

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025
Avery Room, Fairbanks Centre, 54 Locks Road, Dartmouth, NS

1. Welcome/Call to Order

Lauren Sinclair, Secretary of CPRS Nova Scotia, welcomed members and guests to the meeting and delivered a land acknowledgement. Quorum was confirmed and the meeting was called to order at 5:12 p.m.

2. Minutes of 2024 AGM and Acceptance of Agenda

The minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting were circulated to members in advance of the meeting. There being no errors or omissions, the minutes were approved as presented.

The agenda for the 2025 Annual General Meeting was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. There being no errors or additions, the agenda was approved as presented.

3. President's Report

Sarah Manley Robertson, SCMP President of CPRS Nova Scotia presented the President's Report. The report included highlights of Board activities over the past year, communications initiatives, acknowledgement of the current Board, and recognition of National Volunteer Week.

Sarah reaffirmed CPRS's national mandate and the Nova Scotia Society's commitment to ethical, strategic public relations and communications management.

Sarah highlighted that the key priorities for the year included delivering member value through practical professional development, strengthening province-wide networks, supporting practitioners across career stages, and elevating the profession in Nova Scotia.

Sarah noted that Board operations remained effective despite some role turnover and capacity constraints. She shared that the Practitioner of the Year award was deferred, and one Nova Scotia APR candidate was successfully supported.

Programming and activities were guided by member feedback, resulting in targeted networking and professional development, strengthened student engagement, and collaboration with partner organizations.

The Society maintained national visibility, sound financial management, and strong governance while continuing to recognize and promote member achievements.

4. Financial Report

Kate Comeau, APR, Treasurer of CPRS Nova Scotia, presented the Financial Report, including an overview of the chapter's financial position. Members were invited to ask questions.

In her report, Kate noted that we are in a strong financial position, exceeding revenue targets and coming in under budget.

Kate recommended again in 2025-2026 that we try to spend down some of our savings to better serve our members.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made and carried.

5. Professional Development Report

Lauren Fraser, PD Committee Chair, presented the Professional Development Report, noting that the year's program appealed to practitioners at all stages of their careers. In-person sessions fostered networking opportunities and supported relationship-building for students, recent graduates, and newcomers to the PR industry in Nova Scotia. Attendance averaged 32 participants and included students, members, and non-members, with our final event – a virtual session – reaching as far as Edmonton.

Prioritizing our members, we incorporated feedback from the membership survey – covering topics of interest, preferred event times and locations – and focused on delivering practical applications in each session. Each event was aligned with one or more elements of the CPRS Code of Professional Standards.

A total of five professional development sessions were held during the 2024/2025 year, including:

- **September 25, 2024** – Career Strategy event (in person at the Halifax Partnership offices) with Karen Kelloway. This interactive session, led by career coach Karen Kelloway, provided attendees with valuable insights and tools to help navigate career uncertainty, reframe challenges, and clarify next steps. Participants learned how to articulate what they need to thrive, focus on controllable factors, and take ownership of their career development. 14 attendees (11 members, 3 non-members).
- **November 21, 2024** – Government Relations & Public Policy panel (in-person at the Keith's Brewery Market). Panelists Mike Davis (Davis Pier), Kristan Hines (National), Trevor Floyd (Iris), and David Tarrant (Enterprise Canada), moderated by our Board's Vice President, Alison Gillan. In this timely session, panelists discussed government relations, public policy, and the value of nurturing sustainable, long-term relationships. Panelists emphasized the importance of strong engagement strategies and shared insights on building relationships in a shifting political landscape. 73 attendees (59 non-members, 14 members).

- **February 6, 2025** – Crisis Communications event (in-person at the Halifax Partnership offices) with Tom Ormsby (Tom Ormsby Public Relations). In this session, crisis communications expert and CPRS College of Fellows inductee Tom Ormsby shared foundational insights into crisis management. Attendees gained a deeper understanding of how to approach high-pressure situations with clarity, preparedness, and strategic focus. 32 attendees.
- **March 26, 2025** – Mastering Media & Messaging (in-person at MSVU and co-hosted with IABC Maritime). Panelists Hannah Langille (National; IABC Maritime Board member), Rudee Gaudet (NS Department of Natural Resources & Energy), and Remo Zaccagna (NS Health/CPRS Board) shared best practices in media relations and messaging. Moderated by CPRS-NS President Sarah Robertson, the session focused on navigating tough questions, delivering key messages, and building strong media relationships. Attendees gained practical insights into navigating the evolving media landscape with confidence and clarity. This PD event was followed by a CPRS-NS Student Social event. 28 attendees.
- **May 1, 2025** – Volunteerism panel event (held virtually on Zoom) with panelists Alison Chandler (KBRS), Kathryn Levandier (United Way Maritimes), Sue McKeage (Communications Nova Scotia), and Shelley Murphy and moderated by Lauren Sinclair. This session, inspired by a member suggestion and held during National Volunteer Week, explored how volunteering strengthens both communities and careers. Attendees received practical strategies and inspiring stories to guide their volunteer journeys. 17 attendees (16 members, one non-member).

6. Membership Report

Ceilidh McMeekin, Membership Chair, highlighted two membership events, including a Holiday social held in collaboration with IABC Maritime, and a student appreciation event and social held at MSVU in March. Virtual presentations to students at MSVU also took place in September to introduce students to our society.

Ceilidh noted that all new members receive welcome emails, and an offer to meet in person, to facilitate strong connections with the local association.

Ceilidh also highlighted the membership survey that was conducted in October/November, which received 22 responses.

7. New Business

None

8. Nominating Committee Report

JoAnn Alberstat, Immediate Past President of CPRS Nova Scotia, presented the nominating committee report, introducing the nominations for the CPRS-NS 2025-2026 Board of



Directors:

- **President:** Lauren Sinclair
- **Immediate Past President:** Sarah Manley Robertson, SCMP
- **Vice President:** Alison Gillan, APR, CMP
- **Treasurer:** Kate Comeau, APR
- **Secretary:** Logan Oderkirk
- **Members at Large:** Mina Atia, Morgan Atwater, Colleen Cosgrove, Dawn Delaney, Lauren Fraser, Rebecca Hatton, Ceilidh McMeekin, Rudee Gaudet, Tien Pham, Molly Simon, Olivia Ward.

JoAnn Alberstat asked for further nominations. Hearing none, a motion was made to accept the nominations as presented. The motion was carried.

9. Recognition of Outgoing Board Members

The following members were acknowledged for their significant contributions to the Board and to our Chapter's work throughout the year:

- JoAnn Alberstat
- Tiffany Chase
- Remo Zaccagna
- Katie Feltmate
- Najah Dhuny

The Mount Saint Vincent University student Board representatives for the year, Suwela Vassoa (BPR) and Kiana Crummy (MPR) were also thanked and acknowledged.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, and the meeting ended at 5:52 p.m.

** Post-Adjournment Recognitions and Presentations

Following the official adjournment of the business meeting, the CPRS Nova Scotia Student Award, sponsored by Prospect Strategies Ltd., was awarded to Dina Sallam, a Master's student in Public Relations at Mount Saint Vincent University. Dina was not present, but a slideshow of photos was shown to members.

A special recognition was also presented to Shelley Murphy, a current member and past Board Member. Alison MacDonald helped present the award.

The evening concluded with networking.