Annual General Meeting of the
ADR Institute of Saskatchewan
June 19, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:30 pm
(attendance via ZOOM)

1. **Welcome & Call to Order: Catherine Quevillon Schill**
   - Executive Director, Catherine Quevillon Schill opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the AGM and giving her personal land acknowledgment. She welcomed special guests from ADRIC, Michael Schafler, Gary Lacasse and Montasser Bahrini. She then turned the meeting over to Lyndon Linklater, Knowledge Keeper to give opening remarks.

2. **Opening Remarks: Lyndon Linklater, Knowledge Keeper**
   - Lyndon acknowledged the beauty of the gifts we have all been given by virtue of living on this great land and emphasized the power of choosing gratitude in all things. He encouraged us to seize the day and wished us well in our meeting.
3. **Notice of Meeting & Quorum Confirmation: Catherine Quevillon Schill**
   - Catherine confirmed the Notice of Meeting requirements had been met and that a fully constituted quorum was also confirmed with more than 5 persons physically present at the meeting.
4. **Approval of Agenda: Rodger Linka**
   - **Motion** by Rodger Linka that the agenda be approved as circulated: seconded by Itemobong Umoh.
   - **Discussion**: a member noted that there was no "election of directors" on the agenda and wondered about this as this has been a standard item on ADRSK AGM Agendas in previous years. Rodger Linka advised that this year the Board decided the organization needed to do a "reset" to stabilize the organization and as a result decided not to solicit new Board members for the coming year. Even though it has been a practice to solicit on a yearly basis, it is not a requirement of the Bylaws. Going forward, they anticipate a process will be developed for Board recruitment and selection, similar to what is done in other organizations.
   - **Carried.**
5. **Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes: Itee Umoh**
   - **Motion:** by Itemobong Umoh that the minutes of the 2024 AGM be approved as circulated
   - **Seconded:** Kristin Anderson.
   - **Carried.**
6. **Approval of 2024 Directors Actions: Kristin Anderson**
   - **Motion**: by Kristin that the actions of the Board of Directors for the ADR Institute of Saskatchewan occurring between May 24, 2024 and May 23, 2024 be ratified by the membership of the Institute
   - **Seconded**: Marg Romanow.

- **Discussion:** A member pointed out that those in attendance could not ratify the actions of directors because they had not received the reports in advance of the meeting. Catherine advised that all reports would be distributed after the meeting. Kristin suggested that voting on this motion be deferred to the end of the meeting so that those in attendance could hear the presentations and then would be in a position to approve the actions of the directors.
- **Vote deferred**

7. **President's and Vice President's reports: Kristin Anderson (Gina Alexander is away) Reports will be distributed with minutes after meeting.**
   - President Anderson began by acknowledging the very challenging wildfire year and expressing appreciation for members who attended the AGM nonetheless. She went on to acknowledge and thank the Board members, both past and present who have dedicated so much of their time and energy to ensuring the success of ADRSK.
   - Kristin gave an overview of the initiatives and activities pursued and undertaken over the year and was candid that the 2024/2025 year has been very challenging for the organization in many respects (see written reports).
   - She told the membership that a major issue the organization addressed this year was regarding an initiative ADRSK had undertaken a few years ago, "The Centralized Board of Revision" (CBoR) for the Province of Saskatchewan related to property assessment appeal hearings. The CBoR heard a major commercial appeal filed by a business consortium in a small Rural Municipality. While the decision arrived at by the Appeal Panel was excellent and stood up upon appeal to the next level, the cost for the appeal panel was $70,000 which the RM was unable to fully pay. The RM paid $15,000, leaving ADRSK to absorb the $55,000 overage. While efforts continue to recover at least some of the loss, ADRSK has been significantly impacted and we have struggled to come to terms with the impact. Rodger Linka will provide more detail on this initiative in the next section of the meeting.
   - In short, the combination of the financial impact of CBoR, the resignation/retirement of long-time board members, the Board's decision to move more toward a "governance board" and hire an Executive Director while at the same time onboarding three new board members made this an overwhelmingly stressful year. As a result, the Board has decided to take a year to regroup and reset without changes to the Board.
   - On a more positive note, ADRSK has made in-roads into developing a partnership with the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC) by training social workers at that University in dispute resolution and adding a student membership. We have a number of their students as members. Given the Calls to Action, it will be important to facilitate the development of Indigenous Mediators and to develop training for federal, provincial and municipal government in the area of dispute resolution that is skill-based in the area of intercultural/cultural conflict resolution competencies and which takes into account the Treaties, Indigenous and Aboriginal rights, human rights and anti-racism. Lyndon and I have travelled to Alberta to meet with Indigenous

practitioners to learn how to build more diversity in the field and change the landscape of dispute resolution in Saskatchewan.

