

Minutes Annual General Meeting Russian House Melbourne

9th December 2018

Present: President, committee members and members of the Russian House

- Meeting started at 1.25 pm with a prayer.
- The president, George Lavrin opened the meeting, establishing that a quorum had been reached with the presence of members of which ... were financial.
- George Lavrin was elected as chairperson of the AGM. Scrutineer, John Milovanovich and minute secretaries, Nadezhda Filianovskaia and Irene Schkola were also elected without opposition.
- Minutes of the previous AGM in 2017 were distributed.

It was noted that there were inconsistencies between the English and the Russian versions of the Minutes. The Minutes were accepted on the proviso that the differences between the two were corrected.

- President of the Society's Report (report tabled)

George Lavrin presented his report as President of the Russian House starting with a welcome to all participants of the AGM. Committee members and volunteers were thanked for their efforts in the year 2017– 2018. The President noted that all committee members themselves were volunteers and all worked without pay.

Maintenance of the House and its assets is being carried out continuously.

The following projects were accomplished this year:

1. The windows both upstairs and down were replaced. A grant of \$30,000 had been received for the work on the ground floor.
2. Repainting of the hall and corridor on the first floor.
3. The "Crystal Room" repaired and renovated with large mirrors installed.
4. The balustrades cleaned and polished.
5. Televisions replaced with new both upstairs and down. One of the old televisions was moved into the dining room.

The President explained briefly the discrepancy between the financial position at the end of the last financial year (\$129,095.43) and the present (\$92, 290.86).

Russian House and land have been valued as being between \$5m and \$7m. A large amount of work took place this year to raise the standard and value of the House.

The Russian House has been involved in many events over the past year. G. Lavrin provided a thorough list but amongst those that were of significant interest this year were the celebration of 75th anniversary of diplomatic relationships between Australia and Russia and the watching of the opening of the FIFA World Cup and games that Russia played in in June

of this year. Sixty viewers came to watch the last match with Croatia and this was filmed for SBS TV.

A new rental agreement has been reached with the RERC. This will be current until June 2020.

Future work on the building include rendering of the facade of the Russian House.

A sub-committee has been formed to overview the decoration and renovation of the House. Amongst the issues they will be looking at will be the replacement of the fresco whose removal caused great controversy in the community, new window coverings and possible replacement of the bars for ballet.

Recently during a heavy rainfall, the new roof leaked. This may well be another project for the committee.

The Society aims to continue to improve the Russian House so it will be both attractive and safe for its guests.

In answer to the questions from the floor the President reiterated that the rendering and redecoration of the House are the most important projects for the following year but there will always be others that will arise as the year progresses including looking at the repair of the oven.

Issues raised by Anna Feotichstkova were addressed in "Other Business".

Anatole Volk recommended the use of a timer to switch off air conditioning as some users fail to switch them off before leaving the House. The issue he raised about the front and back door locks will be looked at by the committee.

Report Accepted by all

- Financial Report presented by Sergey Sizenko, Treasurer of Russian House (report tabled)

Total income was \$62, 683 and total expenditure was \$128, 237. The net deficit was therefore \$65, 554. The greatest expenditure was in the area of Repair and Maintenance of the building - \$94, 728

Two grants have been received from the Government one being current for this financial year.

Treasurer's Report accepted

- Internal Audit Committee Report presented by Anatole Volk (report tabled)

The Internal Audit Committee approved the Financial Report. All questions and concerns were responded to satisfactorily.

The Audit Committee suggests reviewing membership payments to ensure that membership is up to date at the time of the AGM. The Treasurer concurs with the need to review this issue. The Committee will look into this during the year mindful of the requirements of the Constitution.

Nona Panova brought up the issue of late notification of the AGM. The Secretary replied speaking of a number of ways possible to make payments for membership and of the

notifications made by email and post. It is important that contact details including email addresses are kept up to date. Nona Panova noted that not all have access to the internet and that a hard copy is preferable.

Auditors' Report accepted.

- Election of Office Bearers of Russian House

Same candidates as the previous year except Gregory Uskhopov who was resigning from the position of Vice President.

President: George Lavrin

Vice President: Sergei An

Secretary: Nadezhda Filianovskaia

Treasurer: Sergei Sizenko

All voted in without opposition.

- Election of Committee Members

The following committee members were re-elected without opposition.

- Margarita Mingina
- Marina Keskevich
- Vera Kalashnikova
- Vladimir Nikolaeff (Absent from AGM. Re-elected upon J. Milovanovich paying his outstanding membership dues during the meeting)

Other people may be co-opted if required

- Election of Internal Auditors

As there were no other nominees the existing auditors were elected without opposition. Sergei Suetin and Anatole Volk – Levonovich remain as the Internal Auditors.

- General Business

- Annual Youth Assembly: FR. Deacon A. Abramov reminded members of the Youth Assembly, which will be taking place in Melbourne this year.
- Return of the bars for ballet: Anna Feotiskova spoke about the need to return the bars to the "Crystal Room". A discussion arose about the precedence of members at the AGM over that of the Committee. It was decided that the subcommittee will make the decisions with consideration of the opinions of members at the AGM. E. Zubrin spoke of the need for the Committee to keep the desires of the AGM in mind when making decisions.
 - Vote: 37 for the return of the bars
- Historical Seminar: Fr, N. Karipov invited members to attend lectures to be given by a Russian Historian on religious life in Russia.

- Group Membership for Club Erudita: Vera Kalashnikova spoke in its favour. Although the Club is highly respected, membership at the Russian House constitutionally is only for the individual not group.
- Grand Piano: Vera Kalashnikova spoke in its favour as a potential money earner if concerts were to be held. The committee will look at its viability
- Overpainting of Fresco: This became a controversial topic amongst the members of the Russian Community especially on Facebook.

The painter who had painted over the fresco explained that significant parts of it had been damaged by rain leaking through the roof over the years. The paintwork was lifting and bubbling.

G. Uskhopov (Vice President and acting President at that time) explained how he came to make the decision in the absence of the President of the Russian House.

N. Filianovskaia spoke of the decisions the subcommittee will need to make about how and with what to replace it. A number of suggestions have already been made and welcomes further suggestions from members in written form.

Tamara Baras spoke of the need to have, as a replacement, for the fresco a positive image, reflective of Russian culture today but looking to the future.

Svetlana Parsons commented that the Russian House should have been more open and responsive to the public in this and similar situations.

Sergey Sizenko noted that many who had made comments on Facebook were not even members of the Russian House and that if they wish to have a say they are welcome to join.

- Retirement of the Vice President: G. Lavrin expressed gratitude to the retiring Vice president, Grigory Uskhopov and thanked him for all his years of service to the Russian House
- Close of Official Meeting

The president closed the meeting inviting all into the dining room to partake of tea, piroshki, sandwiches and cake. Meeting closed at 3.00 pm.

Minute Secretary: Irene Schkola