



AGM 2023

April 13
Explorer Hotel
Yellowknife, NWT



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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

ZOOM LINK (active 11:25am): <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82814057742>

11:30 a.m. Thursday, April 13, 2023, Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NWT

11:30 a.m. - ED James O'Connor: Welcome guests, brief update on organization's activities in past year, introduction of Guest Speaker.

11:40 a.m. - Update on NWT economic situation from Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister of Finance, Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment. Depending on time, a limited number of questions from audience to follow.

Noon - ED O'Connor calls NWT Chamber President Yanik D'Aigle to podium to thank Minister Wawzonek, and then to call AGM to order:

- Establish Quorum
- 2023 Agenda, motion to approve
- 2022 AGM Draft Minutes, motion to approve
- President's Report, motion to approve
- Review of 2022 Financial Statements, motion to approve
- Proposed amendments to By-Laws and Constitution (distributed for information only)

- Nominating Committee Report by President D'Aigle and presentation of proposed slate of directors, who will stand at their tables until all called.
 - ED O'Connor conducts election of 2023/2024 NWT Chamber Board of Directors. Calls for any further nominations (three times).

12:25 p.m. - Swearing in of new NWT Chamber Board by Honourable Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories
Board group photo - ED O'Connor

12:35 p.m. - ED O'Connor invites incoming NWT Chamber President to offer comments,

Motion to adjourn AGM by incoming president.

Until 1 p.m. - Soup and Sandwich lunch provided.

Office located in the Old Town Air Tindi Building, 23 Mitchell Dr., Yellowknife, NT X1A 2H5

Overview

The NWT Chamber works to promote and create business opportunities, foster business development, and serve as a channel for professional business relationships between members, all level of governments and business organizations.



Who speaks for the business community in the face of the myriad of anti-development forces? Your Chamber does. Savvy businesspeople know they need an advocate to carry their concerns to the right ears or to speak for the entire sector when needed, so one operator does not get singled out.

During the historic global pandemic, the NWT Chamber switched its stance to that of a program provider to ensure businesses could weather the potentially game over storm of forced closures and other public health measures. We partnered with corporations and government to provide grants and also launched the successful #shopNWT campaign in 2020..

Sources of funding for the NWT Chamber include membership fees (our advertising, mass E-Blast emails to members, sponsored social media posts and training contacts.

We also receive government support, when necessary, for attending educational events and conferences, or to stage conferences or trade shows in the NWT.

The NWT Chamber appreciates the support and/or partnerships from GNWT's Industry, Tourism and Investment department's Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED) program, the federal government's Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor), and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)



Executive Director's Report

The NWT Chamber was at a crossroads when I was brought on. I knew that. There was a solid base of members, but it was not growing. Many enterprises and entrepreneurs had to run lean during the pandemic and kept the no-frills attitude even as COVID was in the rear-view mirror.

The NWT Chamber tried to start the process of crafting a new Strategic Plan in the winter of 2021-22, but was stymied by the pandemic, which took a lot of time and energy away from our volunteer Board of Directors. Then there was a change of Executive Directors, which left the office vacant for a few weeks and also required a few months for me to get up to speed.

A lot of the early Strat Plan work was found to be out of date in the post-COVID world. A few Directors and the ED sat down in late December to decide on a plan. We brought on Peter Vician as facilitator and had an Executive meeting with him and then a full board day-long session on a Saturday in January. We received his report in late February.

Some of the ideas raised during the group session were already being implemented (raising the Chamber's profile, creating a better website), while others were acted upon right away (a twice-monthly column in News/North, faster responses to issues of the day, a Weekly Newsletter to members).

But the bigger picture items are going to take some hard thought and careful planning by the incoming Board of Directors elected at this AGM.

