

General Membership Meeting Minutes May 21, 2026

Date: May 21, 2026

Time: 8:03 PM EST

Attendance

Ernest Biktimirov, Cathy Cope, Jason Reding, Ann Marie Towell, Keith Davy, Cindy Barrett
Representatives and members from various affiliated clubs were present, including:

- Chatham-Kent Aquarium Society (CKAS)
- Durham Region Aquarium Society (DRAS)
- Trans Canada Guppy Group (TCGG)
- Hamilton & District Aquarium Society (HDAS)
- St. Catharines & Area Aquarium Society (SCAAS)
- London Aquaria Society
- Peel Region Aquarium Society
- Georgian Shores Aquarium Club
- Kitchener-Waterloo Aquarium Society

1. President's Update

Ernest Biktimirov advised the membership that CAOAC President Jim Chalmers had submitted his resignation due to family reasons. The Executive accepted the resignation.

In accordance with CAOAC bylaws, Ernest Biktimirov, as First Vice-President, assumed the duties of President until the election of a new President at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the April 13, 2026, General Membership Meeting were reviewed.

Corrections and Amendments:

- Dave Holland noted that a bylaw discussion regarding replacing references to the "CAOAC Newsletter" with "CAOAC Official Communication Channels" had been omitted and should be added.
- Nancy Egelton clarified comments regarding the location of the original charter document and requested the record reflect that it had previously been stored in a pocket within the brown records binder.

Motion: To approve the April 13, 2026 meeting minutes as amended.

Result: Carried unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Jason Reding presented the Treasurer's Report.

Financial Update:

- Current bank balance: \$8,659.16
- Outstanding liabilities: approximately \$430.47
- Adjusted balance after settlement: \$8,228.69

Additional Updates:

- One outstanding membership payment had been received.
- Financial statements would be distributed to club representatives prior to the AGM.
- Consultation with the Ontario Nonprofit Network confirmed that motions to waive financial reviews/audits must be considered individually for each applicable year.
- The matter will be brought forward at the AGM for proper member consideration.

4. Steering Committee Report

Bob Wright, Chair of the Steering Committee, provided an update regarding the upcoming CAOAC elections.

Key points included:

- Election procedures had been distributed to clubs.
- Members interested in seeking executive positions were encouraged to submit biographies in advance of the AGM.
- Nominations would remain open until the AGM.
- Election administration remains independent from the current Executive to avoid conflicts of interest.

Members were encouraged to direct election-related inquiries directly to Bob Wright.

5. Call for Nominations

Discussion continued regarding the upcoming AGM elections.

A current officer indicated their willingness to stand for re-election.

Members were encouraged to submit biographies and declarations of intent to the Steering Committee Chair prior to the AGM.

6. Special Presentation – Invasive Species Prevention

Presenter: Stephanie Weinstein, Senior Lead, Education

Invasive Species Council of British Columbia

Stephanie Weinstein delivered a presentation on invasive species prevention within the aquarium trade.

Topics included:

- Definition and impacts of invasive species.
- Economic and environmental consequences of invasive aquatic organisms.
- Risks associated with releasing aquarium fish, plants, and invertebrates into natural ecosystems.
- Proper disposal methods for aquarium contents.
- Identification and reporting procedures for invasive species.
- Best practices for aquarium retailers and hobbyists.
- New educational resources developed for the aquarium industry.

The presentation highlighted the importance of responsible aquarium ownership and the role hobbyists play in preventing invasive species introductions.

Members participated in a question-and-answer session following the presentation.

Topics discussed included:

- Economic impacts of invasive species.
- Management priorities for invasive species programs.

- Invasive crayfish species in Ontario.
- Reporting procedures for invasive plants and animals.
- Community stewardship efforts and habitat restoration initiatives.

The membership thanked Stephanie Weinstein for her presentation and educational efforts.

7. Tanks for the Community – Public Aquarium Initiative

Ernest Biktimirov delivered a presentation on public aquarium initiatives and community engagement through the aquarium hobby. Topics included:

- Benefits of placing aquariums in public spaces to introduce children and families to the aquarium hobby.
- Increasing public awareness of aquarium societies through community displays.
- Educational and community benefits of public aquariums.
- Examples of volunteer-maintained aquariums by SCAAS at the St. Catharines and Welland Public Libraries.
- Practical guidance for clubs interested in establishing public aquariums, including volunteer coordination, partnerships with libraries or community centres, and securing donations.

The presentation highlighted the positive impact aquarium societies can have through community outreach and public education.

Members participated in a discussion following the presentation. Topics discussed included:

- Examples of community involvement by local aquarium clubs.
- Public aquarium projects as a means of promoting the aquarium hobby.
- Partnerships with local institutions and organizations.

8. Other Business

Proposal was suggested to defer the Bylaw amendment regarding the Steering Committee Chair. The Executive Committee decided against deferral to meet the 60-day notification period.