

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date	Sept 25, 2022
------	---------------

Annual General Meeting		x			
General Membership meeting					
Search and Elections Committee					
Rehanara Begum	x	Committee chair	Kishower Laila	Member	x
Selina Bhuiyan	x	Member	Sultana Haq Bably	Member	x
Shanjana Rahman	x	Member			

The South Asian Women's and Immigrant's Services (SAWIS) Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2021-2022 was held on Sunday, September 25, 2022, at 4:00 PM EST. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, SAWRO's AGM was hosted online via Zoom Webinar. Outreach took the form of phone calling to eligible voting members and social media postings. A maximum of 112 attendees were in attendance. Election of the organization's governance body took the form of an online Zoom Webinar Poll maintained and managed exclusively by the Nominating Committee Chair and Staff Spokesperson.

The event host and a member of the Search and Election Committee of SAWIS, Kishower Laila, began the event by welcoming everyone to the virtual event and recapping the previous AGM in 2021. The host informed the membership of their inability to arrange an indoor setting for the event this year due to the lack of an appropriate indoor space to safely accommodate all attending members.

The event began with a tribute presented by Husna Sweet to Jim Nugent, ex-treasurer and a dear friend of the community, who passed away this year.

The host invited Sultana Jahangir, outgoing Executive Director and President of SAWIS, to provide progress over the past year. Her recap was presented alongside the Annual Report as a visual aid. Jahangir provided a year-in-review of SAWRO's projects/programs, activities, and initiatives and the proposed 2021-22 annual report. She also elaborated on the work done by the staff and peer workers in times of COVID-19 to provide support to the community's people. Her report described the work to distribute and deliver direct aid (food and PPE) to isolated and homebound community members and work to regularly follow up with community members through phone call follow-ups and online events. Jahangir emphasized that these actions proved to prevent the further marginalization of the community and neglect of the most vulnerable in times of lockdown and social distancing.

Following the Annual Report presentation and organizational activities, the host welcomed Secretary Syeda Yasmin to summarize and highlight the yearly services and activities. Syeda highlighted SAWRO's day-to-day work providing specialized employment and settlement support through the DWJobNet program in partnership with COSTI, funded through the Ontario Newcomer Settlement Program. She mentioned that the project focused on maximizing activities that support community members, especially newcomer immigrant women and their families, to re-enter the labor market and access essential COVID-19 health, social, and income programs. The number of services provided through the program was then stated. She also summarized the work of staff and peer workers to establish, update and circulate information throughout the community via sessions that made essential health, social services, and legal information available to newcomers experiencing challenges accessing information, programs, and services in English and Bengali. These activities were also supported by Women and Gender Equity (WAGE) through a COVID-19 fund. To highlight the next steps, Syeda outlined the need among newcomer women for access to a wide range of employment, settlement, and income-support services and programs and for SAWIS to expand and formalize services to effectively respond to changing circumstances. In the next year, SAWIS will work with its staff, peer workers, and service partners to increase access to integration services, public income supports, and services for financial empowerment.

The host then welcomes Mahima Alam, a SAWIS bylaws committee member, to review the organization's structure. She provided an update on the work done in the past years to update the organization's structure to strengthen SAWIS's role as a women-led and community-based organization. The Status of Women Canada supports the work. Mahima mentioned that over the last year, staff, committee members, and the

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Board had been engaged in work to apply for charitable status. She mentioned that the process required a thorough examination of the organization's governance and activities. This led to the organizations undergoing a name change, amendments to the letters of patent, and an extensive review of the by-laws, which led the bylaws committee to present a new set of bylaws. These amendments were passed in the AGMs held in 2020 and 2021. Over the last year, SAWIS worked with the charitable status department staff to review the application. The final application was submitted on April 2022. We received approval as a charity on August 2022. Now, as a charity, SAWIS's main obligation is to devote all its resources to the stated charitable purposes and activities. Mahima mentioned that other obligations as a charity include maintaining direction and control of the use of our funds, filling an annual Registered Charity Information Return Form within six months of our fiscal year-end, meeting annual spending requirements, keeping reliable and complete books and records, and issuing complete and accurate official donation receipts and maintaining our status as a Canadian legal entity.

The host then welcomed Saleha Haji, the outgoing Director, and Treasurer. Haji presented 2021-22 approved and signed Financial statements to everyone. Following the presentation of the financial statement, a poll was launched to have the document and its findings accepted by the Membership. The Membership unanimously accepted the 2021-22 financial statement.

Then, the outgoing Board of Directors Chairperson, Jinnat Basher, was called upon again to present the 2020-21 Board activity report. Basher reported on the six bi-monthly board meetings she led throughout this fiscal year 2021-2022. She described the different working groups of the Board that are in charge of financial affairs, operation management, policy and governance review, and project report writing and reporting on their work in the past year. Jinnat then dismissed the 2021-2022 board and committee before starting the voting procedure and requested the Search & Election committee to proceed with the election for the 2022-2023 SAWIS governance body.

