Edmonton String Players Association
2025-2026 Annual General Meeting

April 18, 2026

Attendees:
Amy Archibald, President
Ryan Heit, Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator
Liliana Filipoiu, Events and Social Media Director
Margaret Usko, Fundraising Director
Vanessa Kay, Secretary

Karen Hipson, Administrator
Miriam Ferguson, Conductor
Sarah Woodman, Conductor

Annette
Alexandra
Colleen
Daniel
Jaime
Joe
Heather
Karen
Karen
Kateline
Kendall
Lizzy
Madeleine
Marvin
Michael
Sheila

Regrets:
Karen Kawulka, Vice President

1. Opening and Call to Order.
   - Amy Archibald called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM, online by video conference.

2. Roll Call / Quorum.
   - Quorum was established, and attendance taken.

3. Adoption of the AGM agenda
   - Moved by Ryan Heit, seconded by Daniel . All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of minutes of 2025 AGM (May 31, 2025)

- Moved by Liliana Filipoiu, seconded by Heather . All in favor. Motion carried.

5. President's report/general update

- President Amy Archibald reported on 2025/26 board activities and upcoming issues:
- In 2025/26, there was a focus was on advertising and recruitment for upcoming seasons.
    - The board passed a budget to advertise on social media (Facebook and Instagram).
    - We also implemented "bring a friend" for two days to invite interested students for Fiddlinists, Orchestra One, and Adult Orchestra.
    - We also spent budget on advertising in local music festivals programs, online and posters in music festivals, and music stores in the city.
- We updated the contracts for conductors and added a co-conductor this season.
- The contract for Administration Assistant was updated to reflect the amount of work done by this paid position in the organization.
- We updated the code of conduct for members in the MEP handbook (available on the website) to increase understanding between board members, conductors, and members.
- There are changes to our traditional venues this year and into the near future.
    - A committee was arranged by our volunteer coordinator to investigate other rehearsal and performance options in the city. Decisions still need to be made.
    - Our practice venue (Ascension Church) has agreed to sell. Over the next few months, the new owner will discuss options for us to remain as a rental.
    - Our concert venue McDougall Church downtown has also sold to a new owner. They are willing to rent us for an increased price. Other options have been explored. Decisions and bookings need to be made for the upcoming concert season.
- Musician photography is being arranged for May 2026. More details will follow this week.

6. Treasurer's report

- Treasurer Ryan Heit presented a brief report about the organization's financial standing.
- Volunteers have completed a members' audit of financial statements for the fiscal year ending August 2025.
- A casino (every second year) provides a key source of fundraising revenue for the organization. This year's expenses were largely supported by the casino, as well as Fundscrip fundraising and a silent auction held in the previous fiscal year.
- Highlights of financial statements:
    - Finances are operating smoothly, on track with expenses modestly under-budget.
    - ESPA's accounts comprise two operating accounts: a casino account whose funds are restricted to what the casino funds are eligible to pay for, and another operating account. Together, the balances add up to a total of as of April 15, 2026.

7. Update from Volunteer Coordinator

- As volunteer coordinator, Ryan Heit identified this role as coordinating volunteers for practices, ongoing items, venue selection committee, and for two annual concerts.
- The January concert was very well supported by volunteers, with gratitude from the board.
- Volunteers coordination is underway for the upcoming Spring concert on May 31 at McDougall Church. Ryan will send out an email to coordinate remaining support needed.
- Ryan expressed appreciation for all members who reliably and cheerfully fill volunteer roles, including to Joe and members of the new venue search committee for their work.

8. Update from Fundraising Coordinator

- Margaret Usko provided a brief report about Fundscrip fundraisers which she has been leading twice per year for the past two years.
    - A Funsdcrip fundraiser was completed in late fall 2025.
    - A second spring fundraiser is underway.
- Margaret would like to train a new volunteer to lead Fundscrip going forward from fall 2026.
    - This requires just a few hours twice per year to send emails and coordinate distribution of cards.

