



Victoria Iranian-Persian Cultural Society

Annual General Meeting

2019-2020 Report

September 27, 2020

Online Meeting

List of Contents

Introduction.....	4
General Report	5
Board of Directors	5
Responsibilities	5
Key Goals.....	5
Committees	5
Meetings of Board of Directors.....	6
Bylaw and Policy Committee	7
Chair.....	7
Members.....	7
Key Goal	7
Activities	7
Establishing a structure for managing the society.....	7
Researching and developing policies for the governance of the society.....	7
Future activities.....	7
Communications Committee	8
Chair.....	8
Members.....	8
Key Goal	8
Activities	8
Designing and developing the society’s Farsi website.....	8
Marketing and branding for the society’s events and activities	8
Future activities.....	8
Finance Committee	9
Chair.....	9
Members.....	9
Key Goal	9
Activities	9
Maximizing financial transparency.....	9
Diversifying the society’s sources of revenue.....	9
Minimizing event costs	9
Future activities.....	9
Events Committee.....	10

Chair.....	10
Members.....	10
Key Goal	10
Activities	10
Planning and execution of Yalda 2019 Celebration.....	10
Planning for Nowruz 2020 Celebrations.....	10
Future activities.....	11
Services Committee	12
Chair.....	12
Members.....	12
Key Goal	12
Activities	12
Petry Nights.....	12
Victoria Zoorkhaneh	12
Farsi Language Classes.....	12
Future activities.....	12
Annual Financial Report.....	13

Introduction

Victoria Iranian-Persian Cultural Society (VIPCS), as nonprofit and non-governmental organization is responsible to uphold a transparent and constructive relationship with its members. According to British Columbia Societies Act, VIPCS is mandated to organize and hold annual general meetings (AGM). Such meetings are the embodiment of the society's membership rights and ultimate authority, and a place for electing the members of the society's Board of Directors, if needed. To serve the stated purposes, the current Board of Directors has called for an AGM and has prepared a set of reports for the members' review. These reports are consolidated in this document. Please review this document and let us know if you have any questions.

Warm regards,

Board of Directors

Victoria Iranian-Persian Cultural Society

info@vicipcs.ca

September 4, 2020

General Report

Board of Directors

The current Board of Directors took office in last year's AGM on September 29, 2019. The current directors are as follows: Fatemeh Davaridoust, Mehdi Hashemi, Hadi Jafari, Amir Jozi, Arash Kanani, Mohammadreza Nabizade, Mark Shahinfar, Ali Shirazi, Hosein Taghavi, and Naji Yazdi. Salomeh Pourmalek and Kaveh Bavand were also elected in that AGM, but decided to leave the Board of Directors. Hence, the Board is currently composing of only ten active members, and in need of two additional directors for the remainder of the current Board's tenure.

Responsibilities

The four key legal responsibilities of the Board are currently carried by the following directors:

- Mehdi Hashemi, **President**
- Ali Shirazi, **Vice-President**
- Hadi Jafari, **Treasurer**
- Arash Kanani, **Secretary**

Key Goals

The current Board's key goals for their tenure are as follows:

- Establishing and institutionalizing a strong and principled organizational structure,
- Establishing and maintaining a constructive and meaningful relationship with the membership,
- Maximizing the transparency of the society's financial and decision-making affairs,
- Planning and executing events and activities based on inclusion and affordability,
- And identifying and defining new services (within the society's restricted resources).

These goals serve as the governing principles for the society's five specialized committees. Several plausible steps have been taken to achieve the stated goals, but more needs to be accomplished in the next year. You can read each committee's report in the following pages.

Committees

One the current Board's key priorities has been the separation of the Board and committees' authority and decision-making capacity. These committees are:

- Bylaw and Policy Committee (Chaired by Mehdi Hashemi)
- Communications Committee (Chaired by Mohammadreza Nabizade)
- Finance Committee (Chaired by Hadi Jafari)
- Events Committee (Chaired by Ali Shirazi)
- Services Committee (Chaired by Naji Yazdi)

These committees are governed by established terms of reference and are composed of both Board Directors and active volunteers. These committees serve as a platform for enshrining community spirit, team building, and leadership training for future years. If you are interested to join any of the society's committees, please contact us via info@vicipcs.ca.

