



The North American Mobeds Council

Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting held in person and electronically on June 24, 2023 at
Zoroastrian Association of Huston - - Bhandara Atashkadeh – Houston Texas

Attendees at ZAH:

1. Tehemton Mirza - President
2. Adi Sidhwa - Treasurer
3. Kobad Zarolia
4. Ardaviraf M
5. Jamshed Dastur – Vice President
6. Cawas Desai
7. Porus Balsara
8. Zarir Bhandara
9. Burjor Dastur
10. Khushrav Nariman
11. Parvez Bhote
12. Maneck Sidhwa

Virtual attendees:

1. Mehbad Dastur - Executive Officer
2. Pazash Mithaiwala - Secretary
3. Gev Karkaria
4. Bomi Damkevala
5. Porus Pavri
6. Xerxes Madan
7. Frank Fariborz Shshzadi
8. Pesi Vazifdar
9. Behram Panthaki
10. Zarir Bhandara
11. Xersis Dastur
12. Soli Bamji
13. Zerkis Bhandara
14. Peshotan Unwalla
15. Parvez Patel
16. Jimmy Doctor
17. Kaus Doctor
18. Kash Doctor
19. Jal Birdy
20. Adi Unwalla

21. Nozer Kotwal
22. Jal Panthaky
23. Khushroo Bharda
24. Jehan Bagli
25. Jamshid Pouresfandiary

1. Welcome and Introductions:

NAMC President Tehemton Mirza welcomed all the participants, and the meeting was called to order, followed by a short prayer.

2. Read and Approve minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

Following some discussion, the minutes were adopted

Moved by Arda Minocherhomjee, Seconded by Cawas Desai. Accepted Unanimously.

3. Financial Statements and financial reports

a. NAMC -Canadian Statements:

- i. Treasurer Adi Sidhwa elaborated on the financial statements.
- ii. Arda Minocherhomjee clarified that the Ervad Soli Dastur Education Fund is for advanced education in Zoroastrianism and only the NAMC executive committee can decide to deploy these funds at their discretion.
- iii. Difficulty with banks in Canada not allowing US resident signing officers was discussed:

After discussions, the following resolution was moved by Kobad Zarolia and seconded by Arda Minocherhomjee:

“Resolved that any two Canadian Resident NAMC executives be and are hereby authorized to operate the Canadian bank and investment accounts of NAMC-Canada and any two US Resident NAMC executives be and are hereby authorized to operate US bank and investment accounts of NAMC-USA.”

This resolution was unanimously passed.

b. NAMC - USA Statements

- i. Adi Sidhwa elaborated on the financial statements.

c. General comments:

- i. FEZANA has proposed that its member associations contribute regularly to the NAMC.
- ii. Xerxes Madan, the previous Treasurer, was thanked for all his help during the transition to the current Treasurer.

4. President’s Report:

- a. Thanked Arda Minocherhomjee for assistance and guidance during the transition.
- b. World Zoroastrian Congress in NY in 2022 – role of NAMC -update provided.
- c. New Mobeds felicitation day was celebrated under Mehad Dastur’s leadership.
- d. Website:
 - i. Special thanks to Mehad Dastur and Arzan Lali for the new website

- ii. Payment gateways were created and are operational.
- e. Upcoming Parliament of the World's Religions (PoWR) in Chicago:
 - i. Kobad Zarolia to join Tehemton Mirza at PoWR to represent NAMC.
 - ii. Demonstrations of ceremonies and lectures planned by NAMC.
 - iii. NAMC to participate in panel discussions with leaders of different world faiths.

5. NAMC Liaison Representative (FEZANA and NAMC joint initiative)

- i. Tehemton Mirza thanked Arda Minocherhomjee for giving birth to this concept.
- ii. Recognizing difficulties by the FEZANA Association members in amending their constitution or by-laws to appoint or elect a Mobed Liaison on their Board of Directors, the following resolution was suggested to be passed by FEZANA members:

WHEREAS it is necessary to formalize the role of Mobeds and the functioning of the future generation of Mobeds in North America.

Resolved that in all religious matters, of (insert the name of the Association) shall be guided and directed by NAMC recommendations, communicated by the NAMC Liaison Mobed, appointed by the majority of local Mobeds and approved by NAMC.

6. NAMC Institute of Zoroastrian Studies activities:

- i. Courses and Lectures provided by the NAMC IZS were listed and discussed.
- ii. Suggestions were made to make prayer books available on the NAMC IZS website for use by Young Mobeds.
- iii. The Young Mobed Training Course in Houston in July 2023 was discussed.
- iv. A proposal for membership in the American Theological Institute for broader exposure to NAMC IZS activities was discussed and supported by members.
- v. Vote of Thanks to Tehemton Mirza, Registrar Bomi Damkevala and IT expert Mehad Dastur.

7. Other business, as may properly be brought before the meeting.

- 1. Mehad Dastur updated the members on the GenZ survey conducted by SOAS.
- 2. Kobad Zarolia spoke on Event Specific Prayers and suggested tailoring prayers to the occasion.
- 3. Mehad Dastur discussed the use of electronic devices in place of traditional paper prayer books.
- 4. Jal Panthaki suggested that NAMC consider removing the part from Vendidad that explains punishment when reciting within North America.
 - Several members spoke for and against this suggestion.
 - The members felt that such changes were beyond the mandate of the NAMC and should not be entertained.
- 5. Jal Panthaki suggested that NAMC establish guidelines or a policy to accept people into the Zoroastrian faith.
 - After lengthy discussions and presentations by several members, the members felt that such a policy was impractical and not to be entertained.
- 6. It was announced that NAMC was actively inviting applicants for the Ervad Soli Dastur Scholarship Fund for higher studies in Zoroastrianism at universities in North America.

7. Mobedyar Bhujwala suggested considering granting voting rights to Mobedyars at the NAMC AGM.

After discussion, it was felt by the members that it was not appropriate to offer voting rights to Mobedyars at the NAMC AGM.

8. Initiating Mobeds in North America:

The following motion was presented:

“Resolved that the NAMC explore the possibility and method of initiating Mobeds in North America.” Moved by: Kobad Zarolia, Seconded by: Cawas Desai

Vote: 15 Yes (in favour) - 7 No (opposed): - Motion Carried

The members set up a committee of the following members to report at the next AGM on the possibility and method of initiating Mobeds in North America:

Zarrir Bhandara, Cawas Desai, Manek Sidhwa, Parvaz Gonda, Porus Bulsara, Kobad Zarolia and Tehemton Mirza

9. Certified Mobed criteria in North America was discussed:

Members felt that NAMC should have established standards before discussing this concept. This issue was tabled.

10. The matter of taking names of non-Zoroastrian spouses and their families in any prayers was discussed:

Members felt that this matter should be left to the conscious of each Mobed.

11. Establishing guidelines on same-sex marriage was discussed.

Members felt that this matter should be left to the conscious of each Mobed.

8. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned with a vote of thanks to ZAH, Bhandara Atashkadeh and the hosts of visiting Mobeds.