

**ACTRA TORONTO
COUNCIL MEETING VIA ZOOM
TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021**

PRESENT

David Gale, President, in the Chair
Theresa Tova, Past President
Angelica Alejandro, Vice-President
Rebecca Applebaum, Vice-President
Angela Asher, Vice-President
Richard Young, Treasurer
Dalmar Abuzeid
Heather Allin
Thom Allison, alternate for Kevin Hanchard
Lisa Michelle Cornelius
Wendy Crewson
Paul de la Rosa
Maria del Mar
Aidan Devine
Shawn Doyle
Art Hindle
John McGrath, alternate for Jocelyne Zucco
Deb McGrath
Jack Newman
Leah Pinsent
Samora Smallwood
David Sparrow
Joy Tanner

REGRETS

Shereen Airth

COMMITTEE & MEMBER CAUCUS CHAIRS, OMBUDSPERSON

Karen Ivany, Ombudsperson
Victoria Murdoch, Acting Chair, Apprentice Caucus

OBSERVERS

Gabrielle-Anne Désy
Bruce Dow
Oshi Wanigasekera

ALSO PRESENT

Sue Milling, Executive Director, ACTRA Toronto
Judy Barefoot, Director, Commercial Production, ACTRA Toronto
Alistair Hepburn, Director, Film, Television and Digital Media, ACTRA Toronto
Karl Pruner, Director, Communications, ACTRA Toronto
Karen Ritson, Director, Finance and Administration, ACTRA Toronto
Nicole Valentin, Director, Member Services, ACTRA Toronto
Marie Kelly, Executive Director, ACTRA National
Tania Cardwell, Stunt Liaison, ACTRA Toronto
Cass Enright, Media Relations, ACTRA Toronto
Maxine Bower, Special Advisor, ACTRA Toronto
Taisa Dekker, Industry Relations, ACTRA Toronto
Jenn Paul, Industry Relations Specialist, ACTRA Toronto
Karen Woolridge, Public Relations Officer, ACTRA Toronto
Freda Merritt-Gambrill, Recording Secretary, ACTRA Toronto

The meeting was called to order over Zoom at 10:19 a.m. with President, David Gale, in the Chair. Mr. Gale welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The reading of the Land Acknowledgement by Heather Allin was followed by reading of the Equality Statement.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION #1

Moved by Heather Allin, seconded by Paul de la Rosa:

“That the Agenda for the ACTRA Toronto Council Meeting of August 3, 2021, be accepted.”

CARRIED

APPROVAL AND CORRECTION OF THE MINUTES

There being no changes to the Minutes, the following was proposed:

MOTION #2

Moved by Richard Young, seconded by Angela Asher:

“That the Minutes of the ACTRA Toronto Council Meeting of June 22, 2021, be accepted.”

CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE: WORD FROM THE SET AND AUDITION ZOOM ROOMS

- Councillors shared feedback from members including concerns about COVID protocols, challenges with self-tapes and the need for audition standards, late payments and issues with payment of per diems.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

David Gale gave a brief report:

- Chaired the virtual Town Hall on June 24th; recording is on the ACTRA Toronto website
- NCA negotiations are ongoing
- Attended: YEAA meeting; outACTRAto meeting; Sue Brouse’s (UBCP) Zoom farewell; meeting with Trevor Hampden the newly appointed ACTRA National Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB); Referendum and By-Law meetings.
- Stunt Committee and the Women’s Stunt Committee: both committees have been meeting and providing input on the By-Laws and feedback on COVID practices.
- Hosted PRS/UBCP Stunt Performers webinar: recording is on the website and provides a very good overview about the residual models and language in the collective agreements.
- *ACTRA Awards – submission guidelines*: For a number of years we have been looking to making the ACTRA Awards gender inclusive. Mr. Gale has been done some research and suggested the following changes:
 - Outstanding Performance Gender non-conforming or Male
 - Outstanding Performance Gender non-conforming or Female
 - Outstanding Performance Gender non-conforming or Male Voice
 - Outstanding Performance Gender non-conforming or Female VoiceCouncil approved this change.
- *Draft criteria for Award of Excellence Recipients*: Council was in agreement with the draft document, dated July 14, 2021, that was presented.

