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| **Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia** |
| **Board Meeting** |
| **Hampton Inn, Truro** |
| **Saturday, September 11, 2021**  9:00am to 12:00am - Board Meeting  10:00am - Refreshments  12:00pm to 1:00pm – Catered Lunch  1:00pm to 3:00pm – Board Meeting |

**MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order**

9:04am – Wendell called the meeting to order, reviewed the team agreement, and introduced Denyse from the Federation as the new secretary (discussed previously and agreed to amongst board members)

1. **Roll Call**

Central – Marina Keeping & Patricia Cain

Eastern – Evelyn MacInnis & Sheila Hill

Northern – Carolann Zegray & Mary Ann Burke

Western – Rob Richardson & Lloyd Sweeney

African Nova Scotia Reps – Iona Smith & Anita MacMillan

Mi’kmaq Reps - Darlene Arseneau for Mainland

- Cindy Poulette for Cape Breton (Cindy was late and missed the call to order & beginning of elections)

Past Board Chair – Wendell Fraser

Federation Staff – Gary Landry & Denyse Hockley

1. **Elections for Board Positions**

Marina Keeping and Darlene Arseneau were nominated for the position of Board Chair/President. Voting took place. Gary collected ballots and he and Denyse counted the ballots. Marina was elected as Board Chair. Darlene was nominated for Vice Chair/Vice President. No other nominations. She accepted. Patricia Cain was nominated for the position of Treasurer. No other nominations. Gary advised that the next finance meeting at DCS would be on October 6th at 2:00pm. Patricia accepted the position.

1. **Introductions**

Everyone introduced themselves.

1. **Comments from Outgoing Chair**

Wendell advised that he has emailed the new Minister of Community Services to ask for a meeting as well as emailing the new Premier to introduce the Federation. Wendell than passed the Chair position over to Marina.

1. **Selection of Committee Members**

HR Committee:

Mary Ann, Anita, Patricia, Wendell, Cindy, Iona, Lloyd

Policy Committee:

Rob, Darlene, Sheila, Carolann, Evelyn

OHS Committee:

Gary, Denyse, Iona, Evelyn

Bursary Committee:

Sheila, Darlene, Mary Ann, Lloyd

Diversity & Inclusion Committee:

Anita, Darlene, Patricia, Carolann, Iona, Cindy

1. **Signing of Board Member Forms**

Board members took some time to sign three forms: Declaration of Understanding and Agreement, Conflict of Interest, and Oath of Confidentiality. Gary collected the signed forms to bring back to the office for filing.

1. **New Material for Board Binders**

Board members updated binders with new material and old material was given to Gary and Denyse to take back to the office for shredding.

1. **HR/OHS Policy (Vaccines)**

It was discussed whether new staff working for the Federation should be required to be vaccinated against COVID (all current staff are already double vaccinated). A motion was made by Patricia Cain to have this added to the new HR Policy. Carolann Zegray seconded the motion. Everyone on the Board agreed. There was a discussion about whether there should be a policy in place that all board members must be vaccinated. Gary will check with Fergus.

1. **Old Business (Business Arising)**

**10.1 Survey (Ellen Carter)**

Ellen Carter is a foster parent and attends St. FX. As part of her PhD work, she would like to conduct a survey of foster parents and is looking for assistance from board members. She had joined via telephone at the February meeting. Gary will contact her and find out what exactly is involved and more details about the survey.

**10.2 Computers for Board Members**

Gary will have those for the next meeting.

**10.3 Memorial Bursaries**

Now that elections are complete, Rose can finish registering us with the 50/50 fundraising website. Discussion around possibly having an online auction as well.

1. **New Business** 
   1. **Associations**

Membership and attendance are declining. Some associations have shut down due to lack of participation. Discussion around what can be done to increase participation. Suggestion about having food. Maybe more people would like to get out and attend meetings after covid is over. There are lots of new foster parents and this would give them a chance to socialize with more experienced foster parents. Iona tried to start an association in her community and there was little interest. Rob and Sheila have both reached out to foster parents in their community. Rob suggested trying to have a combination in person/online meeting.

* 1. **Did you know?**

Concern raised that a lot of new foster parents don’t know what is available to them. It would be helpful if they had a “Did you know?” list. This might be a project for the board to look at doing. Could include items like how to go about registering the child for school.

* 1. **Outgoing Board Members**

Question was asked how we recognize outgoing board members. Suggestion was made that we could give them a card and gift. Wendell sent cards to all board members leaving this past year. Pre-covid they would receive a certificate thanking them. No allowance in the budget for gifts.

* 1. **Tuition Wavers**

Several post secondary schools are not offering tuition wavers for individuals who were in care. Criteria is usually that they must have been in care for at least a year. They do not have to go directly from high school. They can apply as an older adult that had been in care as a child.

* 1. **2022 AGM**

One new item for the bylaws was missed at the 2021 AGM. Update to the bylaws to state that both African Nova Scotians representatives can be from the same area. This needs to be approved by the membership at the next AGM (it does not affect anything this year).

1. **Strategic Plan**

Our new strategic plan has four key priorities. The strategic plan should guide everything the board does. What can we do to increase foster parent’s awareness of the Federation and the Board? How can we better improve communication between foster parents and social workers?

1. **Meeting with the Minister**

The last meeting with the minister was with the deputy as it was right before election time. Marina would like everyone to send her their top three concerns and when she has those, she will schedule a meeting with the new minister to bring forward those concerns. She would also like to have some stats to bring to the meeting (how many homes have opened and closed in the last year). Denyse will send stats to Marina. Some concerns that were brought up during the board meeting:

1. Increased number of foster homes closing which leads to more children be placed in “safe houses.”
2. Will the extra money for covid cleaning expenses continue?
3. Cost of living has gone up, when will per diems go up?
4. Will this new government move forward with Foster Care Redesign?
5. **Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting**

Wendell moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Iona seconded.

1. **Financials**

The Federation has been spending less on training due to covid. Question: What happens to that unspent money? Can it be spent on other things? Gary advised that DCS would need to approve spending it on something else**.**

1. **Next Meeting -** Nov. 19th & 20th at Hampton Inn, Millbrook
2. **Meeting Adjourned**

1:42pm Motion made by Rob to end the meeting, seconded by Carolann.

Minutes taken by Denyse Hockley