



Minutes of Annual General Meeting **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**

Attendance: See list appended to this document

1. Call to Order

Dianne Coppola, President, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

2. Welcome

Dianne Coppola welcomed everyone.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of March 23, 2025.

Moved: Dan Toppari

Seconded: Doug Thomas

Carried

Question: Can you please put a link to the minutes for the AGM in the Newsletter prior to next year's AGM? It would provide more time for people to review them.

Answer: Yes, thank you for the suggestion.

4. Business Arising

The action items arising from the 2025 Minutes will be addressed in item 5.7 Publicity Director's Report.

5. Reports

5.1 President - Dianne Coppola

- Identified and oversaw annual plans and initiatives.
- Ensured the Club's finances were stewarded responsibly and government filings were submitted.
- Monitored and enforced the policies and by-laws governing the Club and its members as needed.
- Wrote (hopefully) inspiring and informative messages in the bi-monthly Newsletter and the occasional letter of support for organizations doing good work related to cycling.
- Wrote three letters of support for organizations seeking grant money:
 - Bike Niagara to deliver cycling education programs for youth and adults
 - Town of Pelham for its Cycling Without Age Program
 - Town of Pelham to rehabilitate 1 km of the Spur Line Rail Trail along the Pelham-Thorold border
- Conducted a Membership Survey to identify what the Club does well and areas where improvements could be made.
- Revised the Code of Conduct to more clearly identify behavioural expectations for members and guests and outlined steps for conducting and documenting conduct investigations.

- In October enjoyed cycling, sightseeing and fellowship with 62 Freewheelers and their guests on a Bike & Barge trip along the Danube, visiting Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary.

5.2 Treasurer - Mike Menicanin

- Highlights of the 2025 Financial Report:
 - Opening Balance - \$8990.60
 - Two GIC's - \$11,826.76
 - Closing balance - \$25,096.72
- The Club made donations to:
 - St. Vincent De Paul \$100 (Thank you on behalf of Dennis Munn)
 - Broken Spoke \$200
 - Spin for Ukraine \$100
 - Development & Peace \$100 (Thank you on behalf of Rita Dillon)
- Mike gratefully recognized Richard Sparrow for his assistance with the Financial Report review, which confirmed the accuracy of the 2025 financial records. Richard checked:
 - Annual Summary amounts on the spreadsheet ledger against the year-end draft report and the December 2025 snapshot.
 - Cheque stubs against the spreadsheet ledger and bank account.
 - Expense receipts against the spreadsheet ledger.
 - Bank deposit slips against the spreadsheet ledger.
 - GIC summaries and reinvestment entries against the bank statement.
- Comparison Report
 - Between 2024 and 2025, the income was stable. The primary difference in expenses was the cost of purchasing jerseys and t-shirts.

Question: How often is clothing bought?

Answer: Approximately every 4 years, jerseys are purchased in a large quantity to keep the cost per shirt reasonable. Jerseys and t-shirts are sold at cost so the Club does not make a profit on them. The Club uses local suppliers. Tour Leaders receive a free yellow Tour Leader t-shirt.

Motion: Approve the Treasurer's Report for 2025.

Moved: Mike Menicanin

Seconded: Rod Forrester Carried

Questions:

1. What is the value of the reserve fund the Club should hold?

Answer: There is no formal rule on the reserve fund amount. Typically, not-for-profit organizations reserve two years of the total budget to cover costs associated with dissolving the Corporation, e.g. accountant fees, audit fees, corporate lawyer, etc. The two GICs act as the Club's reserve fund: one renews every three months (for quick access to cash in the event of an unforeseen expense) and one renews annually. It was noted that the GICs do not represent excess membership dues, but were profits from cycling weekends operated by the Club many years ago.

2. Why is the balance \$25,096.72?

Answer: It represents the total amount of funds currently held in the Chequing and GIC accounts.

3. Is there a budget?

Answer: No, a formal budget is not created. Club expenses are generally consistent from year to year other than when we need to replenish Club jerseys or t-shirts. The Board monitors spending against membership revenues from year to year. A spreadsheet is kept of the estimated expenses based on past years and is reviewed by Richard Sparrow.

