The Canadian Association of Journalists
L'Association Canadienne des Journalistes

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Meeting Particulars

Date: Sep 13-14, 2025

Location:In-person and via Zoom

Directors In Attendance (position/role, region represented):

Najib Asil, Toronto
Jameson Berkow, Toronto
Emily Blake, Northern Canada
Elisha Dacey, Manitoba
Laurie Few, Treasurer, Toronto
Brent Jolly, President, Southern Ontario
Jason Markusoff, Alberta
Tyler Olsen, British Columbia
Karyn Pugliese, Past president
Alexander Quon, Saskatchewan
Nikita Roy
Paul Schneidereit, Vice chair
Zane Schwartz, Chair, Vancouver
Patti Sonntag (via Zoom), Quebec
Julie Sobowale, Vice president
Nathalie Sturgeon, Atlantic Canada
Fatima Syed, Vice president
Paula Tran (via Zoom), Ottawa

Staff In Attendance (position/role):

Monique Durette (via Zoom), Operations Manager
Emelia Fournier, Program Coordinator

Regrets:

Katrina Clarke, Winnipeg

Summary of Meeting

1. Call to order: Sep 13, 2025 9:07AM ET a. Introductions
2. Director professional development sessions - guest: P. Minnikin (via Zoom) Training provided by Paula Minnikin on governance and board director roles.
Adjourn for lunch 11:35AM ET *J. Sobowale joined at noon ET.* *Resume 1:20PM ET*
3. Operational board meeting items:
a. Agenda amendments and approval: MOTION to approve agenda as presented. M: N. Sturgeon, S: N. Roy, Carried.
b. Previous board meeting minutes corrections and approval: TASK: Governance committee to review minutes and minute-taking process, and June 2025 and Aug 2025 approval to be deferred to the next board meeting.
c. Officer/staff reports
i. President's report - B. Jolly

MOTION - That the CAJ board retains the services of Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP to create a new not-for-profit organization with purposes/activities that align with acceptable charitable status: advanced education, research, scholarships and ethics. Upon completion of creating this new not-for-profit organization, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP will oversee the process of preparing and submitting an application for charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency. And that this project will have a proposed budget of $10,000. M: B. Jolly, S: A. Quon, Carried. MOTION to accept the president's report as presented. M: J. Sobowale, S: F. Syed, Carried.
ii. Treasurer's report - L. Few Verbal report provided. TASK: Review Contingency Reserve (aka Rainy Day Fund) to ensure the current level is appropriate for current revenues. MOTION to accept the treasurer's report as presented. M: N. Sturgeon, S: J. Sobowale, Carried.
iii. Chair's report - Z. Schwartz/P. Schneidereit Verbal report provided. Few vacancies remain.
Break 2:51-2:56pm ET
iv. Operations Manager's report - M. Durette TASK: Membership committee to review the concept of designation/certification for journalists. MOTION to accept the operations manager's report as presented. M: N. Sturgeon, S: A. Quon, Carried.
v. Program Coordinator's report - E. Fournier MOTION to accept the program coordinator's report as presented. M: F. Syed, S: J. Berkow, Carried.
d. Regional event explanation Z. Schwartz explained to new regional directors what it means to offer regional events as directors TASK: M. Durette to reach out to regional directors to provide detailed information about regional events, funding, and other details regional directors need to know.
e. Region Reports:
i. Winnipeg - K. Clarke
ii. SK - A. Quon
Break 3:48-3:58pm ET
f. Committee & Program updates:
i. Advocacy committee - B. Jolly

Verbal update provided about ongoing efforts of the committee. Highlighted the current programs available to members and non-members such as the Emergency Support Fund, CNIPS and other work of the advocacy committee.

ii. Awards committee - J. Markusoff
Verbal summary of report provided about ongoing efforts of the committee, such as the upcoming round of the program and the expected timeline. Chair of the committee presented motions, and necessary context, for the several motions.

MOTION to approve the rule that members of the CAJ awards committee and the board president are prohibited from entering the awards program in the year in which they serve in those roles; and that in recognition of this sacrifice, active CAJ awards committee members will be given free tickets to that year's gala, at the discretion of the awards committee chair and treasurer. M: J. Markusoff, S: J. Berkow, Carried.

TASK: M. Durette to amend TOR of the Awards Committee to reflect the approved motion about restriction of committee members entering the awards program.

MOTION to approve the receipt of $10,000 from Jana Pruden for the creation of the Janice Johnston Award for Crime and Justice Reporting, with funds to sit in an internally restricted reserve for the sole purpose of the award. Cash award of $1,000 to be issued to gold award recipients only, for a period of 10 years. M: F. Syed, S: E. Dacey, Carried. A. Quon abstained from vote due to personal contribution to the fund prior to being sent to the CAJ.

