

Members' Meeting Minutes
2025 ICSBS Convention in Toronto
October 16, 2025

Berthe H. Ford, President, began the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

I. Message from the President

Berthe reviewed the happenings of last May, following the annual board meeting in Palm Springs, when the former office manager, Julia Peled, emailed her resignation to Berthe. Soon after, she received resignations from all members of the executive committee, plus another board member. It was a challenging transition, but the situation has been rectified.

At the emergency board meeting held on May 10, the remaining board members accepted the resignations of former board members, and they elected the following individuals to serve as the executive committee and on the board: Berthe H. Ford, President, Mike Ma, Vice President, Shari Nokes, Secretary, and Richard Liu, Treasurer. The full board includes Albert Au, Berthe Ford, Per Kristensen, Xiao Li, Richard Liu, Mike Ma, Alexie Malcom, Courtenay McGowen, Shari Nokes, Susan Page, Joey Silver, Laurence Souksi, and Brian Spaid.

Berthe expressed her excitement and appreciation for the new board members who are active, involved, and dedicated to the long-term sustainability of ICSBS. She reported that the "John Ford Young Writers' Award" was created to attract younger members, which she has funded, the hiring of Stelli Munnis, a kind and efficient office manager, and reminded members that we are a team of transparent, devoted, strong, healthy, and dedicated individuals who welcome your input.

Clare Chu wanted it known that her resignation was not directly attributed to Julia's resignation. **Henric Adey** added that it was a confluence of things.

II. Reading of the minutes

Mike Ma read the minutes from the last meeting in Palm Springs on Saturday, May 3.

Berthe called a motion to accept the minutes as read. **Courtenay McGowen** accepted, and **Melanie Maguire** seconded.

Koos de Jong requested to have the reports sent out ahead of time so he can take time to read everything carefully, and to think about his questions ahead of time. This would

be very helpful for non-native speakers and would save time to not have to read the minutes during the meeting. Others agreed.

Berthe thanked Koos for the good idea and said that it would be considered at the board meeting. **Henric Adey** said this was already decided at the prior board meeting to have handouts of the minutes and the financials (990) and that we'd no longer read the minutes out loud. Berthe apologized and stated she didn't see it in the minutes, but it was an excellent idea that would be discussed.

Berthe asked if all were in favor. All were in favor. No one opposed.

III. Treasurer's Report, Education, and Membership

Membership

Richard Liu stated that we were successful in meeting the previous treasurer's targeted goals.

As of today, we have 236 current members. We collected 50 more membership dues since last year. The past tallies incorrectly included approximately 70 non-paying members. We will continue to follow up with those who haven't responded.

- **Charll Stoneman** asked if the 50 were truly new members or previous members that hadn't paid in the past but currently renewed.

Of the 236, 19 renewed at higher levels: 3 at benefactor level, \$1,200; 4 at patron level, \$600; and 12 at sponsorship level. We have 22 new members as of April.

The board is actively engaged in implementing exciting ways to better serve our existing members and to reach a wider audience.

Personal/Professional Background

Richard introduced himself for the benefit of new members and those who don't know much about him: he's been a board member for the past 3+ years, recently retired architect based in Los Angeles, started and ran a design firm for 33 years. He's well-versed in dealing with finances, financial planning, and financial oversight and has weathered every recession. Being the treasurer for ICSBS is essentially like running a business, but simpler than running his office.

Success depends on having the right team and working well together. The new team of board members has worked tirelessly in the past 6 months to streamline ICSBS finances and to share ideas to take our society into the future. Our board chairs will share initiatives. Your constructive input is welcome.

Finances

We're tracking income streams and expenses in Excel spreadsheets. Stelli has reformatted the spreadsheets for our Membership Roster and Income from Membership (also updating contact information), Convention Attendees, Convention Income and Expenses (P&L), Journal Income and Expense (P&L).

We can now track our financial status and project incoming expenses and cash flow. We manage our bank account, and all other payment platforms (PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, etc.) and schedule zoom calls to keep spreadsheets updated. We are streamlining processes to free up Stelli so she can focus on other things, like outreach initiatives.

