
Conseil national

May-25

Recorded Votes/Votes Consignés

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Beaurivage, Jannick	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Guérineau, Séverine	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Hunt, Sherry	3	1	1	1	1	1															
Jeansonne, Don	3	1	1	1	1	1															
Hannigan, Mairead	3	1	1	1	1	1															
Thomas, Krysty	4	4	4	4	4	4															
McRae, Dorothy	3	3	1	1	1	4															
Olynyk, Randy	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Pennington, Jan	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Sokal, Nadia	3	1	1	1	1	1															
Spence, Stewart	1	1	1	1	1	1															
St-Georges, Patrick	1	1	1	1	1	1															
St-Germain, Audrey	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Swerdlyk, Aaron	4	4	4	4	4	4															
Veale, Curtis	1	1	1	1	1	1															
White, Kasia	1	1	1	1	1	1															
Dyck, Milton	1	1	1	1	1	1															
VACANT, North Alberta																					

1=yes/pour 2=no/non 3=abstain/abstention 4=absent

Quorum: Bylaw 6 sec 6

- VOTE
- 1 approved November 2024 minutes
 - 2 President report
 - 3 By-Laws Standing Committee report
 - 4 Collective Bargaining and Health and Safety & General Standing Committee report
 - 5 Finances & Communication Standing Committee report
 - 6 Budget 2024 & 2025
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10
 - 11
 - 12
-
- VOTE
- 1 Adoption du procès-verbal novembre 2024
 - 2 rapport du président
 - 3 rapport du comité permanent des Statuts et règlements et des questions générales
 - 4 rapport du comité permanent de la négociation collective et de la santé et sécurité
 - 5 rapport du comité permanent des finances et ccommunication
 - 6 Budget 2024 & 2025
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10
 - 11
 - 12

AGRICULTURE UNION (BYLAWS & EDUCATION)& GENERAL

May 28, 2025, Edmonton, AB

Hours of session: 1:00 pm to 3:15 pm

Present:

Bylaws & Education:

Randy Olynyk – Chairperson

Curtis Veale

Jannick Beaurivage

Donald Jeansonne- Co-Chairperson

General:

Audrey St-Germain - Chairperson

Kasia White

Stewart Spence - Co-Chairperson

Krysty Thomas

Recorder: Don Jeansonne

- 1 Reviewed Previous minutes:
 - a. Bylaws and Regulation: No follow up
 - b. General: No follow up

- 2 General : Awards.
 - a. Triennial Grass Roots Regional Activist Award Nomination Form was reviewed.
 - Notice should be sent out regularly to ensure local are aware of this award.
 - Recommended that Guidance and form be separated. (submitted by Audrey , seconded by Stewart)
 - Recommended that “Triennial Grass Roots Regional Activist Award Nomination Form” will be easier to find on the web site (submitted by Audrey seconded by Stewart)

- 3 Bylaws and Regulations: Reviewed Website
 - a. For: BY-LAWS OF THE AGRICULTURE UNION 2023 in Index -Name and Headquarters was repeated twice.

- 4 Training Session Topic suggestion
 - a. Duty to Accommodate
 - b. Local development
 - c. UMC/ OSH / AGM meeting what is involved *
 - d. Resolution writing *
 - * committee recommendation
 - National Executive will find facilitators for the Training sessions
 - Reminder email will come from National Office to the locals, to submit two members to receive the training.

We recommend that National Office send out the call letter as soon as possible and training be done by the fall (September- November).

Report moved by Randy Olynyk and seconded by Audrey St-Germain.

Appendix:

 **AGRICULTURE UNION** 

Triennial Grass Roots Regional Activist Award Nomination Form

At the Agriculture Union, our accomplishments rely on the dedication of our many volunteers. We proudly recognize members who demonstrate outstanding union activism. This award acknowledges a grassroots activist’s exceptional contributions within their region.

Nominations must be submitted by December 31 prior to the Convention year. Submissions must come from a Local Executive and be seconded by the RVP responsible for that local.

