

**NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA - OTTAWA BRANCH  
CONFERENCES**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 5 JUNE 2017**

This report is prepared as of 15 April 2017.

**General**

In 2016/17 there was a single activity forming the basis for conferences, namely the 2016 NAC National Annual General Meeting (AGM), Board Meetings and Conference. There was consideration of possibly conducting a mini-conference on the theme of the Defence Policy Review; however, this was not advanced. Instead NAC National, with the assistance of the Ottawa Branch (NAC-O), commissioned two special editions of the Canadian Naval Review. These covered the Defence Policy Review, and secondly, the NAC Conference on Canada's Shipbuilding Strategy – Recapitalizing the Fleet.

**Conference Results**

As reported at last year's Branch AGM, a detailed planning budget was developed for the 2016 NAC National AGM, Board Meetings and Conference. This estimated, almost a year in advance of the event, a modest deficit of just over \$17,000.00. As a result of several factors instead of a deficit a modest surplus was achieved. Some of the key features of the event are summarised in this report.

The Conference Theme and objective were achieved and the roster of speakers, moderators and Master of Ceremonies all performed admirably. Remarkably, none of the preferred and committed speakers had to cancel and the overall program remained stable across the final months of planning. One speaker had a last minute scheduling conflict that threatened cancellation but this was resolved with a change to the program timings. The AGM was conducted successfully although the timings seemed rushed near the end. The election of the incoming Board required some late changes to accommodate voting employing a secret ballot.

The three sessions of the NAC Conference covered: Session 1: The Basis for Investing in the Recapitalisation of Government Fleets; Session 2: Canada's Shipbuilding Strategy; and Session 3: What Next for Canada's Shipbuilding Strategy. Considerable favourable feedback was received on the Conference program and the selected venue, the Westin Hotel. The above referenced special edition of the Canadian Naval Review captured five presentations and one editorial from the Conference. The contributions of Dr. Eric Lerhe (Commodore retired), Dr. Michael Hennessy, Mr. Tom Ring, Dr. Elinor Sloan, Dr. Michael Byers, and Dr. David Perry were featured in this successful edition.

The Conference was quickly sold-out and NAC-O was able to amend the layout plan to put in more seating and still maintain a comfortable venue. This increased our overall revenues by approximately 4% over the budgetary projection and contributed to the modest surplus. There was a strong presence from the Department of National Defence (DND) and other federal departments and parliamentarians.

Sponsorship responses exceeded expectations and contributed to a successful event. This resulted in a substantial increase in revenues from this source, exceeding the budgetary estimate by approximately 45%. This is the primary reason why an estimated deficit led to a surplus. NAC-O was pleased to receive a favourable response from many firms who were supporting the NAC for the first time. The relevance and timeliness of the Conference Theme provided a good buzz around the event and contributed to strong sponsorship interest.

As the Conference date approached, NAC-O conferred with the Executive Director and decided not to record or film any of the proceedings thereby, reducing expenses compared to the budget. We adopted a lean approach to the audio-visual services contracted at the venue. These changes did not have a deleterious effect on the overall conference presentation.

Due to a poor take-up on the proposed spouse and partner program as the Conference and AGM approached, the intended program had to be cancelled. This was disappointing for some but it became clear early on that the Branch membership was not enamoured with a spousal or partner program. Traditionally this is a subsidised activity at the venues and for the transportation requirements.

Local printing costs were minimised especially for the AGM, by employing volunteer resources, and this reduced the costs from that projected in the budget. Additionally as the Conference was well subscribed early on, NAC-O decided to forego any costed advertising and instead focussed on promotion that was without charge through media blogs, defence periodicals and web-based promotion. This permitted savings in minimising the advertising costs.

The AGM and Conference did not meet the anticipated quota of hotel rooms at the venue, and when this was recognised, NAC-O negotiated more favourable terms given the significant expenditure on the Conference, AGM, meals, and refreshments. This limited the overall venue charges. The Conference consciously limited the number of out-of-area Conference Speakers thereby, achieving lower speaker travel expenses than was budgeted. NAC-O implemented a number of other minor initiatives to control costs in anticipation of a small overall deficit. In the end these measures helped contribute to lower than budgeted expenses. In summary, the 2016 NAC AGM and Conference achieved a modest surplus of over \$22,000.00.

## **Organization**

The organization for planning and executing the NAC Conference, AGM and Board of Directors Meetings was based on volunteers from within NAC-O. Within the overall Conference planning committee a series of nine (9) Sub-Committees (SC) were formed. Each SC worked in an integrated fashion as the entire effort required close coordination and effective collaboration. The overall planning was headed up by the Conference Coordinator (H. Smith) and the Chief Staff Officer (J. Barber). The SC comprised the following:

- **Command SC** - Overall Command, Control and Conference Coordination and Chief Staff Officer – Overall Management, Contingency Funding – H. Smith (Lead) and J. Barber;
- **Signage SC** – Signage, Placements, Printing in support of Signage, Graphics, Lanyards, Banners –D. Soule (Lead) and J. Millar;
- **AGM and Executive Director SC** – Providing direct support to the NAC Executive Director for the AGM and Board Meetings Support. Assisting with Coordination with NAC National on all issues – D. Soule (Lead) and H. Smith;

- Venue SC – All Arrangements with the Venue including Conference Rooms, Hotel Rooms, Meals, Stand Easy, Evening Receptions, A/V, Lighting, Sound, Security, Podiums etc – R. Barry Walker (Lead) and A. Garceau;
- Sponsorship SC – Sponsorships, Sponsor Liaison, Communications – T. Addison (Lead) and J. Carruthers and H. Smith;
- Conference SC – Theme and Conference Aim, Program Development, TAGLINE, Lining Up and Briefing All Speakers and Moderators, Timings, Speaker Travel and Support, Post Program – H. Smith (Lead), J. Barber, RH Gimblett, NH Jolin, PC Avis and N Leak;
- Printing SC - Program Printing, Advertisement, Conference Bags, Publicity and Promotion – R. Archer (Lead) and N Leak;
- Registration SC - Registration Events, Registration Passes, Liaison (Govt, DND, RCN, CCG, Industry) Payment Processing, Sponsor Pop-Up Displays, Stationary, Postage – RB Walker (Lead) and A. Garceau; and
- Partner SC - Partner, Spousal Program, Transportation, Registration, Coordination Visitors to Ottawa – T. Addison (Lead) and PC Avis.

## **Summary**

In December 2016, NAC-O shared the main planning documents used for 2016 with NAC St. John's (Newfoundland and Labrador) (Edgar Williams) to assist in planning for 2017.

NAC-O executed a successful National AGM, Board Meetings and Conference in October 2016. Considerable complimentary feedback was received from those who attended and participated. I must convey my appreciation for the outstanding efforts of all of the volunteers in helping to bring credit to the NAC for the 2016 AGM and Conference.

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