

## **2020 IOIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Minutes**

Thursday, January 30, 2020

Noon – 6 PM CST

Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas, USA

**Noon – 12:35 PM** Lunch is served in the open 2nd floor dining area of the hotel. Due to bad acoustics the dining area is deemed unsuitable for the Keynote Presentation.

**12:45 – 1:15 PM** IOIA inspector members and guests move to and settle into the FRIO II Room on the Riverwalk Level where Keynote Speaker Michael Sligh, IOAS President, North Carolina, is introduced and presents his talk Common Ground/Common Cause - The Struggle for the Soul of Organic. He begins with family lore about one of his ancestors who was lost at the Alamo. His talk continues with a historical overview of the cycles and phases of the organic movement, describing its uniqueness, its triumphs - and its challenges in the US and globally. He feels the IOAS (perhaps as 'International Organic Alliance for Strategic' Conversations) could become an organized conduit for global strategic conversations about markets outstripping oversight capacity, about certification inconsistencies, gaps, and fragmentation, and to address issues of regional isolation in the movement.

He points out we are currently phasing from a compliance-based to a risk-based system and from the reactive to the proactive. He emphasizes the need to come together to embrace continuous improvement and continuous innovation in order to retain the ethics and soul of the organic movement. He offers a quote from the old American comic strip Pogo, “We are faced with insurmountable opportunity!” If we can harmonize on specific fronts to deter fraud – adopting organic best practices such as crop rotation, enhancing biodiversity and soil building the movement can be a force in mitigating climate change. He states that the movement must also include upholding the rights of producers and laborers.

He closes by reading still relevant passages written in the 1940-50s by his mentor Paul K. Keene of Walnut Acres about the priceless burden of organic farming. He then turns to the members and announces that “You're all my heroes!” Following the talk Mr. Sligh receives a standing ovation from the membership. Margaret Scoles asks whether he is willing to share copy of his talk for publishing in the next IOIA Inspectors Report and he agrees.

**1:15 – 2:25 PM** Inspector members depart the FRIO II Room. Those registered walk to the 4th floor San Antonio Ballroom to attend the ACA Professional Development Panel Discussion for perspectives, tips and tools from certifiers and inspectors to ensure Quality Inspections.

**3:00 – 6:00 PM** Inspector members return to the FRIO II Room for the IOIA Annual General Meeting.

**3:00 PM**

1) Quorum – IOIA BOD Chair Lois Christie establishes that a quorum of IOIA membership is represented in the room in accord with IOIA Bylaws.

BOD Members Present:

Lois Christie, Chair

Janine Gibson, Vice Chair

Heather Donald, Treasurer

Margaret Anne Weigelt, Secretary/Special Past Chair

Chuck Mitchell, Member-at-Large

Rachel Cherry Myers, Director

BOD Member not present: Philippe Descamps

**Documents for Meeting:**

2020 IOIA Annual Meeting Draft Agenda

PPT Slide: Draft Meeting Minutes of the IOIA 2019 AGM w/ Recommended Changes

IOIA 2019 Annual Report and PPT Slideshow

IOIA Revenue & Expense Budget vs. Actual, Cash Basis, Jan – Dec 2019

IOIA Balance Sheet, Cash Basis, as of Dec 31, 2019

IOIA Revenue & Expense Budget Overview, Jan – Dec 2020

**3:12 PM**

BOD Chair Lois Christie calls to order the 2020 IOIA Annual General Business Meeting.

**2) Approve 2020 Annual Meeting Agenda** – Lois asks the membership to approve the Agenda. Request is made by Patti Bursten Deutsch asks that the topics of IOIA Ethics Committee and IOIA Shirts be added to the Agenda. Request is made by Garth Kahl for time to introduce the topic of a Working Group Coop for inspectors.

Motion is made by Patti Bursten Deutsch to add the three suggested topics to the Agenda under 6) New Business.

Motion is seconded by Amy Stafford.

BOD Chair Lois Christie asks for the vote.

Motion passes unanimously.

### **3) Approval of Minutes from the 2019 IOIA Annual General Meeting.**

A copy of the 2019 Draft AGM Minutes is projected on screen. The text is marked w/ formatting changes and edits recommended by BOD Chair Lois Christie and Secretary Margaret Anne Weigelt. MA reads a summarized version of the draft minutes as LC moves through the full text with mark-ups.

Edits recommended and suggested are made by LC as the draft is reviewed on screen.

Motion is made by Garth Kahl to accept the minutes with the recommended/amended corrections.

Motion is seconded by Terrence Layhew.

BOD Chair Lois Christie calls for the vote.

Motion passes unanimously.

