



Board of Directors' Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

4:00 p.m.

Via Go to Meeting

Present:	Christine John (Acting Chair); Renee Schlonies, Andrew Marttinen, Chris Wren, Selwyn (Buck) Hicks, Brittany Andor and Susanne Snowdon
Staff:	Phyllis Lovell, Kelly Ferris, Deb Pope, Julie Lipsett and Jeff Nickel
Representatives:	Nancy Craig, FPA Representative
Guests:	Caitlyn Symsyk-Dekker, Legal Council
Regrets:	Linda Van Sligtenhorst, Marsha Reany, Tim Nicol, Marie Tudor, Craig Ambrose, Anne Bester and Darlene Ritchie
Recorder:	Kim Fleming

1. **Welcome / Opening Remarks**

Christine John welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Approval of the Agenda / Conflict of Interest Declaration**

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the agenda as presented.

MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Susanne Snowdon

CARRIED

No conflict of interest declared.

3. **Approval of the Minutes from October 20, 2021 & Business Arising**

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the minutes from October 20, 2021 meeting as presented.

MOVED by Selwyn Hicks; SECONDED by Brittany Andor

CARRIED

4. **Presentation – Legal Services: Our Journey on the Path to Truth and Reconciliation Presented by Caitlyn Symsyk-Dekker, Legal Council**

Caitlyn began her presentation by introducing her legal team of lawyers and law clerks.

In Q1 (2021-2022), there were 87 child protection cases before the court and in Q2 (2021-2022), there were 72 child protection cases before the court.

Caitlyn talked about the 9 Indigenous Commitments including reducing the number of Indigenous children in care; reducing the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families, increasing the use of formal customary care agreements and increasing the use of Original Dispute Resolution (Circle).

Caitlyn shared the Legal Services timelines that included weekly team meetings where meetings turned into emotional reflections around the discovery of the children found at Kamloops Residential School. The team has also attended sacred fire ceremonies at M'Wikwedong Cultural Centre and Kelso Beach in Owen Sound. Caitlyn assured the Board that her team adheres to the 9 commitments not only in work life but in personal life.

The use of Indigenous approaches to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ODR) continues to be successful with 1 referral for mediation and 2 referrals for family group conferencing in 2020/21 and 2 referrals to mediation, 3 referrals to family group conferencing and 4 referrals to Indigenous approaches to dispute resolution.

The number of Indigenous children in care dropped from 6 in 2020/2021 to 1 admission of an Indigenous child in care at the end of Q2 in 2021/22. This 1 child was discharged from care within 5 days where they were moved to a kin placement.

The number of legal files involving indigenous children and families went down at the end of Q2 (2021/22) with 21 percent (15 of 67) of Indigenous families that BGCFS is serving that had a protection application in front of the court. In 2020/21 there were 22 percent (11 of 53) of families.

It's a good news story with Indigenous children in formal customary care. In 2019-2020 it was 9 percent and at the end of Q2 of 2021-22, it went up to 32 percent. Customary Care aligns with the Signs of Safety practices that the organization has adopted.

Ms. Lovell gave a big shout out to Caitlyn and her legal team. This presentation shows the many profiles of work with indigenous families and the progress that has been made to strength the practice of BGCFS' legal services.

5. Reports

- **Chair**
- **OACAS**

Christine John provided a report from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

For the month of October, the focus from OACAS and across the sector was the 'Dress Purple Campaign'. In the past, the 'Dress Purple Campaign' focused on the Duty to Report. OACAS had released a public statement in October outlining the new direction for this year's Dress Purple Day Campaign. This change was the result of feedback from Black and Indigenous stakeholders about how the campaign's focus on Duty to Report has led to hyper-surveillance of their communities and therefore contributed to overrepresentation. As such, the campaign is shifting away from Child Abuse Prevention Month toward a broader message that looks at

safety and well-being from a holistic perspective and understanding the multiple intersections with child welfare.

Ms. John also shared that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services asked OACAS to strike a task force to centralize decision making and operationalize the redesign strategy. In partnership with ANCFSAO and the Executive Leadership Section- Executive, OACAS put a call out to members to express their interest in joining the Child Welfare Redesign Task Force. This is the first phase of operationalize redesign, which is a multi-pronged and multi-year plan. The Task Force will be appointed for a year, after which an evaluation will be done to determine next steps.

- **FPA**

Nancy Craig presented on her report from the Foster Parent Association.

There were 30 in attendance at last night's meeting including two new foster parents. Foster parents have been asking when the COVID-19 vaccine will be released. The newsletter from the agency came out today and it was nice to see the recognition write ups for years of service. The outcome plans for children in care were also received today which included the goals and objectives for each child in care. There has been a delay in receiving outcome plans and getting them out in a timely fashion as there was a glitch in the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN). Foster parents are part of developing outcome plans for the children in their home and it is important that they are received in a timely manner.

The annual trip to Great Wolf Lodge has been booked for January 2022. More information will be shared with the Board soon.

The foster parent newsletter will be coming out in January and will be shared with all foster parents. The newsletter will also highlight Board Members.

- **Saugeen First Nation Representative**

No Report provided.

- **Chippewas of Nawash Representative**

No report provided.

- **Chief Executive Officer**

Phyllis Lovell presented on her report.

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) Southwest Zone Executive Directors met with Indigenous leaders at Muncee First Nation on October 29th, 2021. Ms. Lovell shared with the Board that it was a challenging conversation, and everyone walked away from the meeting with a new and deeper appreciation for how the Eligibility Spectrum, a provincial tool

that is designed to assist Children's Aid Society child protection staff in making consistent and accurate decisions about a child or family's eligibility for service at the time a society becomes involved. The Eligibility Spectrum was developed in the 90's so it is an old tool that is being used and it has not been further developed. There are five (5) categories that include: physical/sexual harm by commission; harm by omission; emotional harm; separation from parent/caregiver and caregiver capacity. The eligibility tool does not recognize the impact of trauma on families or children, or it does not recognize the barriers and the challenges that come with poverty. Ms. Lovell shared with the Board that only 10 percent of the work that is being done in child welfare is connected to children who are victims of child abuse. The other 90 percent are identified as acts of omission (neglect). Darlene Ritchie, Representative to the Board from Chippewas of Nawash was also present at the meeting and Ms. Lovell shared her appreciation to Darlene for her eloquent and heart felt words and the opportunity that she presented to all at the meeting. The bulk of what child welfare agencies do is to support families.

- **Community, Governance and Stakeholder Relations Committee**

Renee Schlonies presented on her report from November 10, 2021.

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board approves the resignation of Alison Fernandes as of November 5, 2021

MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Chris Wren

CARRIED

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the CGSR Committee Report as presented.

MOVED by Christine John; SECONDED by Brittney Andor

CARRIED

- **Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee**

Andrew Marttinen (acting Chair) presented his report from the November 11th meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the FRMA Committee Report as presented.

MOVED by Chris Wren; SECONDED by Selwyn Hicks

CARRIED

6. **New Business**

Selwyn Hicks expressed a big thank you to the staff for the development of the COVID-19 vaccine policy.

7. **In-Camera (required)**

The Board moved in camera to approve the minutes from October 20, 2021 meeting and to hear about a risk issue.

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Directors meeting moves in-camera at 5:29 p.m.

MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Selwyn Hicks

CARRIED

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Directors meeting moves out of camera at 6:15 p.m.

MOVED by Selwyn Hicks; SECONDED by Chris Wren

CARRIED

8. **Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 15, 2021**

9. **Adjournment**

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Directors meeting be adjourned.

MOVED by Susanne Snowdon.