 **Nominee Information**

Full Name _____
Email _____
Phone Number _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____
Province AB BC MB NB NL NS NT NU ON PE QC
 SK YT
Postal Code _____
Local _____
Years of Membership _____

 **Nominator Information**

Full Name _____
Email _____
Position _____
Region Atlantic Quebec NCR Ontario Prairie B.C. & North

 **Nomination Rationale:**

Provide detailed information on how this member has rendered service of the greatest distinction and singular excellence in any field of endeavour benefitting the Agriculture Union at any level:

Comments/Additional Information (optional):

 **Secunder (RVP)**

Full Name _____
Position _____
Email _____

General Committee Approval

Date of Approval _____

Criteria Summary:

- Nominee must be a member in good standing.

- Nominee must have demonstrated outstanding contributions at any level of the Agriculture Union.
- Contributions must have benefitted their region significantly.
- A member may only receive this award once.
- Application must clearly demonstrate how the nominee meets these criteria.
- Submission must be made by a Local Executive and seconded by the appropriate RVP.

Collective Bargaining and Health and Safety Committee Agenda

Date: May 28-2025 9:300-12:00pm

Location: Delta South, Edmonton – Imperial Room

Committee members:

- Milton Dyck, National President (Chair)
- Jan Pennington, RVP Eastern Atlantic
- Mairead Hannigan, Alternate RVP Southern Ontario
- Séverine Guérineau, RVP Western Quebec

Alternates(observers): none

Call to order at 9:30am

Recorder: Mairead Hannigan

This report and all motions were motioned by Milton Dyck and Seconded by Mairead Hannigan

1. Welcome
2. Approval of agenda
3. Review of November 2024 Minutes
4. Action items from previous minutes

All action items that the committee has agreed to are complete have been removed from this report.

ACTION ITEM: The chair of the committee will attempt to find a copy of the Workplace Violence policies for each employer to post on our website with the link for the PSAC document.

- Milton Dyck informed the committee that there were revisions to the Violence in the Workplace training resulting from new direction from Treasury Board
- Aaron Swerdlyk had gone to various internet systems to obtain the information; however, the systems are marginally different, and we cannot be assured that they are up to date/accurate
- We are advised to keep our Agriculture Union policies /responses to Workplace Violence current on the website to be able to provide consistent answers to our members

Outstanding

The chair of the committee acknowledged this was not completed and will work with the office to try to have this material posted. The chair of the committee will reach out to NOSH co-chairs for the policies in both official languages.

ACTION ITEM: Members feel their views are not reflected in bargaining. If we can involve them at early stages, they may feel more involved and more satisfied with the results. We could send out a

request to the membership and find common issues. With those common issues we could assist them in writing demands. **A template was shared with the committee members prior to the bargaining demand deadline of November 15th, 2024. As such, this action has been addressed, but the committee has decided to leave it on the agenda as CFIA is yet to call out for bargaining demands.**

5. Workplace Violence (standing Item)

The committee noted that in many cases the employer has not ensured that the required refresher training on workplace Harassment and violence regulations is taken by all employees.

Motion: The Agriculture Union send out an email to all members on the requirement to have both sets of the required training.

This motion was ruled out of order by the president as it is overly burdensome, and it is an employer responsibility.

Motion: The Agriculture Union to update the key info document and add the link for the PSAC's workplace violence toolkit, but also outline the importance of the grievance process (and provide potential wording). It also should refer to injury on duty leave and Human Rights complaints (where applicable).

Motion carried. Although this work is already being action, this motion provides specific instructions for the information that we wish to see in the new document.

Update:

- Employers are still working on ensuring that this required training be taken by all employees
- AAFC & CFIA still at 60-80% completion rate – 2nd follow-up course that would have training from each department is also not completed to date. Now overdue by 1.5 years at this point
 - CFIA/AAFC only 20% of managers have the training
 - AAFC is responding to pressures from UMC meetings to complete this item
 - Not our role to do the task of notification, falls under employer responsibility
- CGC & CSPS have completed all their employee training within the 3 years- 100% complete
 - Revamped the course and applied it
 - CGC employees now have better understanding on how to request mediation and now have a foundation of expectations

Discussion:

- Member brought up concern around triggering of an investigation if an occurrence happens at a 3rd party establishment with persons outside of government employment. This type of incident requires a formal Nationally consistent response, not an area-by-area response. Training from CFIA doesn't reflect this concern

Response/Action:

- All departments must have a designated respondent that is given the complaint – CFIA & AAFC have a system that permits a choice to follow up with incidents or to not
- If an investigation is requested, it must be followed up/completed
- **Bring issues of occurrence where issues are not handled correctly by designated respondents to Pres/VP for follow-up action**
- **follow up with issuance of NOO (notice of occurrence) to document the situation and lack of response.**

6. OSH Employer Updates (standing Item)

A) Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

Ship Inspections

CFIA is discussing the idea of having Transport Canada perform ship inspections under the virtual supervision of CFIA inspectors as subject matter experts. However there has been no details provided as to how this can be done.

