

Vancouver Yogoda Meditation Society

AGM May 2025

Present: BOD members plus 20+ members face-to-face or online.

1. The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Josephine Durante
2. Josephine Durante read a letter from Paramahansa Yogananda to members, composed on March 28, 1951
3. Reminder that all who vote on motions must be signed members of Vancouver Yogoda Meditation Society (VYMS). Others are free to attend but cannot vote.
4. Josephine Durante outlined the nine points on the agenda:
 1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, April 28, 2024 (Motion #1)
 2. Discussion and vote on the proposal for a new chapel (Motion #2).
 3. To review 2025 first quarter interim financial statements
 4. To elect the Board of Directors of the Society;
 5. To elect Service Readers, Sunday School Teachers and Assistants of the Society;
 6. To update members on the Retreats in 2025 and 2026.
 7. To review the financial statements of the Society for the financial year ended December 31, 2024
 8. To advise of the current situation of the Society's application for Charitable Status;
 9. To transact such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting

Item 1: Call for a vote to approve Minutes from 2024 AGM meeting, April 28, 2024

- a. Approved and seconded, Joanna Clark and Samaya Ryane; carried by a vote of the membership

Item 2: Approval of the donation of a property to serve as future home of VYMS and its activities

- b. Vote was held at EGM held February 18 2025 but the vote was not valid and the announcement was a surprise announcement and did not meet the VYMS Bylaw or Society Act requirements for advanced notice
- c. Avnija Iyer of the Coordinating Committee reviewed the various details of the proposed donation, including architectural details and drawings
- d. Entire cost of land and construction to be borne by anonymous donor with no strings attached.
- e. SRF Center Department has indicated support for the proposal and donation
- f. Construction to start in summer of 2026; estimated time of completion is summer of 2028; it was made clear these dates were estimates

- g. Furnishings of the building would not be included; these costs would be covered by the VYMS
- h. Estimated maintenance costs around \$25,000, which is considerably less than just the current lease amounts the VYMS is paying (approximately \$70,000 per year)
- i. The donor will be working with the Coordinating Committee of the meditation group and the group members to review and approve the interior design
- j. Three representatives from the VYMS membership will contribute to design process: Joy Larsen, Rene Beauchamp, and Charles Scott
- k. Plans and details of the proposal are posted on the bulletin board and can be made available to any members upon request
- l. Upon completion, the ownership of the property and its buildings will be transferred to the Vancouver Yogoda Meditation Society
- m. Question:
 - i. At the EGM, there were two conditions. First was that the donation was contingent on VYMS having federal Charitable Status. Second was the property would be transferred under a 99-year lease (no resale possible for 99 years)
 - ii. Answer: Both conditions have been removed by the donor
- n. Question:
 - i. Especially if the VYMS achieves federal charitable status, it will have to issue a receipt to the donor for tax purposes of both the VYMS and the donor. How will value be determined?
 - ii. Answer: An assessment of the property would be carried out at the time of transfer (after consultation with tax experts)
- o. Question:
 - i. Would the property be transferred to VYMS or to Self-Realization Fellowship?
 - ii. Answer (from Donna Boothman, Treasurer of VYMS): The property would be transferred to VYMS. Self-Realization is not a legally registered entity in Canada or British Columbia. Although such donations can technically be made to SRF, both the donor and SRF Center Department are in approval of the VYMS becoming the legal owners of the property
- p. Steve Summers pointed out that if the VYMS does not achieve its goal of obtaining federal Charitable Status, there will likely be tax implications: ongoing property taxes. Since we are a non-profit organization in British Columbia, we would not pay income taxes for the donation
- q. Vote on the motion to approve acceptance of the donation of the property and the VYMS's willingness to move its operations to this new site:
 - i. 31 in favour of the proposal (25 in person; 6 online_
 - ii. Zero not in favour

- iii. Motion to approve the donation of the property and associated construction costs accepted

