
SRPC AGM

June 3rd, 2020 – Virtual via Zoom with 41 Participants

Call to Order

Margaret Tromp calls the meeting to order at 17:00 and thanks everyone for attending. Margaret went over Zoom etiquette for the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Peter Hutten-Czapski, seconded by Dave Jerome. No objections, approved.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the April 6th, 2019 AGM meeting by James Rourke, seconded by Michelle Lajzerowicz. No objections, approved.

President's Report – Dr. Margaret Tromp

Margaret reported on the different challenges the SRPC has faced as a result of COVID-19.

March 12th SRPC Executive made the inevitable, but emotionally difficult decision to cancel the Rural and Remote Medicine Course that was to take place in Ottawa, April 23rd – 25th. It was shaping up to be the best-attended conference yet, and the Society was taking full advantage of advocacy efforts with it being held in Ottawa. SRPC Executive, along with one student and one resident, was invited by Dr. Ravailia to attend Senate and a meeting was arranged with the Health Minister. The SRPC office was able to alleviate all financial obligations by postponing the event in Ottawa until 2022. Registration fees were refunded, with a percentage of them donated back to the organization.

RuralMed has been and continues to be a great tool to support our colleagues.

Bi-weekly kitchen parties have been arranged to allow members to meet up virtually and share their musical talents.

Exclusive newsletters with COVID information were sent to members as new details emerged. Our student committee worked hard and pulled together information to create a COVID resource page on the SRPC website.

Jennifer Barr and Margaret attended weekly Canadian Medical Forum (CMF) meetings during the pandemic. CMF did issue two statements; one regarding the availability of PPE, and the other was regarding pandemic pay for residents.

A committee was formed to review the SRPC's by-laws, and we hope to have them approved today.

A new SRPC logo was revealed in March and has been well received.

The Rural Road Map Implementation Committee (RRMIC) mandate is finished in January 2021. There is a desire to move forward with phase 3 of RRMIC, and a meeting is scheduled with CFPC and SRPC leadership in the coming months to see what this will look like moving forward.

Margaret presented a list of 21 initiatives that the SRPC is currently working on.

Margaret's term as SRPC President is now finished. She thanked the SRPC office staff for their support and dedicated work. Margaret announced that Jennifer Barr has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer (COO). She thanked SRPC Executive and Council for their continued dedication. Margaret is pleased that Gabe Woollam will be taking over for her and is very confident in his leadership abilities.

Treasurer Report – Dr. Gavin Parker

The auditor's report was available to members before the meeting, and Gavin reported that our accountants did not see any red flags. Gavin highlighted the following:

- The most significant change this year was the reduced income from Rural and Remote 2020. Cancelling Rural and Remote did not have the financial impact we were anticipating. Aside from the lost revenue, the venues (1 conference center and 2 hotels) did not hold us financially liable. SRPC staff was able to negotiate rescheduling Ottawa until 2022, and all deposits that were paid have been deferred until then. Gavin thanked those that donated their registration fees back and those that allowed it to remain as a credit on account.
- There is no Rural Critical Care Course scheduled to run this year.
- Having switched publishers and moved to an online format, the CJRM is running at a much lower expense.
- Louise Arden was successful in applying for the Canadian Wage Subsidy Benefit (CWSB) from the Federal Government, which is covering 75% of staff wages until the end of August.

Gavin pointed out that this will not be a year of financial growth, but our economic efforts over the last few years have helped us through this unfortunate time.

Motion to approve the 2021 budget by Sandra Hirowatari and seconded by Kyle Sue. No objections, approved.

Membership Report – Mrs. Jennifer Barr

A report was available outlining membership growth over the last two years and a provincial breakdown of membership. Active members have increased by 37% over the previous two years. There has been a steady increase in each membership category over the years, which is anticipated to continue. At the last AGM, there was discussion about knowing what our denominator is – how many rural physicians are there in Canada. We were able to take data from MD Select (Scott's Medical Directory), which is a Canadian database of practicing physicians. A postal code search of physicians in rural areas was performed, and using populations of 10 000 or less, we figure there are close to 11 000 rural physicians in Canada. Only 6% of those physicians are SRPC members. The office has worked on trying to figure out our retention rates, but there are so many variables; it has proved to be a difficult task. (Not every member has the same renewal date, and we have many membership levels to switch to/from.) Jennifer strongly believes word of mouth is how we will continue to recruit new members and encouraged everyone to speak to their colleagues about the SRPC. Anyone with ideas on how to increase membership was asked to contact Jennifer.

