

International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, October 16, 2025 via Zoom and in person (Toronto)

The Meeting was called to order by President Berthe H. Ford at 5:40 p.m. EDT.

Present:

Berthe Ford, Richard Liu, Susan Page, Shari Nokes (via Zoom), Brian Spaid, Per Kristensen, Albert Au (via Zoom), Alexie Malcolm (via Zoom), Mike Ma, Courtenay McGowen, Laurence Souski and Stelli Munnis (guests expected at 6 PM)

Berthe Ford determined that there was a quorum.

Short Summary

The board meeting addressed various administrative and financial matters, including a switch to independent financial reporting and discussions about membership tracking and conference attendance. The group reviewed upcoming conventions and events, focusing on programming and registration policies. The group also examined strategies to attract new members and improve website accessibility. The conversation ended with decisions about journal publishing, advertising rates, and future convention planning, including potential venue selections and board member transitions.

Summary

The meeting began with a review of the July 13th meeting minutes. Susan Page moved to accept the minutes and Richard Liu seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Semi-Annual Financial Reporting Transition

The board agreed to switch to independent financial reporting with semi-annual reports in March and August, with the next report available in November. The society's financial status was reported as healthy, with annual expenses of approximately \$110,000 and income primarily from membership dues and conventions, plus \$8,000 in dividend income from investments.

The board discussed membership tracking, revealing that about 70 members had not paid their dues. Some had indicated they would not renew. The directors reviewed a new spreadsheet system for tracking membership status, payments, and journal subscriptions.

Conference Attendance and Registration Review

The meeting focused on tracking attendance and registration for the upcoming conference, noting lower than usual participation due to political situations in the U.S. and China. The group discussed registration policies, including a no refund policy after a month before the event.

The directors reviewed the financial status of the Toronto convention, which was close to budget. They also addressed concerns about auction donations, noting that some expected items were missing, and discussed a potential program addition for the Amsterdam Convention related to inheriting non-documented art collections.

Reviving Interest in Snuff Bottle Collections

Members SL Tan, Caroline Ris and Koos de Jong joined the meeting to discuss gaining new members. There was a discussion regarding declining interest in collecting snuff bottles, noting that many inherited collections are sold for less than value. They emphasized the importance of addressing this issue and proposed a joint meeting with the Royal Dutch Asian Arts Society to discuss ways to attract new, especially young, members to the field. It was agreed the symposium on attracting new members will be one hour. Caroline Ris suggested sending invitations to writers and art critics. Berthe added that members can invite a guest to the convention who could attend with a voucher. She also noted that in the past the art critic was invited to visit the Dealers room. This was successful and brought a few new attendees to the conventions. The IRS in Philadelphia also read the article in the local paper and paid a visit to the dealers' room. Unfortunately, one dealer from HK did not declare his bottles and they were all confiscated. Thereafter, ICSBS no longer called the art critic for a review not wanting other IRS inquiries related to sales tax, etc.

Rijksmuseum Lecture Planning

The group discussed the timing and format of an upcoming lecture at the Rijksmuseum, agreeing on a 45-minute presentation by Koos De Jong followed by 15 minutes for questions and answers. The group decided to co-sponsor a dinner at the Sea Palace restaurant in Amsterdam, with the other party hosting and splitting the cost.

The program for the Amsterdam meeting includes a curated tour and lectures on Chinese snuff bottles. It was suggested that the lecture regarding Tibetan and Mongolian snuff bottles include a comparison to Chinese snuff bottles.

ICSBS emphasized the importance of presenting a lecture on a specific and well-researched topic, rather than a broad overview, and suggested incorporating examples of snuff bottles for public viewing. The group discussed the potential for increasing public exposure to the dealer's room and the importance of experimenting with new marketing strategies. They agreed on a one hour duration for the lecture and exhibition, with plans to invite Royal Asian Art members and art critics to enhance

visibility.

The board also addressed how to handle inquiries about selling collections, considering whether to direct people to the website or specific members.

Chinese Membership Strategy Enhancement

The society discussed strategies to attract new Chinese members, noting that current collectors in China prefer direct bidding over dealer intermediaries and are active on platforms like WeChat. They explored ways to improve website accessibility for Chinese members, including implementing advanced search functionality, AI-powered content interaction, and multilingual support, with a focus on Chinese translation.

Journal Updates

Brian Spaid discussed making certain journal indices freely accessible and discussed potential collaboration with members like Yingu Pan who has expertise in AI and website technology. Image quality on the website was discussed. The board approved Rosanne on a three-year contract for the online journal, averaging out the cost over the three years. The group also discussed the need to find a new administrator for Instagram and to develop a content strategy that goes beyond just posting bottle photos. Educational information should be included. Concerns about the quality of a recently published article were discussed.

There was a discussion about raising advertising rates to \$600 for inside continuous advertising.

Convention Venue and Pricing Strategy

ICSBS directors discussed hotel rates and registration fees for the upcoming convention, emphasizing the need to finalize rates and ensure a profit of 50,000 euros. They also addressed challenges with the dealers' room in Hong Kong where high costs and a lack of local dealers were concerns. The group considered alternative venues and explored the possibility of using public event spaces. They agreed to further investigate options and continue discussions via Zoom.

2028 Convention Venue Planning Discussion

The group discussed the 2028 convention and potential venues. It was suggested that Boston is a good choice due to its location and resources. They also talked about replacing Susan on the board. Lindsey Hall was considered as a potential candidate. The conversation touched on past conventions and the need to start

planning early.

Action Items

- Stelli to update the membership tracking spreadsheet with accurate payment information.
- Brian and Yingu Pan to meet to discuss website improvements including AI features and advanced search functionality.
- Brian to implement Chinese translation on the website as a priority.
- SL to share journal indexes with Brian for potential inclusion on the public-facing website.
- ICSBS to ask Rosanne for a formal 3-year contract proposal for journal publishing.
- Susan to ask advertisers about accepting the increased advertising rates.
- Shari to look at the contract with Rosanne once drafted.
- ICSBS to explore alternative venue options for the dealers room in Hong Kong.
- ICSBS to confirm with Koos that his lecture at the Amsterdam convention will be limited to one hour.
- ICSBS to follow up with the Amsterdam hotel regarding the Saturday rate increase.
- ICSBS to organize a Zoom meeting to make decisions about Amsterdam once hotel rates and banquet details are clarified.
- Brian to explore having Sean join the marketing committee to help with social media content.
- ICSBS to contact Nancy Berliner and Andrew Singer about the potential 2028 Boston convention.

Upon motion by Mike Ma which was seconded by Susan Page, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Nokes
Secretary