

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**November 14, 2025**

Hybrid meeting, in person in Waterman Lounge and by Video Conference on Zoom

### MINUTES

**Call to Order:** Ralph Budd called the meeting to order at 2:05pm. There were 23 members present in person and 38 members attended online.

1. Ralph Budd introduced Dr David Churchill, Chief Technology Officer at Beta Technologies. Dr. Churchill described the founding and early development of the company. The company was started by Kyle Clark in 2017 based upon his interest in aviation and the production of an electric powered airplane. He received early support from Martine Rothblatt, an entrepreneur, who was attracted to the concept. Dr. Churchill described several of the challenges involved in the production of the airplane, such as the need to develop novel computer systems to control the plane, simplifying the engineering to avoid heavy dependence on outside vendors, and identifying enough employees with the required skills. The business model is to produce electric craft with a range of about 200 miles to deliver packages rather than to carry passengers. By late 2018 they had a prototype capable of flying as a proof of concept. Since electricity has much less energy per unit than jet fluid, they anticipate that they may need to develop a hybrid system. Hower electric powered craft offer an opportunity for lower operating costs and are competitive on that basis with conventional aircraft. As the company expands, Dr. Churchill anticipates a continuing need to identify new workers, particularly in technical areas. Their competition is a relatively small number of companies in the West developing electric powered aircraft to transport passengers, but China is doing so aggressively. Dr. Churchill then took questions from the audience.
2. President Gurdon gave a brief overview of Executive Committee and RFAO organizational activities during the past year.
  - a. Much of the discussion at Board meetings regarded the change in the health plan and attendant problems. As the University searched for a sustainable plan to provide health insurance it consulted with the University Benefits Advisory Council (UBAC). RFAO had 2 members on the Council and was able to participate in the selection process over the summer. Following the announcement of the new plan there have been numerous challenges to our membership, and Board members have devoted considerable time and effort to answering questions and developing a FAQ for guidance.
  - b. The Board met with the Interim Provost to encourage improved communication between the University administration and our membership.
  - c. The Board has established an “Events and Speakers” committee to provide a regular educational component as outreach to our members.
3. It has obtained stipends for member scholarship activity, and awards were made to retired faculty in the fields of Agriculture, Historic Preservation, Studio Art, Natural Resources, Romance Languages, and Food Systems.
4. There was an election by ballot, and 100 ballots were recorded.
  - a. Results of elections of representatives to the RFAO Board for 2year terms.
    1. Officers:
      - a. Michael Gurdon, President
      - b. Beth Mintz, Vice-President
      - c. Ralph Budd, Secretary-Treasurer
    2. At Large Executive Board Members:
      - a. Jay Ashman, Claire Burlingham, Gary Derr, Alan Gotlieb, Alison Pecheneck
5. Questions followed. There was a concern that requiring VIA participation was unfair to retirees who preferred to have their own advisor; members who are disabled and unable to complete the registration process should contact Caitlyn Sisler in HR; members were encouraged to join the RFAO forum for help and updated information.
6. The meeting was adjourned at 4pm.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda