



**Board of Directors' Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 15, 2021**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Via Go to Meeting**

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**Present:** Linda Van Sligtenhorst (Chair), Christine John, Selwyn Hicks, Andrew Marttinen, Marsha Reany, Renee Schlonies, Marie Tudor, Brittany Andor, Susanne Snowdon and Chris Wren

**Reps:** Darlene Ritchie (Chippewas of Nawash)

**Staff:** Phyllis Lovell, Anne Bester, Kelly Ferris, Deb Pope, Julie Lipsett and Robin Wallis (CUPE)

**Guests:** Sarah Madigan

**Regrets:** Nancy Craig and Craig Ambrose

**Recorder:** Kim Fleming

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**1. Welcome / Opening Remarks/Land Acknowledgement**

Linda Van Sligtenhorst welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Land Acknowledgement was shared.

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

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board accepts the agenda as presented.*

*MOVED by Renee Schlonies; SECONDED by Chris Wren*

*CARRIED*

**No conflict of interest declared.**

**3. Approval of the Minutes from November 17, 2021 & Business Arising**

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board accepts the minutes from November 17, 2021 meeting as presented.*

*MOVED by Renee Schlonies; SECONDED by Chris Wren*

*CARRIED*

**4. Presentation – Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) 16+**

**Presenters: Deb Pope and Sarah Madigan and Destany (youth)**

Sarah Madigan, Supervisor of Family Resources Services, shared a slide deck on Voluntary Youth Services.

For a youth to be eligible for VYSA, they must be deemed in need of protection in accordance with the legislative requirements under the Child, Youth, and Family Services Act (CYFSA).

Currently, there are 14 youth currently engaged with the VYSA program. Two youth identify as First Nations and all others identify as white. There has been no youth who identified as LGBTQS+.

100 percent of the youth have a prior child protection history. The primary concern that was identified for youth entering the program identified as experiencing parental mental health issues or addictions and caregiver issues. Child conflict was the highest verified protection concerns for youth.

Ms. Madigan shared that 69% of youth were receiving an education and 77% of youth were employed.

BGCFS and community services have worked to understand and fulfil the requirements of the Ministry directive. Young people may not be getting what they need from us and may be feeling stuck between systems. There are unique challenges facing our rural counties and these factors have a significant impact on youth who are already facing challenges and vulnerabilities. Service gaps can increase the likelihood that young people are in unsafe circumstances.

BGCFS is working on changing the story for youth with the building of a community practice that is responsive to the needs of 16- and 17-year-old youth by creating clear paths to the correct services and leveraging preventative practices to present young people from needing to move out of their homes too early.

Early connection is important for vulnerable youth who are 16+ to ensure that they feel connected to supports and services that meet their immediate, short-term and long-term needs.

Moving forward, the committee that includes community partners will continue to meet and will identify the high-risk youth and help with breaking down the silos and putting a community action in place that will wrap around youth before they are in a crisis. Currently, a grant proposal has been submitted that will seek funding that will help with the prevention piece of the work.

Ms. Madigan introduced Destany, a youth who is part of the VYSA program.

Destany shared her experiences with being part of the program and how she feels very supported. Destany lives in a very rural isolated area of Grey and Bruce and has suffered with social anxiety. The program has helped build her confidence and Destany is looking forward to attending College next year.

## 5. Reports

- **Chair**

Linda Van Sligtenhorst presented on her report.

A resignation letter was recently received from board member, Tim Nicol and was regrettably accepted. Mr. Nicol was the Chair of the Finance, Risk Management and Audit Committee (FRMA).

Andrew Marttinen has accepted the position of Chair of FRMA and the role of Treasurer of the Board.

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies has recently announced the upcoming leadership meeting in February 2022 and Ms. Van Sligtenhorst will plan to attend.

- **OACAS**

Christine John who sits on the Board of OACAS, provided an update. OACAS is currently going through looking at all systemic issues across the sector. There have been concerns that have come forward and experienced by members of OACAS.

Ms. John attended a great board meeting last month where there was open table discussion. The Board is embarking on a new path forward and a new awareness.

- **FPA**

No report was provided.

- **Chippewas of Nawash Representative**

Darlene Ritchie shared her report from the Nation. There has been more community engagement and further talks around the scope of the child welfare and the changes to the child welfare legislation. The Nation's primary goal is to keep children out of care and continue working on improving conditions. The meeting was a full day meeting and ended with a feast. The children who attended, had a wonderful day and did not want to leave.

A kin/customary care support group has been established and well attended. The group will meet once per month. There will be training on peer support and building community capacity.

- **Chief Executive Officer**

Phyllis Lovell presented on her report.