- *Draft criteria for Life Membership:* Council was in agreement with the draft document, dated July 14, 2021, presented.
- ACTRA National Census: Mr. Gale reported on the ACTRA National Census. He called on Council to encourage members to fill out the census. Cass Enright will be setting up a Zoom recording tomorrow for Councillors to record messages asking Members to take the census.

Richard Young said that ACTRA Toronto and ACTRA Ottawa conducted a census a few years ago and we received a 30% response. Richard encouraged Council members to support the Census and to spread the word. The census will close on August 23rd.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sue Milling reported that Taisa Dekker and Jenn Paul are working on drafting the audition standards guidelines.

We are in Step 3 in our province's road map. Wearing masks and following protocols is necessary. Vaccines are not mandatory in Ontario outside of long-term care facilities. As Producers look at policies around vaccines, they must comply with human rights legislation and our collective agreements.

Staff continue to work remotely while some are working in the office. While we are closed to the public, we have staff on-site answering phones and dealing with production needs for vouchers.

We will be holding a virtual Fall Members Conference. This date is yet to be determined.

On the public policy front, ACTRA Toronto made a submission to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development – Ontario's Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee. We offered recommendations on:

- Economic recovery.
- Strengthening Ontario's competitive position by working with Ontario Creates to identify and meeting emerging needs of content producers, encouraging an integrated training approach, fostering self-promotion and marketing skills and increasing work opportunities.
- Supporting workers by supporting increased and affordable internet capability, supporting income averaging, protecting the most vulnerable workers in the industry and paying performers at least the provincial minimum wage.

IPA bargaining – we will be holding focus groups in preparation of IPA bargaining. At this point, we are not sure whether we will be bargaining in person and we need to be realistic in our expectations. We are going to stay as focused as we can. A pre-bargaining meeting with the CMPA has been scheduled for later this month.

NCA – looking for new dates to continue bargaining. We have a good team. Eleanor Noble has taken over from David Sparrow to lead ACTRA's bargaining team. David remains a tremendous resource for the bargaining team.

Ms Milling reported on Karen Ritson's upcoming retirement on December 17th after 22 years of managing our finances, budgets, auditors, accounting and reception staff, human resources and ACTRA Awards and Conferences. We owe her a huge celebration.

Ms Milling welcomed Maxine Bower, Special Advisor, to our ACTRA family. Ms Bower is reviewing our language around harassment and discrimination and sourcing providers of anti-oppression training. She is familiarizing herself with Victoria Shen's cases and will be working with Nicole Valentin.

By-Law Referendum results and key dates: The ACTRA Toronto By-Law changes were ratified by the Members. 10% of the eligible voters voted with 90% in favour.

Election Committee Recommendation: The kick-off date for Council elections is October 6th. It was recommended that Council establish an election committee of Ferne Downey, David Sparrow and Jean Yoon.

MOTION #3

Moved by Heather Allin, seconded by Theresa Tova:

“That Council establish the Election Committee for ACTRA Toronto Council for the 2021 Elections. Members of the Committee will be Ferne Downey, David Sparrow and Jean Yoon.”

CARRIED

Industry Relations – Taisa Dekker

- A producer reached out about contracting ACTRA performers on a video game production using stunt and motion capture performance. After a few conversations and negotiation of rates, the production went signatory, bringing work to two ACTRA members.
- Connected with 15 filmmakers/producers interested in engaging ACTRA talent on low budget film and digital productions. These discussions took place via Zoom, phone calls and email correspondence between May 31st to July 27th, 2021.
- Presented to the Women in Film & Television Toronto – Scripted Digital Series Incubator program to promote the engagement of ACTRA talent on digital series.
- June was Audiobook Month, and ACTRA Toronto hosted a panel with Canadian Audiobook Publishers. The union promoted audiobook productions created by ECW Press, Penguin Random House Canada, and House of Anansi, on social media as well as in the online magazine: <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/make-your-summertime-book-an-audiobook/>.
- TO Webfest 2021 ran from July 1st through 31st, and as part of ACTRA Toronto’s sponsorship, the union presented a workshop about how to work with ACTRA talent, hosted by Taisa Dekker and Lisa Michelle Cornelius. ACTRA Toronto’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs, Janet Rose Nguyen and Chattrisse Dolabaille spoke on the “ACTRA – Diversity” panel hosted by Rodney V. Smith, the President of Webseries Canada, which organizes TO Webfest.
 - ACTRA Toronto sponsored the performance awards at TO Webfest, and ACTRA performers won four of the five categories!
 - Best Lead Actor – Phil Moniz – Short Term Sentence
 - Best Supporting Actress – Karen Le Blanc – For the Record
 - Best Supporting Actor – Maurice Dean Wint – For the Record
 - Best Ensemble – Narcoleap Season 2 (UBCP production)
 - Best Toronto Series – Short Term Sentence
 - Best Canadian Series – Detention Adventure
- ACTRA Toronto sponsored the Future of Film Showcase, and as part of the festival, took part in the filmmaker networking event, where IR connected with 6 emerging creators about engaging ACTRA talent on their projects.
- The Ryerson University Film Festival partnered with ACTRA Toronto and hosted a diversity panel moderated by Janet Rose Nguyen and featured performers Aisha Brown, Karen Robinson and Paul Sun-Hyung Lee.
- Connected with an audiobook company from the United States who have opened a Canadian office and want to engage ACTRA members on their upcoming audiobook productions.
- Met with a representative at Ontario Creates about the interactive digital media and animation industries, and the promotion of ACTRA performers in video game production and animation.
- Presented to the Toronto Acting Academy about the importance of joining the union, and the work ACTRA does to organize, bargain, and build the industry.