Richard thanked Berthe and Courtenay McGowen for sponsoring Stelli's travel to the convention and thanked Stelli for her work. Berthe also voluntarily paid her own registration and hotel to help improve the bottom line.

For greater transparency with our financials, the Board agreed to retain Driscoll, the accounting firm who files our year-end taxes, to produce semi-annual reports—1st and 3rd quarters to coincide with our May and October meetings. The report will be available in November. Please contact Stelli if you'd like a copy.

We have good cash flow for 6 months, the other 6 months, we have low revenue. The goal is understanding that and budgeting accordingly for the rest of the year.

- **Henric Adey** requested an estimate of expenses. Richard said he was getting to it.

Richard stated that the status of the society is healthy and stable. The cost to run the society is approximately \$110,000 a year, which goes to manager's salary, employment taxes, rent, insurance, website maintenance (Helena Heukeshoven and Gary Yeoman), dues and subscriptions, credit card fees, and emergency contingency. The main source of income are dues and conventions. To date, we have collected approximately \$52,000 in membership dues, which exceeded the projected target of our last treasurer. The projected convention income for Toronto is \$55,000 as of this morning. In the past, we wouldn't have known right away. The Philadelphia convention was \$27,000 in income, which is not sustainable. The previous treasurer stated in the minutes that we need to be at \$50,000, and we hit \$55,000.

- **Henric Adey** stated that you don't know the income until all the bills have been paid and all is settled. Richard said that we're tracking all expenses in our spreadsheet, and we've paid our vendors already. We're tracking income and a few people have paid cash at the door, but Stelli is tracking everything. And this

doesn't include a contingency from the hotel of \$1,600. We're comfortable saying \$55,000. We worked hard to achieve this and to stay on budget.

Also noted is a source of income we haven't had in the past which is dividend income of about \$8,000 a year. We invested \$270,000 in mutual funds and stocks primarily from the Weiss snuff bottle sale. The other source is the Education Auction Fund. Last year we raised \$13,000 so hopefully we can beat that. With the three revenue streams—membership, the convention, and dividend income—we have enough to meet our expenses. I'm hoping to invest the Education Fund. I'm counting donations as bonus income, but the board will decide how to spend that—perhaps on the website, since that's the big-ticket item right now, and it's a path of outreach for the society.

Financial reports will be available upon request. I'll be working closely with the accountant to get us what we need.

- **Rosanne Chan** stated that she was moved by all the friendships, and she offered to do the *Journal* for the society at no cost for one-year. She was thanked by Berthe and others.
- **Derek Shepherd** expressed frustration at not having the financials to review one month in advance.

Richard agreed and stated that we would have it going forward, one month in advance. We can give members the report in November and everything will be itemized. He has been working to make sure everything is transparent and no expense has been wasted, down to calculating the cost of shipping the *Journal*. He knows that each *Journal* is costing us \$19.67/issue and we're charging \$20.

- **Derek** said if you take the Weiss money out, we only have \$30,000-\$40,000 in the bank, which is not much money, especially if there is an emergency. The Weiss money was a windfall and should be in a reserve account, not to be used. The books should be balanced by income and expenditure. Richard agreed. We are not touching the Weiss funds. Derek asked if numbers continue to decline, how are we going to correct the income stream?

Richard reminded everyone that he loves the Society and will see to it that it doesn't fail. Yes, we are on shaky financial grounds, but the previous committee was projecting a loss of \$40,000, and that did not happen. We stemmed the slide that was projected. He has been on the board for 3 years asking some of the same questions and not getting answers. He understands the frustration and is trying to take care of the members and be transparent.

- **Berthe** added that during Covid, when the society was on the verge of having no money, she targeted a number of individuals to give \$5,000, and that helped tide us over.
- **Clare Chu** said as a nonprofit, we have to file a 990 in December, and would it be helpful to post that document on the member part of the website as discussed in previous board meetings?

Richard said we would be doing this with our new and improved website: how members can access information, all the reports, your own member page, whether you paid or not. Brian will provide an update.