Update:

- Transport Canada performing ship inspections under the virtual supervision of CFIA inspectors has not happened to date. NOSH will be re-engaging the working group on the issue if/when this concern comes up again.

Employee Field Identification

We are asking that identification is included as part of personal protective equipment PPE so that inspectors are identified as officials and are not mistaken as members of the public. While some regions are finding ways to do this it is not nationally implemented.

Discussion:

- Member brought up question if inspectors are visible while conducting inspection work (wearing of non labeled items, tyvec suits, overalls/coats without insignias)
- ATL/ON Some inspection staff given 3 in 1 jackets or coveralls/lab coats with CFIA flashes/name visible
- QB no procedures written down for procurement of items or use of items for identification purposes, however employees do have hi-vis vests with CFIA marking for working in areas and staff are encouraged to use these types of items to identify themselves in the field
- Member brought up scales of entitlement and what is provided to each employee for a specific job as a good place to be more specific on these needed items for identification

Response/Action:

- **Members are encouraged to bring up this item in their UMCCs for additional discussion**

Virtual OHS Meetings:

Last year, Raman Srivastava, Vice President of Human Resources, advised that due to budget reduction, September NOHS will be virtual and December in person. However, for future meetings, the decision will be taken away from NOHS. Management is not recognising that the committees are run by consensus they are simply ruling that all meetings will be virtual. As previously discussed in November 2024, an ESDC complaint would not be beneficial as all employers could use that as a way to eliminate all in person meetings.

Discussion:

- ATL meetings are 50% in person still, Nova Scotia is following a hybrid meeting model, NFLD is only conducting meetings virtually with no face to face due to geographic and funding constraints

- NOSH is not permitted to travel at this time, Regional is still permitted- 50% of the cost is covered by the Area due to advancements made by PIPSC union members that laid the foundation

Response/Action:

- **Need to keep aware of the situation and report a lack of in person meetings or forced virtual only meetings where we are not engaged in the discussion – OHS is a joint effort**

Joint Learning Program (JLP):

In November 2024, the committee had a lengthy discussion about OSH JLP training. We asked the president of the Agriculture union and came up with the following suggestion

Previous Motion: For CFIA bargaining the Agriculture Union will put in a demand to clarify that the Joint Learning Program OSH training be fully covered by the CFIA.

Rationale: this is how it is implemented in Treasury Board however currently, CFIA committee members do not have access to the training, and it should be fully funded by the CFIA as health and safety is the employer's responsibility.

Discussion:

- JLP action item will be going forward as planned in CFIA bargaining
- Members brought up concerns around this JLP replacing general training and lack of ability of employees to attend the 2 day sessions due to increased workloads

B) Canadian Grain Commission (CGC)

Ongoing discussion about face to face and locations of NOSH meetings still ongoing. CGC has done well for timing and location of meetings being hosted and conducted all together minimizing costs, helping their self funded budget

CGC is not investing in health and safety related equipment and training, citing budgetary restrictions.

All workplace violence training is complete (both levels). Translation of the 2nd level training was done to French and the Quebec training was conducted in person. New staff are onboarded as they come into service.

Staffing and overtime continue to be an issue and now shift work/arbitrary OT in new locations is additional problem for work life balance and general health.

Grain dust has been an issue in many offices (respiratory/overall health concerns).

ESDC complaints where progress is not happening have not been filed to date

C) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Lack of a chemical inventory for places of employment is still an outstanding issue

Response/Action:

- **Agriculture Union President to bring this up to relevant parties**

They have had some turnover in the designated recipients but are starting to get back on track. The designated recipients were denying notice of occurrences however, we have told them that this is not allowed

AAFC has not hit its promise of 80% for completion of the first round of workplace violence training, which is completely unacceptable. The second round of training has not commenced as of yet

D) Canadian School of Public Service (CSPS)

Both sets of workplace and violence training are 100% complete.

