

AFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS – SERVICES AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 19th, 2026
5:00 pm
Microsoft Teams – Virtual



ATTENDANCE

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

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 February 19, 2026, agenda as presented.

Moved by: Dania Kuzbari

Seconded by: Jennifer Geen

4.0 Review Previous Minutes

MOTION BIRT the committee approves the January 22, 2026, meeting minutes, as presented.

Moved by: Jane Omollo
Seconded by: Jennifer Geenen

5.0 New Business

Program Relocations – Rebound and Supervised Access

- The Algoma District School Board (ADSB) notified AFS that the Rebound program must relocate from Kina Awiya. ADSB requires the move by March 11.
- The Supervised Access Program must also relocate from Chapel Ave. by end of June/July. The current space is highly valued due to access to playground, gym, and kitchen.
- AFS is exploring alternative locations, including:
 - Former Saint Mary's College
 - The Mount, Holy Cross
 - Commercial spaces in the community, however, they are more costly
 - Potential partnerships with Nogdawindamin or other agencies with surplus space for shared cost.

6.0 Standing Items

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

i. *Service Demand Report*

No service demand report was presented. However, Ali provided a summary of Director of Services report highlighting the following:

- **Anticipated Increase in Community Need:** A significant service demand expected following Algoma Steel layoffs and associated ripple effects. A community response team is being organized.
- **Changes to Community Walk-In Clinic:** AFS will withdraw primary involvement in the community walk-in clinic effective March 31 due to inequitable resource burden. AFS will develop its own child/youth-focused walk-in service.
- **Training & Workforce Development:** Staff training underway – Indigenous cultural training and Attachment, Regulation & Competency (ARC) training. Family therapy training deferred to next fiscal year due to scheduling constraints.
- **Psychology Services:** Contract funding supports a third psychologist; partnerships with CLA and CAS ongoing. Exploring new partnerships to sustain service levels.
- **Women in Crisis Partnership:** Men's counselling service expanded from 2 to 3 days - high demand for 5 days/week. Staffing limitations prevent expansion at this time.
- **Integrated Risk Management & Continuous Improvement Plans:** Plans developed in response to accreditation requirements. To be presented for Board approval at the February Board meeting.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Staff participated in a recent training titled Shifting World Views.

ii. *Community Services Update*

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

- **Youth Wellness Hub:** Construction at Youth Wellness Hub continues. Sensitivities among staff may delay immediate return of the NRAC program; they are temporarily operating from Chapple.
- **Recruitment:** Interviews have been conducted for the Virtual Youth Hub and Hart Hub Youth Outreach workers. Approximately 16 to 17 candidates were interviewed – selections expected soon.

- **Student Nutrition Program:** Additional National School Food Program funding received. About \$25,000 available for school equipment (dishwashers, stoves, microwaves).
- **Residential Licensing:** Ministry licensors are on-site. Minor issues identified and corrected – no major concerns reported to date.
- **Fourplex Program Update:** youth provided notice to move out by March 1 - AFS is identifying new eligible tenants. Behavioural issues have stabilized; overall program functioning well. Proctor arrangement generally successful, with occasional communication reminders. About 19 youths on a waitlist though not all require housing placement.

b. Finding a Better Way (Extraordinary Service)

i. Privacy

There was no privacy breach.

Complaints

One complaint related to the recruitment of an Indigenous Elder. The individual was disappointed in the decision that AFS made regarding the position and escalated it to the Board.

Serious Occurrence

There were 30 serious occurrences.

ii. Lead Agency

- Work continues on the Ontario Integrated Intensive Treatment Pathway (OITP).
- Northern Lead Agency group meeting regularly to ensure northern youth needs are addressed.

iii. Accreditation

- Brenda created a Microsoft Teams channel established for document sharing with Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA). Feedback expected within 2-3 weeks.

iv. Ontario Health Team (OHT)

- Recent meeting focused on frail and elderly populations.
- Some concerns about administrative overhead vs. direct service impact.
- Children and youth priorities remain underrepresented - advocacy continues.

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

i. New Funding and Initiatives/Partnership Updates

- United Way funding of \$2,000 received.

d. Level Setting

i. French Language Service/Culture Linguistics

- Staff progressing to Level 1 French language training - actively practicing within Teams.

ii. Youth and Family Engagement

- Information provided in Brenda's report.

iii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Updates

- AFS is sponsoring Black History Month Gala (\$1,000 plus a table).
- All sponsored seats have been assigned; additional spots available for purchase

e. Reconciling our Truth

- **Indigenous Elder Recruitment:** An Indigenous Elder has been recruited to support AFS' strategic priority of Reconciling our Truth.

7.0 Ongoing Business

- a. **Review Terms of Reference**
Deferred

8.0 Other Business

9.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm