

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>I have a question regarding the Strategic Initiatives and Goals. In specific Terry mentioned that "improving member services" was a key goal.</p>	<p>The board has key goals that include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value for members 2. Member satisfaction 3. Operational efficiency 4. Increase new members 5. Improve staff productivity 6. Move from an operational board to a policy board (sustainability) 7. Public awareness of our service <p>This past year, our End-of-Life Advisory Committee undertook a project to improve value by adding more educational information to our website. We also worked with partners to add more information like our presentation by Laura Silver, Death Doula.</p>
<p>Should our main goal, at this time, be to strengthen our membership numbers to ensure our long-term sustainability? If so - what are the Boards plans to increase or preferably double the membership numbers?</p>	<p>As a nonprofit, we must carefully allocate our limited advertising funds to grow our membership in Alberta. Discussing topics like death and dying can be sensitive, making it challenging to raise awareness about our services and even harder to get people to act on purchasing a membership.</p> <p>To address this, we've created a strategy focusing on advertising in newspapers and magazines, and delivering presentations that resonate with individuals more open to end-of-life discussions. This audience typically includes older adults considering funeral arrangements, those grieving the loss of a loved one, and individuals facing life-limiting illnesses.</p> <p>Additionally, we are developing a social media plan to disseminate information across various platforms to reach a broader audience in Alberta. We are also collaborating with organizations that have similar mandates to enhance their awareness of CMS.</p> <p>Therefore, while we agree increasing membership is important, it is more accurate to state that increasing awareness is our main priority.</p>
<p>Do you expect outreach expenses to continue to increase over the following year?</p>	<p>Yes, we expect our outreach costs to increase over the coming year. Since we cover all of Alberta, we are spending more to advertise across the province. In addition to this there are more expenses related to travel.</p>
<p>Do you feel that membership fees are reasonable now or should be increased?</p>	<p>Our membership fee of \$40 is low compared to other memorial societies and funeral co-ops, which often charge a fee of \$50 or more, or require yearly dues. We are trying to maintain this fee</p>

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	for as long as feasible.
A surplus of \$600,000 seems large given the mandate of the society. What is the plan for these funds in the future?	The board, made up of dedicated volunteers, has worked diligently to run the organization. However, the organization has grown too large for volunteers to manage alone. The board is planning to hire a part-time Executive Director, and some of the surplus will be used to cover this new but planned expense.
What are record fees?	We collect a \$35 record fee from our funeral service provider whenever a funeral plan is purchased for a member or their estate. This fee helps cover the cost of our part-time Membership Services Coordinator.
Please explain the increase in professional fees.	For the 2022-23 fiscal year, we retained the services of a CPA to perform a full audit, rather than the financial review we have done in prior years. This was necessary to comply with our obligations under the Alberta Cooperatives Act. This resulted in an increase in professional fees.
Are membership fees annual, or a single payment?	Our membership fee is a one-time payment of \$40.
How many members do we have in total and what is the annual addition and annual number of deaths.	Over the past three years, we have culled our database to differentiate between active (living) members and those who have passed away. To the best of our knowledge, we have close to 26,000 active members across Alberta. To the best of our knowledge the number of new memberships purchased, and the number of deaths processed by our service providers, are similar annually - at about 2200.
Does the society have connections with other provinces i.e. Saskatchewan?	We liaise with the Memorial Society of British Columbia (MSBC) and Saskatchewan. In fact, our Board Chair attended the MSBC Annual Meeting in Vancouver in November 2023. We have also met with the Memorial Society of Saskatchewan in recent months. Members can arrange to transfer their membership between these (and other) memorial societies for a \$15 administrative fee.
How long is our contract with McInnes and Holloway?	We strive to negotiate our contracts for a 3-year period. The current contract with McInnis & Holloway runs until December 31, 2025.
Are expiring contracts usually renewed?	Yes, if our members are happy with the service, we try to renew the contracts.
How do you attract service providers? They are agreeing to a discounted price. What is in it for them?	We partner with funeral homes to offer straightforward and respectful plans to our members at a lower cost. The funeral homes save money because of bulk discounts, free advertising, and more sales. Plus, they understand that not everyone can afford expensive funerals. By teaming up with us, they can

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	provide affordable plans to Albertans looking to save money on their funeral costs.
Do you support a person/family who chooses MAID?	The CMS does not provide any direct services including MAID. We do, however, provide useful information on our website to assist you in your decision-making. For information on MAID visit our website page: https://www.calgarymemorial.com/medical-assistance-in-dying-maid.html
What social platforms are we on now or planning in the future?	The CMS is on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/cooperativememorialsociety) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/cooperativememorial/). Over the past two years we are learning how to post and grow our presence on these platforms. We encourage you to join for continuous learning and sharing opportunities.
Are the plans similar costs by geographic location?	We aim to keep our funeral plans affordable and consistent, but prices can vary due to different factors. We suggest comparing plans from our providers to find the best fit. Sometimes, it's cheaper to buy a plan and cover travel costs to a bigger city rather than getting a local one, especially if cost is your main concern.
Is a list of prearranged funeral plans available?	We have all the plans listed by location on our website at https://www.calgarymemorial.com/funeral-service-providers--plans.html .
Will Laura Silver's "Death Doula" presentation be on the web site?	Yes, it is on our website under the tab "Dealing with Dying." https://www.calgarymemorial.com/death-doulas-and-home-death-care-providers.html .
Do you know of any death doulas in Cochrane?	We recommend you contact Laura Silver in Calgary. She can refer you to the closest resource. Laura Silver: 403-478-9567 or www.deathdoulalaura.ca .
Is there an Edmonton contact or do we deal with Calgary.	We have funeral service providers in Edmonton and many other cities in Alberta. Please refer to our list here: https://www.calgarymemorial.com/funeral-service-providers--plans.html . General inquiries, province-wide, can be directed to our Membership Services Coordinator.
Is there any consideration about the green burials that we are hearing about?	Green burials are gaining in popularity as the price for "green" caskets decreases. Check the plans of our service providers for green burial options available.