



OHJA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

December 1st, 2025

7:00 pm

Board Members Present: Victoria McDonald, Ellen Gowland, Carrie Whitwell, Karla Scott, Pam Dorion, Kelly Traver, Sharon Batista, Liz Rous, Diane Ratigan, Kathryn Kitchen, Alana Aird

Members Present: 21

MINUTES

1. Call to Order, Approval of Agenda @ 7:06pm - **Victoria McDonald**

Sharon Batista / Carol Jardine

All in favour ... Motion Carried

2. Approval of minutes – **Victoria McDonald**

Carrie Whitwell / Pam Dorion

All in favour ... Motion Carried

3. President's Report - Victoria McDonald

- 2025 was the year for elevating the OHJA brand and building on the momentum of our strategic plan
- Big year for our Points Management Program - launched our own, in house program - focus on being user friendly, easy to navigate and being updated in a timely manner.
- Thank you to all our sponsors for another wonderful year!
- Membership Update:
 - We are down 119 members from last year.
 - Early bird is open until Dec 31 - \$75 (Renewal Rate Jan 1 - \$85)
- Committee Summaries
 - Hunter / Equitation
 - Budgeted \$48,500 for 2025 (down \$1000 from 2024)
 - Young Hunter Development was a big focus this year - 6 shows at the Ottawa Tournaments Venue plus the Final.
 - Pony Power Program - secured prize sponsorship from Apple Saddlery which was a huge help!
 - Team Derby Challenge launched this year - team based opportunity for Juniors / Amateurs / and Professionals. Lots of positive feedback on this program!
 - 2'6 Discovery Derby - continued support on this program - offered at Ottawa and Ten Sixty.
 - Professional Leader Board - introduced this year - our goal is to have programs across all membership categories.
 - CET Mini Medal - continued to offer our support of this program this year but was only offered at Ten Sixty and Ottawa as Angelstone offers their own branded



programs for this. We plan to continue to support this program in hopes that it will be offered at more venues in the future as it is an integral part of riders' growth.

- CET Bursary - We still offer this bursary to the winner of the Regional Finals.
- Emerging Rider Medal Program - Angelstone took over these classes with new sponsorship.
- Jumper
 - Budgeted \$21,000 in 2025 - up \$1000 from 2024
 - Nations Cup - another huge success this year - great participation from everyone!
 - Wanted to support our 1.30m / 1.40m riders this year so we launched a leader board for them which will be provided to the top rider competing in these divisions during the season.
 - Mini Prix Series - New this year - for riders competing in the 0.6m - 1.10m heights - gives these riders the opportunity to feel the recognition and compete in a stake class.
- Points Management
 - So pleased with how this system performed this year compared to previous years
 - There has been some confusion between Angelstone vs OHJA points. OHJA tracks all Ontario points based on EC Rules - Angelstone tracks only Caledon Equestrian and Angelstone Events based on their own system of calculations.
- Other Programs
 - Junior Ambassador Program - continued to evolve this year with numerous initiatives to support our programs and sport. T'eq Talks were launched this year with great engagement as well as our Instagram Takeovers which gained lots of traction over social media.
 - Sportsmanship Award - 3 nominations this year - recipient was Holly Heikkila.
 - Travel Grant - Received 7 applications this year - we are so proud to offer this bursary and support our riders.
 - Trainers of the Year Awards -
 - Chris Delia - Equitation
 - Susy Niles - Jumper
 - WGM Stables - Hunter
- Events/Awards/Banquet Committee
 - Our biggest event of the year was the OHJA Finale. This year's event was offered at Caledon Equestrian Park as part of the final show of the Ontario season. In an effort to recognize our member's year end accomplishments with a broader audience and include our members from the Ottawa Region, we offered our week of champions approach. Throughout the week and at the completion of each division, we presented year end awards. Saturday was our day of recognition and celebration of champions. We offered a delicious family brunch followed by a champions reception and dinner while watching and supporting the final Grand Prix of the regular season. We sold 215 tickets and received good feedback from members on the week overall.
 - This year we presented 355 awards across 36 divisions. We continued to award our ever-popular director chairs as championship prizes for year-end award winners. Each year we change up our reserve champion offering and this year we provided OHJA branded belts from BlueBerry Hill Boutique.