- I am also working with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Persephone theatre to develop a culturally sensitive conflict resolution and drama program for kids in high-risk neighbourhoods.
- Another area of exploration is with the Saskatoon public school system. In both of these initiatives, we hope to develop volunteer and paid opportunities for our members that contribute to making our communities a better place.
- She closed her report with a resolute commitment to reconciliation, the development of the organization and an acknowledgement of the importance and practice of alternative dispute resolution and thanked the membership for their continued support for the Institute and for their support in her leadership role.
- **Motion:** by Kristin Anderson to approve the President and Vice-President's reports.
- **Seconded:** Itemobong Umoh
- **Carried.**

8. ADR Saskatchewan Centralized Board of Revision Report (Information Item): Rodger Linka (Board Member)

- Rodger, as a Board member intricately involved with the development and formation of the CBoR at its inception stepped up to provide the history and details around the current state that the organization has found itself in.
- Over the years some of the broad objectives of ADRSK has been to seek to develop and enhance opportunities for our members to obtain volunteer and paid work (this came from a member survey). Another has been to support the provision of access to justice in the community by providing reasonably-priced options for alternative dispute resolution (mediation and arbitration). And lastly to provide educational services in the areas of Mediation and Arbitration.
- ADRSK is a "not-for-profit" organization, so the caveat when the organization has partnered with other entities (like SaskSport and the Saskatchewan Construction Dispute Resolution Office) that the provision of services must be "cost-neutral", meaning that ADRSK costs are covered, but no significant profit is made and no loss is incurred. We are a "not-for-loss" organization. The costs of services provided by our members is very low to organizations that partner with us in comparison to how those same services are charged in the community - typically $150/hr. We have considered it to be mutually beneficial. Our members, particularly those developing, have gotten opportunities and our partners have received quality services at a very reasonable price.
- A few years ago, the Province of Saskatchewan approached us to consider providing the Centralized Board of Revision service. They had heard about the success of the SaskSport initiative and wondered if something mutually beneficial could be arranged. They were interested in ensuring reasonably

priced, truly neutral and professional property assessment appeals be provided to residents who appealed their property assessments. Historical practices have proven to be neither professional nor neutral and the Province was wanting to make a change in this area by providing a better access to justice for property owners in the province.

- Upon consideration, ADRSK Board saw this as a golden opportunity to provide a valuable service to the people of Saskatchewan while at the same time providing opportunities in the area of arbitration for our qualified members.
- In order to facilitate this initiative, ADRSK established an organization (a not-for subsidiary with ADRSK as its sole member) and entered into an agreement with the Province of Saskatchewan. To get started, ADRSK was awarded a $70,000 grant. Because ADRSK was a sole member, we initially incorporated all decision-making into the decisions of the ADRSK Board meetings. Michele Cruise-Pratchler was hired as the manager of CBoR and established the operations. These were well-organized and we moved into the area of work.
- Immediately upon entering the field, the first major issue we found ourselves facing was stiff competition from competing “for-profit” small businesses that provided the same services at a lower cost. Our competitors, while technically obligated to provide the same level of professional neutral services, did not actually adhere to the same professional standards and did not utilize professionally training and qualified arbitrators when forming their panels.
- Our competitors charged as little as $50/day for non-professional panel reps (local teachers, farmers, community members), while we charged $150/hr for less complicated cases where we could use Qarbs and $250/hour for more complicated cases which required a Carb. The benefit of using a professional neutral is that the decision rendered was neutral, objective and far less likely to be overturned upon appeal. Unfortunately, the quality of the decision was not significantly important enough to the municipalities to outweigh the additional cost. As a result, of the 777 municipalities in Saskatchewan, CBoR was only able to secure approximately 70 as clients. In order for CBoR to be sustainable from a cost perspective we would have had to secure a minimum of 150 municipal clients. Over time this alone would have been the downfall of CBoR.
- The second major issue that arose, as mentioned by Kristin was a major assessment appeal launched against the small Rural Municipality of St. Gregor by a consortium of seed cleaners. They launched this appeal against a number of municipalities, one of which was our client, The RM of St. Gregor. Three of our members formed a panel, reviewed the 1000-page appeal, held the appeal hearings and rendered a comprehensive 100-page decision which was upheld upon appeal. This decision has been upheld and copied in other jurisdictions and it is one that ADRSK as an organization can be proud of. The issue arose when St. Gregor was unable to pay the $70,000 bill for the cost of the hearing panel and rendering the decision. They were only able to pay $15,000, which left ADRSK a shortfall of $55,000. In order to

