



## Secretary's Annual Report 2019-2020

**SECRETARY: position VACANT**  
*Report prepared by Gerry Powell*

### **PORTFOLIO OBJECTIVES 2019-2020**

- The Secretary's duties are standard and laid out in NLC bylaws and administrative guidance.
- the objectives undertaken at the Branch were to:
  - Establish an administrative process for the effective planning, conduct, and recording of Council and Branch meetings and decisions made;
  - Develop an Action List to monitor the progress of planned actions or Branch preparations for major events through the training year;
  - Establish a process to make necessary info for upcoming meetings, or records of previous meetings available to Directors and, as appropriate, all members; and
  - ensure the Branch adheres to NLC bylaws and admin guidance.
- Additionally, at last year's AGM, the following goals were undertaken:
  - Restructure the admin features of the website to make them easier to access/use; and
  - Investigate the viability of video conferencing for meetings of the Executive and guests.
- The Treasurer continues to act as recording-secretary until a Secretary can be appointed. The scope of NLOB activities warrant a separate Secretary dedicated to the position.

### **Comments of Achievement Status**

- Secretarial processes have continued to improve and allow for effective governance through the Council. There are records management responsibilities that the bylaws require of the Secretary that, while done in some manner, are currently distributed across several members.
- Council discussions can focus on issues needing their attention in the meeting time available. Monthly Branch meetings (9 in total) were held in the period Sept 2019 to June 2020. All were fully formed with a call/notice, agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to approve. The Executive operated effectively discussing/voting on sudden or urgent issues as necessary between Council meetings. The Executive now normally meets by video conference prior to each Council meeting to prioritize and streamline issues for discussion and focus the agenda.
- The Action Item List was maintained and reviewed by the Council to monitor progress on significant or long-term activity. 4 outstanding Action Items and 11 of the 20 created over the year were closed. Progress over the Spring was hampered by some challenges. 3 remain on hold while the COVID-19 crisis continues, 2 can now progress with the new bylaws now set, and 2 are in progress awaiting decisions from Division, National and DND on the way ahead in the Fall.
- Records of Decision (Minutes) have been produced for each Council meeting, but getting them out in a timely manner can be improved. The primary problem has been the absence of a dedicated secretary. As well, they are comprehensive and could be streamlined further.
- In addition to email, meeting calls and supporting material are now posted on the Branch website at [www.ottawanavyleague.org/council.html](http://www.ottawanavyleague.org/council.html). Historical records of council proceedings and decisions are now available to all directly rather than held on someone's file, and possibly lost with a Director's departure.
- All bylaws are being adhered to, and the Ottawa branch works with both National and Division offices to ensure correct interpretation and application of them.

## **Recommendations for 2020-2021 Objectives**

- Continue the processes started and maintain the momentum achieved last year.
- Develop the capability, practices and culture of the Council to capture the full potential it now has.
- Finalize the production of a Branch Policies and Procedures document as allowed in the Bylaws to outline unique procedures, processes, or expectations at the Ottawa Branch.
- Complete a new package of TORs for all portfolios to include as an annex to that document.

## **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PORTFOLIO**

- The Branch website was upgraded to allow for better presentation to the public, improved outreach tailored to our members, and information sharing for the Council. These improvements have yet to be fully developed.
- The Branch closely monitored and participated in the development of the new “Ontario Addendum” to the bylaws, and the choices facing the Council for a new governance at the Division AGM that followed. Members of the Executive are also on the new Division Board and involved with some of its working committees. This will allow us to monitor further developments towards the broader governance processes anticipated in the near future.
- Council has a better ability to manage the affairs and activities of the Branch, particularly its financial affairs.
- The Council has acquired several new members (going from only 8 to now 18 members since March), reactivated long-vacant portfolios, and invigorated its Communications and Community Outreach capabilities with new measures and tools in place and deliverables produced.
- the COVID-19 crisis led to a much broader use of videoconferencing by the Council and the Executive. The Branch has acquired its own BlueJeans account (a service already widely used by NLC National and several Corps) to formalize the capacity. The results have been very positive. Despite a significant increase in the size of the Council, the participation in the last three meetings has been almost 100%, covered much material, and been completed on time.

## **ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

- Ensuring a new Secretary is well supported so as to maintain and continue the progress made in Branch governance and adaptations needed in what will be interesting times over the year ahead.
- The new governance at Division still has some work to do. The involvement of two of the Branch Executive in Board duties there may take some of their time and attention, but is made supportable with the improved strengths and capacity in the Branch Council at home.
- Additional references & training for Directors responsibilities as Board Officers should be investigated

## **SUMMARY**

- We are very well placed to deal with the challenges ahead! I thank all on the Council and in the Corps for the patience and support they have provided along the way, and look forward to working with all of our new members!

Respectfully,  
Gerry Powell