

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. Meeting held at the Arthur Seguin Chalet, 365 St. Louis, Pointe Claire, Quebec, CANADA.

Date: May 18 & 19, 2013.

NAMC EXEC 2012-2013 Present:

Kobad Zarolia	Ontario	(President)
Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee	California	(Vice-President)
Gev Karkaria	Quebec	(Secretary)
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario	(Treasurer)
Khushru Bharda	Ontario	(EXEC Board Member)

Members Present:

Mehbad Dastur	Ontario
Soli Dastur	Florida
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Cyrus Mirza	Ontario
Noshir Mirza	Ontario
Jal Panthaki	Quebec
Pesi Vazifdar	Chicago
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey

Four Proxies were registered.

Meeting was called to order by President Ervad Kobad Zarolia after a short prayer.

Ms. Faranak Firoozi, President of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, welcomed all the Mobeds and wished everyone a productive and positive meeting.

(1) Read, discuss and adopt the minutes of the Twenty Fifth Annual General Meeting held at the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, 3590 Bayview Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario M2M3S6. CANADA.

Cawas commented that item (3) “NAMC Mobedyar Program” be revisited and we should trace back to see if we have covered our previous resolutions and decisions. President said that we shall discuss this in item (5) of current agenda.

Cawas also enquired if review of articles submitted for “ATHRAVAN” were being vetted as per item (8)(j). Kobad replied that currently only Khushru reviews them.

Soli suggested that these articles be made more interesting.

Arda-E-Viraf proposed and Soli seconded. The minutes were adopted.

(2) Adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2012.

Treasurer Tehemton Mirza presented the Statements.

Members had a brief discussion about investments and treasurer was advised to stay with Class “A” bonds, with minimal risk.

Cawas proposed to adopt the Statements and Adi seconded. Financial Statements were passed unanimously

(3) President’s Annual Report: President Kobad Zarolia highlighted NAMC’s activities during 2012.

Lecture Circuit: The NAMC Lecture Team was unfortunately unable to tour in 2012. There have been quite a few requests to continue these lectures in 2013.

NAMC "ATHRAVAN" Newsletter: Thanks to Soli, Khushru and all the contributing Mobeds, the Newsletter made a second year of successful rounds in 2012/13. Soli mentioned that the Newsletter is distributed to all NAMC listed member Mobeds, to all FEZNA groups, to over 200 Mobeds in the North American diaspora and to over 200 members in his "Tele Class". The President complained that there had been absolutely no feedback or comments from NAMC members. He once again requested the members to participate more actively in this program by contributing articles researched personally and by commenting on the material submitted by others.

NAMC Mobedyar Program: Kobad mentioned that Tehemton had successfully completed training of two Mobedyars in London Ontario. Congratulations to Tehemton and the Mobedyars.

Soli's "Tele Classes" Kobad informed the group that Soli's classes were an instant hit and more and more Zoroastrians are participating. All members present, congratulated Soli on the success of his new venture.

Adi proposed to adopt the President's report and Pesi seconded. Report accepted unanimously.

(4) Performance of Navjote Ceremony under unusual situations and circumstances:

(a) Navjote can be performed if a Zoroastrian child is physically handicapped or immobile. Unanimously agreed.

(b) Navjote of a Zoroastrian child (at least one parent Zoroastrian) can be performed if the child is mentally challenged, but able to speak, able to recite at least the Kushti prayers. Unanimously agreed.

(C) Navjote of a Zoroastrian child can be performed if the child is mentally and physically challenged, unable to speak or communicate, unable to comprehend. Two Mobeds abstained from voting and the rest agreed.

The Final Resolution proposed, seconded and passed:

Any Zarthushti child(at least one parent Zoroastrian) irrespective of any disability can have his or her Navjote performed.

(d) Navjote request from an Iranian Zarthushti (for a Sudreh Pushi) just before his/her wedding ceremony. In the absence of adequate information, the members deferred a decision.

Soli was requested to communicate with Mobed Firouzgary in Iran and find out how it was handled there.

The members also felt the need for a test of the applicant before agreeing to do a Sudreh-Pushi ceremony. A sub-committee of Soli, Cawas and Arda will put together a curriculum to enable Mobeds to test an applicant's basic knowledge of our religion. This would be circulated by October 2013.

(e) In an inter-faith marriage, the non-Zoroastrian partner wishes to have his/her Navjote performed. Members felt that this would be considered as "conversion" and decided not to pursue this topic.

(f) Iranian, Kurd and other communities around the world who claim to be descendants of Zarthustis. Soli was requested to touch base with Mobed Firouzgary to determine how they dealt with this

(5) Mobedyar program evaluation:

(a) Tehemton did a presentation about his experience in training and qualifying two Zarthusties in London Ontario. He outlined some recommendations and suggestions to improve the program. The original curriculum set up by Jehan, needed a revision. There are a few prayers that are not immediately relevant to the training program. These should not be insisted upon during training.

Tehemton has prepared a proper, structured, "Instruction/Training Manual" for the Mobedyar program. Cawas and Soli will review the same and Tehemton will incorporate their comments/additions/corrections. A final edited copy will be available to any senior Mobed who undertakes to train a suitable candidate.

This "Manual" will supersede the current curriculum.

