



Athabasca University
Students' Union

Athabasca University Students' Union

Special Council Meeting Minutes

APPROVED Dec 13, 2016

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

5:30pm MT

Meeting Called By: Shawna Wasylyshyn, President
Type of Meeting: AUSU Special Council Meeting
Minutes: Donette Kingyens, Communications and Member Services Coordinator

Participants

Council: President Shawna Wasylyshyn, Vice President External and Student Affairs Julian Teterenko, Vice President Finance and Administration Kim Newsome, Councillor Robin Bleich, Councillor Andrew Gray, Councillor Scott Jacobsen, Councillor Amanda Lipinski, Councillor Brandon Simmons,

Staff: Executive Director Sarah Cornett, Communications and Member Services Coordinator Donette Kingyens, The Voice Managing Editor Karl Low

Members: Bonita Arbeau, Lyle Harvey

Absent: Councillor Dixie Toliver (Absent on vacation)

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm MT.

Agenda and Minutes

- 1.0 Adoption of Agenda** All
- Motion:** BIRT AUSU Council adopt the agenda.
S. Jacobsen / R. Bleich **Carried 8/0**
- 2016-11-23 Council Agenda.pdf*
- Non-councillor attendees from the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee are invited to join the discussion during agenda item 3.0.

Old Business

- 2.0 Ratification of Email Motion – November 16, 2016** S. Wasylyshyn
- Motion:** BIRT AUSU Council ratify the following email motion of November 16, 2016 for the record:
- BIRT AUSU council authorize a 3rd party website consultant to retrieve, compile and interpret website analytics for "The Voice Magazine" (www.voicemagazine.org) for the period of November 1, 2015 to October 31, 2016 and that this request be initiated immediately. AUSU council further authorizes an expense of up to \$1000 to pay the 3rd party for this information.*
- K. Newsome / A. Gray **Carried 9/0**
- A. Gray / S. Jacobsen **Carried 8/0**

New Business

- 3.0 Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee Report** S. Jacobsen/ S. Cornett
- Motion:** BIRT AUSU Council approve the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee report.
S. Jacobsen / B. Simmons
- 2016-11-02 Joint C-V Report.pdf*

The initial report was reviewed and discussed by the executive, who felt there needed to be a more direct connection between the terms of reference and the creation of an action plan. The committee put together a revised report which was circulated prior to the meeting.

The report was discussed at length, and the following points were raised:

- There is concern from council that it would require significant staff and council time to put together a standing Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC).
- The Voice has significant money in reserves which some council would like to see used first towards improving The Voice, such as using it to pay for more staff hours. However, it was noted that the reserves were intended for things like a new website and cannot be sustained long term for wages since the budget currently just balances.
- It was suggested that the EAC consist of more councillors or use the existing standing MECC committee, but it was noted that one of the key roles The Voice plays is to be able to critique AUSU, which requires editorial autonomy that cannot be carried out with an EAC comprised of all council members. Examples were also provided of organizations that have committees comprised of members at large.
- Some council members expressed a preference for making improvements to The Voice to get it on an upward trajectory before implementing an EAC to maintain it long-term.
- The Managing Editor works part-time and does all the work of editing, managing, and producing the magazine at present so does not have time to implement the action plan himself.
- It was suggested that The Voice move to a bi-weekly publication to allow the Managing Editor more time to undertake tasks to improve the Voice, but it was also noted that this would lead to lost writers, and it has been historically very difficult to get new writers.
- The report shows a short term, medium term, and long term plan for four categories in the report. The short-term plans only involve the editor, editor in chief, and one councillor to get things started, and some of the ideas have already begun being implemented by the Managing Editor.
- Council would like to consider other avenues to improve The Voice prior to creating an EAC, such as using reserves for a short-term paid consultant to help implement the recommendations.

The council decided that they would like to consider the current report as an interim report only, and they would like the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee to put together a revised report that includes the following:

- Timeframes for the short, medium and long term action plans.
- Consideration of paid consultant work instead of the EAC for the medium-term goals.
- Section 11 fleshed out with a more rigorous action plan.
- Add more specific tasks, resources, and decision points to the action plan.
- Consider the EAC as a longer-term possibility to maintain the publication.
- More information about the job descriptions of the Editor in Chief and Managing Editor prior to and distinct from the EAC.
- Further details about the procedure to review and assess the action plan in the future.

B. Arbeau joined the meeting at 6:21pm MT.

Motion to amend the original motion to approve the report as an interim report.

A. Gray / K. Newsome

Carried 8/0

J. Teterenko left the meeting at 6:55pm MT.

Motion: BIRT AUSU Council approve the Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee report as an interim report.

S. Jacobsen / J. Teterenko

Carried 7/0

It was noted that with current staff work loads and the winter break, the earliest a revised report would be ready would likely be February. However, council can choose to implement ideas from the interim report in the meantime.

The committee will continue to provide monthly reports to council as it has been doing.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meetings of Council will be:

Tuesday, December 13, 2016, 5:30 pm MDT - Public Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 2016, 5:30 pm MDT - Public Meeting (Tentative)

Motion to Adjourn at 7:02pm MT.