



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

March 18th, 2026

PRESENT:

Debra Barrett	President
Marge Knutson	President Elect
Mallory Makinson	Office Administrator
Michele Gurman	MB Government Appointed Member
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 9:03 a.m.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: Moved by Michele Gurman that the agenda be adopted as amended.

Seconded by Liz Chongva. **CARRIED**

Amendments addition of item 7.2 and 7.3

2. Approval of Minutes for January 21st, 2026

Motion: Moved by Gisela Nolting that the minutes from the Board Meeting held January 21st, 2026, be approved as circulated. Seconded by Marge Knutson. **CARRIED**

3. Acceptance of the Financial Reports

Motion: Moved by Liz Chongva that the financial reports for January 2026 and February 2026 be accepted as circulated. Seconded by Ann Mandziuk. **CARRIED**

4. CORRESPONDENCE

None

5. OA Report

- I attended finance, and board meetings and prepared the board meeting and finance agenda/minutes. A wide variety of tasks completed in result of these meetings.
- Month end finances completed and quickbooks balanced.
- Communicated and complied with Sensus to get the financial reports completed.
- Newsletter e-mail/mail out.
- Website is being continuously updated and monitored to keep it current. Updating current newsletters. Newsletters and Board Meeting Minutes added to website.
- Working on book of reports.
- Completed the resolutions ballot mail out to members.
- Membership Registrations for the 2025-26 year continuing to come in late. Donations deposited and allocated/QuickBooks updated.
- Completed the financial reports with Sensus.
- Created content for social media, advertisements, Zoom presentations, etc.
- Mailed Proclamation Signing letter to the Minister of Agriculture.
- Many other tasks were done this month; this is just a highlight of my month.
- Invoiced MB Agriculture for annual grant and completed forms for direct deposit
- April 2. 2026 MWI can send in next years grant information and application

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 Resolution on Veterinary Services for Big Animals (emergency resolution?)

DISCUSSION

There was an issue with big animals brought forward by a couple of WI members who deemed it important enough to qualify as an emergency resolution. Concern is how could a government force a veterinarian to go to remote areas. The income is not as lucrative for big animals; as it is for cats and dogs.

One issue is if there is a vet clinic with designated vets for big animals, they cannot meet the volume of requests for care.

Question: Could part of a resolution require a local vet clinic be responsible for emergencies?

At the ministers request MB Agric. has authorized a provincial vert service working group to review vet services district model and determine what can be done. Leanne Tidbits is the agriculture contact. There are 150 vet clinics in the province in 26 vet service districts and there is only 1 vet district that doesn't have any service for big animals.

Decision: MWI should voice our members' concerns. MWI's response could be submitted this year or next year.

ACTION: **Marge** will write a letter of support for the review based on statistical information to be provided by the MB Agriculture liaison.

ACTION: **Thelma** give information on who and where to address a letter of concern regarding veterinary services for big animals.

ACTION: **Board** to canvas membership concerns and submit a Resolution for the November 2026 resolution process.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Offering 2 years of Free Membership to Potential New President-Elect – Marketing & Planning Committee

Suggestion to advertise on social media to raise interest in nominating a potential president-elect for this coming year. Social media ads will be used. Suggestion: Offer for the 2 years of their president-elect status a free MWI membership.

DISCUSSION:

Concern: providing a free membership may not provide the best nominee. Suggestion: MWI offer a free membership for the first year as the president elect as a reward for the time required to adapted to the role.

Decision: Consensus is to not have the free membership.

ACTION: **Mallory** to create social media posts to remind members about the importance of nominating an MWI president-elect. The Board will review the posts prior to posting.

7.2 Southwest and Northwest Book of Remembrance (BOR)

We don't know what's happened with Northwest BOR. Southwest, prior to dissolution, requested a former member maintain the regional BOR. Concern: The regional BOR from dissolved regions should be archived in a central location, like a library or the Provincial Archives, rather than in a private home to ensure secure storage. These books become the property of MWI upon dissolutions of the regionals and must be properly archived by MWI. Property of dissolved WI branches is stipulated in the Women's Institute Act as passing of ownership to MWI.

ACTION: **Ann** request feedback from members at the AGM regarding disposition and storage of regional Book of Remembrance.

ACTION: **Ann** will create a newsletter article for member education and feedback.

7.3 Celebration of Life at the AGM

Maryanne McNabb just passed away this week she was also a former MWI President. Is the local WI doing the celebration of life or the Board.

Woodmore and Lenore have members hwo [assed away in 2025/2026.

ACTION: **Ann** will put together a poem to read for the BOR.

ACTION: **Liz** and **Ann** will read for the BOR.

ACTION: **Mallory** to give newly received institute names to be included in the MWI BOR.

ACTION: **Debra** to develop a Policy to set out the criteria for inclusion in the MWI Book of Remembrance. **Note:** a fee of \$25.00 to be paid by the WI branch, a family member or

interested party is required with the submission.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Executive – Debra Barrett

No meetings held to date.

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

A second luncheon quote was received and was finalized. Entrée will be Quiche with either a soup and/or salad, dessert, tea/coffee. Alternative canned beverages to be provided by MWI. Springfield WI to provide muffins and coffee for the morning.