Industry Relations - Anti-Black Racism, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Jenn Paul

- New D&I Co-Chairs Janet Rose Nguyen and Chattrisse Dolabaille have officially begun their term and held their first D&I Committee Meeting at the end of June.
- The African American Vernacular English Workshop with Amani Dorn took place at the end of June.

- Attended the REMC Town Hall.
- Work continues on the Audition Standards and Hair and Makeup initiatives.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE IPA: Focus Group on issues to be addressed in the upcoming negotiations of the Independent Production Agreement

Council was divided into breakout rooms and the data collected from these discussions will be put together with the data to be collected from the other focus groups.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Richard Young reported that we are at 33% of the year. At the June 30th deadline 90% of dues were collected. Expenses are on target. We are projecting a deficit this fiscal year due to the expense which will be incurred in developing our IT system.

Mr. Young also reported that he will be stepping down from the position of National Diversity Chair at the end of August.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Past President, Theresa Tova: Ms Tova reported on AACE. This group has received 38 applications from individual coaches and three organizations wanting to sign on to the Association of Acting Educators and Coaches code of conduct.

Vice-President, Angelica Alejandro: A Zoom meeting was organized for parents of child performers.

Apprentice Caucus – Bree Ali, Outgoing Chair submitted the following report: Victoria Murdoch, Secretary of our Apprentice Caucus, will be stepping up as Chair going forward. Ms Ali decided to step down as Chair as she had to rebalance her priorities during a difficult personal time. Ms Murdoch has been a truly amazing, dependable and resourceful member of the Apprentice team since being voted in February 2020, and not only has she streamlined and organized so much of the Caucus's processes, she has taken the lead on their most recent project. Ms Ali is especially grateful that she been able to lean on her this past year as a colleague and friend.

Victoria Murdoch, Chair. Ms Murdoch submitted the following report:

Ongoing Projects:

- Background Performers Page content was gathered from a sub-committee meeting and the final page is now in edits with Angelica Alejandro and Nicole Valentin.

Future Plans in addition to filling vacancies on the Caucus:

- Interested in hosting additional Q & A/Talkback sessions with industry professionals for guidance on topics such as the technical side of self-tapes, and the online casting process, Zoom auditions, and re-learning best practices.
- Interested in collaborating with other committees to host events/workshops, e.g. the VO industry event that was attended by Apprentice Members with an interest in voice, where Members were able to ask questions in an informal setting to industry professionals.

Background Advocate – Shereen Airth: Ms Airth submitted the following report:

Lengthy discussions with Members regarding By-Law ratification, many Members not understanding this ratification was not about a contract. Referred Members to staff regarding non receipt of ratification notice. Shared ratification notice and information on multiple social media pages. Members have expressing disinterest, dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement.

- Provided information and clarification regarding the new Green Vouchers to Members and social media pages. There is concern by some that the primary reason for the new vouchers is to circumvent Preference of Engagement.

