

**ACTRA TORONTO
COUNCIL MEETING VIA ZOOM
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2021**

PRESENT

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

REGRETS

COMMITTEE & MEMBER CAUCUS CHAIRS, OMBUDSPERSON

Karen Ivany, Ombudsperson
Victoria Murdoch, Chair, Apprentice Caucus

ALSO PRESENT

Alistair Hepburn, Executive Director, ACTRA Toronto
Sue Milling, Advisor, ACTRA Toronto
Judy Barefoot, Director, Commercial Production, ACTRA Toronto
Karl Pruner, Director, Communications, ACTRA Toronto
Karen Ritson, Director, Finance and Administration, ACTRA Toronto
Nicole Valentin, Director, Member Services, ACTRA Toronto
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 10:04 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 Lisa Michelle Cornelius and Tonjha Richardson was followed by reading of the Equality Statement by George Alevizos, Victoria Murdoch, Deb McGrath and Shawn Doyle.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The following changes were made to the Agenda:

Item 10 – National Report – deleted as National Executive Director Marie Kelly was unable to attend the meeting

MOTION #1

Moved by Joy Tanner, seconded by Shereen Airth:

“That the Agenda for the ACTRA Toronto Council Meeting of October 5, 2021, as amended, be accepted.”

CARRIED

APPROVAL AND CORRECTION OF THE MINUTES

There were no corrections to the Minutes, the following was moved:

MOTION #2

Moved by Shereen Airth, seconded by Angela Asher:

“That the Minutes of the ACTRA Toronto Council Meeting September 9, 2021, be accepted.”

CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE: WORD FROM THE SET AND AUDITION ZOOM ROOMS

- Councillors shared feedback from members including concerns about audition processes. Jenn Paul reported that a focus group with Casting Directors was held and we are working on putting together a best practices and audition standards guide.
- The question about morality clauses and criminal background checks was raised. It was recommended that performers lockdown their social media accounts so that their posts are not public.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

David Gale gave a brief report:

- Went to TIFF in person and saw three Canadian films.
- Interviewed *Sort Of* co-creators Bilal Baig and Fab Filippo via Zoom for ACTRA Spotlight.
- Met with Maxine Bower and Jo Vannicola about to discuss outACTRAto and queer issues within our union and industry. Ms Bower is doing a great job of organizing meetings with committee heads.
- Met in person at ACTRA National re the upcoming IPA negotiations and for the first time with Eleanor Noble since her election, and Michael Murray and Ian Chai for the first time in person. The meeting was a hybrid Zoom and in-person. Bargaining may still be held virtually as it is still not completely safe to meet in person.
- Congrats to Jocelyne Zucco and Rebecca Applebaum for a tremendous Fall Members Conference. It was good to get together even though it was via Zoom.

- The Toronto IPA Negotiating Team (David Gale, Kevin Hanchard, Catherine Disher, Nicola Correia-Damude, Grace Lynn Kung and Shawn Doyle) met for the first time over two days. The Wages and Working Conditions meeting will take place over three days next week.
- *outACTRA* Chair, Joanne Vannicola, is stepping down. The Committee will follow a similar process as the Diversity Committee's in their search for new Co-Chairs.
- Submissions for ACTRA Awards in Toronto are now open.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Alistair Hepburn reported:

- Staff continue to work beyond capacity as the number of productions continue to rise in film and television and steady number in commercials.
- We are seeing more requirements by locations that require mandatory vaccinations to be in place, i.e. restaurants, university campuses, theatres, etc. and there are ongoing conversations with producers about mandatory vaccines requirements under the Human Rights Code and ACTRA's encouragement for all performers to be vaccinated if they are medically able to do so.
- The September 28th report released by the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table shows a comparison that unvaccinated people were seven time more likely to contract COVID-19 than fully vaccinated people, 25 time more likely to be hospitalized and 60 time more likely to be in ICU. Link https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Update-on-COVID-19-Projections_2021.09.28_English-2.pdf
- The updated ACTRA Toronto's Operating Plan was posted to our website on September 23rd. Link: <https://www.actratoronto.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RECOVERY-RENEWAL-%E2%80%93ACTRA-Toronto-Operating-Plan-2021-2022-Status-Report.pdf>. Despite a roller-coaster of a year, we made excellent progress on the OP Plan.
- August Lew, ACTRA Toronto new Director of Finance and Administration will be starting on October 12th. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table.
- Re Council Elections. An eblast will go out to Members tomorrow and the Nomination Form will posted on our website. Important dates to note:
 - **October 6, 2021** – Council election 2021 launches with the release of Nomination Forms and rules to eligible Members.
 - **October 19, 2021** – deadline for candidates to submit nomination forms, headshots and statements.
 - **November 3, 2021** – Online voting begins.
 - **November 12, 2021** – Online voting ends.
 - Virtual candidate meet and greet sessions: **October 26th and November 2nd**, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A third, if necessary, on October 9th.
- Negotiation updates:
 - The National Commercial Agreement discussions is scheduled for one day this month and two days in December.
 - Regarding the IPA. Our cross-country Wages and Working Conditions group will meet over the next three days. There is lots of great work ahead of us. Negotiations run November 2-12, 2021.
 - IATSE voted 98.68% in favour of providing a strike mandate. ACTRA Toronto has tweeted our support for our siblings.

