

AFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING – MINUTES

Wednesday, March 25, 2026
5:00 pm
Virtual – MS Teams & In-Person



ATTENDANCE

AFS BOARD MEMBERS:	William Johnson, Chair James Agnew Rick Hamilton	Megan Bernard Jennifer Geenen Dania Kuzbari	Lucia O'Connor Dan Swystun Wes Lavergne
REGRETS:	Jane Omollo	Patricia R. Lofstrom	
STAFF/LEADERSHIP:	Ali Juma Lisa Guzzo Barbara Day Angie Speers	Jacob Bruzas Arlene Smith Brittany McHale-Johnson	Obianuju Fadijo Marsha Ledyit Shelagh Ewing

MINUTES

1.0 Quorum

Quorum established.

2.0 Constitute Meeting

2.1 Call to Order

The Board Chair calls the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2.2 General Welcome

The Board Chair welcomes everyone to the meeting, both in-person and online.

2.3 Land Acknowledgement

The Board Chair provides the land acknowledgement.

2.4 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest declared.

3.0 Presentation

3.1 Introduction of Elder and Indigenous Outreach Worker

Ali and Marsha formally introduced the Indigenous Elder, Barbara Day and Indigenous Outreach Worker, Brittany McHale-Johnson. Some highlights include:

- Introduction of the Indigenous Outreach Worker and Indigenous Elder Advisor roles.
- Early programming underway, including:
 - Youth and staff programming (Lunch & Learns)
 - Cultural teachings and ceremonies
 - Exploration of land-based learning and arts-based programming
- Discussions on advancing Truth and Reconciliation through relationship-building, staff learning, and community engagement.
- The Board acknowledged the importance of Indigenous leadership and guidance.

3.2 Worth Fighting for Campaign

OPSEU Local President and Steward, Shelagh Ewing and Angie Speers respectively, provided a presentation on the Worth Fighting for Campaign and highlighting the following:

- Overview of the Worth Fighting For provincial advocacy campaign.
- Advocacy for sustainable, long-term government funding for children's mental health agencies.
- Addressing recruitment, retention challenges and the impacts of Bill 124.
- Clarification that the campaign targets government funding structures, not employers.
- Funding inequities affecting service stability.
- Importance of employer advocacy alongside workers
- Value of coordinated advocacy with sector associations and unions.
- Suggested actions: letters of support and meetings with MPPs.

MOTION

WHEREAS Algoma Family Services operates within the Broader Public Sector and is dependent on provincial funding to deliver high-quality, safe, and effective services to children, youth, and families; and

WHEREAS prolonged wage suppression and structural underfunding have contributed to recruitment, retention, and workforce sustainability challenges across the community and social services sector; and

WHEREAS OPSEU/SEFPO has launched the Worth Fighting For campaign to advocate for funded wage increases and long-term, stable investments in community-based services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of Algoma Family Services formally acknowledges and supports the objectives of the Worth Fighting For campaign, including the call for sustainable funding that enables fair compensation for staff and the long-term viability of essential community services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this support is expressed without prejudice to ongoing collective bargaining, and is grounded in the Board's fiduciary responsibility to ensure service continuity, workforce stability, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Chief Executive Officer is authorized to communicate the Board's position, where appropriate, to sector partners, funders, and stakeholders in a manner consistent with the organization's mandate, values, and governance obligations.

Moved by: Lucia O'Connor
Seconded by: Dania Kuzbari All in favour. CARRIED.

4.0 Agenda & Minutes

4.1 Approval of Agenda

MOTION

BIRT, the board approves the March 25, 2026, Public Board Meeting agenda as presented.

Moved by: Dan Swystun
Seconded by: Dania Kuzbari All in favour. CARRIED.

4.2 Approval of Minutes

MOTION

BIRT, the board approves the February 25, 2026, Public Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Moved by: Lucia O'Connor
Seconded by: Rick Hamilton All in favour. CARRIED.

