

## **CAOAC General Members Meeting – January 19, 2026**

### **Attendance:**

**Executive Team** – Jim Chalmers, Ernest Biktimirov, Cathy Cope, Keith Davy, Ann-Marie Towell, Jason Reding, Cindy Barrett, Frank A CAOAC Past President

**Club Representatives** - Nancy Egelton, Dave Holland, Ken Boorman, Zenin Skomorowski, Barry Graham, Nellie VanGils, Jeff Mountjoy, Carla McDonald, Margaret Dent, Victoria, Phil Barrett, Ken Boorman, Mike Majer, Myron Iwanochko

Meeting called to order at 8:07pm

Ernest Biktimirov welcomed everyone to the first CAWAC General Membership Meeting of 2026. Stated CAOAC had a successful year in 2025, which concluded with the Hamilton Aquarium Society's 70th anniversary bash. Stated that at the COAC convention in Burlington, we welcomed a new club, the Georgian Shores Aquarium Society, into CAOAC at our last general meeting, and hopes this momentum will be carried forward into the new year.

Ernest Biktimirov formally introduced himself as first vice president of CAOAC and that he would be moderating the meeting and then reviewed the meeting agenda. He began with a welcome and the introduction of the COAC executive.

**Ann Marie Towell** introduced herself as the HAP (Horticulture Award Program) chairperson and that there were no submissions for this year. She is hoping to see more for next year. She then introduced Cindy as her partner in the fish rescue program and that she is working with Cathy to make the process more efficient

**Dave Holland** had a question about the horticultural awards program and if there was a rollout plan when clubs can expect information on how to participate in the horticultural program? Dave stated there's a lot of new executives that don't know it exists and they don't know that you can act as the club AHAP Rep. Ann-Marie responded by saying they should get in touch with her and that she is more than willing to help out any other any clubs.

Cathy gave a webmaster reported and started by saying thank you to Frank, the past president for his patience and willingness to help get the website up and going again. She also thanked Michael Beat for an easy handoff. She encouraged the clubs to reach out with any ideas for the website. Cathy also asked for patience as she learns her way around the website and getting it updated. Dave also inquired about minutes being posted on the

website and she reiterated that there has been a bit of a learning curve plus the website was down for some time. Nancy Egelton mentioned that Lisa Boorman has been a great help in keeping the Facebook page up to date. Cathy plans to continue to work with Lisa on the Facebook page and Lisa assigned Cathy with Admin rights.

Keith Davy reported next that he is going to try and get more speakers onto the website as well as confirming the speakers and their information currently on the website. Keith hopes to get a good list of qualified speakers on there.

**Jason Reding** provided a Treasurer's report, he stated that the executive team did make the decision to increase the membership fee for this year. For larger clubs it went up \$10, for medium sized clubs it went up \$5 and for the smaller club fee it remained the same just to help out those clubs that are maybe a little smaller and don't have the financial means to keep up. Jason reminded the group that there has not been an increase since 2018. Jason stated that we locked in the website for 3 years as there was a substantial savings for doing so. Jason stated that CAOAC is exploring potentially changing financial institutions so that we can do electronic payments, however, no decision has been made. Jason also reported that some clubs will need to be contacted as they have yet to confirm if they are pursuing insurance. Jason did not receive a sign off for last year's financials from all clubs and will be reaching out. This needs

Standards or or whatever it is guidelines that they have, it's actually a super majority which is 80% and that's we would have to get 80. We'd have to get almost everyone to attend this meeting and then 80% we would need an 80% vote. So we need to have 80% of the clubs here which needs to have a 100% return rate as the decision is in writing and not by a vote.

Dave Holland mentioned that summaries that weren't done, but there were no AGM's during the pandemic for 2021 or 2022 and is following up on this compliance issue from September. He asked if the executive considered asking the membership to approve the decisions of the executives for those years in lieu of the AGM? Jason replied that he will have to go back and double check on again how the ONCA would like that handled. And the clubs can expect another e-mail from the executive team.

Jason thanked the clubs who paid early/on time and a draw was made for a rebate of \$50, Peel Region won for the second year in a row.

Ernest presented the next item which is vote for the membership of Saint John Aquarium Society from New Brunswick. He asked Victoria to introduce their club. He then called for

a vote to accept their membership into CAOAC. With a showing of raised hands and no abstentions, the vote was unanimous and officially welcomed them to CAOAC.

 Ernest then proceeded to the next item on the agenda which is nomination and vote for the new Breeders Awards program chair. Nominated was King Ely from Aquarium Club of Edmonton for this position because he has extensive experience in keeping fish and breeding fish. Ken briefly introduced himself before Ernest called a vote. Ken was approved unanimously.

Jim then shared his idea about raising funds for CAOAC without impacting the clubs themselves and that is by going to the manufacturers and seeing if they would sponsor us and we would come up with a code or a button or a logo that says CAOAC approved and it would help sell their product and we could put that out right across Canada. After much discussion and queries, Jim's idea seemed to receive support for his idea and many ideas of how it can be adjusted and different opportunities.

Jim spoke on Bill 35 and that he talked to two different lawyers who agree that these private bills very rarely see the light of day.

Ernest then commented on the very successful Hamilton Aquarium Society, 75th anniversary bash and CAOAC convention in Burlington this past November, and that is now it's time to select a host for the 2026 convention, and we hope that one club or maybe 2 clubs working jointly will express interest in hosting the next convention. He offered the help of CAOAC if any clubs were concerned about the amount of work involved,

Jim and Ernest both thanked everyone for their participation in not just the meeting but the clubs and adjourned the meeting.