Discussion

There was a brief discussion regarding what the potential IATSE strike could mean for production in Canada. Mr. Hepburn said that the agreements being negotiated do not include the agreements that IATSE members in Canada work under.

The question was raised about members using forged vaccine certificates. Mr. Hepburn said that this would be an issue between the employer and the member. The member could be subject to discipline if the employer grieved. If the employer complained to the government, the member could be fined up to \$100,000.

Industry Relations – Taisa Dekker

- Three productions went signatory after discussions with Industry Relations and FTDM staff – two short films and a pilot for a digital series.
- Post-Secondary Outreach:
 - Bachelor of Film & TV program at Sheridan College, 4th year students
 - Careers in Arts Management – Centennial College
 - Acting for Media program – George Brown College
- ACTRA Toronto promoted films at TIFF 2021 featuring union members. This year, the festival was a hybrid model, with the industry conference taking place on a digital platform, a portion of the films available digitally, and some screenings taking place in person.
- The CION Cinema Summit took place September 20th to 24th, and producers signed up to meet with ACTRA Toronto to find out information about the organization and how to engage members. At the CION Film Forum, Ms Dekker spoke about the union's outreach to post-secondary programs in the province and encouraged productions to get in touch with ACTRA Toronto if they need information on engaging union talent.
- Met with a producer interested in contracting ACTRA performers on a short film.
- Had multiple meetings with the creator of a digital series and their production team about how best to contract the project under an ACTRA agreement.
- Spoke with a producer interested in engaging ACTRA performers on a ten-episode audio drama.
- Connected with a producer interested in working with ACTRA talent on a dramatic podcast as part of a training program focused on Indigenous youth.
- Spoke with a financial organization about engaging ACTRA talent on future advertising campaigns.
- Industry Relations staff from ACTRA Toronto and UBCP met with SAG-AFTRA organizers to discuss ongoing initiatives on both sides of the border. Topics of discussion included: commercial organizing, SAG-AFTRA's [influencer agreement](#), podcasts and audition standards.
- The Industry Relations staff presented at the ACTRA Toronto member conference about the Audition Standards project and outlined common responses from union performers about casting breakdowns, self-tapes and zoom auditions. Work continues on the Best Practices Guide for Audition Standards.
- Attended the Interactive Ontario AGM.
- The next [Diversity in Voice](#) – Commercial VO & Vocal Health Workshop takes place on Saturday, October 23 and Sunday October 24, 2021 and is open to members of the Diversity and Inclusion and outACTRAto Committees. The instructors for this workshop are Alicia Richardson and Tracey Hoyt, and the course has room for 10 participants.
- Members are encouraged to submit nominations for the 2022 ACTRA Awards [here](#).
- ACTRA Toronto continues to Spotlight advertising productions and the ACTRA members featured in commercial work. See the posts on social media @ACTRAToronto.

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

- Spoke with a diverse performer who would like to participate in ACTRA Co-ops but is having a tough time finding collaborators. As a result, the Industry Relations department is working on planning a "Co-op Collab" mixer event, where we can help educate performers on the co-op agreement and provide a networking opportunity for them to meet other ACTRA performers who are interested in creating a co-op film.
- Met with BIPOC TV & Film about the Joint Anti Oppression training initiative.
- Work continues on the development of the anti-oppression training outline.
- Working with the D&I Co-Chairs to plan some upcoming initiatives for the committee, including a potential headshot initiative for diverse performers.
- Met with SAG/AFTRA about ongoing organizing initiatives.
- Presented the work progress of the Audition Standards initiative at the ACTRA Fall Conference.
- Work continues on the Audition Standards document.
- Attended TikTok World Conference, to learn more about the budding industry of Influencers.