- **David Samara** asked, if we're flush, but we get reports in November, is it going to give people enough information at this meeting? Richard stated that the reports will be outdated, which is why he gave a more current update during his report.
- **Rebecca Shepherd** stated that in Philadelphia a projected financial report was distributed, which was helpful. Richard said that's fine, but he wanted to provide more current numbers, which he is tracking in his spreadsheets. Rebecca said it's helpful to see the numbers written down. Richard said they will be provided.
- **Dennis Lee** is an old/new member. His father has been a member since 1978. The Society is going through a major transformation, and he asked that we recognize the board members who have been elected. He asked everyone to give them trust and time. We want to move forward. The board members are all volunteers who are giving their time, and we should give them our support and the benefit of the doubt.
- **Cathy Shapiro** loves the Society and has a comment about the *Journal*. For the first time, it states that the society is not responsible for the content in the *Journal*, including advertisers are solely responsible for their content whether it's true or not. In the past, all the content was vetted. I'm worried that in the future, we can't trust what's in the *Journal*. I'd like to see all articles and advertisers vetted in the future to make sure we have integrity about who we include as advertisers.

Richard pointed out that we're following the advice of the attorneys who sit on our board, and all concerns about the topic should be brought to their attention. He also suggested that members put any grievances in writing to be submitted to the Grievance Committee who will review and give a recommendation to the board.

- **Clare Chu** said that this topic was discussed previously by the board.

- **Berthe** stated that she wrote a letter to Zacke and told them to beware that there had been a complaint, and that even though the money was returned, the shipping cost was not returned.
- **Marshall Lo** reminded members that it's not possible to check everyone out ahead of time, due to the labor and cost involved, plus our judgment could be wrong.
- **Sudhir Daru** stated that the Society cannot vet every organization. Buyers have to beware.
- **Lindsey Hall** stated that the most important thing now is to focus on the future health of our finances and better management going forward. No point focusing negatively on the past, so thank you Richard for picking up the mantle and for working so hard on all our behalves to sort everything out so efficiently.
- **Charll Stoneman** stated that an accountant should be able to provide a balance sheet and a profit and loss prior to this meeting. I'd like to know if this is possible, and I'd like to move on to approve the financial report.
- **Berthe** stated that a financial report is just a financial report. There's no approving it and you cannot amend.

Richard said he'd ask for financial reports ending in February for the May meeting and move September to July so we'll have reports for the Convention.

IV. **2026 Convention in Amsterdam Update**

Carolyn Ris provided an overview of the draft program. **Ingeborg de Roode** added that the Dutch Royal Arts Society would like to host us to discuss how we can attract new members and to raise awareness in general for the Society. They have methods for addressing this topic that we can learn from. It can be done in one hour so hopefully the board will vote in favor of this.

V. **Website and Marketing Update**

Brian Spaid provided background about his credentials and experience in technology, marketing, artificial intelligence, etc. and shared what's to come with the new Website that's in design and moving into the development phase.

Rosanne Chan volunteered to be part of the committee.

Koos de Jong asked the team to reach out to members for help gathering content.

VI. **Auction Update**

Courtenay McGowen apologized for the display case being empty due to the Someren bottles being held up due to the Canadian Postal Strike, but that we're moving forward

with the online silent auction, and that bottles will be mailed out to winners as soon as we receive them. Members asked if there were condition reports. Courtenay stated that there are no condition reports, but the prices are very reasonable.

VII. Update on 2027 Convention in Hong Kong

Susan Page stated who was on the committee: Laurence Souksi, Xiao Li, Albert Au, Andrew Singer, Rosanne Chan. We're open to any ideas so please reach out. Susan discussed why Hong Kong was chosen and shared a draft agenda. Hotels are expensive so that's still being worked out.

Rosanne Chan suggested we consider having the dealers' room offsite so we can find a hotel on the Hong Kong side. There are many that are inexpensive and nice. She offered to help since she has connections.

Susan shared that Boston was being considered for 2028, which is also the 60th anniversary of ICSBS conventions. She gave reasons why Boston is a great option, but we're open to suggestions.

Derek Shepherd suggested we consider Abu Dhabi.

Berthe asked if there was any additional new business. There was not. Berthe called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Courtenay McGowen accepted, Lynne Alschuler seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stelli Munnis