(b) A discussion was held to find out if this program should be put on hold for some time. Adi and some others were strongly in favour of uninterrupted continuation, as it is imperative that we plan ahead for retirement/attrition.

The following resolution was introduced:

"Be it resolved that NAMC continue with the Mobedyar training program with modifications and improvements recommended and approved "

Proposed by Adi, seconded by Cawas. Resolution passed.

(c) Primary Objective of the Mobedyar program is to be able to serve small and isolated communities where services of a Mobed are not easily available.

(d) Minimum Age of applicants for Mobedyar program is 25 years. An additional stipulation for ladies would be a serious commitment (in writing) that they would not participate in, or perform any religious ceremony during their monthly period. The matter was put to vote; with 8 in favour and 6 against this proposal.

(e) Dress Code for Mobedyars:

Ladies – White pant, white shirt, white scarf & white socks.

Men – White pant, white shirt, dagli, white cap, white socks.

No cap or head cover resembling a pagdi should be used.

(f) Mobedyar-in-training should not participate in any public religious ceremony. He/she should be an observer only.

(g)The following resolution was proposed, discussed, debated in length, voted on and passed:

Be it resolved that an NAMC recognized Mobedyar:

(1) Can perform a Jashan as a Jyoti, Afringan, Farokhshi, Satum, funeral prayers (Geh Sarna, Uthamna, Sarosh nu Patru and Chahrum) and Boi in a Dadgah, only in the absence or non-availability of a Mobed.

(2) Can assist a Mobed by offering Atravakshi in a Jashan, sitting in a Jashan and sitting in a Navjote or Sudreh Pushi.

(3) Cannot, under any circumstance, perform a Navjote, Sudreh Pushi, Wedding, Boi in a consecrated Atashkadeh and any inner liturgical ceremony (including Yazashne, Visparad, Vandidad and Baaj), independantly, or with, or under the supervision of a ordained Mobed(s).

Further resolved that non-observance of any of the above requirements will result in automatic forfeiture of that Mobedyar's privileges granted by NAMC.

Further resolved that this resolution supersedes any and all resolutions previously passed with regard to Mobedyar's privileges and all such previous resolutions are considered null and void.

Resolution proposed by: Cawas Desai and seconded by Pesi Vazifdar

Resolution unanimously passed.

(6) Recommendations from Ervads Jehan Bagli and Jal Panthaky : the items in the letter were discussed in depth and the members unanimously felt that they could not be implemented. A letter of acknowledgement would be sent by the secretary and the president regretting the rejection.

(7) Kobad read out the email from Goolu Austin regarding performance of Navjot by a newly ordained lady Mobedyar in Toronto. Kobad will acknowledge and reply.

(8) Should NAMC set up a “price guideline” for various religious ceremonies performed for members of the community by Mobeds: Members unanimously agreed that Mobeds should be compensated fairly for their services when they perform religious ceremonies. It would be difficult to have a standard price list as circumstances and cost of living differs substantially across the North American continent. Each local Zoroastrian Association should have their own price list. A “sample” list compiled by the Chicago Association will be offered by the President to those asking NAMC guidance.

The community should realize that expenses of travel, laundry, time off work, add up. The community just has to look around and see how other communities support their priests and ministers financially and otherwise.

Mobeds are advised to accept payment for their services. If any Mobed wishes to provide his service free of charge, he should still accept his fee and then donate it to any charity or institution of his choice.

(9) Summer “refresher” Camp for young Mobeds: Kobad proposed that we try once more to organize a week's camp. Soli mentioned that he had a syllabus for a two-week camp that is being successfully run in India. Members felt that the camp should be limited to four days for our first “trial balloon”. Soli, Adi, Cyrus and Arda will get together and formulate a program to fit into a four-day event. The camp would focus on an age group of 14 to 18.

OTHER BUSINESS PERMITTED BY THE CHAIR

(10) Religious Subject for discussion at future NAMC AGMs: Kobad urged all members to help revive the tradition we had followed in previous AGMs. One Mobed to research a religious topic, give a short presentation and then initiate a discussion. This is to better educate NAMC member Mobeds.

(11) Religious Lecture Series: Kobad informed the members that Houston had made repeated requests to continue the “Lecture Series”.

FEZANA has graciously offered NAMC \$4,000 towards Travel expenses of Mobeds doing the lecture circuit.

Khushru, Soli and Tehemton to organize four speakers and four trips a year.

Tehemton suggested a theme for the lectures: "Concepts in Zoroastrianism" eg. concepts of God, Heaven & Hell, Angels, Dualism, Sin & Punishment, Fire etc.

Soli suggested topics like Gahambars, Zarathushtra's birth and life, Social set-up in ancient times etc. Soli strongly suggested that presenters should use slides and offered to assist any speaker who needs help in preparing slides.

(12) NAMC Website: Arda, Tehemton and Cyrus to get together and refresh the website by end July 2013. New set-up to be communicated to Gev when ready.

(13) Behram's letter re: Mobedyar syllabus: Adi, Tehemton, Jehan and Behram to review/revise the syllabus.

(14) How to conduct next AGM: Arda & Cyrus to come up with a suitable format and circulate the same to all NAMC members.

(15) Next AGM: In Chicago.

(16) Meeting adjourned with a vote of thanks to the Chair and to our gracious hosts in Montreal.

NM.