- Planning has begun for the next Working the Scene in Colour, with the call for scripts going out and the event taking place on November 25, 2021. The casting call will be released towards the end of October.
- Planning continues for this year's Sandi Ross Awards.

Special Advisor – Maxine Bower

- Membership Support
 - Wellness check-ins with members and referrals to mental health supports.
 - Responding to concerns regarding dangerous sets and making referrals.
 - Multiple meetings with various performers and producers regarding issues related to interpersonal violence, toxic workplaces, and poor working conditions.
 - Attending the DEI and outACTRAto committee meetings.
 - Attended Respect on Set session.
- Sexual Harassment and Abuse complaints
 - Supporting members with historic and current sexual assault and harassment complaints, including discussions about next steps.
- Membership Education
 - Drafting and writing summary of the sexual assault and harassment reporting process for ACTRA website.
 - Additional planning and consultation with Jenn and BIPOC TV and Film for the industry specific Anti – O training.
 - Additional editing for updates to the members 'Resources' page.
 - Participation in ACTRA conference – panelist on 'How to be an Ally'.
- Consultation and Support for colleagues
 - Offering consultation and support to colleagues regarding questions and concerns about harassment, membership mental health, and human resources services.
- HAVEN Helpline
 - Attended meeting with LifeWorks, Lisa from ACTRA national, and Nathalie-Anne from DGC.
- Brainstorming and Planning for Future Initiatives.

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE DISCUSSION

An in-camera discussion was held regarding the 2022 Award of Excellence recipient.

TREASURER'S REPORT – BUDGET RESTATEMENT

Richard Young and Karen Ritson presented the Budget Restatement for the year ending February 2022.

MOTION #3

Moved by Art Hindle, seconded by Deb McGrath:

“That ACTRA Toronto Council approve the restated budges for the year-ending February 28, 2022, as presented.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CONFERENCE DEBRIEF

Jocelyne Zucco and Rebecca Applebaum were so very happy to report that the first virtual ACTRA Toronto conference was a big success. On September 23rd, the morning started out with *Virtual Auditions: Zoom, Self-tapes, and Standards*, followed by *How to be an Ally On and Off Set: Performers Working Together for Change*. After lunch, the great Candidate 101 and the Plenary, the day ended with *All About Sort Of: Meet the Cast and Creatives of the New Groundbreaking CBC and HBO show*.

This is also the first conference where all the sessions were recorded. They are available online on the ACTRA Toronto website.

The Committee had an excellent point people in Victoria Murdoch (*Virtual Auditions*), Pierre Simpson (*Sort Of*) and Chattrisse Dolabaille and Janet Rose Nguyen (*How to be an Ally*). On top of organizing their respective sessions, Ms Murdoch took on the job of host and reader, and Ms Dolabaille and Ms Nguyen co-hosted their session. All four-point people were also responsible for bringing many of the fabulous prizes given out during the plenary. The success of the conference is in large part because their work and the Co-Chairs were very grateful for how willingly and capably they all stepped up and into these leadership works.

They are grateful to all our kind, generous, passionate fabulous guests that brought much richness to the sessions, including our wonderful staff members who answered the call when we reached out: Jenn Paul, Taisa Dekker, and Maxine Bower.

The Co-Chairs thanked all the staff who were working behind the scenes. Karl Pruner, Cass Enright, Gail Hauptert, Alistair Hepburn, and of course, the incredible Karen Ritson.

This was Karen Ritson's last conference. "Oh, are we going to miss her! She is our rock. As always, Karen was her usual outstanding else. She does so much behind the scenes. Her diligence, assistance, thoughtfulness, generosity will always be remembered. We will miss her greatly."

And so, let's now look ahead to the winter conference ... stay tuned.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

Treasurer – Richard Young:

Education – Mr. Young had nothing new to report.

Sandi Ross Award: The 2021 Sandi Ross Award recipients have been chosen and endorsed by Council. The names will be released via a press release later this month. The pre-taped Awards ceremony will stream on November 5th.

Vice-President, Angelica Alejandro: Ms Alejandro said that the Background page on the ACTRA Toronto website is "Gold"! She thanked everyone who had a part of making this happen.

Apprentice Caucus: Victoria Murdoch reported.

The Caucus met on September 13th for 90 minutes.

