



Board of Directors' Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

4:30 p.m.

Inn on the Bay/Best Western, Owen Sound

- Present:** Linda Van Sligtenhorst, Alison Fernandes, Renee Schlonies, Selwyn (Buck) Hicks, Susanne Snowdon, Craig Ambrose, Chris Wren, Marie Tudor, Marsha Reany and Andrew Marttinen (virtual)
- Staff:** Julie Lipsett, Kelly Ferris, Deb Pope and Jeff Nickel (virtual)
- Guests:** Darlene Ritchie, Chippewas of Nawash and Nancy Craig, Foster Parent Association
- Regrets:** Christine John, Brittany Andor and Robin Wallis
- Scribe:** Kim Fleming
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1. Welcome / Opening Remarks/Land Acknowledgement

Linda Van Sligtenhorst welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the land.

2. Approval of the Agenda / Conflict of Interest Declaration

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the agenda as presented.

MOVED by Craig Ambrose; SECONDED by Alison Fernandes

CARRIED

No conflict of interest declared.

3. Approval of the Minutes from March 23, 2022 & Business Arising

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the minutes from March 23, 2022 meeting as presented.

MOVED by Chris Wren; SECONDED by Selwyn Hicks

CARRIED

Business Arising: Julie Lipsett has received her designation from the College of Registered Social Work.

4. Presentation – ‘Adapting the Signs of Safety (SOS) Trajectory for Adoption’ Presented by Alison Holmes, Supervisor of Family Based Care

Alison Holmes provided an update on the integrated SOS model into the adoption work that she is currently working on. The adoption team have embraced the SOS tools and appreciate how the tools were adapted to adoption.

The service model for BGCFS is a model that minimizes the number of moves a child makes. Ms. Holmes shared with the Board that frequent placement moves for a child can affect their brain function and development. Our first priority is to always work towards returning the child/ren home to their parents and our second priority is to seek out kin who can care for the child should the parents not be able to. Once the two priorities are exhausted, the Society will seek permanency with an adoptive family.

Ms. Holmes shared the number of adoptions that were finalized in the last 3 years. In 2019/20, there were 7 adoptions finalized; in 2020/21, there was a spike in the number of adoptions finalized with the number being 18 and in 2021/22, the number was brought down to 8. Ms. Holmes indicated that in 2022/23, we should see another spike as we currently have 14 children whose information is at the court waiting for the judge to finalize their adoptions. There are 22 children currently on adoption probation. Adoption probation is the period of time when a child is placed with a family with the intention that the family will adopt them.

The Signs of Safety model is working as we are seeing a reduction with the number of children coming into care. This is a good thing.

Adoption has changed dramatically in the past decade. The field has learned from the lived experiences of adopted children who are now adults about the importance of their first family in the development of healthy identities and if the child/ren are of a cultural background that is different from their adoptive family, that relationship with first family and or community in the case of Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit and Metis (FNIM) children is even more crucial to the development of a healthy cultural identity. To address this, the Child, Youth and Family Services' Act allows for openness orders. Openness Orders preserve the child's rights to maintain important relationships with them. An adoption finalization cannot occur until the Openness Order is complete.

Ms. Holmes spoke about a timeline called 'a trajectory' that shows what needs to happen and who needs to do the tasks. A well-crafted trajectory clearly articulates the steps that must be taken for the family to create safety for their child/ren and how long each step is expected to take. It also identifies for the family, what needs to be done and how long they can expect to have the Society involved in their life. This is important because families who become involved with us often do not understand what is expected of them and how long the Society is going to be involved.

5. **Reports**

- **Chair**

Linda Van Sligtenhorst presented on her report. Ms. Van Sligtenhorst gave a big shout out and expressed her appreciation to all of the board members recognizing their attendance and participation in the 'virtual' meetings during the pandemic.

Ms. Van Sligtenhorst attended the Board President's Webinar recently and shared how the sector and community have strengthened in partnership during the pandemic and also the importance of staff wellness and having a good work life balance.

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) has released a new Mentorship Pilot Program for new board members. OACAS is currently looking for agencies to pilot this program and Ms. Van Sligtenhorst would like to see BGCFS sign up as our board mentorship program does need more attention. The program is designed so that mentors are assigned to new board members and will attend meetings together to help board members understand the board structure and how to get the most out of being a board member. Further discussions on the Mentorship Pilot Program will take place at the next Governance Committee Meeting in May. More to come on this.