It's not likely our Core Values will change much:

- *Ensure member value and confidence*
- *Cultivate partnerships to improve the economic well-being and quality of life in NWT*
- *Embrace change and advocate for sustainable business development*

But we do need to better define the space occupy as an organization. We need to define two or three priorities and focus on them. What is the organization's destination? Where do we want to be in three, five or 10 years from now? The primary NWT business issues are the cost of living, the cost of housing and hiring and retention of employees for the long term. The climate change agenda is a major issue the NWT Chamber needs to recognize, not ignore. We are not anti-union, but pro-business.

We are a territorial organization that really needs to define and understand what the Northern economy is. How do we make sure we differentiate ourselves from the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce? With the closure of all but three of the smaller Community Chambers, we really need to make an effort to connect with business leaders and grow membership in those regions.

We need to forge relationships with regional Indigenous governments, espe-



cially as that business sector has no territorial organization at present.

There are many government agencies providing training and financial support for entrepreneurs to get off the ground in the North. Where do we come in? Once those businesses are in operation, they will discover government regulations can end up being a detriment to their success.

That's where the need for NWT businesses to speak with one unified voice becomes important. The NWT Chamber works to ensure the stage is set and the playing field is level. Standing alone as a small business can be daunting and disempowering. Uniting with other businesses through a Chamber of Commerce can give your small business big backing.

We are a respected and welcome entity at conferences and events. We are the go-to source for media comment when public policy clashes with the private sector.

We are not a major organization serving an urban base. While the NWT Chamber has its head office in Yellowknife, our service area is the 1.4 million square kilometres of the territory. There are 33 communities in the NWT, ranging in size from 92 people in Jean Marie River, to 759 in Fort McPherson, 2,607 in Fort Smith, 3,796 in Hay River and 21,720 in the capital.

There are active private businesses in all regions — Beaufort Delta, Dehcho, Sahtu, South Slave, Tłı̄chó and the North Slave (capital area) — ranging from traditional activities, outfitters, home offices, local stores, hotels, independent professionals to the NWT's largest corporations, including mines and transportation companies.

It's a unique, wonderful and challenging place with awesome natural beauty and significant prospects for entrepreneurs. And those businesses will need someone to have their backs for years to come.

President's Report



I want to start off by saying a big thank you to everyone in attendance here today, whether in person or virtually. Everything you do in regards to promoting businesses of all sizes within the NWT is so important to our economy and future growth of our territory and all of our 33 communities. So much work goes on in front and especially, behind the scenes and we cannot do it with all of you.

My second year as President, and hopefully final year of anything to do with the COVID-19 health epidemic, brought on many challenges. Recovery has been difficult for many and is still on going for most.

Throughout the year, we continued to advocate and be at the forefront regarding inflation and the cost of doing business in the North and holding the government to account in ways they could help or do things differently. We advocated for post pandemic recovery policies and business support.

We continued to advocate around the current procurement process for the Federal and NWT governments and the changes we believe should occur. We continue to advocate against the carbon tax as presented until real alternative solutions can be provided to northern businesses and residents. And we'll continue to listen to our members to help be their voice to advocate positive change on their behalf.

My second term was thrown a loop from the beginning with our Executive Director resigning shortly after our last AGM. Our summer months were spent recruiting and sourcing a new Executive Director. We were very fortunate to have

found James O'Connor to join our organization. His talents, resourcefulness and willingness to always be willing to step out of his zones of comfort have already help bring on some positive key changes to the chamber. Thank you James for the great work you do each and every day.

As our territory and business community has had to recover and adapt to this new post-pandemic era, so has the NWT Chamber of Commerce. We need to ensure we remain relevant to our business community and ensure we can continue to be there to support them. With a new ED in place, it was time to begin to look at how we operated, communicated and supported our business community.

With this in mind, we sent James to receive governance training to help ensure we operate our organization correctly. Thanks to James, we have renewed partnerships with many media outlets throughout the North and have refreshed our website and branding.

It was also time to begin looking from within and review the strategies and priorities for our organization. We needed to look at what was working, was not and what we will do differently in the future.

This led us to begin a Strategic Plan Review for the chamber. Thanks to Peter Vician, who led us with a discovery and facilitation review and to the board members across the territory who participated in this initial work.

