



Alberta College of Occupational Therapists

Council Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2026

Attending:

Arwen Caines – President, Regulated Member

Heidi Knupp – Vice President, Regulated Member

Carrie Hait – Councillor, Regulated Member

Joyce Vayalumkal – Councillor, Regulated Member

Kristin Ward – Councillor, Regulated Member

Christie Bergman – Councillor, Public Member

Dennis Fitzgerald – Councillor, Public Member

Marianne Baird – CEO and Registrar

Benny Mutoni – Recording Secretary

Regrets:

Dr. Zahid Rafiq - Councillor, Public Member

Voting Members for this Meeting – Carrie, Christie, Dennis & Heidi

1. GATHERING

Arwen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council agreed to move the budget 2026-2027 discussion up to the first spot on the agenda. With no further suggested changes to the agenda, Council brought forward a motion.

MOTION: To approve the January 24, 2026, ACOT Council meeting agenda as adjusted – Heidi (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

RL 2.2: Budget 2026-2027

Marianne shared the following highlights from the budget:

- Revenue is forecast to increase 3% consistent with past years.
- Human resource expenses will increase as a staff member returns from a parental leave and a contractor is brought on for database testing, document assistance, etc.
- Funding has been added to cover expenses related to bringing new Council members on board.
- Reserves are forecasted to have a planned draw down to cover increased expenses this year.

MOTION: To approve RL 2.2 Budget 2026-2027 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED).
CARRIED.

Update on Strategic Plan

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT staff members continue to be present at all Federation of Regulated Health Professions (AFRHP) interest groups and working groups.
- The development of ACOT's Artificial Intelligence (AI) guideline identified in the new strategic plan is underway.

Marianne noted that as ACOT is starting out 2026, some of the strategic plan items for this year are not yet completed.

Review of Action Items

Examples of action items completed included:

- Creation of a first draft of a Council self nomination for a governance award.
- Addition of one Council meeting in Calgary to the 2026 meeting schedule.

Practice Inquiries Activity

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT continues to have a steady volume of complex practice queries coming in.
- Frequent topics of queries include but are not limited to ethical scenarios, general registrant support, documentation, plus some questions starting to come in about AI.

Q: Do you anticipate that these practice queries will continue to increase?

A: Yes, and all the OTs on the team take practice queries.

Q: What is ACOT staff doing for self-care during or after fielding some of the heavier queries?

A: ACOT staff meet and consult with each other often. It's also a way to debrief with one another.

A Council member noted that ACOT is doing an important job handling complex queries which, if not managed well, could potentially lead to complaints.

4. GENERATIVE THINKING

CCPM (Continuing Competence Program Manual) Update

Marianne shared a package with information that reflects policy updates that were approved by Council and added that this information has been incorporated into the manual.

Roundtable on Volunteer and Work Roles

Marianne raised noted it was a Council action item to add a roundtable discussion annually on volunteer roles, work affiliations, and potential biases.

Council members shared their respective roles, work and volunteer positions.

It was determined that no conflicts of interest or biases exist that would affect Council operations.

Diagnosis Update

Marianne shared that there has been a lot of progress for the course development, with the following key updates:

- A psychometrician has been added to ensure the course and its exam is developed in a defensible manner, following international standards. The OT/physician resident creating the course is very open to working with them.
- ACOT staff members are working through the implications of OTs diagnosing and will bring forward options for consideration and decision points to the February Council meeting.
- A librarian consultant has been added to assist with the literature and environmental scans to inform the work.

The floor was opened for discussion.

- A Council member shared that it is great that ACOT staff have been identifying implications regarding diagnosis and have been very cautious about it. The Council member added that Council had the fortunate opportunity to work through this conversation over a long period of time. Another Council member added that it is important to remember the staff will have a different perspective as this change will affect their day-to-day work directly. Other Council members agreed. An idea was put forward for Council and staff to meet, interact and get each other's perspectives on the diagnosis conversation.
- A Council member suggested that Dr. Miini Teng be invited to meet with Council to speak more on the course development and answer any questions Council might have.
- A Council member shared their appreciation for the forward-thinking that has gone into keeping reserves which has allowed ACOT to have resources to support the diagnosis process.



- Another Council member noted that it would be important to keep track of the volunteer time and financial resources that have gone into the diagnosis project. Marianne shared that this will be part of a technical report that will be done.

Q: Has there been communication with the government regarding diagnosis?

A: The last communication from the government was in 2023, when they confirmed that diagnosis is not a restricted activity. The last communication from ACOT to government was in the summer of 2025 when we notified the government that ACOT will be proceeding with course development for diagnosis and ACOT has not heard back. Closer to launching the pilot, we will reach out again to share this update.

ACTION: invite Dr. Miini Teng to a future Council meeting.

ACTION: arrange for ACOT OT staff and Council to meet about diagnosis activities.

Council positions update

A regulated Council member shared that they will be retiring from OT and Council, with their last Council meeting attendance being February 2026. The Council member added that it has been a great experience serving with this group.

Marianne shared that there are additional Council members whose terms will end after August 2026, which will create three openings to be filled. Marianne added that the President and Vice-president (VP) selection process will continue to be done as it has in the past, with those interested in the positions welcome to present their expressions of interest during the February 2026 Council meeting.

Marianne raised the question of whether, considering turnover in three positions, Council should consider staggering terms (one-, two-, and three-year terms) rather than appointing all three positions to three-year terms. Following discussion, Council agreed that three-year terms for all positions are most appropriate.

Council discussed whether two or three positions should be posted, as well as whether appointments should begin concurrently or be staggered with a one-year gap between start dates. Council agreed to fill all available positions to avoid a loss of continuity while ensuring opportunities for new members with different perspectives and knowledge. Council members noted that this would be in the interest of public protection.

