

Members of the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia
&
Staff Members of the Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services of Nova Scotia
Shubenacadie, NS

October 29, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

Gary Landry, *Executive Director*.....FFFNS
Jill Martin, *Allegation Support*..... FFFNS
Shirley Howard, *Coordinator of Training*.....FFFNS
Rob Richardson, *FFFNS Board Member*.....FFFNS
Georgeina MacKinnon, *Foster Care Coordinator*.....DCS
Jodi Phillips, *Foster Care Supervisor*.....MFCS – Mainland
Carolyn Wells, *Recruitment Social Worker*..... MFCS – Mainland
Megan MacNeil, *Pride & Pre-service Trainer*..... MFCS – Mainland
Jen Nutter, *Intake, and Investigations Supervisor*.....MFCS – Mainland
Darlene Arseneau, *Foster Parent*.....Mainland
Erica Bilodeau, *Administrative Assistant*.....MFCS – Mainland
Natalie (Curly) Doucette, *Child and Family Wellbeing Specialist*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Sheraine Young, *Foster Care Supervisor*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Mickella Francis, *Family Support & Case Aide Supervisor*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Sheena Williams, *Children in Care Supervisor*..... MFCS – Eskasoni
Meg Bernard, *Pride & Pre-service Trainer*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Lucinda Hiscock, *Intake, and Investigations Supervisor*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Darlene Francis, *Foster Parent*..... MFCS – Eskasoni

Regrets:

Margaret MacMillian, *Coordinator, Foster Care Services*.....DCS
Leeann Higgins, *Family Support & Case Aide Supervisor*.....MFCS – Mainland
Lesley McKee, *Adoption Supervisor*.....MFCS – Mainland
Denise Maracle, *Children in Care Supervisor*.....MFCS – Mainland
Cindy Kabatay, *Kinship Assessor*.....MFCS – Eskasoni
Sophie Francis, *Recruitment Social Worker*.....MFCS – Eskasoni

1. Agenda

- Reviewed and approved.

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Review of Attendees List Across Programs

- Double check to ensure Temporary Care is invited to the meetings. All foster care workers should be invited.

4. FFFNS Updates

- This will be Garys last Federation meeting with MFCS as he is retiring at the end of the year.
- There is still one seat that is open on the board. They meet eight times a year. If there is a foster caregiver that is interested in being part of the board, please let Rob know. The goal is to have a collective voice for foster parents.
- Gary attended the launch in Port Hawkesbury. Next year's event will take place in the northern region.
- The FFFNS is starting to plan the next AGM, which will be held during the last week of May. It will take place at the Best Western in Liverpool.
- They have not found an ambassador yet.
- The Federation has been hosting the monthly hub home meetings. The next meeting will be facilitated on Teams on November 26th at 11:45am. Jill will send out an email to the hub homes with the details. The meetings have been good and offer great peer support for the homes. Staff are not invited to these meetings.

5. Allegations and Support Program Updates

- The CAIT team has two social workers, and they are handling all investigations.
- They would like to find an interpreter that can translate to Mi'kmaw for the homes on reserve. If anyone can think of an individual that would be qualified, please let Gary or Jill know. The individual should be knowledgeable of the child welfare system and the process.
 - o Shirley Denny from Millbrook has been suggested as a possible candidate.
- Jill had been attending Session 9 to talk about her role.
- There are pamphlets available with the program's information. She will look into creating magnets with the phone number on it to give out to foster parents.

6. FFFNS Training and Peer Support Services Program

- Shirley is revamping many programs.
- She spent a month training the trainers on the new one-day sensitivity training so they can facilitate it.
- She has put on one session of the sensitivity training, with more to come this fall/spring. Feedback from participants has been positive.
- There will be refresher training for Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. It will consist of a 3-hour online module and a 3-4 hour in person portion. This will be offered on November 16 with more dates in the spring.
- She would like to hear any feedback that people are hearing or personally have.
- She is looking for training locations that are closer to the hub homes.

7. DCS Updates

- Margaret is unable to attend this meeting, Georgina will give an update on her behalf.
- The foster care redesign is still in process with a tentative wrap up in March. They are currently looking at recruitment strategies and plan to move forward with opening Temporary Emergency Receiving homes.
- They are trying to improve the process of opening homes, and the SAFE assessment process.
- There will be an upcoming webinar for staff regarding the new changes of the redesign and how to support foster caregivers.
- They sent out clarifications to staff on respite and the payments.
- Margaret, Mairi, and other specialists have been working on the new policy manual which will be launched soon.
- Scott Clark, Jill Barkhouse, and Stacy Greenough have been working on the fundamentals training. It is currently being delivered to staff.
- They will be looking at the adoption subsidy program in the new year. Curly and Lesley are part of the committee.

8. MAAK Updates

- Referrals are still coming in. Families that have had circles have positive reviews. The mainland currently has 3 families that they are providing support to. Carolyn is often asked to attend to give information about the kinship process.

9. MFCS Updates

- Carolyn and Megan have been busy with recruitment and preservice. Carolyn facilitated her first session 9 last week. It was a small group, but they asked lots of questions.
- Meg has started training and is still learning a lot about the process. She offers her sessions in English and Mi'kmaw.
- Sophie is doing recruitment, kinship assessments, and ATOC training.
- Cindy is doing general foster home assessments.
- The Eskasoni police detachment has a backlog of police checks that is slowing down the assessments for the Agency. Curly will contact Lenora and see if she can contact the RCMP detachment to express the importance of getting the checks ASAP.
- Curly is still part of the committee working with KMKNO to develop the new act. They are currently working on legislation.

10. Foster Parent Updates

- Darlene A. attended the foster parent launch and the foster parent banquet at Noggins. She notes that the hub home events on the mainland are not well attended, noting this could be due to the large distance between the homes in the constellation.
- Darlene F stated that the homes in the constellations in Cape Breton seem to be closer together and have better turnouts for the hub home events but not everyone attends.

11. Positive Stories

- Darlene A. received her 25-year anniversary award at the foster parent banquet. Her foster child cheered out that she was proud of her.

12. Miscellaneous

- *Self-Funded Insurance Program:*
Foster care workers would like to have stickers or magnets made with the phone number on them to distribute to foster homes. These magnets could possibly be paid for out of the “because you care” funds because it would benefit all foster caregivers.
Rob should include the program information in the monthly updates he sends out.
CIC workers should be made aware of the process to ensure they are giving accurate information to homes.
Georgina will ask Margaret to reach out to the broker and see if they would be interested in presenting during a meeting or at the AGM to discuss the program.
- Sheraine has created a form that she gives to all newly opened homes that contains the name and phone numbers of all the workers that are involved in a child-in-care’s life. She will send out the template to everyone.

13. Dates and Times of the next meetings

- To be determined.