We needed to ask:

- What is the space we want to occupy as an organization? What are the NWT Chambers priorities? What does the NWT Chamber want to accomplish during the next period?
- What do we want to “pat ourselves on the back” for? What is the organizations roadmap? What is the organizations destination? What two or three things should the organization focus on?

This session helped identify key areas of opportunity and priority for the chamber. The 5 key objectives identified were.

- Membership
- Member Support & Service
- Policy Advocacy
- Communication & Engagement
- Governance

With these key objectives identified, and the framework in place, it was now key to bring in some fresh faces and perspectives to the board and executive. I am proud of the work the recruiting committee completed and we have some great potential additions to the board of Directors of Chamber of Commerce.

As we enter our 50th year with a new board and new members, the finalizing

of the upcoming Strategic Plan will be instrumental in positioning our priorities as an organization for the next four years.

I would encourage again all members and stakeholders to reach out and share with us what you think these should be. All of your input and feedback is greatly appreciated as we set course for the chamber for the next four years.

I would also like to take the time to thank Minister Wawzonek and her offices who continue to be engaged with the NWT Chamber and Premier Cochrane for her contributions and leadership to the NWT. We have not always agreed but they have always been willing to sit at the table and listen to our concerns.

With a territorial election around the corner, I want to ensure all candidates & incumbents are aware the NWT Chamber of Commerce will be there to help voters make an informed decision.

I would like to thank the board for all of the hard work they have done over the past year. We cannot do it without any of you. I would also like to give a special thank you again to James O'Connor, our Executive Director for taking on your new role by hitting the ground running and always being ready to learn, adapt and listen.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for their support over the last couple of years as President and look forward to seeing our new board continue to evolve our Chamber to the next level.



Some key advocacy efforts in 2022:

A written submission was made to the GNWT committee reviewing Bill 60: An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act. Some excerpts:

- The NWT Chamber of Commerce is significantly concerned with the more than potential grave negative impact to the proposed increases to the carbon tax regime, expected to be implemented this spring. This increase, on top of already rising costs of doing business due to existing significant increases in shipping, transportation, labor, property taxes, sourcing of goods and overall inflation, will cause a major burden to businesses across the NWT of all sizes, business that are still trying to recover already from a global pandemic.
- It is obvious, in our opinion, decisions for the North are again being made for us. The NWT Chamber of Commerce is calling on Premier Caroline Cochrane, Cabinet, the Legislative Assembly and the rest of the GNWT to reject the federal government's plan and demand the federal government to let the GNWT and its Indigenous government partners to have the power to determine the fate of this great territory. As Premier McLeod stated in 2017: "The practice of decisions being made by bureaucrats and governments in Ottawa must come to an end."



We are part of the YK Chamber's Immigration Committee, trying to determine what is causing a chokepoint in a system that could help alleviate the labour shortage in the North. Is an Immigration program designed for the North the way to go.

During ED O'Connor's travels in the fall of 2022 working for the NWT Chamber, there was one consistent concern expressed by business owners: a shortage of labour. It's a real problem. You can see it manifested across the territory, especially in the hospitality sector, with slower service, shorter hours of operation, or in extreme cases, closure of businesses.

It's not as if governments at the territorial and federal level aren't aware of the situation. It appears to be a classic example of the glacial pace at which bureaucracies and politicians are able to push policies around to meet real needs. Businesses can't operate in such a fashion, or they will become extinct.

For example, it took a decade for the NWT to get a federally board-approved doctor for immigration purposes, which now means time-consuming and expensive trips to Edmonton for applicants in communities across the NWT are no longer required.

Last year has seen some tinkering around the fringes of immigration policies, which are mostly created and curated by the federal government.

But the territorial government does find ways to make some changes. For example, in September, the GNWT unveiled a new immigration initiative aimed

at francophone workers, which could very well help some NWT employers fill critical gaps. In fact, the federal government has a deep-rooted desire to increase francophone immigration to regions beyond Quebec.