**4) 2019 Annual Report Overview** Strengthening Our Foundation, Setting Big Goals, and Taking Bold Strides Forward is presented with PPT slides and narrated by BOD Chair Lois Christie. Shortly into her report she invites the following BOD Committee Liaisons to present committee reports.

**Asia Pacific Committee/Latin American Committee Report** is presented by Chuck Mitchell. Chuck segues to the report by sharing a humorous story and some 'fun facts' and then explains he will blend together presentation of the Asia-Pacific and Latin American reports. First he points out that currently there isn't a Latin American Committee. Chuck goes on to explain how

the BOD has empowered the Asia-Pacific Committee, for up to three years, use of the committee's budget resources to develop (w/ IOIA staff assistance) and conduct training in the region. To build further, they will keep the profits for additional training development - instead of sending back to IOIA. As a result, the committee has successfully delivered training in Thailand. Chuck emphasizes the importance of these kinds of global collaborations, noting the BOD's approval for Margaret Scoles to serve on the IFOAM board.

**Canadian Committee Report** is presented by Janine Gibson. She acknowledges the contributions of Kelly Monaghan for her role with the Canadian Standards Board and for additional contributions from Bill Barkley. Janine adds that the committee has been lobbying the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) and invites Kelly to report on those efforts. Kelly presents a brief overview of some of the barriers to lobbying the CFIA and Canadian certifiers regarding issues of consistency – pointing out that certain communication avenues are missing from Canada that are already built into NOP/NOSB and by the ACA and IOIA. She notes that six Canadian certifiers are attending this week and that CFIA COO team member Valeriya Staykova will be part of the November 2020 IOIA Advanced Training in Saskatoon.

**Overview of the IOIA Technology Upgrade** is presented by Ryan Sitler. He notes that the upgrade has begun is now led by IOIA staff – that it will interface with new website for future distance/self-directed training, for BOD, members, payment services, training and certificates. He said we are excited because the system will free up staff time for other things. The software company we decided to work with is called Blu Solutions and is based in NC. Ryan closes by inviting members to contact him with any suggestions or questions regarding the IMS project. Margaret Scoles asks whether we are open to a membership survey for input about technology. Heads nod - yes. She notes that we are currently in the information gathering phase so a survey is important.

**IOIA Policy Committee Report** is presented by Rachel Cherry Myers. Rachel describes how excited she is to be part of the committee. She says that attending the 2019 NOSB Fall Meeting for the first time was incredible to see – that she now fully understands the impact IOIA can give voice to. She said the committee is excited to have member input to increase our voice. Rachel expresses great appreciation for Margaret Scoles as IOIA's representative presenting the committee comments to the NOSB. In turn, Margaret Scoles suggests that Rachel could perhaps become our first regular IOIA representative at the annual ACA Policy Conference in Washington DC.

Lois continues the Annual Report by listing the membership value IOIA offers - continuing education, half-off discount for a webinar, inclusion of current and controversial topics in the IR

quarterly newsletter, posted BOD agendas and meetings open to members, IOIA Forum, partnering and collaborating with ACA on Working Groups and Certifier-Inspector Dialogue calls (10 years), and the IOIA Peer Evaluation Program. Lois invites Al Johnson to talk a little about the Peer Evaluation Program. He notes that demand for the program is going down. Margaret Scoles describes scheduling difficulties as issues, and points out that costs have gone up.

Lois continues by highlighting 2019 consumer outreach efforts through the Ask the Inspector program piloted by Chuck Mitchell and the new IOIA consumer membership category. Training highlights, training data, and the upcoming self-directed webinar are detailed by Lois.

Lois recognizes the work of IOIA's new Policy Committee which ensures response is heard from the inspector's perspective to industry issues. The committee prepares IOIA's comments for NOSB meetings.

Lois thanks exiting Special Past Chair Margaret Anne Weigelt for her many years of service on the BOD. Lois presents her with a personalized photo book filled with BOD memories and notations. A round of applause is given.

2020 IOIA Scholarship award winner are highlighted – Anais Edwards from Florida for the Andrew Rutherford Scholarship and Peter Obidike from Nigeria for the Community Initiative Scholarship. Lois shares brief biographical sketches for each. Lois shares follow up information in 'Where Are They Now?' about previous IOIA 2008 Rutherford Scholarship winner Osiris Abrego Plata noting that Osiris currently serves on the Biodynamic Association (BDA) BOD.

Lois finishes her Annual Report presentation with a look to the future by furthering 2019 BOD goals for:

- Inspector Credentialing
- Information Management System and Technology Upgrading
- IOIA Comment Policy
- Policy Committee Actions
- Making Membership More Valuable and Inspectors More Visible
- Continued Focus in both Technology and Training for Fraud Prevention

Lois asks the membership to turn their attention to the Annual Financial Report documents.