Meetings of Board of Directors

The current Board has had 13 formal and a few informal meetings. These meetings are public and open to our members. If you are interested to be notified of these meetings or are keen to attend, please visit our website or contact us via info@vicipcs.ca. Also, all Board meeting minutes are available on our website for your review.

Bylaw and Policy Committee

Chair: Mehdi Hashemi

Members: Fatemeh Davaridoust, Taj Daliran, Arash Kanani, Mehdi Hashemi

Key Goal: Establishing and institutionalizing a strong and principled organizational structure

Activities

The Bylaw and Policy Committee has been working on two specific missions for achieving the stated goal:

- Establishing a structure for managing the society
- Researching and developing policies for the governance of the society

Establishing a structure for managing the society

To serve this mission, the committee has already taken the following steps:

- Identifying and using recognized best practices for facilitation of Board meetings
- Standardizing the society's archiving and recording practices
- Developing terms of reference for the society's committees

Researching and developing policies for the governance of the society

VIPCS is involved in a broad range of activities in different areas. These affairs have been managed on a case-by-case basis since the incorporation of the Society, without any written or established set of governing policies or terms of reference. The current Board had made it a priority to develop policies for the society's activities and affairs. A number of policies have already been developed and ratified:

- Communications Policy
- Use of the Society Resources Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Events Terms and Conditions

Future activities

There are a number of other areas that are still in dire need of policy development, and we are hoping to be able to work on those areas in the remainder of our tenure.

Communications Committee

Chair: Mohammadreza Nabizade

Members: Hosein Taghavi, Araz Aghazadeh, Ali Givili, and Mohammadreza Nabizade

Key Goal: Establishing and maintaining a constructive and meaningful relationship with the membership

Activities

The Communications Committee has taken the following measures during the last year:

- Designing and developing the society's Farsi website
- Marketing and branding for the society's events and activities

Designing and developing the society's Farsi website

Given the key role of websites in communications and public relations, this committee was mandated by the Board to design and develop the society's website as its main priority. This website is already active and serving our membership. Prior to the pandemic, this website scored an average of 30 visitors per month. In this website, you have access to the following:

- Information regarding the society's structure and leadership
- Society's latest news
- Board's meeting minutes
- Existing governing documents
- Forms
- Useful information about the city

Marketing and branding for the society's events and activities

During the past year, this committee has had a central role in the production of marketing material and advertisement for the society's events on various platforms.

Future activities

The Communications Committee is aiming to take the following steps in the remainder of the current Board's tenure:

- Designing and publishing the English version of the society's website
- Designing and publishing the society's e-newsletter
- Starting the 'Zero to Hero' campaign

Finance Committee

Chair: Hadi Jafari

Members: Mark Shahinfar, Hadi Jafari

Key Goal: Maximizing the transparency of the society's financial affairs

Activities

The Finance Committee has taken the following steps to achieve its stated goal:

Maximizing financial transparency

To serve this purpose, the committee has prepared and released quarterly financial reports for our member's review. These reports contain the detailed account of the society's financial activities for each given period. You can access these reports on our website.

Diversifying the society's sources of revenue

The Finance Committee, alongside other committees, has strived to access available government resources and to recruit sponsors in order to reduce the society's exclusive reliance on events ticket sales revenues. For this year, we managed to secure a \$1,600 City of Victoria Grant, a one-time \$1,000 sponsorship, and some donations from our active and amazing members.

Minimizing event costs

In the last AGM, the current Board was mandated to make the society's events more affordable and financially inclusive. To achieve this goal, we worked closely with the Events Committee to efficiently manage our event costs without impacting the overall satisfaction of our participants/members. We are pleased to see that we achieved this goal for our YALDA 2019 Celebration. We were going to have the same approach for our Nowruz 2020 Celebrations, but unfortunately all our events were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Future activities

This committee is committed to work towards maintaining and institutionalizing the current approach.

Events Committee

Chair: Ali Shirazi

Members: Amir Jozi, Hadi Jafari, Sara Salem, Anahita Nikbakhtan, Hosein Taghavi, and Ali Shirazi

Key Goal: planning and executing the society's cultural events in an inclusive and affordable manner

Activities

The Events Committee was established a month after last year's AGM. This committee is composed of both Board Directors and volunteers. This committee's work was significantly impacted by the current pandemic. That said, the following is the list of the committee's key activities:

- Planning and execution of Yalda 2019 Celebration
- Planning for Nowruz 2020 Celebrations

Planning and execution of Yalda 2019 Celebration

For this event, the committee held several meetings and worked with a group of over 30 amazing volunteers to make the 2019 Yalda Celebration happen in December 2019 in Langford Legion. In this event we successfully hosted 210 guests. You can see the summary of the event satisfaction survey and financial report on our website.