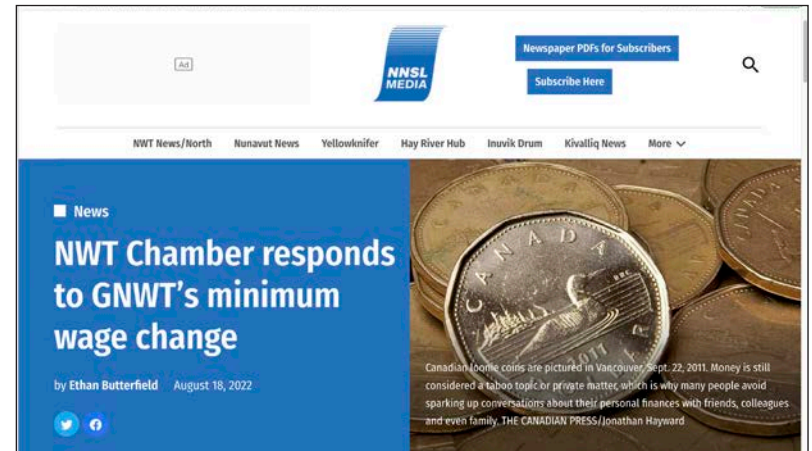
We have found time and again the amount of red tape around liquor licenses is very archaic and difficult to navigate, as well vague, thus leaving a large opening for personal interpretations of the liquor legislation.

When reviewing the legislation, we need to not assume the worst in a business or individual and their actions but have parameters for these very much one-off incidents.

We also need to have faith in business owners and their staff in abiding by rules that are clear is in both their best benefit economically and socially.



The NWT Chamber believes the following objectives are the most important to the liquor legislation: Be flexible to incorporate change over time; be reasonable for the liquor industry to navigate; enable different approaches in different communities; generate revenue for the GNWT; promote moderate consumption • support economic growth; and support tourism.



The NWT Chamber understands the push for a living wage and support the study of what a living wage would look like when all other supports are adequately aligned but increasing the minimum wage to better support 400 residents is not the answer.

We strongly urge you to please delay the minimum wage rollout until the economy has stabilized and all restrictions have been removed from NWT businesses and how they operate. The only guaranteed outcome of this increase will be the closure of businesses unable to stay afloat.

The Chamber's board of directors also expressed concerns that by removing public oversight into its minimum wage policy, the GNWT has taken full control over future increases to the minimum wage, usurping its responsibility to be accountable to taxpayers and going back on pledges to be transparent.

The NWT Chamber called on Employment Minister R.J. Simpson to fully explain the benefit of dissolving the Minimum Wage Committee. To his credit, he did respond to us with a detailed letter.

For the record: the NWT Chamber of Commerce is not against sensible minimum wage increases, we just want to make sure the process has proper public oversight.

**INFORMATION LEVEL
MEMBERSHIP FEE
SCHEDULE**

(all fees are subject to GST)

Applicable to individuals, governments, trade and professional organizations with no voting or membership privileges and no ability to stand for elected office within the NWT Chamber.

Reciprocal, complimentary memberships with other non-profits are possible.

Gov't Departments, Crown Corporations	\$1,000
Trade & Professional Assoc.	\$500

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP
ANNUAL FEE SCHEDULE**

(all fees are subject to GST)

Applicable to corporations and businesses wishing to have full membership privileges, benefits, and voting rights.

Number of Employees	Annual Fees
500+	\$2,000
250-499	\$1,500
11-249	\$1,000
4-10	\$350
Up to 3	\$200



After an absence of two years, the NWT Chamber’s golf tournament returns Friday, August 18 at the Yellowknife Golf Club. After 18 holes, participants will be treated to a reception with a silent auction and a delicious meal. More details will follow, but please save that date and start thinking of teams to enter.

To celebrate the NWT Chamber’s 50th anniversary this year, a major one-day conference and evening reception is being planned for Sept. 29. Stay tuned for information.