5.3 Membership Director - Hans Taal

- Total membership in 2025 was 307, down from 326 in 2024. This represents a 6% decrease.
- Breakdown of Membership by Municipality
 - 98 (32%) St. Catharines
 - 35 (11%) Niagara-on-the-Lake, (Queenston, Virgil), Niagara Falls
 - 35 (11%) Pelham (Fonthill, Fenwick, Ridgeville)
 - 25 (8%) Welland
 - 24 (8%) Lincoln/West Lincoln
 - 18 (6%) Grimsby
 - 16 (5%) Thorold
 - 15 (5%) Port Colborne
 - 8 (3%) Fort Erie (includes Ridgeway)
 - 5 (2%) Wainfleet
 - 28 (9%) Outside Niagara

279 (91%) of members reside within Niagara and 28 (9%) reside outside the Niagara Region

5.4 Tour Director - Ian Kerry

- Port Colbourne has added 30 rides to the Ride Schedule.
- 2026 will see gravel rides return to the schedule. They will be listed as events on the schedule. Thanks to John Swart for organizing these rides.
- Look at the Ride Schedule regularly as rides can be added or changed at any time.
- The Club offers 557 rides annually; 287 (52%) of those rides do not have designated Tour Leaders.
- The Club currently has 34 Tour Leaders. Several long-time Tour Leaders have resigned (health, work responsibility, moved out of Niagara) and we need new volunteers to help fill the gaps.
- If you sign up to be a Tour Leader, you will receive a free Tour Leader's t-shirt as a thank you.
- There is a revised Ride Liability Release Form for Tour Leaders to sign in members/guests on rides.
- Please take pictures during rides and send them to Lynda Purpura, Communications Director.
- If you would like a license plate name tag for your bike (your first name), contact Ian Kerry and he will print one for you.
- Stay safe in 2026. Make sure to leave no one behind.
- Thanks to Lynda Purpura for updating the website and event pages.

Highlights re Ride with GPS (RWGPS) - Mike Menicanin:

- The Club has a membership with RWGPS that members can access. Details are on the website. Routes can be downloaded to a phone or bike computer for turn-by-turn navigation or cue sheets can be printed. We are slowly phasing out the practice of Tour Leaders providing printed cue sheets and encouraging members to make use of hands-free technology or print their own cue sheets.
- Rides will slowly be organized into collections based on the starting location of the ride. The only collections to date are the 'A' rides from the Meridian Community Centre, Fonthill and Lock 3 Museum; more collections will be added over time.

5.5 Safety & Education Director - Dan Toppari

- Niagara has some great trails for members to take advantage of (Merritt Trail, St. David's Trail, Steve Bauer Trail (rail trail), Great Circle route).
- The Niagara Region road safety and strategic plan was submitted in 2025. A "thank you for your report" was received from the Niagara Region noting that they would not be using any of the input at this time.

Question: Are you aware of any groups that may want safe cycling courses? Bike Niagara would like to expand its reach.

Answer: Dan will send out letters to school contacts to encourage safety courses for Grade 9 students. He noted that Bike Niagara will be offering an on-road safety course on Saturday, May 9, 2026 that is free for Freewheeler members. The details are on the Ride Schedule and events page.

5.6 Communications Director - Lynda Purpura

- Website:
 - added and updated event pages
 - added new content - information, photos to the Galleries, Buy & Sell page
- Contact Forms:
 - Responded to or redirected Contact Form emails (questions about Club or website)
- Newsletters/News Bulletins:
 - Sent Newsletters to the membership every 2 months
 - Sent News Bulletins to the membership as required
 - Updated and sent out Tour Leader Newsletters four times during the cycling season
- Administrative Tasks:
 - Worked with Publicity Director to design the FW notecards
 - Oversaw Google Drive document storage and back-ups
 - Updated forms and documents as required

5.7 Publicity Director - Marian Bredin

- Business arising from 2025 AGM Minutes:
 - *Creation of a QR code image for use on social media.* This project is completed (circulated printed versions of the two images to the meeting). Next steps include finalizing guidelines for access to and use of the image by members and getting it into circulation.