ensure our members were paid, ADRSK decided to cover the overage and look for opportunities to recoup the money. This situation has placed a huge burden on the Board.

- Since that time, there have been a number of meetings where Catherine Quevillon Schill, Michele Cruise-Pratchler, Scott Siemens (acting as a volunteer) and I have met with the Province of Saskatchewan to explore options to recoup the loss and to correct the imbalance in the competitive market with limited success. We did succeed to negotiate an additional $40,000 grant to ensure CBoR can continue to provide the service throughout the 2025 appeal year, but since this will be needed to offset operating costs as well, the entire amount will not go toward paying down the debt.
- Michele has been working together with the RM of St. Gregor to apply for a grant under “The Targeted Sector Support Program” (which has a section to cover dispute resolution). If successful, this grant could entirely cover the remainder of the overage. We are hopeful this will be successful.
- Boards of revision in this province are often staffed by members of the community with little or no training who are often friends of the Municipal administrator. There is no guarantee of neutrality or objectivity and the decisions made reflect that. Many are overturned upon appeal. Government officials are interested in a higher standard of adjudication. Government is responsible to ensure appeals are held correctly (by neutral and objective boards of revision), but at present there is not the political will to enforce the higher standard.
- In our most recent meeting with Government on June 9, 2025, we provided feedback on Governments proposed changes to the Municipal Acts in the province and advised them that unless there were significant changes to accountability for other Boards of Revision, given the state of affairs, ADRSK would not be continuing to operate the CBoR past December 31, 2025 and that we would be providing written notice of same prior to the end of June. We also told them we are willing to work with them on creating other mutually beneficial options and if something changes in future, we would be happy to work with them, but we can’t continue to do this at a loss.
- We told then we believed that all Boards of Revision should have at least one Qualified Arbitrator and that we are willing to provide training if Government should decide to enforce something like that. The ball is now in the hands of the Government of Saskatchewan to make changes if it so suits them. We are open to engage with them if there is a service we can provide that makes sense.
- I will echo Kristin’s comments that the amount of volunteer and other hours that have gone into trying to “right the ship” this year have been enormous. The nuances and complexities of this file are many and varied and there has been no shortage of challenge for the Board. We are all feeling a bit battered. That is why we have decided to carry on this year with the Board contingent we currently have, to focus on getting some work done and stabilizing things.

9. ADR Saskatchewan’s 2024 Financial Report - Michele Cruise-Pratchler (on behalf of Albert Benesh)

- Catherine introduced Michele Cruise-Pratchler, ADRSK Member and Accountant for ADRSK who is providing the financial report which is typically the responsibility of Treasurer, Albert Benesh who is on leave.
- Michele opened by stating that she provided two reports. One for ADRSK and a separate one for CBoR. They will be distributed after the fact.
- ADRSK established a sub-committee of the Board this year consisting of Andy Livingston, Albert Benesh and Sarah Collins. Catherine Quevillon Schill was part of the sub-committee as Interim Executive Director. Andy Livingston stepped down from the sub-committee early in 2025. It was the responsibility of the Finance Sub-committee to develop the annual ADRSK Budget.
- Motion by Russ Gregory – that ADRSK Bylaw 2 (subsection 2) be amendedrom currently reading as *"The Board shall consist of at least three but not more than ten (10) persons as may be determined from time to time by the membership."* The Board recommends an amendment to this subsection to read as *"The Board shall consist of at least five (5) but not more than ten (10) persons as may be determined from time to time by the membership."* Seconded – Crystal Klassen. **Carried.**
  a. **Motion:** by Russ Gregory – that ADRSK Bylaw 7 (subsection 3) currently reading as *"Two directors constitute a quorum at a meeting of the Board or such greater number as the Board may determine."* The Board recommends an amendment to this subsection to read as *"Quorum for Board meetings shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of elected Directors, or five (5), whichever is lesser."* Seconded by Ken Gamble. **Carried.**
  b. **Motion:** by Russ Gregory – Whereas the current ADRSK Bylaws contain no eligibility provisions for election to Directorship, the following provisions be created as Bylaw 2 (subsection 5):

     That a Director be:

     i). a member in good standing and not subject to sanction by the Institute;
     ii). a resident of the province of Saskatchewan;
     iii). a person who is not currently an undischarged bankrupt; and,
     iv). a person without criminal conviction, or a person for whom conviction(s) has been pardoned.

