

Annual General Meeting 2024 Draft Minutes

Date: 20 November 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Infinity Convention Centre / ZOOM

Present: **Board Members:**

Mike Bureau, Léo Cardinal, Victoria Cowell, Beverley Croft (President), Stan Mathew, Karim Mekki, Matthew Moore, Ben Ripley, Krishon Walker,

Nominations Committee Chair:

Beverley Croft

Membership:

More than 100 CIPP members were in attendance in person and online when the meeting was called to order. (146 members online and 159 in person) attended the AGM.

CIPP Staff:

Peter Bleyer (Executive Director), Julie Lallier-Michaud, James Campbell, Andrea Cashman, Melissa Newitt, Hannah Kaya, Shirley D'Penha (Recording Secretary)

1. Introduction and opening remarks

Léo Cardinal, from the Paramedic Service, took a moment to remember Garth Tourangeau, a respected Superintendent, active CIPP member and past Treasurer, and valued colleague who sadly passed away on Monday. He shared that Garth was known for his good spirit and dedication—always stepping up to help, even when it was unexpected. Leo highlighted the positive impact Garth had on his colleagues and the community. He then invited everyone to join in a moment of silence in Garth's memory.

Beverley Croft, President, shared that she had the privilege of serving alongside Garth on the board and, on behalf of CIPP staff and members, extended heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues—saying he will be deeply missed.

Beverley welcomed both in-person and online attendees and noted that over 150 members were present in the room, and a similar number had joined virtually making it one of the largest AGMs she has ever attended. She emphasized that this strong turnout reflects how the union is continuing to grow and rebuild.

Beverley Croft acknowledged that CIPP is based on unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory, recognizing our colonial past and present and, the harm that our country causes Indigenous peoples of this land. As a labour union, CIPP is committed to learning the full history of this land and supporting reconciliation as defined by Indigenous communities. She also noted that the Member Engagement and Diversity Committee has proposed launching a Human Rights or

Social Justice Discussion Group to help explore CIPP's role in reconciliation and broader justice efforts.

Beverley Croft and Peter Bleyer, Executive Director, reviewed a few housekeeping items and explained how the voting tools would be used throughout the meeting.

Beverley welcomed the Board and introduced the Committee chairs: Mike Bureau (Finance Committee), Stan Mathew (Member Engagement & Diversity Committee), Victoria Cowell (Scholarship Committee & Governance & Human Resources Committee). Beverley noted that in her role as the Nominations Committee chair, she would chair the elections for the Board of Directors.

A quorum was established, and the chair called the meeting to order.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: To adopt the agenda for the 2024 AGM as presented.

Moved by Mike Bureau; Seconded by Karim Mekki.

Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of 23 November 2023

Motion: To approve the Minutes as posted from the 2023 CIPP AGM.

Moved by Victoria Cowell; Seconded by Ben Ripley.

Motion carried.

Reflecting growing union engagement and given the limited time available, a few changes were made to the AGM agenda this year.

Members received the annual report by email prior to the meeting; printed copies were also provided at the registration table for in-person attendees, and a link to the report was shared in the chat for those joining online. The bilingual report includes detailed updates from the President, Executive Director, Treasurer, Labour Relations Lead, and each committee, highlighting the ongoing work of the union. As a result, oral reports were not presented individually. However, a question-and-answer period was scheduled following the presentation of the 2025 budget, and members were encouraged to prepare their questions for that time.

2. Building Union Power

Peter Bleyer, Executive Director, introduced the next item. He noted that this year's AGM theme of building union power aligned with ongoing efforts from recent years. The presentation addressed two resolutions that were approved by members at the 2023 AGM, and covered three key areas: a detailed report on research into the potential impacts of renegotiating binding interest arbitration, an explanation of the theory of change guiding the union's strategy, and an introduction to the new member network that is intended to strengthen engagement and facilitate member action to influence the results of bargaining for the next round and beyond. The presentation concluded with in-person and virtual group discussions, emphasizing the central role of member input as the process of building union power evolves.

Arbitration clause report back

The first resolution focused on the arbitration clause in our collective agreement with the City of Ottawa. The motion instructed the Board to examine the potential implications of removing the clause in future negotiations.

A comprehensive summary of this analysis was provided to members — distributed in print for those attending in person and shared via the Zoom chat for online participants.