- *Possibility of ads in newspapers.* Ads are expensive and not always effective. The Board hopes to increase the Club's presence on social media and encourages members to use the new social media image when it becomes available and/or carry Club business cards to distribute. Word of mouth remains the most successful recruitment strategy.
- *Updating the list of cycling shops re their discount policy and updating the list online.* The Board discussed this, but because we have found discount policies to fluctuate (e.g. percentage offered, cash vs credit, eligible purchases, etc.), maintaining an accurate list is not a good use of time. Therefore, we are advising members to ask at each shop. We have changed the wording on the website and Newsletter to remind members to ask about discount policies before finalizing their purchase.
- Other activities:
 - Distributed FW publicity cards to local bike shops during the summer and fall.
 - Attended the Gord Singleton Legacy Ride in Niagara Falls on June 28/25 with Lynda Purpura, and displayed the FW branded canopy, display board and promotional materials.
 - Took photos for the Newsletter and website throughout the season, including scheduled rides, event rides and Fall Social.
 - Explored the use of the FW Strava Club account for posting Club events on Strava. Learned that only a 'verified club' can post links, and the process of Club verification on Strava is quite onerous (mainly seems to be competitive clubs, private businesses and bike shops that are verified). Without verification, publicity uses of Strava are limited to highlighting a 'Club event' that directs FW Strava Club members to the existing Club page on Strava. It will not redirect to the FW website, but posts do reach the 79 members who are linked to the FW Strava Club account.
 - Researched potential lower-cost Freewheeler promotional 'merch' items such as neck buffs and water bottles. These items could supplement clothing sales for members who already have jerseys or t-shirts; however, the Board is not sure if this is feasible (ordering and storage of inventory, payment processing, etc.).
- Explored the use of outdoor promotional banners in the form of 'tear drop flags' for use at Club event rides in and beyond the region. The purchase of a small-format stand/ballast-type flag might be preferable for quick setup and removal. This requires looking into potential concerns associated with using the flags at public/semi-public spaces (e.g. Lock 3 Museum, public parks). Event Tour Leaders, or the Publicity Director, could bring the flag to the event ride start and be responsible for setup and take down.
- Updated the Open House poster for 2026 to ensure FW branding was more prominent and added the QR code so people are directed to the website. Distributed copies of the Open House poster.
- Business-size cards and postcards are available for members to hand out.

Questions:

1. Newspapers have an online presence; should they be used?
Answer: Some smaller papers might print an article and that would be less expensive than an ad.
2. If a picture is taken of a QR code, would the quality be good enough for someone to open it on their phone?

Answer: Images are being developed. Members could certainly have it on their phone and send it to others, or have others open it on their phones to easily access the website.

5.8 Social Director - Monique Finora

- The Open House will take place on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at St. Alfred Church in St. Mark's Hall, 272 Vine Street, St. Catharines (enter off Carlton Street).
- The Spring Social and potluck dinner will take place on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 1557 Pelham Road, Fonthill. Refreshments at 6 pm with dinner following.
- There will be a Fall Social in October with bike rides and pizza.

6. New Business

6.1 Kilometer Club Certificates

Ian Kerry congratulated and presented Kilometer Club certificates to:

Kilometer Club 2025	
Mike Menicanin	9,400 km
John Walsh	8,500 km
Stephen Adamcryck	8,050 km
David Livett	7,102 km
Lloyd Keller	6,321 km
Ted Arlant	6,045 km
Lou Coppola	5,620 km
Dianne Coppola	5,465 km
Marian Bredin	4,378 km
Paul Dillon	4,200 km
Rita Dillon	3,000 km
Mark Kawabe	2,931 km
Dan Toppari	2,900 km
Rod Forrester	2,575 km
Anne Schattman	1,691 km

6.2 Excellence in Tour Leading

Ian Kerry congratulated and thanked Tour Leaders of the Year for 2025, Rita Dillon and Mike Menicanin

6.3 Election of the 2026/27 Executive

Rita Dillon conducted the election and sought additional nominees for each of the Board positions. There being no other nominees, Rita announced that the following directors were acclaimed to their positions for 2026/27:

- President Dianne Coppola
- Vice-President Hector Bordenave
- Treasurer Mike Menicanin
- Secretary Julie Stobbe