Q: How many public members spots do we have open currently?

A: We have one at the moment.

Q: What would happen in the event we had 3 public members and 3 regulated members with a deadlock on an issue?

A: The President would cast their vote on the matter.

Q: Is there a term for our public members or do they stay indefinitely?

A: Government tends to leave public members in place until they want to move on.

ACTION: Arwen to email Council members inviting expressions of interest for the VP position, to identify candidates to call upon at the next Council meeting.



Governance Committee (GC) recruitment

Heidi reported that GC is undergoing a reshuffle with three members leaving and noted that the committee will require at least one additional member.

Kristin, a Council member, agreed to join GC.

5. Committee Reports

Governance Committee

Heidi shared the following updates:

- The Committee met on January 14, 2026.
- The Committee went through Registrar Limitations (RLs) and made updates including a reference correction to RL1 and changes to wording in RL 2.2 and RL 6.
- Title and reference numbers of changes were also made, with the Committee recommending removal of pages that include old agendas.

ACTION: GC to remove pages that include old agendas.

MOTION: To approve the GC Report with and its recommendations - Dennis (MOVED) Heidi (SECONDED). CARRIED

Competence Committee

Marianne shared the following updates:

- The Committee has oriented two new Public Members since the last report.
- A survey of those who have had review and evaluations completed has been distributed, and the analysis is under way.
- The Committee will be looking at future potential updates over the next year, such as risk-based selection for the review and evaluation process and peer review circles, which have been implemented in jurisdictions like Ontario.

Acting Against Racism and Intolerance (AARI) Committee

Marianne shared the following:

- The Committee continues to make great progress on development of learning modules. As more modules get loaded into our learning management system, these links will be provided to Council.
- The Committee has oriented new committee members from the LGBTQ2SI+ and disability communities.
- The old and new Committee members will meet in February.

MOTION: To approve the Competence Committee and AARI Committee Reports as presented - Carrie (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED



Onboarding Committee

Marianne shared the following:

- The Committee determined that it would be a benefit to write out the process for Council members wishing to pursue the VP role. The Committee put the Councillor to VP role transition description in the procedure manual update.

Council discussed transitioning responsibility for onboarding procedures back to GC. Council decided to leave the Onboarding Committee in place, and to have it reconvene in June 2026, prior to new members joining Council.

ACTION: Add “relook at initial emails from ACOT” to the onboarding checklist.

ACTION: Add the current year Council schedule calendar to the new Councillor package.

ACTION: Put all information from the orientation for new Councillors onto their iPads in a folder.

MOTION: To accept the Onboarding Committee Report, including the updated manual as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED

6. CONSENT ITEMS

Review of Last Meeting's Minutes

Council examined the November 24, 2025, ACOT Council Meeting Minutes and requested one adjustment:

- correct a typo on page 2

MOTION: To accept the November 24, 2025, ACOT Council Meeting minutes with the adjustment requested - Carrie (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

RL 2.1: 2025-2026 Q3 Budget vs Actual

Marianne shared the following:

- Revenue is tracking close to what was forecasted.
- Expenses continue to be lower than expected, especially investigation and legal costs due to lack of hearings this year. In addition, HR costs are lower as a result of an ACOT staff member being on parental leave.
- ACOT has not pulled from reserves this year, but a significant portion is projected to be used in Q4 for the diagnosis course development.

MOTION: To approve RL 2.1 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED



Key Partner Analysis

Marianne asked Council whether any updates are needed to the existing key partner document, noting that there has not yet been time to meet the more recently added key partners.

Council members noted that the document is clear and well detailed, with no suggestions for changes at this time.

RL 8: Legislative Compliance

Marianne reported that ACOT became aware of an individual using the OT title in Alberta without being registered. The matter was investigated, and eventually ACOT's legal team issued a cease-and-desist letter, resulting in the removal of the OT title from their website.

MOTION: To approve RL 8 as presented - Carrie (MOVED) Dennis (SECONDED). CARRIED.

RL 8.1: Legislative Compliance - Discipline

Marianne shared the following:

- ACOT is meeting the requirements in this RL through the annual reporting section on discipline decisions submitted to Alberta Health.
- ACOT also meets the requirements with reports to Council outlining complaints activity every two months.
- ACOT focuses on fairness and transparency while processing complaints as required by the *Health Professions Act (HPA)* and the principles of natural justice.
- The Complaints Director and Registrar have both taken Foundations of Administrative Justice courses.

MOTION: To approve RL 8.1 as presented - Dennis (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

Complaints Activity Reports

Marianne shared that there has been an increase in complaints with 8 open, and 12 closed since March 2025. Marianne added that one complaint was referred to the Ombudsman, who found ACOT's process was fair.

Council expressed appreciation for ACOT's prompt handling and processing of the complaints.

MOTION: To approve the Complaints Activity Reports as presented – Dennis (MOVED) Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED.

7. REFLECTION ON GOVERNANCE

Council provided their input on whether the Ends Policy was met during this meeting:

- Great conversation while putting the public protection at the forefront.
- Good discussion regarding the best way moving forward with upcoming Councilor changes.
- We have a lot of perspectives but still come to consensus to move us forward.
- It was a good meeting, and we had a valuable onboarding discussion.
- We had a good amount of time to discuss all items that came up.
- It was a productive meeting and we met our Ends.

8. MEETING SURVEY

Council took five minutes to complete the Council meeting survey.

9. IN CAMERA

MOTION: To move to an in-camera session – Dennis (MOVED), Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting – Dennis (MOVED), Carrie (SECONDED). CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.