Audition Standards:

- Members were very encouraged by the work being done on audition standards, especially where it relates to turnaround times and observing weekends and holidays.

Performer Contracts:

- Reiterated to members to mark their covid tests, virtual fittings, and any out-of zone travel on their contracts.

Covid Testing:

- Concern from members that sometimes individual results are not released, rather batched to production.

Background Page:

- It's live! <https://www.actratoronto.com/working-background/>

Member Concerns:

- Members encouraged to share personal stories of negative experiences with agents with Nicole so they can be considered at next negotiations with ACTRA approved agent lists.

Producer's Corner:

- Potential sub-committee in the works of members who are interested in producing.

Fall Conference:

- They held an unofficial Happy-Hour on Zoom post-conference to get to know each other outside of their official roles at ACTRA Toronto.

Background Advocate: Shereen Airth reported.

- Green voucher discussions continue.
- 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, particularly during negotiation years.
- Reminded members that this is an ACTRA election year.
- Continue to respond to many inquiries and posts regarding the COVID requirements, sharing vaccine FAQs.
- Continued to be in touch with many Background Performers and other Members for wellness checks, both as part of Nicole Valentin's 1,100-member project and general outreach to Background performers. This is ongoing.
- Asking all member that she has contact with to read the COVID protocols, COVID FAQs and any and all eblasts in depth.
- Members are generally experiencing email fatigue.
- Supported family members following the sudden passing of ACTRA member Ron Laugher.

Diversity and Inclusion – Co-Chairs Janet Rose Nguyen and Chattrisse Dolabaille

The following points are what occurred for the committee from this summer to September 2021:

- Sent out newsletters encouraging engagement.
 - Pushed census answers, council elections.
 - Sent out a survey about interest for the future initiatives for the committee.
- Held a successful social.
- Cochairs spoke at the TOWebfest diversity panel.
- Janet Rose moderated the RUFF diversity panel.
- Co-Chairs joined the conference committee and held a successful panel “How to be an Ally On and Off Set” with 100+ participants.
 - Obtained prizes.
 - Janet Rose spoke at the plenary.
- Held end of month committee meeting and have initiatives planned:
 - Picture day.
 - Financial health workshop.
 - Manifestation workshop.
- Will hold a social in October.
- Sandi Ross Awards – will film in October and have their recipients chosen.

Child Advocate: Christina Collins reported.

She is hoping to schedule another parent/minor session before December. The last one over zoom was greatly received.

Ms Collins has had the usual email queries regarding minors' nighttime shoots, quarantine issues and general clarification of the IPA. Recently more people are confused as to what ACTRA does. She has to explain that ACTRA is not an agency but a union of professional performers and what ACTRA does.

There seemed to be, more than usual, emails asking for representation, how to get an agent, where to look etc. She, of course, directs them to the ACTRA Toronto website and states while ACTRA does not endorse any one agent, she highly urges them to seek representation with agencies that are affiliated with TAMAC and EIC, for obvious reasons.

The website itself, looks easier to navigate and that has been helpful too.

Ms Collins soldiers on getting information out to parents and minors.

Vice-President, Jocelyne Zucco: Following are reports under Ms Zucco's portfolio:

Act Your Age: John McGrath submitted the following report:

- Shared an article, sent to the Caucus by Sue Milling, on the topic of ageism in the media with the committee members.
- Sent a note encouraging members to participate in the ACTRA virtual conference.
- AYA also drafted an e-blast to its members about the upcoming free CSARN virtual conference for senior artists. It will be distributed in October.
- The Committee is planning their upcoming workshops.