SRPC By-laws – Dr. Gabe Woollam

After a discussion at the 2019 Fall Council meeting, a committee consisting of Gabe Woollam, Peter Hutten-Czapski, Margaret Tromp, and Jennifer Barr was tasked with reviewing the SRPC by-laws. Considering the discussion from that meeting, Gabe gave an overview of the significant changes:

1. Cleaned up outdated language
2. Removed outdated sections
3. Standardized the nomination process
4. We have changed Council membership from regional representatives to provincial/territorial representatives

Dave Jerome thanked the committee for taking this on and noted that he saw a significant improvement in the document. He questioned the provincial and territorial committees, section 21.1 (The Council shall have up to 13 Provincial/Territorial Committees: (a) one representative from each province and territory in Canada.) Margaret Tromp and Gabe Woollam explained that ideally, each province/territory would have a committee, and the chair of that committee would be the representative on Council. Jim Rourke felt that having each province/territory represented at Council would be a very strategic move for the SRPC as much of the negotiating and steps forward is done by medical associations and governments at a provincial/territorial level. Dave suggested we strike line 21.1 (a), and all attendees at the meeting were in favor.

David Beach asked for clarification if lifetime members pay membership fees as it does not specify in the document (as it does for all other membership categories). It was agreed that it should be clarified in the document that lifetime members do not pay fees.

Dave Jerome questioned the new structure of the Council and asked if a transition plan has been discussed. Gabe responded that the Nominations and Awards Committee would take a staggered approach to fill these positions as we do not want a wholesale change. We anticipate this will take three years to implement.

Motion to approve the by-laws with the two amendments noted above by Elaine Blau, seconded by Keith MacLellan. No objections, approved.

Nominations and Awards – Dr. Gabe Woollam

There are two nominations requiring approval.

1. Global Health Committee Chair – Dr. Ben Langer
2. Student Committee Co-chair – Ms. Avery Palmer

Dave Jerome motions approval of the two candidates, David Beach seconds. No objections, approved.

Recognizing we did not have the opportunity to congratulate our award recipients this year personally, Gabe highlighted the list of 2020 recipients. A special awards newsletter was sent to all members, and local newspapers were contacted, making them aware their local physicians won an award.

Presidential Installation – Dr. Margo Wilson

Margaret took over leadership of the SRPC at a particular time of change and upheaval and, during this time, took a very hands-on approach. Margo thanked Margaret for her hard work and guidance during her term, especially her leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic. Margo was very enthusiastic to welcome Gabe Woollam as the next President. Gabe is a family physician, medical educator, hospital administrator, and a passionate advocate for Rural health. Margo knows we will be in excellent hands under his leadership.

New Business

Previously, we had tasked the communication group with looking at ways to increase membership, but Gavin proposed we form an ad-hoc membership committee to work on recruiting new members. While it is important to recognize what has been done so far to increase/retain members, we also need to discuss what can still be improved. It is an important issue and something that will be considered further at Council. Gavin is happy to be involved and encouraged members to talk to their colleagues

and encourage them to join the SRPC. Elaine asked for some talking points to help initiate conversations with colleagues. Gavin suggested we have a one-pager to help members promote the SRPC.

New President's Message – Dr. Gabe Woollam

Gabe thanked Margo for her words of encouragement and the membership of the Society for allowing him the opportunity to serve as President. He thanked Margaret for her dedication and especially all the work with our office staff, making us a far more professional and efficient entity. This has helped improve membership, our financial situation, and the respect that our organization receives at several different tables. Gabe thanked our small but mighty office staff and looks forward to working with them more closely.

Gabe has been Involved with SRPC since he was a medical student in BC. He has benefited from the peer support, educational, and leadership opportunities that the SRPC has provided. He has taken much value in his involvement with the SRPC. The Society will be faced with challenges moving forward with COVID. However, there will also be opportunities such as developing virtual rural CME, which may allow us to diversify some of the ways we make an impact nationally and even with our income streams. We will continue working on the 21 initiatives that Margaret spoke to, and hopefully, add more to the list. We will continue to strengthen specialty involvement, which is something that has grown over the last few years. Gabe commented on the importance of continuing to network with other medical organizations. The work on the by-laws and with the Nominations and Awards committee will help us focus on the engagement of our members and bringing new faces onto our committees and Council. Gabe is looking forward to working with SRPC members.

Meeting adjourned at 18:10.