4.3 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

No business arising.

5.0 Items Removed from Consent Agenda

The **CEO Report** was removed from consent agenda for discussion highlighting the following:

- Community impact considerations related to Algoma Steel layoffs.
- Progress on :
 - Indigenous services expansion
 - Youth Wellness Hub Construction (additional \$300K funding secured)
 - Accreditation (provincial accreditation received)
 - Reduced counseling wait times
- Several partnerships, trainings, and grants secured from United Way for \$16,500 and \$20K from Algoma Public Health.
- Continued preparation for collective bargaining.
- No reported privacy breaches or complaints.

6.0 Consent Agenda

MOTION

BIRT, the board approves the March 25, 2026, consent agenda as presented.

- 5.1 Board Correspondence
- 5.2 AFS Foundation Report, *Jessica Lopatka**
- 5.3 Community Services & Strategic Initiatives Report, *Brenda Clarke**
- 5.4 Finance & Administration Director's Report, *Jacob Bruzas**
- 5.5 Human Resources Director's Report, *Arlene Smith**
- 5.6 Service Demand Report, *Melissa Brockelbank - Deferred**

5.7 Director of Service Board Report, *Lisa Guzzo**

5.8 CEO Report, *Ali Juma**

Moved by: Megan Bernard

Seconded by: Jennifer Geenen All in favour. CARRIED.

7.0 New/Ongoing Business

7.1 Indigenous Outreach & Board Governance

Lucia provided a detailed analysis of correspondence from an unsuccessful Indigenous Elder applicant, highlighting:

- Difference between performative actions and structural change.
- Importance of Indigenous leadership in decision-making, not only service delivery.
- Risks of over-reliance on Indigenous staff for all reconciliation efforts.
- Recommendation for deeper structural planning.
- The Board agreed to include Reconciling our Truth/Indigenous matters as a standing agenda item at Board meetings.

7.2 Board Recruitment – Finance Background & Megan Vacancies

- There Chair mentioned the ongoing need for a board member with finance expertise and anticipated vacancy due to Megan Bernard's planned departure. She is willing to stay until AGM or as soon as it is filled.
- Suggestions were raised for potential candidates, including individuals with Indigenous and financial experience.
- The Chair encouraged board members to leverage personal networks before advertising Megan's position.

7.3 25th Anniversary Event – Board Members' Re-union & Updates

- The Chair confirmed support for participation in the 25th anniversary board reunion planning.
- Merchandise such as mugs and magnets will be provided for purchase.
- Other anniversary activities are underway.

Other Business:

No other business

8.0 Board Committee Updates

8.1 Governance Committee Chair Report

No Governance Committee held this month due to lack of quorum.

8.2 Services and Advocacy Committee Chair Report

The Chair provided a summary of the report on behalf of Patricia noting that the items of the Committee report had been discussed in Ali's report. Board members were advised to review the report as provided in the board package.

9.0 Adjourn to In-Camera

MOTION

BIRT, the board moves to adjourn to the in-camera segment of the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Moved by: Dania Kuzbari

Seconded by: Rick Hamilton All in favour. CARRIED.

10.0 Resume Regular Public Board Meeting

MOTION

BIRT, the board moves to resume the regular public board meeting at 7:42 pm.

Moved by: Rick Hamilton

Seconded by: Wes Lavergne All in favour. CARRIED.

11.0 Accept Motions Made In-Camera

MOTION

BIRT, the board moves to approve the in-camera motions.

Moved by: Dania Kuzbari

Seconded by: Dan Swystun All in favour. CARRIED.

12.0 Adjournment

MOTION

BIRT, the board moves to adjourn the regular public board meeting at 7:45 pm.

Moved by: Rick Hamilton

Seconded by: Megan Bernard All in favour. CARRIED.

13.0 NEXT MEETING

- Next Regular Board Meeting April 22, 2026 @ 5 PM

Submitted by: Obianuju Fadijo, Executive Assistant