



**MANITOBA WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (MWI)
Board Meeting Agenda**

September 24th, 2025

PRESENT:

Debra Barrett	President
Marge Knutson	President Elect
Mallory Makinson	Office Administrator
Vacant	MB Government Appointed Member
Michele Gurman	MB Government Appointed Member
Jacqueline Chartrand	Regrets
Liz Chongva	Southwest Regional Rep
Liz Chongva	Northern Regional Rep
Thelma Blahey	MB Ag Representative
Gisela Nolting	Winnipeg-Interlake Regional Rep
Ann Mandziuk	Home Ec. Rep

Call to Order 9:04 a.m.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: Moved by Michele Gurman that the agenda be adopted as circulated.
Seconded by Ann Mandziuk. **CARRIED**

2. Approval of Minutes for June 18th, 2025

Motion: Moved by Liz Chongva that the minutes from the Board Meeting held June 18th, 2025 be approved as circulated. Seconded by Michele Gurman. **CARRIED**

3. Acceptance of the Financial Reports

Motion: Moved by Ann Mandziuk that the financial reports for June 2025, July 2025 and August 2025 be accepted as circulated. Seconded by Liz Chongva. **CARRIED**

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Wheat City Women's Institute Disbanding 2025 – letters and information have been sent. It is unfortunate.

5. OA Report

- I attended marketing, finance, and board meetings and prepared the board meeting agenda/minutes. A wide variety of tasks completed in result of these meetings. Month end finances completed.
- Mailed cheque donations to ACWW, IPG etc.
- Website is being continuously updated and monitored to keep it current. Updating current newsletters and zoom presentation advertising. Resolutions for 2025 added to website.
- Updating forms/new 2025/2026 membership.
- Created letters and certificates for lifetime memberships Fisher Branch WI.
- Created content for social media, advertisements, etc.
- Many other tasks were done this month; this is just a highlight of my month.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 AGM 2026 Location.

- Date**
- Location**
- Speaker Ideas**
- Fund Activity**

Discussion: Domain initially expressed interest in hosting. The Board considered alternative scenarios should no branch offer to host.

Alternatives: the Herman Prior Centre have a meeting space for 40 people,

- the Board may have to do the Lion's share of the planning,
- 37 people attended the 2025 AGM in Dufrost,
- the Centre has ample parking, disability accessible washrooms close to the meeting room,
- center has WIFI for a potential hybrid meeting,
- Grosse Isle offered to look for speakers. Should we continue to hold it on a Saturday or try for one year at the Herman Prior on a Friday?
- Speakers availability would be greater during the week,
- costs may be lower during the week,
- suggestions for speakers are Sandy Knight, who is an agricultural advocate who does beautiful photography and is a writer. Aq in the Classroom is right in Portage as well.
- suggestion that Friday May 8th would work best.

Action: **AGM 2026 Virtual/Hybrid & MWI Women's Day Committee** to investigate the Herman Prior Centre for the AGM. Which day would you prefer holding a meeting. Stick with Friday and go to Thursday if it's an issue. May 8th is the date set for the AGM.

Action: **Grosse Isle** to find speakers.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Mrs. Alfred Watt Trust Agreement

Marie Kenny, the Canada Area rep called a meeting for all of Canada area societies – there are 13 societies forming the Trust Fund, two societies are inconsistent and noticeably absent.

Discussion: is there a need to keep this fund going or should the funds be distributed to permanently, remaining with each of the societies as they exist now.

- Manitoba would retain the approximately 20,000 and be ear marked as the Mrs. Alfred Watt Fund (currently earmarked as the Manitoba Women’s Institute funds).
- The purpose is to provide funds to make sure that the President can still go to the ACWW Triennials.
- Marie Kenny took the agreement to a lawyer and the lawyer gave her the advice that the society should consider disbanding or cancelling the agreement based on the fact that two of the societies are not even bothering to participate any longer and that the way the world is changing. It was deemed that a small contingency of societies holding such a large amount of funds was contrary to current thinking. The societies that met is considering disbanding the trust and has asked for more input from the lawyer.
- Societies will need to consider how to ensure these funds distributed to the societies will remain the focus that they were initially supposed to have. It is solely a Canadian Fund.

Action: **Debra** will request the boards advice on whether she should vote to keep the agreement as it currently stands or dissolve.

DISCUSSION: Designate an account for the purpose for the international funds. With social media now and adapting with the times it would be easy to attend meetings without physically being there to save on expenses.

Motion: Moved by Gisela Nolting to dissolve the Mrs. Alfred Watt fund and develop an internal policy on it’s use. Seconded by Ann Mandziuk. **CARRIED**

7.2 Investments Update

Madge Watt Fund 013	3.400%	13-Sep-2026
Forever Fund 1	3.45%	03-Sep-2027
Forever Fund 2	3.400%	12-Sep-2026

The finance committee reinvested accounts that came to maturity in September.