Planning for Nowruz 2020 Celebrations

In the outset, the committee built on the work of the previous Board on planning for a public Nowruz Festival. We updated our grant application with the City of Victoria and planned for a large set of Nowruz events as part of the proposed Festival. This festival was going to have the following key components:

- Chaharshanbe Suri in the Centennial Sq.
- Chaharshanbe Suri Party in Victoria Events Center
- Saal Tahvil ceremony in the legislation building
- Saal Tahvil party in Victoria Events Center
- Sizdah Bedar in Beacon Hill Park

Given the fact that the City's grant application review process was not completed until late January 2020, we decided to modify our Nowruz plans. In June 2020, however, we were informed that our grant application was partly approved and that we received \$1,600 to spend on our future events. The modified plans for Nowruz 2020 were:

- Saal Tahvil Party in Comfort Inn, with 120 guests
- Grand Nowruz Celebration in Davinci Center, with 250 guests
- Public Sizdah Bedar, in Goldstream Park

Numerous committee meetings were held, and all necessary steps were taken for these events. For instance, venues were booked, tickets were published, marketing was under way, and other logistics were taken care of. However, unfortunately due to the current pandemic we were forced to cancel all our events despite the projected success of our events.

Future activities

The current pandemic has significantly impacted the work of our committee. However, we are currently trying to adjust to this new normal and are aiming to identify and define alternative events for the year ahead.

Services Committee

Chair: Naji Yazdi

Members: Arash Kanani, Fatemeh Davaridoust, Mohammadreza Nabizade, Mark Shahinfar, Amir Jozi, and Naji Yazdi

Key Goal: identifying, designing, and delivering services to our members

Activities

Services Committee is currently working to identify and design services for our members. During the past year, the committee has worked to support the work of our active members in the delivery of their services. These services include the following:

- Poetry Nights (managed by Mr. Manouchehr Parsa)
- Victoria Zoorkhaneh (managed by Mr. Amir Jozi)
- Farsi Language Classes (managed by Ms. Roohi)

Petry Nights

Poetry Nights are founded and managed by Mr. Parsa and are usually held on a monthly basis. These events usually take place on the first Monday of each month in 3861 Cedar Hill Crossing Rd. Due to the current pandemic, these meetings are currently on hold until further notice.

Victoria Zoorkhaneh

Victoria Zoorkhaneh is founded and managed by Mr. Jozi. The gatherings usually take place on a weekly basis in Gordon Head Recreation Center; however, due to the current pandemic, these gatherings are currently on hold as well. Mr. Jozi tried to offer Zoom home-workout sessions during the lockdown, but they were not received with enthusiasm by our members.

Farsi Language Classes

These classes are primarily run by Ms. Roohi and supported by the work of this committee. We are hoping to help expand these classes in the year ahead.

Future activities

The committee is currently working on delivering the following services in the coming year:

- Preparing comprehensive guidebook for newcomers in Farsi
- Starting a mentorship program
- Offering volunteer interpretation services
- Promoting Iranian small businesses

Annual Financial Report

Victoria Iranian-Persian Cultural Society
Annual Financial Report Sept 31, 2019- Sept 1, 2020

Summary	Details	Total
Total Revenue		\$9,380.50
Total Expenses		\$6,070.88
	Balance	\$3,309.62

Revenues	Details	Total
Event ticket sales	Yalda Party	\$5,880.50
Sponsorships		\$1,000.00
Donations		\$250.00
Grants	City of Victoria	\$1,600.00
Other	Previous year's Nowruz venue (refund)	\$650.00
	Total	\$9,380.50

Expenses	Details	Total
Balances carried from previous year	AGM 2019 venue, insurance and food costs, website fees, etc.	\$596.20
Legal fees		\$40.00
Event costs	Yalda: \$4919.23 + Nowruz: \$321.7	\$5,240.93
Banking fees		\$10.00
Online services fees	Website License + SSL renewal	\$183.75
	Total	\$6,070.88

Balances	Details	Total
Starting Balance (Spt 31, 2019)		\$357.73
Ending Balance (Spt 1, 2020)		\$3,667.35
	Difference	\$3,309.62