The school has a well-functioning committee and are generally easy to work with.

The main issues are around ergonomics, mental health and workplace violence.

The school has now selected 2 new Mental Health Champions. The selection proceeded with OHS policy involvement whereby one employee member and one employer member was selected for the 2 positions.

Discussion:

- CFIA has only one Champion for Mental Health -Kevin Urbanic, Director of Operations, ON - UMC driven process with hiring done by Union representatives (PIPSC, PSAC)
- AAFC unfortunately routinely leaves the employee representative out of discussions
- At CSPC, in discussions, the 2 Champions are treated as equals.

E) Department of National Defence (DND)

DND has a large and complex committee.

The Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Dashboard was shared with committee members (excel sheet) since last meeting

Ongoing challenge has been to get employee engagement. This has resulted in lack of representatives to sit on the committees

F) Public Service Commission (PSC)

Meetings are currently hybrid -next meeting is in person

The members of the committee are going to take consensus training, even though it has not really been a problem due to type/places of work (classrooms/office spaces)

Discussion:

- There are several members in Halifax, NS that the ATL RVP has little contact with. These employees report to NCR/Ottawa Regions but live in Nova Scotia.
- Local 0014 Toronto also has employees that are under this employer that may not have enough communication routes or be aware of who their Union representatives are

Response/Action:

- **Agriculture Union President to converse with the AGRU Vice President on how to better engage this group and whom to contact to improve communication between members and the AGRU**

7. Bargaining updates (Standing Item)

Demands were sent in by November 15, 2024 and In February a mini conference was held by Treasury Board. The first meeting with the employer will be held in June 2025. There will be 3 more dates in the upcoming months of September, October and December

Names of delegates that have been chosen to date:

SV-->Matthew Braddon & Denicka Joiner

TC-->Aaron Swerdlyk & Krysty Thomas

EB--> Michael Hind & Guillaume Legault

All remaining delegates and their alternates will be chosen at the 2 remaining Regional Seminars to be held by the end of June 2025 (Ontario/ NCR/ ATL– 9 delegates will be chosen (3 per region))

Call for demands is to come out soon from Treasury Board. Most demands come from the common table and the online resolution process. This process used to be vetted better by locals and then by the Agriculture Union members. PSAC collects all the demands before the bargaining conference in October. All demands are sorted through and decided upon. Some are reworded, combined or rewritten to reflect the current demands. A lot of work is involved in this process – **need to ensure that the changes are maintained throughout the process this year**

Discussion:

- Agriculture Union President had requested in the past more delegates, however it was denied as there are other larger bargaining units that have less representation at the table
- There have been offerings of training for “How to Draft a Demand” over lunch time
- **If there is training available to members, try to get them to sign up – ensure though that the dates are not after bargaining starts which has happened in the past**

8. HOIR Information Document to support members (**Bring Forward**)

The committee was asked to formulate a plan to address chronic injuries, as we have seen some short comings in reporting and HOIRs.

Some CFIA employees have access to Power BI, which may have some statistical information. It sounds like the information is shared at area committees, but we are concerned if things are not reported, they are not ending up in the data. We encourage council to ask for the data at their OSH meetings.

Motion: The Agriculture Union will develop a guidance document to be posted on Key Info that would help members with chronic injuries (for example, hearing loss).

Motion Carried. The president will distribute this work as he sees fit.

9. New Business:

A) Misuse of AGRU President Endorsement - Email Concern:

Email sent endorsed by Agriculture Union President, Milton Dyck, to all employees of the CFIA in New Brunswick. This email was not authorized by the AGRU, nor was the President aware that it was being sent out. The contents of the email was read to the committee members present.