## **5) Treasurer's Report**

BOD Treasurer Heather Donald steps to the podium and begins the Treasurer's Report with a review of the 2019 Balance Sheet (Cash Basis). She points out that net income is down quite a bit (compared to 2018) due to lower attendance in basic trainings and building infrastructure.

In reference to the line item CDs held for Accreditation Heather explains this will be covered later during 2020 Revenue & Expense Budget Overview. As there were no questions regarding the Balance Sheet, Heather moves on to the 2019 Revenue & Expense Budget vs. Actual Report pointing to increased income from attendance at the Annual Meeting in Huatulco Mexico, for Donations and Accreditation. She explains lower than anticipated income for Membership Dues related to lower basic training attendance, Peer Evaluation, and Cosponsor-Managed Trainings.

Heather asks if there are any questions. Janine Gibson remarks that Accreditation doubled – did more people apply? Margaret Scoles responds that a record number of new applications and renewals coincided. Pam Sullivan asks for more details regarding the Peer Evaluation Program loss. Margaret Scoles points to greater expenses incurred on a number of evaluations.

Heather continues to Expense pointing first to a delayed inventory adjustment that was caught. She describes the increases for contract labor, indicating some webinar expense was reallocated or not spent. Additional contract labor expense is due to a shift in focus of some work and to contracting help to work on the IOIA Emergency Transition Plan and facilitate the Policy Committee.

Pam Sullivan asks question about the Support Staff line comparing 2019 and 2020. A small discussion follows. An executive assistant was not hired in 2019 and \$20K for 2020 is allocated to the IMS Project.

Heather explains the reasons for lower expenses in Promotion, BOD Travel, and differences in various trainings expenses. Janine Gibson asks about the 2019 East Coast expense line listing \$50. Margaret Scoles explains it's an extra line and was supposed to be combined with the next line. Janine also notes the low Field Training expense.

Heather begins the 2020 Revenue & Expense Budget Overview. A modest increase for Membership income is expected. A decrease is expected for Peer Evaluation. Discussion/brainstorming follows about promotion, different models, and logistics for the program. \$1-1.5K was donated to the program by evaluators. Garth Kahl suggests we throw this back on the community – to work on creating a universal list, to share information toward the goal of improving logistics. Silke Fuchshofen asks whether IOIA knows why some certifiers do and don't use the program. Margaret Scoles affirms that IOIA has had quality conversations with CBs. Issues related to scheduling are discussed. Rachel Cherry Myers suggests maybe evaluations could be facilitated by the inspector. Many in the room speak to the issues discussed.

Heather directs the room back to the Budget Overview income projections for trainings. Direct Staff Expense is mentioned next. Beth Dominick speaks up to say that the Executive Director's Salary is too low. Heather explains that the BOD did reevaluate the salary the year before. The amount is competitive based on nonprofit salaries for Montana. She states we all know Margaret Scoles is worth far more than that. The room erupts into loud applause. Beth continues by stating that the salary is not competitive compared to others in similar organic sector positions. Garth Kahl suggests this is a good time to ask about the status of any succession plans. Margaret Scoles explains that IOIA does have an Emergency Transition Plan for a short term replacement of the ED, but there isn't yet a long term plan for the inevitable future succession.

Heather follows with an explanation of the \$87,646 of cash reserves earmarked for the IMS and inspector credentialing technology expected to be expensed in 2020. She points out that this could result in up to a -\$87,646 bottom line for net income on the 2020 balance sheet.

Motion is made by Angela Wartes to accept the 2019 Financial Reports as presented.

Motion is seconded by Ib Hagsten.

BOD Chair Lois Christie calls for the vote.

Motion passes unanimously.

Lois acknowledges the ballot committee members – Ib Hagsten, Al Johnson and Pam Sullivan. Applause follows. She directs everyone in the room to give a short introduction – name and where you are from.

### **BREAK – 15 minutes**

(After the break Ryan Sitler announces he would like to bring some a little comedy to the gathering by mentioning that whoever was nice enough to bring along the IOIA Spanish-Language display in a case – also left some personal items in it – shirt, socks and underwear! Garth Kahl announces that those have been in there for probably three years since he packed it!)

Lois asked Janine Gibson, Vice Chair to facilitate this next section on the Agenda.