There has been much progress since June of this year in Nawash and the changes have been remarkable. Ms. Lovell gave a big thank you to Darlene Ritchie and Chief Veronica Smith who both bring a very strong orientation to the needs of the families and children on the Nation. The Federal Government has recently signaled underfunding around child welfare services for Indigenous children and families.

Ms. Lovell shared with the Board that the staff at BGCFS had their annual all staff meeting last week, and the initial plan was to have a face-to-face meeting where the Roxy Theatre was rented so that appropriate social distancing protocols could be followed. Considering the rising Covid numbers and the advice from Medical Officer Dr. Arra, a decision was made last minute to cancel the face-to-face meeting at the Roxy and move back to a digital format meeting. Staff have been encouraged to work from home and we are back to a strict personal protective equipment (PPE) oriented practice. We will continue to be cautious in our workplace as we follow the Ministry of Health's recommendations as they are shared.

We are now able to offer at home Antigen testing kits for children in care who are going home for the holidays and for when they return to their foster home. We will also use them for visits. There have been ongoing concerns and worries around safety in the family home. We will communicate with foster parents around the testing kits. No one will be forced to do the testing.

Ms. Lovell referenced in her report that BGCFS needs to devote more time in resources to the One Vision One Voice approach. The OACAS offers a three-day equity learning opportunity that BGCFS will make a priority for the coming year in addition to finding more staffing time for this effort. A handbook has recently been released for black parents and the link to this book will be shared with the Board.

Ms. Lovell shared her appreciation to staff, the Board, the Ministry and community partners for their involvement and support around the needs and planning for the high-risk youth in our care. This past year has been very challenging, but we feel that we are on a better path in caring for this young person. A big shout out to the Grey Bruce Regional Hospital who is still caring for this young person and who continues to work in partnership with us in preparing him for the transition to his new home. Currently, this young person's placement is stable, and our plan will be to move him into the house in the very near future with a team of professional support workers who will manage his care. Sam Curtin from the Ministry has acknowledged and thanked staff and the Board for their part in the planning for this youth. BGCFS saw the need and then found the solution.

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

Andrew Marttinen presented on his report.

The COVID-19 Vaccination policy was shared and reviewed by the committee. 99.17 percent of staff has been vaccinated to date. To be fully vaccinated is to receive 3 does of the vaccine. BGCFS has been fortunate to be granted status under essential health workers so obtaining the COVID booster has been seamless. The addition to the policy was around service users.

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board approves the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy updates as presented.*

*MOVED by Selwyn Hicks; SECONDED by Chris Wren*

*CARRIED*

The FRMA Committee reviewed and approved the Budget Planning Principles and Parameters for the fiscal 2022/2023 as presented.

Kelly Ferris shared the report to the Board. The Ministry funding has been on a 2 percent decline since 2012 resulting in a 3-million-dollar reduction. The funding went from 22.5 million to 18 million. Having the principals in place has helped us work within the budget perimeters. Ms. Ferris reminded the Board of their decision to staff to volume and service. Included also in the report is the partnership with Saugeen First Nation in the creation of the Nations' formal customary care worker. The plan will be that BGCFS will reimburse the Nation for the salary of this position for the budget year.

Under Protection Services, there will be no admission of Indigenous children into BGCFS' care system.

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board accepts the Budget Planning Principles and Parameters as revised.*

*MOVED by Renee Schlonies; SECONDED by Selwyn Hicks*

*CARRIED*

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board accepts the FRMA Committee Report as revised.*

*MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Christine John*

*CARRIED*

- **Service and Quality Committee**

Christine John presented on her report.

The Committee reviewed the Operational Organization Plan for 2022-2023. The plan has been included in the Board package and Ms. Lovell asked that the Board review and provide their feedback by December 17<sup>th</sup> and after this date, the plan will be posted on the website. Sam Curtin from the Ministry will also receive a copy of the plan.

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board accepts the Service & Quality Committee Report as presented.*

*MOVED by Christine John; SECONDED by Susan Snowdon*

*CARRIED*

6. **New Business**

No new business

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

The Board moved in camera to approve the in-camera minutes from November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting and to hear an update on a Risk Issue.

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board of Directors meeting moves in-camera at 5:52 p.m. to approve minutes and to receive an update on a risk issue.*

*MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Chris Wren*

*CARRIED*

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board of Directors meeting moves out of camera at 6:54 p.m.*

*MOVED by Brittany Andor; SECONDED by Chris Wren*

*CARRIED*

8. **Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

9. **Adjournment**

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*THAT the Board of Directors meeting be adjourned.*

*MOVED by Linda Van Sligtenhorst*