- Provided outreach/link(s) to members to the RABS webinar, town hall and educational platforms.
- Directed Members to the downloadable Radius Map on the ACTRA Toronto website.
- Assisted Performers with information and/or direction to specific staff (primarily Business Representatives and Membership), as well as to various information platforms including ACTRA Toronto, ACTRA National, AFBS, Canada.ca, Haven, and others.
- Reminded Performers that things posted on social media are there forever and are accessible to anyone at any time, practically during negotiation years.
- Reminded Members that this is an ACTRA election year.
- Continue to respond to many inquiries and posts regarding the COVID inquires, sharing vaccine FAQs.
- Provide online responses to questions from Members and Non-members on various FB pages.
- Continued to be in touch with many Background Performers and other Members for wellness checks, both as part of Nicole Valentin's 1100-member project and general outreach to Background Performers. This is ongoing.
- Asking all Members she has contact with to read the COVID protocols, COVID FAQs and any and all eblasts in depth. Members experiencing email fatigue.
- Still in discussion regarding the Background page for the new website.

Child Advocate Report – Christina Collins: Ms Collins submitted the following report:

Ms Collins hoped everyone is enjoying the easing of some covid restrictions. This was a great month. Along with the usual inquiries over the phone and email, she continues to explain what ACTRA Toronto does and how it takes care of its minors.

With amazing support from Karen Lee, her mentors, Alistair Hepburn and Clare Johnston, and the tireless Angelica Alejandro, they have managed to have a Parent/Minor seminar over Zoom on Thursday, July 15. This was a well-attended two-hour meeting that answered many questions that both Members and Non-members wanted to know. She received some very grateful feedback from some of the attendees, which further convinced her that it was a great success and a much-needed seminar.

Ms Collins hopes to have more of these seminars in the future and will continue to get the word out that ACTRA Toronto continues to prioritize every minor's safety and well-being on and off set.

President, David Gale: Mr. Gale reported on behalf of Joanne Vannicola:

outACTRAto: The committee organized a get together at a park on Church Street and the celebrations ended up in a pub.

Editorial Committee: Joy Tanner reported.

In spite of a July respite, the Editorial Committee has been very busy. The greatest change is the ACTRAToronto@Work podcast. The ever-busy David Gale will be stepping down (he has other duties that take his priority) as Host. They look forward to *Saving Hope* and *eTalk's* very own Huse Madhavi to take over the microphone for the upcoming panel on COVID-19 protocols. The Zoom lineup for the next episode will also include Kim Todd (Executive Producer of the *Handmaid's Tale*), ACTRA Toronto Councillor Deb McGrath and the well of knowledge, Alistair Hepburn.

Their most current piece is by ACTRA Award-nominated voice performer Ana Sani, who reports on the recent Ryerson Children's Media Lab report on inclusion and representation in Canadian children's animation. The article includes telling data, which stimulated typical ACTRA Toronto action. Please note: Following the release of the study, ACTRA Toronto President David Gale reached out to animation production companies asking what changes they have made or are planning to make to ensure there is positive representation of girls and women in animation productions. Councillors can read the President's letter here. Positive responses were received from Corus Entertainment, Switch Entertainment and TVOKids by the date of this post. ACTRA Toronto continues to follow up. <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/representation-in-canadian-childrens-animated-television-report/>

Also, Jenn Paul's significant inaugural piece, Why ACTRA Toronto is Supporting the Notion Defund the Police: <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/why-actra-toronto-is-supporting-the-notion-to-defund-the-police/>

If Councillors haven't had a chance, please take a look at the Working the Scene in Rainbow: <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/working-the-scene-in-rainbow/>

Jani Lauzon's ACTRA Award of Excellence feature is also up, written by Michaela Washburn: <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/jani-lauzon-award-of-excellence-actra-toronto-2021/>

Also included, the Cass Enright piece on his Summertime Audiobook Reading List (Audiobook Month) Thinking of getting into audiobook narration? There are links to samples by our talented ACTRA Toronto narrators: <https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/make-your-summertime-book-an-audiobook/> with links.

Vice-President, Jocelyne Zucco: The following report is under Ms Zucco's portfolio:

Act Your Age: Chair, John McGrath reported.