MOTION to approve the creation of the Geoffrey Stevens Award for Local Government Reporting, with a sponsored cash prize in the amount of $1,000 awarded to the gold award recipients only. Funding of the award to be invoiced to the Friends of Geoffrey Stevens annually. M: B. Jolly, S: J. Markusoff, Carried.

MOTION to eliminate the Daily Excellence Award, effective immediately. M: J. Markusoff. Discussion of motion took place and motion withdrawn.

TASK: Future of Daily Excellence Award to be discussed at next awards committee meeting.

MOTION to accept the awards committee report as presented. M: B. Jolly, S: F. Syed, Carried.

iii. Communications committee - F. Syed
Verbal report provided about possible campaigns and work of the committee.

iv. Conference subcommittee - N. Roy (on behalf of both herself and J. St. Denis)
Verbal report provided about the work to secure a venue for CAJ26 in Ottawa.

MOTION to accept the conference subcommittee report as presented. M: J. Markusoff, S: J. Sobowale, Carried.

v. Diversity subcommittee - Z. Schwartz
Verbal report provided about how the survey work is progressing.

vi. Ethics advisory committee - J. Berkow
Verbal report provided about the work of the committee, which did not meet during the summer.

TASK: M. Durette to update current list on website of committee members.

vii. Finance committee - L. Few
Verbal report provided about work of the committee. Budgeting process to begin soon.
A. Quon to join the finance committee.

viii. Fundraising subcommittee - B. Jolly/J. Sobowale
Verbal report provided about the funding initiatives that the organization is seeking out. No details will be provided until funding is secured.
Mental health and well-being conference, MediaStrong North America, is being planned for next year in Toronto in June. Conflict with other major North American event being held on the same day - B. Jolly/J. Sobowale to discuss further.

ix. Governance committee - Z. Schwartz
Verbal report provided about the work of the committee thus far.

x. Membership committee - J. Sobowale

Recommendation: That the CAJ move from physical member ID cards to digital cards, which are at a lower cost, can be priced lower for members (compared to current cards), have significantly less administrative burden, and come with higher benefits to the members. - M. Durette

MOTION that the CAJ move from physical member ID cards to digital member ID cards. M: J. Sobowale. Discussion took place and motion withdrawn.

TASK: Further discussion of physical and digital ID cards to take place at committee level.

TASK: Send regional member data to J. Markusoff

MOTION to appoint Scott Jacobsen as a non-director member of the membership committee. M: J. Sobowale, S: E. Dacey, Carried.

xi. Mentorship subcommittee - F. Syed Verbal update provided of the work of the committee, including the upcoming round of the program.
xii. Online learning subcommittee - K. Clarke MOTION to accept the online learning subcommittee report as presented. M: J. Sobowale, S: F. Syed, Carried.
xiii. Professional development committee - P. Sonntag Verbal update provided of the work of the committee, including an AI network initiative that is being developed in Canada. N. Roy/B. Jolly to send initiative information around to board for approval.
f. Governance matters
i. Policy approvals Policy review and approvals moved offline
ii. Director Appointments
i. Spencer Colby - Director at large **MOTION** to approve appointment of Spencer Colby as director at large until 2026 AGM. M: B. Jolly, S: F. Syed, Carried.
g. (Information only) Summary of directors' resolutions signed electronically:
i. Directors' resolution for approval of director appointment - BC
h. Other business
Motion to break for the day J. Sobowale, S: N. Sturgeon 5:55pm ET
Call to order: Saturday Sep 14 - Start 9:05am ET (P. Schneidereit and F. Syed absent)
4. Operational planning for 2025-2027, based on strategic plan
a. Directors broke out into groups to work on further development of the operational plan
A. Quon left meeting at 9:52am ET
5. Adjournment. 12:30pm ET

Summary of Resolutions (excludes meeting-operational motions)