Rehanara Begum, Chair and Spokesperson for SAWIS' Search and Election Committee, elected by the AGM in 2021, introduced the committee. The committee has members of the staff and volunteer team who have been working since July to arrange this General Membership Meeting. Rehanara provided a recap on the membership eligibility. She then reported on the outreach activities for inviting the membership to the AGM. Member's contacts were organized by the Secretary. The AGM date was announced on August 29, 2022, and the Search and Elections committee reached out to 400 members starting in August for the AGM. Out of 400, 192 confirmed their attendance. She mentioned that a draft of the AGM Agenda was supposed to be provided at least 20 days before the AGM; however, due to delays in the audit and administrative process, the committee provided it on September 15, which is 10 days before the AGM. Rehanara apologized for this delay on the committee's behalf. She reported on the committee's work to recruit candidates for officers and board positions for 2022-23. Rehanara mentioned the recruitment announcement for the new year's board of directors, officers, and advisory board positions was published on SAWIS' website in July 2022. Those interested were asked to email SAWIS, whereafter they were sent an application to complete and return to SAWIS' Search and election committee. All applications were reviewed and considered nominees for potential candidates for the Board of Directors, Officers, and Advisory Board. Rehanara invited the Kishower to go over the election process and ground rules.

The host proceeded with the election process for the board of directors, officers, and advisory committee, explaining the election voting segmentation process and specifications to attendees. Responsibilities and names of candidates for the nomination of directors, officers, and committee members were stated.

Name of the interested candidate	Election/ Nomination	Interested position
Jinnat Basher	Election	Board of Director
Tabassum Rahim	Election	Board of Director
Anita Bhowmik	Election	Board of Director
Mashiat Mimosa	Election	Board of Director
Rupaleem Bhuyain	Election	Board of Director
Joyeeta Nandi	Election	Board of Director
Sultana Jahangir	Nomination	Executive Director
Saleha Haji	Nomination	Board of Director - Treasurer

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Syeda Sabiha Yesmin	Nomination	Secretary- Membership Secretary
Husna Sweet	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Rezwana Ava Zerine	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Thamina Akhter Chowdhury	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Mrs. Hurunnahar	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Farrah Miranda	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Mohammad Alam	Nomination	Advisory Committee
F. Belal Hossain	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Zak Haq	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Syeda Saira Begum	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Karin Baqi	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Silmy Abdullah	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Umme Farah Rebecca Amin	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Tapashi Chakraborty	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Sultana Hasan	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Farhana Rahman	Nomination	Advisory Committee
Rehanara Begum	Nomination	Search and Elections Committee
Kishower Laila	Nomination	Search and Elections Committee
Selina Bhuyain	Nomination	Search and Elections Committee
Sultana Haq Bably	Nomination	Search and Elections Committee
Shanjana Rahman	Nomination	Search and Elections Committee

Annual General Meeting:

Following the reporting period, the host initiated the election process at 7:10 PM EST. Hosts explained the virtual voting procedure to the membership in both English and Bengali and notified the membership that officials are elected on a 50%+1 basis and that ballot results would be announced at once after all the ballots have been announced. Ballots were released in 4 portions: Officers and Directors, Board of Director, Advisory Board Members and Committee Chairs. The Board of Directors were elected by the Membership while the candidates for Officers, Advisory Board and Special Committees were nominated. During the first Board of Directors Meeting, the Board will appoint from among the nominees to fill the Officer roles, Advisory Board and Special Committees.

Elected Board of Candidates List:

Board of Director					
Bhowmik Anita	x	Ishrat Jahan	x		
Jinnat Basher	x	Rupaleem Bhuyan	x		
Mashiat Mimosa	x	Saleha Haji	x		
Tabassum Rahim	x				

Nominated Officer Candidates List:

Sultana Jahangir	x				
Syeda Yesmin	x				
Saleha Haji	x				

Nominated Advisory Committee Candidates List:

Husna Sweet	x	Mohammad Alam	x	Karin Baqi	x
Rezwana Ava Zerine	x	F. Belal Hossain	x	Silmy Abdullah	x
Thamina Akhter Chowdhury	x	Zak Haq	x	Umme Farah Rebecca Amin	x
Mrs. Hurunnahar	x	Syeda Saira Begum	x	Tapashi Chakraborty	x
Sultana Hasan	x	Farhana Rahman	x		

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Nominated search and election committee Candidates List:

Joyeeta Nandi	x			
Kishhower Laila	x			
Sultana Haq	x			
Selina Bhuiyan	x			
Rehanara Begum	x			

Resolutions

September 2021	Annual Report
September 2021	Audited Annual Financial Report

Documents

Agenda	Tabled, attached
Annual Report	Tabled, attached
Audited Annual Financial Report	Tabled, attached