Discussion:

- OHS committees and advisory groups should be working with managers. Not just as guiding committees. We need to be able to be partners at the Joint Occupational Health and Safety meetings
- The Agriculture Union provides/signs off on the documents for membership as per the Canada Labour Code

Response/Action:

- **Management is to be made aware that they are not permitted to use the Agriculture Union President's name without permission in future correspondence with their employees. This will be discussed with the appropriate Management delegates.**

B) Avian Influenza -Ostrich Farm Destruction

Concern around the safety of CFIA staff attending the Ostrich Farm with positive Animals for destruction/testing. Safety concerns have arisen due to higher number of public outcries on social media sources, email threats of harm to inspection staff involved, and organized public protests at local government offices.

Discussion:

- Agriculture Union President had sent an email to the VP of CFIA Operations to respond to these death threats and concerns raised by the AGRU. Mainly requesting how the membership was to remain safe on the job and maintain their identity as CFIA staff.
- Response read from VP OPS
 - Share the same concerns of health and safety of our staff is top of mind- doing what they can to protect the staff
 - Mental health and wellness is main concern, even for those that are not concerned with the file in full
 - Planning to divert emails from outside away from staff
 - Planning a small response team
 - Will involve RCMP when required, referral of all threats
 - Areas where there is planned protests/ offices of concern have been closed
- Notice of Occurrence (NOO) should be filed to keep track of this item as this is not the first time historically the CFIA has had to deal with issues of protesters/staff member threats
- RAVE system could be used to inform staff on up to the minute issues arising from this situation with concerns of staff out in the field and returning to offices not earmarked that may be involved if the situation escalates while out/away
 - Discussion how there is a need to voluntarily sign up for the RAVE notifications on their phones to be effective
 - Exercises have been conducted at offices for lockdowns
 - Need for hotwashes to be brought forward to identify any gaps /issues to create a process of continuous improvement

Response/Action:

- **Make sure that up-to -date information is getting out to all CFIA employees involves in a timely manor**

C) Avian Influenza – Member Concern

Email received by ALT RVP for discussion on AI practices/protocols in place currently. This member has been deployed several times over several years and is quite knowledgeable on the CFIA practices surrounding AI

Questions raised:

- Are masks that are currently being used the correct ones as there are issues with them degrading during use due to moisture/ normal wear? We need more clarity on the respirator type
- Are JHAs being shared with the staff performing the work?
- Is the 2014 Biosecurity JHA the correct, most up-to -date JHA available?
- Is there a set Virus Security Protocol in place at the CFIA?

Response/Action:

- **Agriculture Union President to send an email directly to CFIA VP Operations and NOSH for clarification on these items**

D) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Concerns discussed around members not wearing/maintaining/having issued to CFIA staff proper and adequate PPE

Discussion:

- CFIA staff in some cases are not wearing their hardhats
- OHS culture and governance is an issue at CFIA and may be at other places
- Hearing protection issues where staff are not wearing ear plugs, new facility assessments may not be done jointly by local OHS committees/managers, hard hat expiry not tracked very well, scales of entitlement not always followed
- Confined space training has been diluted to a general “awareness” not actual training
- Need for a possible ergonomics assessment for CFIA staff that may routinely be working out of vehicles due to field work (potato inspection of fields)- not able to return to office due to limitations in time to conduct work – forced to do notes/enter data directly into systems while sitting in their vehicles.
 - Management has potentially agreed to conduct a “survey if there is a need”

Response/Action:

- Committee members are encouraged to keep engaging Management while on OHS committee calls, keep listening to member concerns and pushing them forward up through local committees to be heard eventually at NOSH

REPORT OF THE FINANCE & COMMUNICATION STANDING COMMITTEE

May 28, 2025

Committee Members:

Patrick St-Georges (chair)
Dorothy McRae
Nadia Sokal
Sherry Hunt
Luc Gour (staff)
Aaron Lakoff (staff – guest)

The chair welcomed the committee and asked if anyone had any issue with our new Communications Officer (Aaron Lakoff) joining our meeting, as a guest; no one expressed any issues. Nadia Sokal was acclaimed as the co-chair, for this meeting.

Review of Budget and Investments

Our membership count has dropped from 7968 (Dec 2024) to 7485 members (end of April 2025), with 1394 of these are RANDs. This drop in membership is likely due to the loss of more Terms and some attrition.