     Seconded by Michelle Linklater. **Carried.**

10. Treasurer's report: (see AGM Package for all reports)

    Treasurer Benesh reviewed his written report and the Financial Statements provided in the AGM materials. Benesh specifically expressed appreciation for our new CPA Accountant (Michele Cruise-Pratchler) in getting our accounting corrected after the deficiencies of 2021 & 2022. **Motion** by Albert Benesh – that the 2023 Financial Statements be approved as presented. Seconded by Dominique Panko. **Carried.**

Motion by Albert Benesh – that the ADR Institute of Saskatchewan dispense with an external audit or review of the 2023 financial records. Seconded by Marie Amor. **Carried.**

11. Interim Executive Director's report: (see AGM Package for all reports)
    Scott Siemens reviewed the written report highlighting areas of significant engagement including the renewal of the Centralized Board of Revision contract with the Province, the partnership with the Construction Dispute Resolution Office, enhancing the function of Board committees, implementation of improved email communications, expansion of our reach via our LinkedIn page, and establishing our own accounting processes separate from ADRIC. Ongoing new ventures include a roster with SaskPolytechnic and a partnership with First Nations University of Canada for student memberships and dedicated delivery of the National Introductory Mediation Course. Siemens concluded his report by thanking the membership for their support during his 12 years as President and these past 2 years as Interim E.D.
12. ADR Canada Report (see AGM Package for all reports)
    Siemens welcomed ADRIC President Michael Schafler to the floor. Schafler expressed his gratitude for ADRSK's role in the Federation and the many ways ADRSK has been a leader on the national stage. Schafler also thanked Interim E.D. and Past President Siemens for his work at the provincial and national level.
13. Elections:
    Scott thanked all those who agreed to let their name stand for re-election / election and reviewed the process of selecting any 5 of the 8 candidates on the ballot.
    a. Election scrutineers appointed were Dominique Panko and Itemobong Umoh. Ballots were distributed and collected with the following person elected to a 3-year term:

    Albert Benesh
    Julian Bodnar
    Rodger Linka
    Ronni Nordal
    Marg Romanow

    The following persons comprise the 2024-25 ADRSK Board of Directors – renewable term end dates as noted:

Gina Alexander	– 2025
Kristin Anderson	– 2025
Albert Benesh	– 2027
Julian Bodnar	– 2027
Rodger Linka	– 2027
Andrew Livingston	– 2026
Ronni Nordal	– 2027
Charmaine Panko	– 2026

Marg Romanow – 2027
Itemobong Umoh – 2025

b. Election of representative to the ADR Canada Board – **Kristin Anderson recused from the meeting for this action.**

Siemens explained the process and necessity of this action to fill the position of ADRSK - ADRIC Board representative. Siemens made three calls to the membership for any other nominees for this role, none were forthcoming.

Motion: Russ Gregory moved to appoint Kristin Anderson as the ADRSK representative to the ADRIC board from October '24 to Oct '25 (ADRIC Board terms of service): seconded by Albert Benesh.

Motion Carried

c. Affirmation of ADR Saskatchewan and ADR Canada committee volunteers: Kristin, the Officers, and the E.D. all noted the long list of members who sit on various committees within the Provincial and National Institutes. Scott described the continued growth seen this year and the importance of these volunteers for their "behind the scenes" contributions. All were encouraged to consider volunteer opportunities to help in the growth and standing of our Institute.

Resolution: Whereas the ADR Institute of Saskatchewan could not function without its many volunteers; and whereas said volunteers regularly go without recognition and thanks; - **BE IT RESOLVED** that the membership of the ADR Institute of Saskatchewan expressly and enthusiastically thank our many dedicated volunteers in their various provincial and national roles. **Unanimously affirmed.**

Adjourn – **Motion** to conclude by Albert Benesh, seconded by Dominique Panko, at 1:18 pm; meeting agenda concluded, no vote required.