

Minutes from the General Assembly of the Nordic Society for Middle East Studies

Helsinki 15 August 2019

1. Mark Sedgwick opens, as acting chair of the Society
2. Election of chair of the assembly: Knut Vikør
3. Election of secretary of the assembly: Thomas Fibiger (Martin Riexinger will sign the minutes)
4. Agenda approved
5. Acting chairman Mark Sedgwick gives the activity report 2016-2019. Sedgwick is acting chairman on behalf of Leif Stenberg since his departure to Aga Khan University, London
The administration of the society has at the same time been transferred from Lund to Denmark. Ulla Prien is now treasurer.
The society has 90 members, including 25 corresponding members from outside the Nordic Region. This is good, since one objective of the society is to build relations outside the region. A new activity has been launched: An MA workshop, this first time in Copenhagen.
A recurring event, a PhD school, had to be cancelled this time because few people have registered
6. Presentation of accounts by Ulla Prien: financial statement distributed with the agenda
The bank account of the Society has been moved to Denmark (Danske Bank)
The accounts have been audited and signed by Jonas Otterbeck with no comments
Questions regarding the accounts:
Has membership risen so significantly as the accounts suggest? No, as most paid for three years in 2016
The subscription for Mideast Wire has been cancelled, therefore the costs have diminished 2016-2019
But there are still members who receive M.W. without paying for it.
Proposal to continue the M.W. subscription. It ended up costing 15 Euro per person. Mark/Knut: This will be for the new board to decide
Accounts approved
7. Proposed change to by-laws
Mark explains the proposal: There is a need for a treasurer, and it will ease negotiations with the bank (so that not all board members need to sign changes in the deal with the bank).
The change is accepted (after agreeing that the assembly has the authority to accept this)
§5 changes from "The Board shall... appoint among its members two vice-chairs. The Board also appoints a Secretary" to "The Board shall... appoint among its members a Vice-chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Any two of the Board's officers (being the Chair and these three further officers) may sign together on behalf of the Society."
8. Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen on behalf of the electoral committee reads the status of the board, including suggestion for new members:
 - a. Continuing: Charlotta Lysa (Norway); Ulla Prien and Mark Sedgwick (Denmark); Thorir Jonsson Hraundal (Iceland), Pekka Tuominen (Finland)
 - b. New: Magnus Halsnes (Norway); Laura Wickström (Finland); Olof Heilo & Helena Lindholm (Sweden)
 - c. Alternates: Anu Leinonen (Finland), Jacob Høigilt (Norway), Anu Leinonen (Finland), Kirstine Sinclair (Denmark)Alternates proposed from Norway, Sweden, Finland, but not Sweden
All suggested board members + alternates are elected by acclamation

Alternates are not elected directly to the board, but if one of the elected board members cannot continue the alternate is automatically elected.

9. Election of chairperson. Jakob reads the proposal: Mark Sedgwick
Mark accepts, and is elected by acclamation
10. Election of electoral committee. The board proposes Susanne Olsson (Sweden), Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen (Denmark), Jon Nordensson (Norway), Hanu Juusola (Finland)
According to the tradition those board members who step down take over in the electoral committee, this practice is continued here
Knut thanks those who are stepping down from the board
11. Election of auditor: Jakob reads the two suggestions for auditor and assistant auditor: Bruno Lefort and Anitta Kynsilehto.
They accept and are elected
12. Discussion of activities
Mark presents 3 upcoming activities
Next NSMES meeting in Reykjavik 2022
Proposed MA meeting in Sweden
Proposed PhD school in Bergen

Board meeting Friday (16 August) will discuss this further
The question of MidEast Wire will also be discussed at this meeting

Open Discussion

- Unfortunate that the PhD School was cancelled. It needs to be announced very early, due to PhD planning. Could this be in the Middle East, eg. Cairo or somewhere else

Mark: good idea, but there is a question of funding

- This funding could come from Nordic sources

- The PhD school could be organized together with the Italian Society for Middle East Studies.

This will be discussed by the board

- 2022 is also the WOCMES meeting. Avoid come too close to it. Who will host, and when it will be is expected to be announced May/June next year

- Suggestion: MidEast Wire is a must, several scholars depend on this service. Individual subscription is 159 Dollars. An agreement through EURAMES makes this 15 Euro per NSMES member. Can the members who need this pay 15 Euro themselves, by telling the NSMES office?

Mark: I can't see any objection to that

The assembly agrees that NSMES should subscribe to MidEast Wire in this way

- EURAMES info service: should this be a service to members, on membership?

Suggestion: to get to the list you have to be a member of NSMES

We may have a problem coming up regarding membership, and EURAMES subscription could be a way to attract new members

Decision: the question of Eurames info service will be decided by the board meeting later

Meeting finished 6 pm



/Thomas Fibiger



/Martin Riexinger