Welcome to our seventeenth Annual General Meeting, especially to those members who have joined us during the past year.

Although the past year was outwardly calm, it was filled with hard work, the results of which should be seen this year. But before moving on to the upcoming events, there is a brief recap of the past year.

**The Project**

- The development of Firebird focused on completing version 4.0 (Beta 1 released in Feb/19) so only 3.0.4 was released during the year. However, in the course of the year, 88 registered engine problems were fixed, so on average one problem was resolved every four days. Also 22 improvements and new features were implemented.
- Driver development continued at unchanged pace, bringing updates to Jaybird (3), .NET Provider (6) and FDB (1). Also, with seed funding from KIMData GmbH and Martin Koeditz stepping up to lead the work, the development of the PHP 'ibase' driver for Firebird (and InterBase) has been revived.
- In the documentation area, the Firebird 2.5 Language Reference have been translated into German, and the Firebird 3 Developer's Guide into English.

**Events**

As in recent years, the main events were The Firebird Tour (this time focused on performance) with stops in Moscow (RF), Prague (CR) and Bad Sassendorf (G), and 15th Firebird Developers Day in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

**The Firebird Butler**

Our main goal last year was to think through and take the necessary steps to improve the overall project position and its funding. After previous years of experience, we have decided to take a new route by extending the scope of the Firebird project to a new area. Since January this year, Firebird is no longer focused only on the Firebird database system and drivers, but also on administration and management tools for Firebird, and the creation of integration solutions across enterprise IT systems. This new project division is called Firebird Butler, and is backed by the resources of IBPhoenix and IBSurgeon. The core of the Firebird Butler project is the development platform for distributed applications, and the applicability of the developed solutions goes far beyond the original focus of Firebird on databases. We firmly believe that this expansion will bring more attention to Firebird and new opportunities for project development and financing.

**The Foundation**

After years of balancing on survival, last year was a significant shift towards stability. Thanks to increased support from sponsors, members and donors, the financial situation and prospects have been substantially improved.

Sponsorships, usually by corporations, continue to be an essential source of income to support our funding objectives. Currently, we have eight Platinum, one Gold, five Silver and seven Bronze
sponsors. A huge “Thank You” is due to all of our sponsors whose contributions accounted for about 80 per cent of income, and a special thanks to our longer-term sponsors.

About 11 per cent of income came from membership subscriptions. Although it may appear as a small contribution in comparison to other sources, the income from subscriptions is essential to the continuity of our funding support so we are especially appreciative of those who pay up promptly when renewal is due. So I want to thank all of the subscribing members for their continued support.

**Grants**

By improving our financial situation, it was possible to allocate a new grant to support Jaybird driver development, so the Foundation currently makes 8 ongoing grants.

**Final Thoughts**

My personal goal as president was to help the project cut through hard times and contribute to the overall improvement of the project's position and funding. Although many efforts have failed or have not gone along as planned, I believe that we have managed to overcome the main difficulties by our joint efforts, and that the prospects for the future are again bright. And although there is still a lot of hard work ahead, this year should be a major milestone in the history of Firebird.

Above all, we will be seeing the release of Firebird 4.0 (which is associated with the sunset for v2.5 and time to make plans for v5.0). Also, the development of Firebird Butler should bring first tangible results. And all this will be culminating by the International Firebird Conference in Berlin, which will be the biggest event so far (3 days, 3-4 parallel tracks of lectures and workshops each day).

Given the scope of work that still awaits us and the fact that I am personally involved in the development of Firebird Butler, I decided not to stand this year. In stepping down from the presidency, I want to thank the committee and the members for their support over the two years I have been in office.

**Pavel Císař, President**

15th March 2019