BIRT the CAJ board retains the services of Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP to create a new not-for-profit organization with purposes/activities that align with acceptable charitable status: advanced education, research, scholarships and ethics. Upon completion of creating this new not-for-profit organization, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP will oversee the process of preparing and submitting an application for charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency. And that this project will have a proposed budget of $10,000. M: B. Jolly, S: A. Quon, Carried.
BIRT members of the CAJ awards committee and the board president are prohibited from entering the awards program in the year in which they serve in those roles; and that in recognition of this sacrifice, active CAJ awards committee members will be given free tickets to that year's gala, at the discretion of the awards committee chair and treasurer. M: J. Markusoff, S: J. Berkow, Carried.
BIRT the receipt of $10,000 from Jana Pruden for the creation of the Janice Johnston Award for Crime and Justice Reporting is approved, with funds to sit in an internally

restricted reserve for the sole purpose of the award. Cash award of $1,000 to be issued to gold award recipients only, for a period of 10 years. M: Fatima, S: Elisha, Carried. A. Quon abstained from vote due to personal contribution to the fund prior to being sent to the CAJ.
BIRT the creation of the Geoffrey Stevens Award for Local Government Reporting is approved, with a sponsored cash prize in the amount of $1,000 awarded to the gold award recipients only. Funding of the award to be invoiced to the Friends of Geoffrey Stevens annually. M: Brent, S: Jason, Carried.
BIRT the appointment of Scott Jacobsen as a non-director member of the membership committee is approved. M: J. Sobowale, S: E. Dacey, Carried.
BIRT the appointment of Spencer Colby as director at large is approved until 2026 AGM. M: B. Jolly, S: F. Syed, Carried.

Summary of Policies and Documents Reviewed

No policies or documents reviewed

Summary of New Action Items

All action items/tasks tracked by Operations Manager in task management software and reported on with individual/committee responsible.

Governance committee to review minutes and minute-taking process, and June 2025 and Aug 2025 approval to be deferred to the next board meeting.
Finance committee to review contingency reserve (aka Rainy Day Fund) to ensure the current level is appropriate for current revenues.
Membership committee to review the concept of designation/certification for journalists.
M. Durette to reach out to regional directors to provide detailed information about regional events, funding, and other details regional directors need to know.
M. Durette to amend awards committee TOR to reflect the approved motion about restriction of committee members entering the awards program.
M. Durette to update current list of EAC members on website.
M. Durette to add A. Quon to finance committee.
Membership committee to discuss physical and digital ID cards and bring back to executive for review.
M. Durette to send regional member data to J. Markusoff.
B. Jolly and N. Roy to send AI network initiative information to board for approval.
Awards committee to discuss future of Daily Excellence Award.

Activity on Past Action Items

All action items/tasks tracked by Operations Manager in task management software and reported on with individual/committee responsible.

Status	Task	Assignee	Date
In progress	M. Durette to set up an internal committee/board webpage through Membee systems. Test page for membership committee created and sent for review	M. Durette	Mar 24, 2024 Apr 24, 2024
In progress	Professional development committee to determine a working group and plan for development of questionnaire to northern reporters about what others who might come in should know about remote reporting; and resource to be developed from such.	PD committee (with Emily Blake and Eva Holland working on task)	Mar 24, 2024
Not started	M. Durette to work with P. Schneidereit and B. Jolly on a local event planning guide.	M. Durette	Mar 24, 2024
In progress	Membership committee to continue discussing the recognition that would be adopted for long-standing, consecutive membership years, based on board's feedback.	Membership committee	Mar 24, 2024
In progress	Awards dispute resolution policy drafted, to be discussed by committee for future recommendation to the board; moved to email for further discussion by the committee	Awards committee	Sep 10, 2023
Not started	M. Durette to create website feedback form	M. Durette	Feb 12, 2023
In progress	International issue position policy tasked to advocacy committee Position policy tasked to advocacy committee Position policy drafted by working group Position policy presented to board for review and approval Position policy moved back to working group for further update	F. Syed/ Advocacy committee	Oct 2, 2022 Dec 10, 2023 Mar 5 2024 Mar 13, 2024 Mar 13, 2024

	Position policy updated by working group Position policy to be reviewed/updated by new working group (P. Schneidereit, F. Syed and M. Durette) Position policy reviewed/updated by working group Position policy on board meeting agenda for review and approval Review/approval of position policy moved to email		Nov 14 2024 Aug 14, 2025 Aug 23, 2025 Sep 13, 2025 Sep 13, 2025
In progress	Charitable status Finance committee tasked with looking at charitable status; B. Jolly has a contact that specializes in non-profit law and will obtain quote Information sent to finance committee for recommendation to board for approval of unbudgeted expense Charitable status application submitted to CRA Response from CRA that CAJ does not qualify with existing activities; recommendation that separate org be established for charitable activities Board approved unbudgeted expense for lawyer on retainer to create new organization that will then apply for charitable status	B. Jolly/ M. Durette/ J. Sobowale	Jan 19, 2020 Oct 3, 2021 Jul 20, 2023 Sep 2024 Feb 2025 Sep 13, 2025