



2001 AGM Resolutions Summary of Action Taken and Directions Proposed

This summary deals with resolutions that were adopted by the delegates, referred to the board, or deferred to future annual meetings. Some information is provided on late resolutions that were not considered “emergency” resolutions.

1. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Board Position

This resolution called on members to agree in principle that a seat on the CHF Canada Board of Directors should be set aside for a self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered person. It was defeated.

At the 2002 annual meeting, participants will consider a wider resolution dealing with governance review, and the structure of the Board of Directors.

2. Affordable Housing Now

This resolution called on the federal government to fund a new affordable housing program for Canadians, including at least the \$680 million the Liberals promised during the last federal election campaign.

The President wrote twice to the Prime Minister to urge the federal government to keep its election promise and make capital grants large enough to produce new housing that is truly affordable. CHF Canada was present at the federal-provincial Housing Ministers meetings in London and Quebec City; on both occasions we made a presentation directly to the Minister Responsible for CMHC, setting out the case for new co-op housing in a new federal housing program. CHF Canada met in Ottawa with the Hon. Alphonso Gagliano, former Minister Responsible for CMHC, and met many times with various Members of Parliament.

In November 2001, the federal government and the provinces and territories concluded the Quebec City Affordable Housing Framework Agreement. This agreement is good news – and an important step in providing some affordable housing for Canadians who need it.

CHF Canada representatives have met with representatives of the new Minister, Hon. John Manley. At these meetings, we have said that there should be no barriers to co-op development under the new program and that the federal government should make this clear to the provinces.

During this year's annual meeting, members will consider a new resolution concerning affordable housing. It calls on the federal government to make sure that the provinces and territories are not allowed to put barriers in place that would prevent the development of new housing co-operatives.

Lobbying for new affordable housing, and making sure that co-ops can be included under any agreements reached between government, has involved a major effort by volunteers and staff. We estimate that approximately \$30,000 has been spent to follow up on this resolution passed by members in 2001, and to support the volunteer activity.

3. Securing Our Future

At the 1998 annual meeting, members passed a resolution calling on CHF Canada to provide advice to housing co-ops on how they can make sure that their co-ops will remain non-profit, and continue to house low-income members, after their operating agreements expire and their first mortgages are paid off.

At the 2001 annual meeting, members agreed on a set of steps that CHF Canada could help housing co-ops take to meet these goals. These steps called for the preparation of some information and research by CHF Canada.

Since the annual meeting, CHF Canada's work has included these activities:

- Beginning a review of provincial co-op legislation – to be completed in 2002 – to determine how these acts may be amended to make sure that housing co-ops continue to offer non-profit housing;
- Releasing a co-op Guide to Replacement Reserve Planning, and participation, with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association in the development of a set of materials and tools about replacement reserve planning;

- Preparation of a guide to internal subsidy;
- Development of a template that co-ops can use to help them arrange for technical studies of their properties;
- Assisting in the development of an investment program for replacement reserves in Ontario.

This has been an important part of CHF Canada's work during the past year, representing about 350 hours of combined staff time, valued at approximately \$35,000 (including overhead costs).

4. AGM Registration Fees

This resolution called on CHF Canada to reduce the registration fees for the national business meeting. It was withdrawn on the understanding that CHF Canada would review the cost to members attending our annual meetings. The intent of this resolution was to make the annual meeting as affordable as possible for all members and to enable as many co-ops as possible, especially smaller co-ops, to participate in the democratic process.

Some co-ops that typically have a harder time participating are those located furthest from the meeting site, making high travel costs a factor, and smaller co-ops, who have to spread the cost of travel and registration over fewer units. CHF Canada has studied the costs of the annual meeting, and taken steps to make it as affordable as possible.

At its November 2001 meeting, the Board approved a program to help member housing co-ops attend the AGM. Use of the travel pool was expanded, so that no delegate travelling on a seat sale ticket will pay more than \$300 to travel to the meeting. Small co-ops (those with 25 units or less) may use the travel pool to pay only \$50 to travel. The early registration fee for the 2002 AGM for small co-ops was reduced to just \$140.

Member co-ops have been asked to contribute to a fund to help with the accommodation costs of representatives of small co-ops, who will receive a \$200 grant from this fund. Co-ops that contribute will be recognized during this year's annual meeting.

Participants have also derived savings from the elimination of the Sunday meeting they requested in their AGM evaluations. This has allowed registration fees to be reduced for all participants, including those attending only the business meeting.

Finally, the participation of sponsors in our AGM also enables us to reduce registration fees.