The presentation proceeded with an explanation of how the arbitration clause functions within the collective agreement. Specifically, Article 41.01 of the Collective agreement with the City of Ottawa states that any issue not resolved through collective bargaining — or if a tentative agreement fails to be ratified by a majority of CIPP members — automatically proceeds to arbitration. The resulting arbitration decision is final and binding, with no option for appeal. In recent years, including the most recent round, CIPP's negotiations with the City have ended in arbitration, a pattern believed to have contributed to disappointing collective agreements, as well as historically low levels of member engagement. When arbitration is seen as inevitable, members have less influence over bargaining outcomes, and more critically, the employer has little incentive to negotiate in good faith.

Removing automatic binding arbitration would change the bargaining process by opening the door to new tactics, such as work-to-rule, refusing overtime, slowdowns, or strikes. All of these tactics would require a mandate (in the case of a strike, a majority vote) from members at that time. Any of these tools can be powerful. Even the possibility of using them can significantly influence an employer's approach to negotiations. However, the successful use of any of these tactics requires more than the removal of the arbitration clause. It requires additional resources, both in terms of member engagement and financial capacity. Unless CIPP members are prepared and resourced to take job action, removing the arbitration clause could open the door to some risk, a concern that was echoed by members.

As with any other provision in the collective agreement, the arbitration clause can only be eliminated through collective bargaining or through an arbitration award. Should CIPP members decide to renegotiate binding arbitration, the union must first build enough leverage to influence the result at the bargaining table and invest in the financial and member engagement resources required to take advantage of any opportunities that would be made available by this change. As CIPP's power grows, members will be in a position to collectively determine if and when to pursue a change to the clause. It was communicated that members would have more opportunities to submit feedback and engage with this decision in the future.

Our theory of change

The second resolution passed in 2023 focused on the creation of a member network with the aim of creating more opportunities for members to engage with their union, and to support efforts to make our strength visible at all times, especially during bargaining. This resolution was passed before we knew the outcome from the most recent round of bargaining. That outcome came in the spring of 2024, through a binding arbitration award. And frankly, it was terribly disappointing.

When the resolution was passed, members already had serious concerns about the bargaining process and how we were approaching it. Those concerns were well-founded. The award we received was inadequate, unfair and unprincipled. It offered very little for members, especially on compensation.

Our goal is to improve results in collective bargaining. Our new “theory of change” holds that a strong bargaining team and clear and well-argued proposals are necessary but not sufficient to achieve the results members deserve. CIPP members must come together and take visible,

coordinated action, if they want to apply real pressure on the employer to drive results at the bargaining table.

While your CIPP bargaining team will continue to represent your interests at the table, the path to improving results requires members to be active participants in the bargaining process. Members will have the opportunity to do so by submitting their detailed feedback to the bargaining survey and demonstrating their unity and strength by taking actions that put pressure on the employer to negotiate on their bargaining priorities.

Communication Manager, Melissa Newitt reported that in the 2021 bargaining survey, members' interest and support for the bargaining team was modest but had grown meaningfully in recent years. Pointing to surveys, participation in union activities, and increased communications between the union and members, Newitt reported that the union was well positioned to develop the member network mandated by the 2023 resolution.

Member Network

Hannah Kaya, CIPP's recently hired member organizer, provided an overview of the plan to develop CIPP's new member network that would support an engaged union community and create opportunities to share workplace issues with the union and participate in actions that build union strength. This plan centered on a decentralized model of union leaders who will facilitate connections between their colleagues and their union, and develop strategic actions that all members will be invited to participate in to increase leverage in bargaining. It was noted that this model is a proven strategy used by unions, organizations, and movements around the world to build lasting power and win results.

Kaya described the different levels of engagement and activities available to members and the resources that would be provided to support a high degree of new member leadership. The presentation emphasized that there is a role for every member in building union power. While results may not be instant, the work of building union power is ongoing and carries across every round of negotiations.

Members were invited to attend information sessions in the January 2025 to learn more details and continue to provide input.

Super-majority Petition Campaign

The first new action that was launched through the member network was a super-majority petition. The petition was described as a powerful organizing tool that demonstrates high levels of unity and collective strength. The objective of the petition is to send a clear message to the employer that CIPP members expect more from the next round of bargaining. Through this campaign, members will be encouraged to share the petition with their colleagues, ignite important conversations, and organize events. Signatures on the petition will only be shared with the employer once a majority of CIPP members have signed. The petition calls on the employer to begin bargaining before the current collective agreement expires, to send representatives to the table who are empowered to make decisions, to resolve straightforward issues through negotiations rather than arbitration, and to offer fair wage increases in line with sector standards.