Item 3: Election of Board of Directors for VYMS for 2025

- a. Nominating committee comprised of Samaya Ryane, Karen Gan, and Joanna Clark compiled a list of nominees
- b. Additional nominees can be accepted from the floor
- c. Nominees must fulfill conditions set by SRF—being a Kriyaban member in good standing, having attended SRF services regularly for the past six months, be wholeheartedly striving to apply the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda in your life, and adhering to provincial and national laws and expected standards of social conduct
- d. Nominees must fulfill requirements of BC Societies Act: act honestly and in good faith, with a view to the best interests of the society; exercise reasonable prudent care, diligence, and skill in execution of duties; act in accordance with the Act and the regulations of the Societies Act
- e. Motion to open nominations from Karin Gan, seconded by Andrés; majority of members supports opening nominations
- f. Current members Steve Summers, Charles Scott, Donna Boothman, and Samaya Ryane nominated
- g. Rene Beauchamp nominated and seconded; Rene accepts nomination
- h. Andrés Echandia nominated and seconded; Andrés accepts nomination
- i. Question: Do Society officers require insurance? Answer: BOD members currently covered by Directors’ insurance; we feel this should continue to be the case
- j. Since there are no nominations beyond the required number of Society members, Joanna Clarke asserts that nominees are accepted and approved by acclamation

Item 4: Election of Service Readers for VYMS services

- a. Nominating committee comprised of Samaya Ryane, Karen Gan, and Joanna Clark compiled a list of nominees:

Justin Bimbrahw	Joy Larsen
Raj Cheema	Claire Maisonneuve
Joanna Clarke	Ravi Pathak
Anil Dias	Samaya Ryane
Josephine Durante	Charles Scott
Judy Earl	Aman Sharma
Andrés Echandia	Sukkhii Singh

Avnija Lyer
James Cook
Joan Knox

Steve Summers
Karan Tak

- b. Nominations were opened from the floor
- c. Elizabeth Cobb was nominated and seconded; Elizabeth accepts nomination
- d. There are no further nominations and nominations were closed
- e. No vote was taken as the group needs more service readers

Item 5: Election of Sunday School Teachers and Assistants

- a. The nominations were opened and closed as there were no nominations

Item 6. To update members on the Retreats in 2025 and 2026.

- a. Andrés Echandia advised the group that monastics have been scheduled to lead the 2025 and 2026 retreats at the Khalsa Centre
- b. For 2025, early bird price of \$230/person; regular price of \$245/person
- c. Vote for approval of down payment for 2025 retreat: Samaya put forth motion; Rene seconds motion: Vote: accepted
- d. Discussion of future possibilities for retreats—alternate locations, costs

Item 7: To review the financial statements of the Society for the financial year ended December 31, 2024 and to review 2025 first quarter interim financial statements

- a. Donna Boothman reviewed the Balance Sheet and Income Statement of 2024 and discussed her concerns with respect to income and losses.
- b. We have had about \$20,000 in expenses for our federal Charitable Status application
- c. She noted the difference between income, \$107,400, versus the expenses, \$120,870, and the net loss of \$3,107
- d. The current monthly rent is \$7,294 and will be \$7,529 at the end of our lease in June, 2029
- e. Our expenses will continue to be larger than our income for the next few years (unless we have a dramatic increase in income). We will have to redeem some of our term deposits
- f. Donna presented an estimated forecast based on escalating expenses and income for the next four years.
- g. We redeemed one term deposit in 2025; we will need to redeem another in 2026, and another in 2028. In total, we will need to redeem \$108,161, which is a loss of equity. We will have \$461,005 remaining
- h. Donna pointed to the value of pledges, adding that they will become even more significant once we own a building. We currently have 42 members pledging; currently they contribute \$51,000 a year

Item 8: Update on Charitable Status application

- a. Charles Scott reports that Revenue Canada has responded to our submitted application with questions about three expenses listed in our projected budget. We were able to point out in our response that these numbers were based on expenses shown in the 2024 Profit and Loss statement. No other concerns have yet been raised by Revenue Canada, and we await word from our lawyers. Charles added that our law firm, Miller Thomson, is a leading firm with respect to setting up and managing charitable organizations
- b. If we achieve Charitable Status, all donations to VYMS will be tax deductible

Item 9: Additional Items Raised from the floor

1. Expression of appreciation for Sukkhi Singh's service over the years in scheduling readers and ushers, and for Aman Sharma for now assuming these duties

Meeting closed with a prayer