It is important to recognize that the AGM is offered on a “breakeven” basis – that is, the revenue received in registration fees must cover the costs of the AGM, not including staff time. Members, therefore, have agreed to registration fees that are set high enough to cover the cost of producing the annual meeting and helping small or distant co-ops attend. Members support registration fees that meet these goals.

5. Group Benefits for Retired Employees

This resolution called on CHF Canada to negotiate with The Co-operators to develop a group benefits program for retired employees.

As reported to members at the 2001 AGM, retired employees have been included in another group plan offered through our insurance partners.

We could not include retired employees in our existing co-op staff benefits plan with The Co-operators because that would have meant a substantial premium increase for those already participating in the plan. However, with the help of Morneau Sobeco, our benefits consultants, we were able to find a group plan that could include retired employees, and is open to retired employees from any member housing co-op. The cost of belonging to this plan is based on the claims performance of the group.

Thanks to our strategic relationship with Morneau Sobeco (AGM Gold Sponsor), making these arrangements was relatively easy and cheap.

6. Accessibility by the Hearing Impaired (Annual General Meeting)

This resolution called on CHF Canada to ensure that all annual meetings are fully accessible to people who are hearing impaired.

The goals of this resolution were added to CHF Canada's barrier-free access policy. Our work reflects members' commitment that services for people who are deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing are available and that these services are well publicized.

CHF Canada is committed to making the annual meeting as accessible as possible. For a long time, assistance to participants with special needs has been included in the meeting budget. These include the preparation of audio tapes of meeting materials, assisted note taking, and other services.

Since the last AGM, two CHF Canada staff members, including Linda Stephenson (CHF Canada's Meeting Planner) have been trained in accessibility issues, at a cost of \$700. When required, the mobility accessibility audits of annual meeting facilities that are now completed by local AGM co-ordinators with volunteers in wheelchairs will also include CHF Canada staff responsible for AGM planning.

If obstacles are found during the audit, participants will be informed ahead of time, as the resolution asked.

7. Accessibility by the Hearing Impaired (Video)

This resolution called on CHF Canada to maintain two closed-captioned copies of all existing videos.

All three CHF Canada-produced English-language videos will be captioned in time for the 2002 AGM. French versions will be captioned later. It costs approximately \$350 per hour to caption these videos.

8. Correspondence Standards

This resolution called on CHF Canada to acknowledge written inquiries from members within 15 business days.

We have developed a correspondence system that has ensured that this standard of service has been met.

9. Independent National Agency

This resolution expressed members' continued strong support for the proposed independent national agency to administer co-operative programs.

Since the last AGM, CHF Canada has made great progress towards the creation of the agency.

Meetings between CHF Canada and CMHC officials were held immediately following the AGM, and throughout last summer. In August, CHF Canada board members met with the Hon. Alfonso Gagliano, at that time the Minister Responsible for CMHC. At that meeting, the Minister confirmed his personal support for the agency.

Throughout the fall and winter, good progress – focused on identifying and resolving outstanding agency issues with CMHC – continued. For CMHC, these issues were how the agency would be governed, what level of risk the agency would assume in dealing with co-ops in difficulty, and how much the agency would cost.

Early in 2002, we reached agreement with CMHC that up to \$25,000 of the costs associated with further work on the agency's risk framework would be paid by CMHC. A consulting team was assembled to undertake this work.

Action has also continued on the political front. Shortly after the federal cabinet shuffle, we met with representatives of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. John Manley, currently the Minister Responsible for CMHC. Manley has more than 1,000 units of co-op housing in his Ottawa riding, and has been a visible and active supporter of co-operative housing in the past. We are hopeful that members will hear a positive response to the agency from the federal government later this year.

In 2001, CHF Canada's direct costs of the agency campaign were \$16,000, plus the equivalent of one half-time staff person. CHF Canada has budgeted \$25,000 in 2002 for the campaign, and we hope that this amount will be enough to win final support for the agency. If additional resources are needed, they will be drawn from CHF Canada's reserves.

LATE RESOLUTIONS

1. Reporting Templates

This resolution asked CHF Canada to develop a reporting template for condition surveys and technical audit reports.

Although the resolution was not granted emergency status, reporting templates have been included in the work that is being done to follow up on *Resolution 3, Securing Our Future*.

2. Electronic Voting at CHF Canada AGM

This resolution called on CHF Canada to prepare a by-law that would allow electronic voting under certain circumstances.

The resolution was defeated and no follow-up is required.

3. Political Action Review Committee

This resolution called on CHF Canada to confirm Political Action Review Committee as a permanent independent committee.

The resolution was not granted emergency status.