The budget and investments were reviewed, updated since April 30, 2025, beginning with a review of the 2024 budget and our discussions were mostly focused on line items which were over budget:

- Staff salaries were at 123%, due to having an extra LRO;
- President's & 1st NEVP's salaries were slightly over, due to increments & economic increase;
- Overall salaries and benefits fell slightly over 100%, because the benefits had been over-estimated;
- Discussed the vacation and OT line items;
- Question was raised regarding the President's expense claims being under budget (24%) and whether all expenses were claimed for 2024;
- Expense budgets for both the National Executives and RVPs were divided to better reflect salary compensation and their respective expenses, since lots has changed, in how we do business, since COVID;
- The Regional Seminar line was also divided to show the portion spent on new activists from small locals, this was positively received;
- Discussion was had regarding line items where there were purchases of more than \$200 for Office and RVP tech allowance (ie. computers, tablets...), since the auditor has amortized those amounts over the 3 year budget;
- Meeting rooms and related expenses were over budget, due to extra meetings and increased hotel prices, especially for the May 2024 PSAC Convention hospitality;

- Simultaneous interpretation and translations were slightly over budget, due to some extra meetings needing interpretation and the Bylaws/Regs being translated;
- Communications and website maintenance was over budget, since we revamped our website, but this should average-out over the 3 year cycle;
- Bank charges, and insurance & bonds were above budget, but no control over this;
- A line was added at the end to account for the residual strike fund paid out to our members, via PSAC;
- Total revenues and interests from investments were higher than predicted.

The committee then reviewed the 2025 budget (up to end of April) and focused on lines with more than 42% over budgeted:

- Staff salaries and benefits were slightly over, due to extra LRO and now our new Communication Officer, hence a discussion will be had by the national executive prior to the next cycles' budget;
- Air travel is coming-in slightly over budget, because there have been several seminars and less travel is anticipated for the rest of the year;
- Discussions were had to differentiate between charitable donations and SJF requests;
- Overall, the 2025 budget is tracking well.

The budget was motioned by Pat, seconded by Nadia; all in favour.

Another motion was made by Dorothy, seconded by Nadia: To have a glossary or explanation per line item, to reflect what gets accounted for, per line. The motion passed.

The Committee also reviewed the Funded Reserves (FR) balances, with the following comments/questions:

- The SPP was discussed in the context that the Auditor flagged that it should be increased, hence the Executives have submitted questions to the actuaries to get better directions on addressing the concerns;
- The committee would like to get feedback from the Executives after they receive feedback from the actuaries;
- The strike fund was removed from the FR, since those monies had already been returned to the general revenues;

Investments were reviewed including GICs and equities. Our investments are still earning interest at rates higher than the past few years. We continue to invest two-thirds of our monies into secure GICs and one-third in reliable equities. A discussion on whether these investments align with our union values. The financial advisor takes into consideration our values, along with which investments will have the best returns. Only

one investment (Shinhan bank Canada) was flagged, since it's a Korean-based bank, but is recognized within Canadian banks. The Executives had recently re-invested the GICs due to mature in the next few months. A discussion was had, whether we want continue to keep our mutual investments with BCE (Bell), but our financial advisor will monitor this stock.

No questions or issues raised with the Audited Financial Statement.

The committee reviewed and discussed the Social Justice Fund (SJF) and the associated spreadsheet, which was recently created to track past requests. The SJF Committee will be asking future requestors to submit pictures and feedback on how the monies were used, to be posted on our website. Caps have been established by the Executives on future requests within Canada (at \$25k/year) and outside Canada (at \$12.5k/year).

Regarding Communications

We reviewed the draft survey, presented by Aaron Lakoff, to be shared with all our members. The intent is to get some basic statistical representation data on our members and find out what preferences they have regarding social media platforms and various topics. Some suggestions were provided to be included in the survey (ie add reddit and whether person holds an election position).

This survey was motioned by Pat and seconded by Dorothy; all in favour.

3 mock-ups for social media were reviewed and discussed, recommendations were made for the Communication Officer. Once the revised drafts are done, they will be shared with Council members for additional feedback. It was noted that the Comms Officer will be the Administrator for our social media platforms. Extra care will be had to ensure these platforms are used in a positive manner. Aaron to check with PSAC legal to mitigate any potential liabilities.

Adjourned at 2:35pm

This report is moved by Patrick St-Georges and seconded by Nadia Sokal.