- In an effort to take advantage of existing inventory for regular season awards, we were able to repurpose ribbons that were not used in previous years which kept our award costs down year over year.
- Communications Committee
 - Our brand and social presence continues to evolve and get more prominence. This year we engaged the services of Melanie Widmeyer of Bridle the Brand, to take our brand to the next level. Melanie added tremendous value and upped our game on content and more timely and meaningful communications.
 - Our content is very focused on profiling our members, providing valuable education materials and keeping members informed more effectively. Our social media presence remains strong with ~7,300 Instagram Followers and 4,400 Facebook Followers.
- Goals for 2026:
 - Maintain our relationship with Yield Branding to maintain our Points Management System.
 - Increase Membership Growth - aim for 2000. More memberships = Increase in budget for Programs. *Must have membership to compete in OHJA programs.
 - Program Refresh - 2026 planning is underway as we continue to collaborate with the venues to organize these programs for the new year.
 - Educational Content - Focus on continuing to provide our educational content such as T'eq Talks, Podcasts & Interviews.
 - Year End Awards - We have sent out feedback forms from this year's event and intend to plan the event based off of the responses from that.

4. By Law Changes - Ellen Gowland

- Proposed change to the definition of “Corporate and Farm” memberships under the “Membership” section 2. We have used the word “Business” instead of “Corporate” to be consistent throughout the bylaws.
- Proposed changes to the maximum time that an Officer (president, vice president, secretary or treasurer) can serve in that role to accommodate potential gaps in interest.
- Proposed changes to “quorum” for the purpose of holding the AGM to allow for smooth operation of the association and its mandate and the AGM will be recorded.
- Proposed changes to eliminate the need for a nominating committee for proposed members of the Board of Directors. The Association has never used one.
- Proposed changes to empower the Board of Directors to make minor, non-membership changes to the By-Laws which will then be presented for retroactive approval at the AGM.

Motion to Approve the 2025 By Law Changes

Diane Ratigan / Ellen Gowland

All in Favour ... Motion Carried



5. Financial Report - Sharon Batista

- At RLB's (previous accountant) request, we need to change accountants this year to prepare 2024 statements and are working on finalizing statements with Curtis-Villar, (Guelph, ON)
- Due to a significant deficit in our finances, we have increased our membership fee to \$85 for 2026. Additionally, we have also trimmed some programs that were not being utilized within all venues in 2025.

Motion to Approve the 2024 Financial Report

Pam Dorion / Ellen Gowland

All in Favour ... Motion Carried

Motion to Appoint Curtis-Villar Chartered Professional Accountants as Review Accountant

Carrie Whitwell / Carrie Thomas

All in Favour ... Motion Carried

5. Board of Directors

- 2 Director positions up for re-election
 - Alana Aird (Director) & Kathryn Kitchen (Director) are up for re-elections for a 3 year term.
 - Nominations?

Motion to Accept the Board of Directors for 2026

Alana Aird

Carrie Whitwell

Diane Ratigan (Past President)

Elizabeth Rous (Vice-President)

Ellen Gowland

Kathryn Kitchen

Kelly Traver

Karla Scott

Pam Dorion

Sharon Batista (Treasurer)

Taylor Brooks

Victoria McDonald (President)

Pam Dorion / Sharon Batista

All in Favour ... Motion Carried

6. New Business + Q&A

- Members interested in joining committees - Please reach out



7. **Next Meeting -**

- Monday January 19th @ 6:30pm

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43pm. - Victoria McDonald
Carol Jardine / Sharon Batista
All in favour ... Motion Carried.