MOTION Liz Chongva that our lunch costs will be \$20 per person. Seconded by Gisela Nolting. **CARRIED.**

Decisions: A 50/50 raffle and a raffle for baked goods will be held to help keep the registration fee low.

AGM & Women’s Day will be hybrid using zoom.

ACTION: **Debra** to provide the Registration form to **Ann** for inclusion in the April newsletter.

8.3 Marketing & Promotion – Ann Mandziuk

AI speaker was found and she will present March 19, 2026 at 7:00.

Amplifying our message looking to put together questions to take to the AGM to get ideas from members.

For now, the newsletter will look similar to what it is at this time. I use Publisher but it is not being supported by Microsoft so I will look for other software that I can use.

Points/Questions for AGM

- Important for branches to share what they are doing in their branch.
- Like to share on social media and in our newsletter.
- Do you use local media newspapers or posters?
- Send the articles or sample of the poster to the office and we can take items out for social media and newsletters.
- How can we encourage branches to have open meetings and invite guests? Would it help to gather ideas and put them into a one pager that can be shared with all groups.
- Give us 2 of your best ideas to entice guests to come to your meetings. We will add them to the one pager.
- Jot down any other ideas that you have to add to our social media and newsletter.

ACTION: **Mallory** to secure a flip chart for the supplies to go to the AGM.

ACTION: Ann will lead the live discussion at the AGM.

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 – Debra Barrett

Diane McDonald has agreed to be the chairperson this fall.

8.6 Scholarship – Gisela Nolting

ACTION: Ann put a reminder in the newsletter about the scholarships.

ACTION: Mallory to post on our social media pages to remind about the scholarship deadline.

8.7 Finance – Marge Knutson

The Finance Committee had a meeting on Monday, February 9th and on March 9th, 2026.

The committee reviewed the December and January financial statements at the February meeting as well as looking at the Budget for 2025-26. Some changes were required due to a change in our decreased membership. Currently, we have 120 members.

We also discussed at looking at other accounting firms to see if a more reasonable rate could be found. Liz and Marge will be looking into this.

In our March Finance meeting we discussed the February bank statements, and also the maturity dates of our investments that are coming due in May and June of this year. Mallory also paid for the Cooperators, Canada Area President fee, AITC membership, FWIC membership, and Sensus audit.

Mallory also confirmed the Funding request to the Province with Thelma. A two (2) year funding agreement instead of a one (1) year is being considered.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, April 13th, 2026.

8.8 International Peace Gardens – Audrey Clark

No report at this time.

8.9 FWIC – Debra Barrett

The WI Day presentations were very successful with memories shared by representatives from most provinces. There were 88 people who attended the Zoom event

The next Board meeting will be held Monday, March 23rd, 2026. The Outreach and Communication meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17th, 2026

8.10 MB Agriculture – Thelma Blahey

- Year end work of processing ag society infrastructure grants is happening
- Working with Debra and Mallory on getting the MWI agreement signed and invoice submitted for payment
- Conflict in other countries is affecting fuel prices, which increases input costs for all things farm related
- Mb Agriculture continues to work on the Vet retention consultation meetings in rural areas regarding the low number of farm focused (big animal) vets.
- The MB budget comes out March 24, 2026

8.11 Agriculture & Rural Development – Gisela Nolting

The youth employment and skills program applications are open until May 4, 2026. The program provides funding to employers who hire youth aged 15-30 for jobs in the agriculture and agrifood sector. For more information go to the AAFC website.

A few years ago, MWI forwarded a resolution regarding live horse exports. The export ban is on the back burner. Bill C-355 passed the House of Commons in May 2024 but died in the Senate when the election was called in early 2025. There is still the private prosecution led by Animal Justice against a horse exporter from Manitoba before court. The decision will come at a further date.

Due to the war in the middle east oil and fertilizer prices are going up.

Point of interest – Saudi Arabia horses were evacuated due to the war in the middle east with vets and groomers in padded flight crates.

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 – Michelle Gurman

No report at this time.

8.15 Restructuring Committee – Debra Barrett

Committee on hiatus.

8.16 ACWW – Gisela Nolting

March 8, 2026, we celebrated International Women's Day. ACWW is a global voice elevating women's voices for over ninety years. This year we also celebrate women farmers around the world. I saw a few articles in farm magazines covering that topic. We are all looking forward to the conference in Ottawa at the end of April.

DISCUSSION: For our AGM should we invite the new Canada Area President to zoom in for 5 minutes to bring greetings and introduce herself.

ACTION: **Debra** to invite the Canada Area President and the new Canadian elected as President to the ACWW.

9. In-Camera Session

Next Board Meeting Date: May 20th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn moved by Ann Mandziuk. Meeting adjourned by Debra Barrett at 10:24 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS IN MINUTES:

ACTION: Marge will write a letter of support for the review based on statistical information to be provided by the MB Agriculture liaison.

ACTION: Thelma give information on who and where to address a letter of concern regarding veterinary services for big animals.

ACTION: Board to canvas membership concerns and submit a Resolution for the November 2026 resolution process.

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