



## **CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING VETERANS ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AGM 2007 FOR CHANGES**

**Submitted by Ray Kokkonen, Vice President**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Prior to the CPVA AGM 2005, I did an unofficial review of the CPVA Constitution and By-Laws and presented a summary report (attached) to the AGM. Following discussion, the AGM tasked me to continue the review. A number of recommendations for amendments were made to the AGM 2006 but they were not addressed by the meeting. Therefore, I am submitting the same recommendations, with some changes, to the AGM 2007. The recommendations are mainly for changes in principle and are not intended to be detailed By-Law amendment motions and the editorial authority to appropriately amend the By-Laws in keeping with the approved principles is requested as a separate motion.

#### **2. MISSION STATEMENT**

##### **2.1. Current Status and Discussion**

There are two existing statements which can both be considered as Mission Statements but neither accurately describes what the CPVA should be doing as the first one is out-dated and the other one doesn't really give any direction.

The Constitution states: "To assist all Veterans and their families with re-establishment to civilian life".

The By-Laws Mission Statement is: "To uphold the Constitution of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association".

##### **2.2. Recommendation**

In order for CPVA to have dynamic and meaningful organizational direction, the recommended mission statement of the CPVA is:

**"To be a strong and leading advocate for veterans, to create and nurture a forum of comradeship for veterans and to govern the CPVA democratically and effectively on behalf of all its members."**

##### **2,3, Motion**

Be it resolved that the CPVA By-Laws be amended to reflect the recommended Mission Statement.

#### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

##### **3.1. Current Status and Discussion**

At present there are four membership categories: Regular, Associate, Life and Honorary with all but Honorary having the right to vote. The major question is the Associate members having a vote – the Royal Canadian Legion is an example where non-veteran Associates have taken over a lot of organizational control. In addition to the Associate issue, it would be advantageous to

have a membership category for groups – such as regimental associations – who wish to join the CPVA as organization.

### **3.2. Recommendations**

In keeping with the above, the new membership categories are recommended to be:

**Regular** – all veterans under the VAC definition and police officers or civilians who have participated in any kind of peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace support or any related operations.

**Associate** – any person who supports the aims of the CPVA and wishes to be involved in its activities.

**Group** – any organization which supports the CPVA or has an affinity with it, such as regimental associations or other specific veterans organizations.

**Honorary** – a person who is awarded the Honorary Membership by CPVA as an honour. This category could be used to replace the Life membership and should also be bestowed on the Founders of CPVA.

**Only Regular members should have the right to vote and to hold elected positions in CPVA.** Under very special circumstances an Associate member could be appointed to a CPVA position – for example, a lawyer Associate member could be appointed as a Service Officer.

### **3.3. Motion**

Be it resolved that the membership categories in the CPVA By-Laws be amended as recommended.

## **4. GOVERNANCE MODEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **4.1. Current Status and Discussion**

In the current CPVA governance model, all decisions are made by the Board (Directors - President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary) and it lacks any regional or chapter based representative decision makers. The Regional Chairs are appointed as Officers by the Board and are then ratified by the AGM, however, as Officers, the Regional Chairs do not have a vote and most do not represent anyone. In order to have a true representational democratic base for the governance of CPVA, the decision makers should be those elected nationally and those elected by chapters or regions.

The AGM, because of the size of Canada and the unwillingness of members to pay for long distance travel, generally becomes a meeting of the local members and therefore does not truly represent the entire membership and important national decisions are made by the local group at the AGM.

### **4.2. Recommendations**

In view of the above factors, for an effective and economical-as-possible governance structure, given the current membership and chapters configuration, the CPVA should have a three part model – the AGM, the Board and the Executive. Generally speaking, the AGM would remain as it is now. The Board of the CPVA should have the following Directors with a vote: President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer and all existing chapter Presidents or designates, with the President as the Chair of the Board. When more chapters are founded and they become so numerous as to make the numbers of Board members too many, the representative Directors should be chosen on a regional basis by election and perhaps then a provincial/territorial command structure should be considered. The Executive would consist of the President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer.

The AGM would elect the Executive, ratify the Officer positions, appoint the Auditors and make other necessary AGM decisions. The AGM should have the possibility to be conducted by conference call or via live internet interface. The Board's responsibility would be primarily policy and it could conduct business by conference calls and the internet, and would not have to meet physically except in very special cases. The Executive would deal with the day-to-day business of the Association and the implementation of the policies decided by the Board, with a special focus on veterans' advocacy and representation to the Federal Government and outside organizations. As well, the Executive would prepare the plans and budget for presentation to the Board and the AGM.

The Officers appointed by the Board should be ex-officio (without vote) and would do the work in the various functional areas within the CPVA such as the Regional Chairs, Membership, Communications (new proposal), Kit Shop, etc.

#### **4.3. Motion**

Be it resolved that the CPVA By-Laws be amended to reflect the recommended governance and organizational structure.

### **5. ELECTIONS AND VOTING**

#### **5.1. Current Status and Discussion**

The current election process in the CPVA By-Laws is extremely cumbersome and is based mainly on the postal service, including the folding of pieces of paper and multiple envelopes in an attempt to achieve a secret ballot. The disadvantages of the present system are the long time that is required for mailing out and return of the ballots. Additionally, there has been considerable confusion and misunderstanding about ballots and proxies – ballots are for elections and proxies are for another member voting on issues for a member not present at the AGM. The entire process for elections and voting must be clarified.

