

Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
21 June 2025, 1:30 p.m.
Elizabeth Bishop House, Great Village, N.S.

Sandra welcomed 19 members and guests to the EB House and to the 2025 EBSNS AGM.

Rosaria Campbell did a reading of Bishop's poems "Manners" and "Sonnet," poems that bookmarked her life, "Manners" about her childhood and "Sonnet" the last poem she wrote, published posthumously.

Sandra read the Minutes of the 2024 AGM. She moved that the 2024 Minutes be approved as read. Second: Patti Miller. Approved.

Treasurer Joy Graham presented the Financial Report for the term 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The balance in the EBSNS bank as of 31 March 2025 was \$2,839.67. Joy noted that the donations in the Credits were those received by the society and the donations in the Debits were donations the society made. Joy moved the report be approved. Second: Rosaria Campbell. Approved.

Joy then distributed an update of income and expenses since 31 March 2025, noting that the balance of the account as of 20 June was \$2,162.52. Joy noted that the decrease was due to the payment of pergola insurance for 2025, and that the Great Village Historical Society would be contributing half of the cost.

Sandra presented the Nominating Committee Report. The proposed slate of officers and board for 2025-2026:

Executive

Pat Townsend – President
Laura Schwarz – Vice President
Sandra Barry – Secretary
Joy Graham – Treasurer

Board:

John Barnstead
Rosaria Campbell
Laurie Gunn
Meredith Layton
Lisa McCabe
Patti Miller (Past President)
Libby Schofield

Sandra asked if there were any nominations from the floor: Laura Schwarz nominated Brandon Schwarz as a board member. Sandra moved the acceptance of the Nominating Committee Report. Second: Barb Bell. All heartily approved and warmly welcomed Brandon.

Due to an unfortunate accident the day before, Pat Townsend was unable to attend, so no President's Report was given. Everyone wished Pat a speedy recovery.

Other Business:

Elizabeth Bishop House

Elizabeth Bishop House administrator Cheryl MacRae gave a detailed, interesting report about activity at and issues with the house.

A summary of residencies for 2024 and so far in 2025. She noted that 2024 was a year of loss in terms of income related to residencies, but that so far in 2025 things were much better. There was some discussion about the low fee charged by the Preservation Society for time at the house, but Cheryl noted that part of the point was to keep it affordable for writers who usually do not have much income, and also that people are responsible for cleaning up at the end of their stay, so no one need be hired to clean. She noted that the house was full until early October to December, except for a week in November, so there is still time available for artists in the fall and she asked that the EBSNS spread the word.

A summary of house repair issues related to the furnace; the damp basement (there are efforts to figure out how to mitigate this dampness); the roof (efforts are underway to get a quote for a new metal roof – one big issue here is that the roofers say the skylight will likely have to be removed); painting the house; work on the windows – efforts to get them so more of them can be opened. Cheryl noted that new verandah steps were installed by Cameron Gunn.

Some discussion followed about the efforts to get funding from Nova Scotia Heritage for the roof. Laurie Gunn and Joy Laking are creating a new sign for the house. The St. James Church of Great Village Preservation Society are in the process of changing its name. Hoping to have it be simply the Great Village Preservation Society. And work is being done on a new website/page.

Great Village School art project

Laura Schwarz noted that she and Katie Kennedy, principal at the Great Village School, had been in touch about an art project that the school is doing in the fall of 2025. Katie had sent Laura a letter describing the project, which Laura read in full (copy attached). The gist: students will be creating images that will eventually be put on flags/banners that will be put up in the village, using the power pole brackets that the EBSNS installed during the EB100 celebrations. The request is for the EBSNS to help the school find an artist who would be willing to help the students create the art that would be used.

A lively discussion ensued and several names were put forward to be given to Katie: Emma Fitzgerald, Louise Clouthier, Joy Laking, Andrew Meredith. Rita Wilson wondered if the school would be using the "Artist in the School" program, and if so, that program has its own list of artists. Laura will bring the list and our query to Katie and report back to the board.