- AYA held its final Zoom workshop before the summer break on June 28th.
- It was an informal gathering to discuss planning for upcoming events as well as a chance to sit down (virtually) with Jenn Paul from ACTRA Toronto to get feedback from members for the Audition Standards initiative.
- Members provided a lot of feedback to Jenn from a "well-seasoned" performers' perspective.
- Members also brainstormed ideas for future workshops, including a session on self-tapes for the "technically hopeless," handling Zoom callbacks or practicing Zoom auditions, prepping for self-tapes, a session with Ron Leach, more improv sessions, more cold reads, narration, another session on audiobooks with more practice. Those were some of the suggested highlights.
- The committee is scheduled to have a conversation with ACTRA Manitoba in August on the topic of Ageism.

Vice-President, Rebecca Applebaum: The following are the reports under Ms Applebaum's portfolio:

TAWC – Joanna Swan

- TAWC will likely be meeting next in late August (date TBD).
- Exciting News! TAWC 2020 Short Film Creation Lab film, *Rainbow Baby* had its first review via Screen Fish. Members can now read it online at <https://screenfish.net/rainbow-baby/>. Currently in full film festival mode, it has been submitted across Canada and US, from TIFF, to Whistler to St John's, to Sundance. More updates to come regarding upcoming official selections and awards.
- TAWC partnered with Breakthroughs Film Festival for the second year in a row to co-present a film in their 10th annual edition which was held online this past June 16-20. TAWC co-presented the film *Parkdale* directed by Lisa Jackson. BFF will receive stats on ticket sales and views from their streaming platform partner towards the end of August. TAWC will follow up to get those numbers. The festival team was happy and grateful for the partnership.
- The Masterclass Pass is still popular though the number of requests and inquiries has decreased a bit. TAWC members who wish to register for access simply have to email Dominique Brownes directly as she manages the list. Log-in credentials are normally sent on a bi-weekly basis but rounds have been a bit longer lately.
- The TAWC WhatsApp Self Tape group is still very much on fire. TAWC members are always there to help one another with self-tapes, rehearsals and auditions. Some members of the group are busy, with sometimes as many as five auditions requests due within 72 hours. There is always someone available to assist. Rebecca Singh even reported a booking from a self-tape session with someone in the group. The support is incomparable and it definitely pays off. Another massive thank you to Cait for spearheading this, and to the fierce women in the group who are always lifting each other up.
- When they come back in August, the committee will be revisiting the TAWC childcare initiative to work to ensure members have support with childcare as things continue to open up. Whoever was a part of the Childcare subcommittee and would like to revisit this, please send an email to tawc@actra.ca.

Ontario Green Screen: Ms Applebaum submitted the following report:

Ontario Green Screen is working with Partner in Project Green (part of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority) on a small materials exchange pilot program. This initiative is related to their Implement Best Practices pillar in the OGS Strat Plan. Specifically, goal #4: promote circularity and reuse in costume design, sets, props and construction and the tactic is, work with local organizations to facilitate the distribution of donations and repurposing materials outside of the industry.

OGS will be working with 3 or 4 productions who are midway through their production cycle. PPG operates a materials exchange program where businesses and non-profit organizations provide information about material they would like to offer or receive. Staff at PPG then facilitate interactions between participants to realize and promote successful exchanges of materials. This is a small pilot to see if the model will work for production and if successful, OGS will look into options for the film industry to scale the services accordingly.

Other than that, various working groups are working away.

DISCUSSION ON FRAMEWORK FOR ANTI-OPPRESSION TRAINING LED BY MAXINE BOWER, SPECIAL ADVISOR, AND JENN PAUL, INDUSTRY RELATIONS DEI

Maxine Bower and Jenn Paul are working on sourcing anti-oppression training and hope they can make it available to members as well as Councillors. This training would be separate from the Respect on Set course.

It was suggested that this be made mandatory and wondered whether the training should be offered by each union or set. It was noted that is it important that senior and older members take the training.

NATIONAL REPORT

Marie Kelly, Executive Director, ACTRA National reported.

Ms Kelly thanked ACTRA Toronto for their contribution to their census . Soft launch will take place early in August.

National is concerned with some of the amendments to Bill C-10. They are working on a strategy to get this through.

National President, Eleanor Noble, is getting up to speed quickly.

Ms Kelly said that these are difficult times to bargain but they remain hopeful. IPA bargaining will commence later this year.

NCA bargaining will take longer than expected.

Regarding the conversation on vaccines, vaccinations should not eliminate the need for COVID protocols. Being vaccinated should be an additional level of protection.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURNMENT

There being no Other Business Heather Allin moved to adjourn the meeting.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:47 P.M.