7.3 Fundraising - Province Wide

Many provinces are considering a province wide or national base raffle. A suggestion was a large ticket item. Another suggestion was an online 50/50 auction. The idea will be brought to the board when MWI has more information regarding the logistics of holding a provincial or national fundraiser.

Action: Mallory will investigate online 50/50 companies are available and what percentage of the proceeds do they take.

7.4 Nominations

MWI requires a president elect for May. Debra has tried to talk to some women; however, they see the executive as being too labor intensive even for those who have just retired. Previously, MWI duties were labor intensive but have been brought to the point now where processes are consistent with the current thinking, therefore it is not a huge job now for the future presidents. This Board has been extremely supportive. Suggestion: possibly two people could work as co-presidents and share the work, this format is becoming more common.

7.5 Committee Structures 2026 (November 2025 – April 2026)

Executive: Debra Barrett (Chair), Marge Knutson, Gisela Nolting, Thelma Blahey (MB Ag. Liaison), Ann Mandziuk (Home Ec.), Mallory Makinson (OA)

Finance: Marge Knutson (Chair), Debra Barrett, Liz Chongva, Gisela Nolting, Ann Mandziuk, Mallory Makinson (OA)

Nomination: Liz Chongva, open

Bylaw & Policy: Debra Barrett (Chair), Marge Knutson, Liz Chongva, Thelma Blahey

Marketing & Promotion: Ann Mandziuk (Chair), Liz Chongva, Michele Gurman, Debra Barrett, Mallory Makinson (OA),

Resolutions: Trish Masniuk, Valerie Watt, Diane MacDonald, Barb Steinwandt, Debra Barrett (Board Rep.)

Scholarship: Gisela Nolting (Chair), Dorothy Braun, Sheena Letexier

AGM 2026 Virtual/Hybrid & MWI Women's Day: Debra Barrett (Chair), Marge Knutson, Gisela Nolting, Liz Chongva, Mallory Makinson (OA)

Agriculture & Rural Development: Gisela Nolting (Chair), Michele Gurman, open

Strategic Plan: Debra Barrett (Chair), Marge Knutson, Liz Chongva, Thelma Blahey

Made in Manitoba Project: Michele Gurman (Chair), Marge Knutson, Debra Barrett

Restructuring Committee: Debra Barrett (Chair), Liz Chongva (committee on hiatus)

Repeal of MWI Act Committee: Debora Durnin-Richards (lead), Marge Knutson, Gail Watson, Gisela Nolting, Liz Chongva, Ann Mandziuk, Debra Barrett

MWI Memberships with External Organizations for 2024 – 2025

Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada (FWIC): Debra Barrett (2024-2027)

FWIC Outreach & Communication Committee 2024-2025: Debra Barrett

International Peace Gardens (IPG): Audrey Clark

Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC): Gisela Nolting

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM): Liz Chongva

National Council of Women Canada: Debra Barrett

Costume Museum of Canada: Liz Chongva

ACWW Coordinator for Manitoba: Gisela Nolting

Council of Women Winnipeg: open

Decision: MWI will withdraw from Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, National Council of Women of Canada and the Council of Women Winnipeg because these organizations appear to be not functioning as a cohesive group at this point. Membership could be rejuvenated should circumstance dictate.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Executive – Debra Barrett

There were no business matters which required the executive committee to meet during the summer.

8.2 AGM 2026 and MWI Women’s Day – Debra Barrett

There has not been any interested expressed by branches to host the events. Suggestion – to hold the AGM at the Herman Prior Center in Portage as they have meeting rooms larger enough to accommodate 40 people, can provide a full hot lunch, and has ample parking a washroom facility.

8.3 Marketing & Promotion – Ann Mandziuk

No meeting was held in September due to unexpected circumstances. On hold until November.

8.4 Bylaw & Policy – Debra Barrett

Policies continue to be updated as required. The Bylaw was not updated at AGM 2025 due to the absence of ministerial direction on what constitutes a provincially accepted yearend financial review. The criteria regarding who is acceptable to perform a reviewed yearend financial statement will be updated in the Bylaw as well as any new or amended policies regarding MWI business matters.

8.5 Resolutions – Jacqueline Chartrand

Committee on hiatus until October 2025.

8.6 Scholarship – Gisela Nolting

The two recipient names are listed on the Red River website for this year.

8.7 Finance – Marge Knutson

The Finance Meeting was held on [September 8th](#). The July and August financial statements were reviewed.

The agenda was amended to include 2 items for discussion.

1) Madge Watt Fund

2) Two Funds that matured in September.

Both items were discussed, and decisions were made regarding both.

The Madge Watt Fund and the Forever Fund #1 will be invested in a one-year term at 3.4%. Forever Fund #2 invested in a two-year term at 3.45%.

8.8 International Peace Gardens – Audrey Clark

Audrey submitted a news article outlining the Peace Gardens still welcoming visitors from both sides, tariffs or not.