“Elizabeth Bishop’s Postcards” exhibit

Sandra shared a catalogue that had been sent for the most recent iteration of this exhibit, which was held at the EB House in Key West Florida, sponsored by the Key West Literary Seminar, which has taken ownership of that house and restored it. Sandra noted that the exhibit would be going to the Sorbonne in Paris next, then to Sheffield University in the UK, and likely to New York City after that. All agreed that it would be nice to have it come to Nova Scotia eventually. The copy Sandra had brought was a gift to the EB House from Arlo Haskell, director of the KWLS.

30th anniversary booklet

Sandra brought a mock up of the booklet, which contains 15 Bishop-inspired poems by 15 Nova Scotia poets. She reported that she got a quote from Allen Print in Bridgetown, N.S., for \$4.00 per unit to print the booklet (pages and covers). All agreed this was a reasonable amount. The booklet will be hand-bound by Brenda Barry (with Sandra’s help). At this price, for 75 copies, the cost would be \$300. 15 of these copies would be given to the contributors, leaving 60 to sell as a fund-raiser.

There was discussion about increasing the number, but in the end 75 copies were agreed on. Also, a discussion about how much to charge. It was decided that \$25 was a good price for this limited edition, hand-bound collection. If all 60 sold, that would be a net profit of \$1,200. Rosaria Campbell moved that 75 copies at \$25 per copy be done. Second: Patti Miller. Approved. Sandra will report to the board as this process proceeds.

Patti Miller produced a box in which were 13 of the “You are ‘In the Village’” banners that the EBSNS installed in Great Village in the 2010s. She had found them tucked away. A lively discussion followed about what to do with them and it was agreed to sell them for \$25. One banner was immediately given to the EB House. And all but a few of them were bought then and there. [N.B. If there is anyone on the board who didn’t attend and would like purchase one, get in touch with Joy who took custody of the few that remained.]

With the business concluded, the AGM was adjourned. Light refreshments were provided by board members; lively conversation provided by all assembled.

What followed was one of the most interesting presentations that the EBSNS has had for some time. Patti Miller introduced Laura Schwarz, manager of the Bass River Heritage Museum, who gave a talk about the Dominion Chair Company in Bass River, N.S – the creators of the famous “Bass River Chairs.” Laura’s multi-media presentation and delightful narrative of the remarkable history of this famous business kept all spellbound. The story of the six fires that happened to the company’s buildings is a tale that could not be made up – that is, no one would believe such a story was possible if it was put in a novel! Thanks to Laura for sharing her knowledge and passion with all those assembled.



Great Village Elementary

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Principal Katie Kennedy

June 17, 2025

Elizabeth Bishop Society of Nova Scotia

Dear Members of the Elizabeth Bishop Society,

I am writing on behalf of Great Village Elementary School to share an exciting art project we are hoping to bring to life by exploring the possibility of partnering with the Society in identifying an artist who might help guide the creative process.

Our school is looking to create a series of original student-designed flags to be displayed on street pole banners throughout our community. These flags will celebrate the spirit of our school and reflect the unique identity, and values of the students and families who call our school the "Grizzly Den" and home to the grizzly bears.

To bring this project to fruition, we envision small groups of students working collaboratively to develop meaningful pieces of art that will later be transferred to weatherproof flags. While we have funding to support the production of the flags and inviting an artist into the school for involvement, we are seeking an artist to help develop the overarching concept for the project and to lead students through some of the artistic processes involved—such as brainstorming, sketching, composition, and refining a final design suitable for reproduction.

We believe this project beautifully aligns with the creative and community-minded spirit of Elizabeth Bishop's legacy, and we would be grateful for any support the Society could offer in connecting us with a local artist whose practice aligns with community collaboration and youth engagement.

Thank you for considering this proposal. We would be happy to provide more details and answer any questions you may have. We look forward to the possibility of working together to bring this meaningful project to life.

Warm regards,

Katie Kennedy
Teaching Principal
Great Village Elementary School