9. Election of Executive Officers and Directors

- Karen noted that the board works as a governance board rather than a working board, which makes Director roles manageable. Roles are not onerous!
    - The Registrar position manages day to day operations.
    - The elected board can set the meeting schedule and format to suit their schedules.
    - Serving as a director fully covers volunteer requirements for the term.
- Key director roles include:
    - President - Sets agendas, signs cheques.
    - Secretary – Keeps minutes, signs cheques.
    - Treasurer - Organizes a volunteer audit of financial statements, gets clearance to access accounts, moves funds or verifies transactions as needed, and signs cheques.
    - Volunteer coordinator puts out calls for volunteers for concerts and other roles as needed, reminds volunteers of their roles, and maintains a spreadsheet of volunteers and hours. Works closely with the casino coordinator.
    - The casino director role - maintains a spreadsheet, emails for casino volunteers, and coordinates volunteer shifts.
    - Fundraising Coordinator – operates fundraising throughout the year
    - Social Media Coordinator – manages social media communication and promotions.
- Nominations:
    - Vanessa Kay (accepts nomination as Secretary or willing to fill any Director role)
    - Kendall Busse (accepts nomination for Fundraising Coordinator)
- An email to members will follow, outlining vacancies and seeking further nominations. A special election will be held at the May members' meeting to fill a full slate of director roles.

9. Update from the Concert Venue Selection Committee

- Ryan Heit and Joe Friedel provided an update on concert venue selection.
- Joe has spearheaded the concert venue search, exploring locations within Edmonton that have seating capacity over 500, and a rental price under $2000 per event.
    - The current shortlist for future concert locations includes First Presbyterian Church (Downtown), West Meadows Baptist Church (West End), and Robertson Wesley United Church (Central-west).
    - Our current concert venue, McDougall church, has been sold. Rental rates there will be significantly higher in future with a 50% interim discount offered for the 2026-2027 season. For subsequent seasons, rental rates would be $2500 per concert.
    - Location suggestions are welcome.
- Joe is organizing site visits and conductor engagement to inform a recommendation.
- A recommendation will follow at an upcoming board meeting.

10. Volunteer Capacity

- Amy noted a new requirement that all members of the ESPA are expected to attend at least two board or members meetings each year going forward.
    - The motion was passed in July 2025 and will take effect in September 2026.

11. Future of the Music Enrichment Program

- Potential new Orchestra Three - Amy invited Sarah Woodman, conductor, to update.
    - Sarah noted that Orchestra Two includes a wide range of abilities. She recommends splitting orchestra two, to provide better opportunities for all players.
    - Amy motioned to record support from membership for MEP programming to expand to include Orchestra 3, with Sarah as the conductor, understanding that this may alter the schedule for Orchestra 2 and that implementation in September 2026 would be contingent on enrolment.
        - Moved by Amy Archibald, seconded by Heather Ball. All in favor. Carried.
- Adult Orchestra rehearsal times - Amy invited Miriam Ferguson, conductor, to update
    - Miriam noted there has been some interest in expanding the adult orchestra practices to 90 minutes instead of 75, however no decisions have been made.
    - Miriam will discuss with the adult orchestra members and update the board and Registrar on any programming changes.
- Fall 2026 Casino
    - Amy noted that a casino in fall 2026 will require many volunteers. Filling these shifts counts as volunteer hours and many members have reported that it's fun.
    - Details will be shared with members once the casino date is confirmed.
- Grant Funding
    - In response to a question about potential grant funding, Amy noted that as a registered nonprofit, the ESPA is eligible for various grants. Members are welcome to get involved to explore opportunities to pursue additional grant funding.
- Future Rehearsal Venue
    - In response to a question about the status of rehearsal venue arrangements, Karen Hipson, Registrar, noted that MEP tenancy at Ascension is stable for now, and some work has been underway to identify other options.
    - There is a pending sale of the Ascension church building to another church, on May 14, 2026. Ascension recommends EPSA as tenants to the new purchasers. However, availability of space, rates, etc, could change with new owners.
    - MEP's unique space needs include rehearsal space as well as full-time office and nearby storage space for the music library, stands and chairs.
    - Miriam and Sarah had explored one alternative possibility but found that it would be a lateral move for the program rather than an improvement.
    - A discussion of seeking space at the Suzuki school noted that their current building likely doesn't have space capacity, though a new building is being planned.
    - Members are invited to share ideas for future rehearsal space with the Registrar.

11. Adjournment

- Alexandra Homulous won the door prize of free tuition for the 2026-2027 term.
- Amy adjourned the meeting at 10:47 AM