A video from OACAS and the Ministry was shared with the Board with a message attached indicating that in March 2020, the world changed. The COVID-19 pandemic formed everyone, including the Ontario child welfare sector to work differently and to interact with communities in new ways. OACAS wanted to recognize staff and thank them for a job well done.

- **OACAS**

No report provided.

- **Foster Parent Association (FPA)**

Nancy Craig presented on her report.

There was an FPA meeting last evening, and concerns were raised from foster parents around the signs of safety model and not understanding all of the changes and expectations that come with it. Ms. Lipsett shared with Ms. Craig that on May 2nd, there will be an Evening of Dialogue scheduled where the SOS model will be shared and on May 27th, there is an all-day training module for foster parents to attend where SOS will be on the agenda.

Ms. Craig indicated in her report that there is one foster parent who is a keener and has noticed items on the BGCFS website that is no longer accurate and needs to be updated. Ms. Craig will connect this foster parent to Kim Fleming who is the communication lead for BGCFS and responsible for updating the website.

- **Chippewas of Nawash Representative**

Darlene Ritchie presented on her report. The Nation has moved to early intervention and prevention. Staff have been trained on Signs of Safety. The Nation will continue to do what is working and building on that. Community members have been asked to share their concerns so changes can be made. The goal is that we want our children to thrive. It takes a whole community to raise a child. Work on a joint jurisdiction initiative between Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash is underway.

- **Chief Executive Officer**

Julie Lipsett presented on her report. Ms. Lipsett shared with the Board on the sad occurrence that took place this month with the passing of one of our colleagues, Jenny Vigliotti. Jenny held

many roles during her career including family service worker, adoption worker, Supervisor of Children's Services, Supervisor of Family Service and Kin and then became the Supervisor of Quality Improvement where she was instrumental in assisting the province with defining and standardizes the way child protection standards are measured and documented in CPIN.

Sam Curtin, Ministry Program Supervisor has recently changed roles to support Violence Against Women and Anti-Human Trafficking in Grey Bruce and has been replaced by Louise Lavery. The role of the program supervisor is to act as a Ministry liaison with Children Aid Societies. Ms. Lavery will plan to attend the June Board meeting where she will introduce herself and share what her roles and responsibilities are to the organization.

BGCFS has recently signed a contract with Iona Skye who will be leading the organization on equity, diversity and inclusion priorities through OACAS. There is also legal training scheduled around Bill C92 where Rachel Mason and Pat Cheghano will assist to develop the training, so their staff understand the implications of Bill C92 around the services we deliver.

Ms. Lipsett attended the sharing circle this morning virtually with M'Wikwedong and shared with the Board how truly meaningful it was to contribute in a meaningful way in helping to create and heal 'circle of care' around youth who are in need of support.

There have been shared services opportunities where BGCFS would partner with Algoma, York and Sudbury CAS's to work together on foster parent recruitment and website design. This will be discussed further at a Service & Quality Committee meeting and then shared with the Board.

The Durham Dashboard will also be shared at the next Service & Quality Committee meeting where Chad Zimmerman, Supervisor of Quality will do a demonstration for the Committee and possibly the entire Board in the future.

Linda Van Sligtenhorst recognized Ms. Lipsett's commitment to connecting with community partners in Grey and Bruce to establish more local involvement with families and children. Ms. Lipsett shared with the Board her meeting with Bruce Grey Regional Health Services where they wish to strengthen our partnership with the Woman and Child Unit at the hospital. Bluewater District School Board is also interested in partnering around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion priorities.

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

Andrew Marttinen presented on his report.

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board accepts the FRMA Committee Report as revised with motions contained therein.

MOVED by Andrew Marttinen; SECONDED by Susanne Snowdon

CARRIED

6. New Business

No new business

7. In-Camera (required)

The Board moved in camera to approve the in-camera minutes from March 23, 2022 and to receive an update on a risk issue.

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Board of Directors meeting moves in-camera at 7:37 p.m. to approve the in-camera minutes from March 23, 2022 meeting and to receive an update on a risk issue.

MOVED by Susanne Snowdon; SECONDED by Chris Wren

CARRIED

8. Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 18, 2022