### **6) New Business**

2021 AGM Location Discussion – Janine states that we have received a lot of positive feedback about having the IOIA Annual Meeting in conjunction with the ACA/NOP Annual Training. She

suggests we consider doing this again in 2021. Next year the ACA/NOP events will be in New Orleans, Louisiana. Other suggestions are solicited. Margaret Scoles lists the suggestions on a poster – New Orleans, Northern Mexico, Guelph Canada, Asia/Pacific – Thailand, Japan, Solomon Islands, BioFach. A thorough discussion follows with ideas from at least 20 inspector members in the room – the importance of going to different places, international, go to places warm in winter, reinforce the synchronicity of this event and do again to maintain momentum and connections with staff inspectors, co-locate with another trade show, arrange the timing of events differently with being fragmented, we shouldn't shorten our AGM Meeting, BioFach, consider that it might be harder to enter the USA, consider Canada, in the EU there's a similar entity as ACA. Janine suggests a Straw Poll to whittle it down to three locations. Top three for the poll are New Orleans, Biofach, Asia Pacific.

**Ask the Inspector volunteer program.** Chuck Mitchell explained how he connected with people like COTA who helped him get into grocery stores. He describes what it's like to have a 30-second conversation with grocery store customers about organic. The concept is to solely let them know there's a process to certification. Most will say either it's too expensive or don't trust the food is organic. Chuck explains how he illustrates with a story. If the customer asks how one can tell whether it's organic? You ask them how they know your phone is a Toshiba? They will probably respond that there must be a government program that guarantees it. Explain that certification is similar – there's a verification process to guarantee. He invites members to look at his display and brochure materials on table in entry to the room.

**IOIA Shirts** – Patti Bursten Deutsch presents her idea of creating IOIA polo-style shirts to wear to inspections. She wants to get a feel as to whether inspectors would be interested? This would increase our visibility. Al Johnson expresses support and suggests these shirts have a pocket. Beth Dominick says there are plenty of on-demand companies out there who don't have minimum order requirements. Angela Wartes says she can find GOTS Certified shirts. Patti asks Beth and Angela if they will form an ad hoc committee with her and they agree.

Patti continues by suggesting that the IOIA Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct and Complaint Procedures is due for a review by the IOIA Ethics Committee. The committee members are Joyce Ford, Janine and Patti. Janine points out that the committee has not met in at least 17 years. Patti states that we need to think about our legacy and taking care of our future inspector members. Janine says she will contact Joyce and get the process going. Thanks are given.

**Working Group Coop for inspectors.** Garth says he feels we have the opportunity right now to do something that maybe only occurs once in a generation to possibly collectivize to provide inspection services. Certifiers are open to it. It addresses the need for a concrete process on how to get new inspectors up to speed, solid career path, to address the problems within the industry like training for inspectors, record keeping, and could provide senior inspectors with mentorship opportunities. We would like to create a subcommittee to explore the possibility of a collective/coop that would provide certifiers with inspection services. For example: A certifier

calls up the inspection pool to hire someone with a particular skill set. Nate Powell-Palm describes the challenges and burn-out experienced running one's own business – this could create stability, stepwise advancement, obtain additional experience and increase our control of fees. Angela suggests this is a way for us to have a benefits package, like health care. It is imperative to make this a 'real' career choice. Ryan Sitler suggests that efficiencies could be created when shopping for an inspector to verify multiple audit standards in one inspection. It would reduce our environmental carbon footprint. Margaret Scoles asks whether this is done by IOIA or a new entity. Garth responds that it would be an entity associate with IOIA. Maybe form another nonprofit?

Motion is made by Yehuda Nestel to form a working group.

Motion is seconded by Beth.

Janine asks if there's any other discussion. Ryan volunteers to be the BOD liaison to this committee.

Janine calls the vote.

Motion carries.

## **7) Board of Directors Candidate Presentations, Election of Directors Ballot**

Margaret Scoles suggests we do the voting and then go have dinner while the ballots are counted. Proxies are passed out. Janine introduces the three candidates Allan Benjamin, Heather Donald and Chuck Mitchell and suggests they present two minute speeches to the membership after which they receive applause.

Janine instructs everyone that she will stand by the door with her IOIA cap to collect the ballots as everyone exits. Ballots are distributed.

The meeting is then paused for a Supper at 6:15 PM.

### **6:15 - 7:00 PM**

Food, beverages, networking - SAN ANTONIO BALLROOM/4th Floor

### **7:15 PM**

The Annual Meeting is reconvened with a Conversation for a New Decade. The conversation panelists are Michael Sligh, Sarah Brown, and Nathaniel Powell-Palm. Moderator is Terrence Layhew.

**8:32 PM**

Ballot decision is announced by Al Johnson. The newly elected BOD members are Heather Donald and Chuck Mitchell.

Meeting is adjourned.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Margaret Anne Weigelt.