#### **5.2. Recommendations**

A complete revision of the electoral process and voting must be done as a part of the re-writing of the By-Laws with the main focus on modernizing and streamlining, including the incorporation of internet voting for both elections and other issues by the AGM, Board and Executive.

#### **5.3. Motion**

Be it resolved that telephone and internet voting procedures for elections and all other issues by the AGM, Board and Executive be incorporated into the CPVA By-Laws.

### **6. COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

#### **6.1. Current Status and Discussion**

The passage of information within CPVA and to the outside world is extremely important today. At present, the CPVA does have the website and the Blue Beret in hard-copy and electronic version. However, among other difficulties the website has displayed incorrect information about various matters for long periods in the past, many members do not receive the Blue Beret in any form and collective address lists are not complete or up-to-date.

If we want to move into the future as a larger and more dynamic organization, we must address communications as a priority.

#### **6.2. Recommendation**

In order to deal with communications effectively and thoroughly as a functional area, it is recommended that a position of **Communications Officer** be created in CPVA with the appointment being done by the Executive, with ratification by the Board, based on the appropriate skill sets, and with the responsibilities of developing and improving CPVA internal and external communications, overseeing the production of the Blue Beret, overseeing the

administration of the CPVA website, ensuring that internal communications elements such as address lists are correct and complete, and other related communications duties.

**6.3. Motion**

Be it resolved that a Communications Officer be appointed and the position be incorporated permanently into the By-Laws

**7. EDITORIAL AUTHORITY TO AMEND THE BY-LAWS**

**7.1. Current Status and Discussion**

As described in the report of the initial By-Laws study, a number of discrepancies and errors exist in the current By-Laws and they should be corrected. As well, it will be necessary to make the detailed amendments resulting from the foregoing motions for changes in the By-Laws.

**7.2. Recommendation**

In order to be able to effectively correct and reformat the By-Laws, the most practical method is to allow the Executive the authority to make the changes. The finalized By-Laws would be presented to the Board for initial review and then to the next AGM.

**7.3. Motion**

Be it resolved that the Executive be granted editorial authority to make the required editorial changes in the By-Laws resulting from the foregoing amendments in principle and the existing errors detailed in the initial By-Laws study report to the AGM 2005.

**8. CONCLUSION**

The issues identified in this document and the recommendations which I have made are based on a considerable amount of research of our By-Laws, discussions, thinking and organizational experience. These issues will have to be resolved whether CPVA remains as it is or changes its name, nature or structure. In any case and in addition to the presented specific points, which I consider crucial, the entire By-Laws have to be thoroughly revised as shown in the attached review from the 2005 AGM. I ask for your support to develop a better CPVA.

Respectfully,



Ray Kokkonen  
Vice President

**Attachment:** CPVA By-Laws Review for AGM 2005

# **CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

## **Report to the Annual General Meeting, 12 June 2005 on the Findings of an Informal Constitutional/By-Law Review**

Submitted by Ray Kokkonen

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

An informal and unofficial review of the Constitution and By-Laws of the CPVA was done during the past several months because there appeared to be some confusion in the conduct of business, particularly relating to Annual General Meetings and elections. As there are a large number of observations arising, this report will present only a summary of the findings. Furthermore, there are different areas of observations which require different forms of action.

### **2 OBSERVATIONS**

The three types of difficulty areas, with examples, are as follows:

#### **2.1. Principle Questions**

This is an area of questions about fundamental issues such as the formulation of the Mission Statement – what is the purpose of the CPVA, is it to be purely a veterans' advocacy organization which provides service officer type services or is it primarily a forum for comradeship and veterans' activities. There are other issues which also raise serious questions, including the rights and privileges of members, i.e. whether Associates and other non-Regular memberships should have the right to vote, etc. Also questionable in some ways are the structure and powers of the Board, calling and conduct of meetings and the process for By-Law amendments and elections. These issues require a deliberate decision by the membership, possibly by means of a referendum.

#### **2.2. Internal By-Law Conflict and Coordination Errors**

There are a number of articles in the By-Laws which conflict with other articles. As an example, Article 3.16 states in general that Directors cannot be paid for their work as Directors but Article 3.18 stipulates in general that they can be paid. As well, there are a number of internal coordination errors resulting in references to other parts of the By-Laws not being correctly identified, e.g. Article 3.20 refers to Articles 3.11 (d) and 4.05 as grounds for removal of Directors and Officers by the Voting Membership whereas Article 3.11 (d) is death and Article 4.05 is resignation both which make removal from office redundant.

#### **2.3. Secretarial Errors – Numbering, Format and Structure**

There are a large number of article numbering errors including duplicate numbers, missing numbers and dual numbers. There are some format and structure errors, the most serious of which is that there are two articles (III and IV) titled Directors and which have a large overlap of context and with some conflict between the two. The format abnormalities can cause confusion about various procedures such as elections because like information is not kept together in a logical grouping and flow.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

It is deemed that the numerous questions and inconsistencies found are grounds for continued work on the Constitution and By-Laws. The observations in the principle issues area will require due process by the Board and the membership. The various numbering and format anomalies are thought to have arisen because the original base document has been amended a number of times and a complete and thorough review is now required.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that a thorough Constitutional/By-Law review be conducted and the report to be made to the 2006 AGM, with motions formulated to address the various issues. It is further recommended that the opinion of membership about the critical principle questions be determined by some form of canvass and appropriate AGM motions formulated based on the results, or with the questions being put to a referendum.