TAWC: Submitted by Co-Chairs Joanna Swan and Dominique Brownes

- They would like to meet in October (date TBD).
- TAWC 2020 Short Film Creation Lab film, *Rainbow Baby* is still in full film festival mode, it has been submitted across Canada and the US, from TIFF to Whistler to St John's, to Sundance. More updates to come regarding upcoming official selections and awards.
- The Masterclass Pass is still popular. 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 requests have slowed down a bit but TAWC members are always there to help one another with self-tapes, rehearsals and auditions. TAWC cannot wait to hear about the many bookings they hope this support group will continue to generate. Another massive thank you to Cait for spearheading this, and to the fierce women in the group who are always lifting each other up!
- TAWC has held a meeting with the Childcare Initiative sub-committee to discuss the next steps. The meeting was chaired by Vice-Chair Dominique Brownes and included members Allie Dunbar (Founder and CEO of the babysitting agency The Summerhill Club), Freya Ravensbergen (former co-chair and spear-header of the Childcare sub-committee), Rebecca Singh, Jocelyne Zucco and Judy Barefoot. A new proposal will be drafted and submitted to the Executive Council for approval in October. They sincerely hope this initiative will be a great resource for Toronto ACTRA members if accepted. Councillors who were part of the Childcare subcommittee and would like to revisit this, please send an email to tawc@actra.ca
- Following their recent Childcare Initiative meeting, Ms Singh has been in touch with Theatre Direct/Balancing Act who is interested in meeting with TAWC to further discuss resources for caregivers and parents working in the performing arts. TAWC hopes this is the beginning of a great partnership that will benefit ACTRA members in the future in their work to increase access to more affordable childcare for performers in the industry while they are pursuing their artistic career.

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

Ontario Green Screen: Ms Applebaum reported that the next Ontario Green Screen community meeting is tonight (October 5th) at 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. on Zoom. At this meeting, OGS will be sharing updates on several initiatives that Ontario Green Screen has been implementing since launch of the strategic plan in April, including the OGS Hybrid/Electric Vehicle Pledge, Food Rescue Initiatives, OGS Ambassador Program, upcoming training, and more. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ontario-green-screen-community-meeting-tickets-171448165077>

Voice Committee – Vice Co-Chair – Krystal Meadows

- D'Arcy Smith (ACTRA member, Professor of Voice and Speech at the University of Cincinnati and voice dialect coach, director for video game productions) and his Colleague Katelyn Reid (BFA, MA, CCC-SLP of the Robin Cotton and Rocco Dal Vera Professional Voice, Swallowing & Airway Centre at UC Health in Cincinnati) have been producing a Vocal Health guide for ACTRA Toronto. Not finished yet but the page will hopefully be up and running on the ACTRA Toronto website soon.

- The Autumn 2021 Commercial VO & Vocal Health workshop takes place Saturday, October 23rd and Sunday, October 24th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will be taught by Alicia Richardson and Tracey Hoyt. The cost to members is \$75.00 but applicants can request a reduction in the fee if they are experiencing financial hardship. All fees collected by ACTRA Toronto for this workshop go directly to the instructors. This workshop is open to Diversity & Inclusion Committee members, as well as outACTRAto members. There is room for 10 performers in the workshop.
- Working on refreshing the Audio Code.
- Working on IPA proposals.
- Spreading the word about nominations for the Voice Awards.
- The next Committee meeting is on Monday, October 4.

President, David Gale: The following report is under Mr. Gale's portfolio:

Editorial Committee – Joy Tanner reported. Although they are still looking forward to in-house meetings, the Editorial Committee has been working overtime. Cass Enright was busy covering 2021 TIFF events. Included is an interview with Kenneth Welsh, and a feature on Toronto performers and films including *All My Puny Sorrows*, *Defund*, *Kicking Blood*, *Lakewood*, *Learn to Swim*, *Little Bird*, *Night Raiders*, *Sort Of* and the animated *Charlotte*. Indigenous and more diverse performances were highlighted.

Please take a look at the links below.

<https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/tiff21-conversations-kenneth-welsh/>

<https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/actra-toronto-performers-shine-at-tiff-21/>

Continuing the COVID Saga, check out Ms Tanner's article, *Theatre Crossing Over*. This piece spotlights Artistic Directors of Theatre Orangeville and Opera Atelier, David Nairn and Marshall Pynkoski. They discussed how they pivoted from Equity contracts to ACTRA contracts to keep their companies afloat and creative during the contractive time. We hope that other theatre companies will follow suit and utilize the ACTRA Advantage.

<https://www.actratorontoperformers.com/theatre-crossing-over/>

New stories are in the works, including a piece that defines harassment and how ACTRA addresses these issues; an interview with web series producer/actor Fab Filippo by our very own President, David Gale; and of course stories on negotiations will be forthcoming. Much ahead in the coming months. If Councillors have any story ideas, please contact the Editorial Committee.

Vice-President, Angela Asher: The following is under Ms Asher's portfolio:

YEAA: The Committee put out a survey. Ms Asher is looking forward to the YEAA's reincarnation.

OTHER BUSINESS

- ACTRA's Woman of the Year, Andrea Menard will be honoured via Zoom on October 14th.

Art Hindle moved to adjourn the meeting.

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:53 P.M.