

AFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS – SERVICES AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 22, 2026
5:00 pm
Microsoft Teams – Virtual



ATTENDANCE

AFS Board of Directors:	☒ Patricia R. Lofstrom (Chair) ☒ William Johnson	☒ Dania Kuzbari	☒ Jane Omollo
AFS Staff:	☒ Ali Juma, Chief Executive Officer ☒ Lisa Guzzo, Acting Senior Director of Services	☒ Brenda Clarke, Director Community Services & Strategic Initiatives	☒ Obianuju Fadijo, Executive Assistant
Youth Representatives:			
Regrets:	Lucia O'Connor	Rick Hamilton	Jennifer Geenen

MINUTES

1.0 Quorum Established.

2.0 Call to Order

Patricia R. Lofstrom calls the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

3.0 Review of Agenda

MOTION BIRT the Committee reviews and approves the January 22, 2026, agenda as presented.

Moved by: William Johnson

Seconded by: Jane Omollo

4.0 Review Previous Minutes

MOTION BIRT the committee approves the October 16, 2025, meeting minutes, as presented.

Moved by: Dania Kuzbari

Seconded by: Jane Omollo

5.0 New Business

6.0 Standing Items

a. Investing in our Awesome Team (formerly Awesome Team)

i. *Service Demand Report*

No service demand report was presented. Ali provided the following high-level update for December 2025:

- Ali advised that AFS does not currently have a permanent Director of Services and thanked Lisa for continuing in the Acting Director of Services role, highlighting her learning and support to clinical teams.
- Ali indicated that there was no Service Demand Report in the format typically presented to the Committee due to the vacancies in the Manager of Business Analytics and IT Administrator roles. He added that the Committee should expect a standard Service Demand Report in March.
- Ali stated AFS did not observe a surge/spike in demand in December despite the Algoma Steel layoff announcement; though AFS anticipates impacts could appear later.
- Ali reported that in December, there were 313 individuals waiting for service (Telemental Health 74 days, Single Therapy Sessions 71 days, Intake Service Coordination 42 days, Counselling & Therapy 24 days waitlist).
- There were 48 discharges (STS – 94, Intake Service Coordination-58, Counselling & Therapy- 41).
- Backlog in intake and brief intervention programs, potentially influenced by reduced staffing levels and high vacation periods.
- Brenda reminded the committee that Telemental Health is funded to serve a very large geographic area: Sudbury through Cochrane and west to the Manitoba border.

ii. *Community Services Update*

Brenda provides a summary of the Community Services report. Highlights include:

- Brenda noted the Associate Minister Mental Health and Addictions visited the Hub on December 11.
- Brenda stated the Minister appeared engaged and interested in the virtual youth wellness hub, including how virtual services could be streamlined provincially to reduce fragmented offerings.
- Elevator construction at the Youth Hub is underway - tent/structure around the future elevator shaft.
- Construction created some noise and mild smell concerns. The Non-Residential Attendance Centre program temporarily relocated to Chapel Ave for January and February, due to sensitivities experienced by school board staff (teacher) and to avoid issues during construction.
- Brenda reported purchase of a Ford Transit refrigerated van funded through the School Food Infrastructure Fund.
- Remaining grant funds were planned for an electric pallet stacker and pallets to be installed at Harvest Algoma.

- Harvest Algoma agreed to support storage of food items; protocols and an MOU were to be worked out.
- The refrigerated capability expands safe delivery windows, enabling deliveries potentially as far as Wawa or Elliot Lake, especially for temperature-sensitive items.
- Brenda noted the van may be shared with other partners pending MOUs.
- Licensing for the Live-In Treatment Center is scheduled for February 17, 2026.
- Preparation steps are ongoing including documentation, and an inspection/walkaround by APH for the kitchen.
- 33 positions posted for the virtual youth wellness hub.
- Four positions posted for youth and housing outreach workers through partnership with the Hart Hub (CMHA as lead).
- Brenda explained that outreach roles would operate in/out of the Hub, likely supervised by Paige Linklater, and would have reporting/documentation responsibilities via CMHA.

b. Finding a Better Way (Extraordinary Service)

i. Privacy

No Privacy breach

Complaints

No complaints

Serious Occurrence

There were 54 serious occurrences. Two to three of these occurrences were related to weather service disruptions/closures, which require serious occurrence reporting particularly for justice services.

ii. Lead Agency

- Ali stated that an OITP (Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway) symposium was held in November 2025 – it is a model of care effort for live-in treatment programs, including development of standards of care.
- Lisa is AFS's representative on the Community of Practice, replacing Stephanie.

iii. Accreditation

- The original deadline to submit modifications was January 17; an extension was granted to Monday, February 2.
- Brenda advised that, based on the nature of gaps, she suspects AFS may not receive full accreditation this time, but emphasized uncertainty until the CCA decision committee reviews submissions and responds (expected by end of February).
- Brenda stated that this year's reviewers applied more rigor, producing more indicators.
- Brenda noted the Board performed well overall and that there was one small policy wording/timeframe item to confirm with Uju and then bring back through appropriate governance process.
- Brenda identified two mandatory areas that were difficult to address quickly:
 - i. An agency-wide **Risk Management Framework**, plus evidence that risks are discussed at senior leadership and/or board meetings and,
 - ii. An agency-wide **Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement Framework/Plan** showing history of use.

iv. Ontario Health Team (OHT)

No update

c. Connecting the Dots, Closing the Gaps (Busting Barriers)

i. New Funding and Initiatives/Partnership Updates

- Ali reported a 4% increase for Community Services, including Rebound North and Alternatives for Youth, which is the amount of \$19,000.
- An additional Youth Justice funding of \$25,000 through a Community Development Fund
- The \$25,000 was described as coming via the Law Foundation connected to a charitable organization in Sault Ste. Marie that approached AFS due to AFS's youth justice role.
- An additional \$10,000 was noted for participation in three round tables with other funded organizations in Ontario, bringing the total Youth Justice funding to \$35,000.

d. Level Setting

i. French Language Service/Culture Linguistics

- Brenda stated the AFS website had been refreshed (noted as done in early/mid-November) and encouraged members to view updates, including on the French side of the Board section.

ii. Youth and Family Engagement

- Brenda referenced an event being planned but timing dependent on elevator construction to avoid disruptions.

iii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Updates

- Lisa reported that AFS is engaged in discussions about a possible MCCSS year-end funding to support a VAW programming and potential partnership with the Community Career Center to better reach newcomer families.

e. Reconciling our Truth

No update.

7.0 Ongoing Business

a. Review Terms of Reference

Deferred

8.0 Other Business

9.0 Adjournment

MOTION BIRT the Committee adjourns the January 22, 2026 meeting at 5:53 pm.

Moved by: Dania Kuzbari

Seconded by: Jane Omollo