Flyers with more information and links to the petition were distributed, and attendees were encouraged to sign.

Facilitated group discussion

To cap off the presentation on Building Union Power, attendees broke into small groups to reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with members taking new actions to put pressure on the employer for better results.

Members were interested and recognized that change was required. There was a general acknowledgment that engaged members must be the backbone of a union. At the same time, there was an interest in accessing more information and a focus on the issues related to interest arbitration.

There was general support for the development of the member network model and interest in better understanding how it will work, how it will improve CIPP's value to members and how it will help to increase our power. Members shared what they believed should be the priority for the network including increasing communication and touchpoints between CIPP and the broader membership and getting more CIPP information into the workplace.

In discussion, a number of suggestions were made for the proposed petition campaign. Members underlined the importance of clear messaging, concise language and concrete goals. The point was made that members would have to be reassured that the petition will be both a safe activity for them to engage in and an impactful tool to build our collective power.

3. New Business

2025 Budget

Mike Bureau, Finance Committee Chair, and Peter Bleyer presented the 2025 Budget for approval. They explained that the proposed 2025 budget focuses on strategic investments that support our Union's goals, maintaining high-quality service to members, and ensuring long-term financial stability.

As CIPP's dues revenues gradually return to pre-COVID levels—due in part to the ongoing reduction in OPH pandemic-related staffing, as outlined in Note 1 of the budget—our overall revenue should remain stable. This is supported by income generated from our reserves, as detailed in Note 2.

Note 4 highlights a key allocation from the Board of Directors: funds drawn from our Strategic Activities Reserve to support the new organizer position and initiatives related to the development of the Professional Community and in support of collective bargaining. The budget also reflects a significant cost saving through a reduction in office leasing expenses, following our move to a smaller, more cost-effective space in a central location—this can be seen in the office rent line item. Overall, the budget projects a balance in the operating budget at year-end. It's a responsible plan that balances investment in members' current priorities with a focus on building the union's future capacity.

Motion: To adopt the 2025 budget.

Moved by Mike Bureau; Seconded by Matthew Moore.

Motion carried.

4. Question and Answers

The 2005 Budget and Organizing Priorities

There was a request for details on the organizing and advocacy budget line item. The primary focus of the organizing work in 2025 would be to build the strength of the union through the new Professional Community network. This investment is aimed at achieving better results in collective bargaining — especially after a disappointing round — as well as increasing the union's capacity to defend and support members more broadly.

This project is funded from the Strategic Activities Reserve (SAR) rather than the operating budget and includes hiring an organizer and supporting member-led roles. This is a multi-year initiative approved by the Board to pilot a new model of decentralized organizing.

The Arbitration Clause

In workshops and plenary members asked about the risks and benefits associated with an eventual removal of the arbitration clause including the risk of a lockout by the employer and financial implications. In response, Peter Bleyer acknowledged these concerns and emphasized that CIPP was very far from a decision on this issue. Bleyer underlined that CIPP's current focus reflecting decisions by the AGM and the Board was to build its strength — whether or not the union decides to pursue removal of the arbitration clause in the future. That's the purpose of the member network and other organizing efforts underway. Other unions at the City of Ottawa are similarly frustrated with the constraints of interest arbitration, and that any eventual decisions on this issue should also take those dynamics into account.

5. Board Elections

Beverley Croft, Chair of the Nominations Committee, reviewed the election process. She reported that there had been one nomination for the OCH seat on the Board of Directors and eight (8) nominations for the four (4) City of Ottawa vacancies on the Board. As a result, the one OCH nominee Matthew Moore would be acclaimed, and an election will be held for the City of Ottawa positions. Members can vote for up to four (4) candidates. All candidates up for election introduced themselves to the membership.

Motion: To accept the results of the 2024-2025 CIPP Board of Directors elections with the following being elected: Shen Bai, Victoria Cowell, Ahmed Luqman and Naika Thomas

Moved by Wendy Schurman; Seconded by Stan Mathew.

Motion carried.

Beverley Croft welcomed all new and returning members to the Board.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.