8.9 FWIC – Debra Barrett

FWIC resumed their board meeting on Sept 22nd. The discussion centered on:

- Two fundraisers will be held this year. The fundraisers are Pampered Chef in October and Allouette cosmetics in April.
- FWIC is exploring using a digital office manager rather due to the staff vacancies and executive distances from the head office.
- Key events – Feb 19th WI Day, March 8 International Women’s Day, and April 22nd Earth Day
- Creation of virtual time for members to chat with each other. The title will be “Coffee Time”
- Received a \$23K donation from Canada Health
- Issues with credit card payments for ACWW Triennial which is resulting in members bank accounts being frozen.

8.10 MB Agriculture – Thelma Blahey

There have been staffing changes within MB Agriculture recently. I have attached the list of deputy ministers as MWI works with different departments at times.

Our DM Brenda DeSerranno was moved from Agriculture to Public Service Delivery

Our new DM is Scott Sinclair, who comes from Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Our long time Assistant Deputy Minister Maurice Bouvier is now a DM with Municipal and Northern Relations.

Please note the following list of deputy ministers:

- **Sarah Thiele** – Clerk of Executive Council and Cabinet Secretary
- **Ainsley Krone** – Deputy Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation
- **Silvester Komlodi** – Deputy Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
- **Scott Sinclair** – Deputy Minister of Agriculture
- **Jeremy Akerstream, K.C.** – Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General
- **Michelle Dubik** – Deputy Minister of Families

- **Charlene Paquin** – Deputy Minister of Housing, Addiction and Homelessness
- **Mona Pandey** – Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning
- **Bruce Gray** – Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures
- **Michelle Wallace** – Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration (effective Sept. 6, 2025)
- **Michael Jack** – Deputy Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation
- **Ryan Klos** – Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
- **Matthew Wiebe** – Acting Deputy Minister of Finance
- **Daniel Blaikie** – Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
- **Jan Forster** – Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Training
- **Jocelyn Baker** – Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change
- **Maurice Bouvier** – Deputy Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations
- **Brenda DeSerranno** – Deputy Minister of Public Service Delivery
- **Jeff Hnatiuk** – Deputy Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism
- **Tyler Gooch** – Deputy Minister of Innovation and New Technology
- **Ann Ulusoy** – Secretary to Treasury Board
- **Dana Rudy** – Public Service Commissioner in the Public Service Commission

Work is progressing on the MWI and MB Agriculture agreement.

8.11 **Agriculture & Rural Development – Gisela Nolting**

After a dry spring and summer, we received some rain at the beginning of harvest. Some areas in southeast Manitoba saw some flooding earlier this month. Cereal harvest is almost complete.

EMILI (Enterprise Machine Intelligence Learning Initiative) is hosting the Agriculture Enlightened Conference 2025 October 23, 2025, at the Delta Hotel in Winnipeg. The theme is “Driving Agriculture Innovation”. For more information go to the EMILI website. Manitoba Women in Agriculture & Food 2025 Summit is October 9, 2025, at the Caboto Centre in Winnipeg. The Keynote speaker is Jill Verwey, the President of Keystone Agricultural Producers. To learn more about this event go to the Manitoba Women in Agriculture & Food website.

8.12 **Nomination – Liz Chongva**

No report at this time.

8.13 **Strategic Plan – Debra Barrett**

The Committee continues to review the plan to ensure compliance.

8.14 **Made in Manitoba Project – Michele Gurman**

Action: **Michele** will write a summary for November’s MWI newsletter looking for suggestions.

Action: **Debra** to provide Michele with a copy of the suggestions from the AGM regarding future Made in MB Projects.

8.15 Restructuring Committee – Debra Barrett
Committee on hiatus.

8.16 ACWW – Gisela Nolting

The 31st ACWW Triennial World Conference is in Ottawa April 26 – May 1, 2026. Early Bird Registration ends Sept. 30, 2025. For more info and to register visit the ACWW website. So far 5 W.I. members from Manitoba have registered.

I was honored to be invited by the Fisher Branch Women’s Institute to read a letter from Marie Kenny, our ACWW Canada Area President, on the occasion to honor and celebrate several longtime Fisher Branch W.I. members. You will read more about the event in the Institute News.

On September 20, 2025, we had a Zoom coordinator meeting about the upcoming campaigns for International Day of Rural Women.

International Day of Rural Women is on October 15, 2025. To celebrate there are two online events: Rural Women’s Health at 1:30 pm UK time
ACWW Celebrates at 3 pm UK time

To register go to the ACWW website.

There is a survey about Rural Women. I will email the link to the board members.

9. In-Camera Session

No discussion held

Next Board Meeting Date: November 19th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. with a view to setting meeting dates for the start of the fall session and determining committee chairpersons.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn moved by Ann Mandziuk. Meeting adjourned by Debra Barrett at 10:40 a.m.

ACTIONS:

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