

AFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS – SERVICES AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 16th, 2026
5:00 pm
Microsoft Teams – Virtual



ATTENDANCE

AFS Board of Directors: ☒ Patricia R. Lofstrom (Chair)
☒ William Johnson

☒ Jenifer Geen
☒ Rick Hamilton

☒ Jane Omollo

AFS Staff: ☒ Ali Juma, CEO
☒ Obianuju Fadijo, Executive Assistant

☒ Lisa Guzzo, Director of Services

☒ Brenda Clarke, Director of Community Services & Strategic Initiatives

Youth Representatives:

Regrets: Dania Kuzbari

Lucia O'Connor

MINUTES

1.0 Quorum Established.

2.0 Call to Order

Patricia R. Lofstrom calls the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

3.0 Review of Agenda

MOTION BIRT the Committee reviews and approves the April 16, 2026, agenda as presented.

Moved by: Rick Hamilton

Seconded by: Jane Omollo

4.0 Review Previous Minutes

MOTION BIRT the committee approves the March 19, 2026, meeting minutes, as presented.

Moved by: Jennifer Geenen

Seconded by: Jane Omollo

5.0 New Business

a. Continuous Improvement Plan

- This agenda item was introduced to ensure compliance with accreditation and standards requirements.
- Ali noted that the implementation of the plan is contingent on the recruitment of the Manager of Business Analytics and Continuous Improvement.
- Recruitment ongoing for Manager of Business Analytics and Continuous Improvement.
- Two candidates remain following withdrawals
- Once filled, regular continuous improvement and quality updates will be provided to this committee.
- Risk-related updates will continue through the Governance Committee.

6.0 Standing Items

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

i. *Service Demand Report*

No service demand report was presented. However, Lisa provided a verbal summary highlighting the following:

- **Counselling and Therapy:** Wait times have significantly decreased. Current average wait times is just over five months. East region wait times are approximately four and a half to five months.
- **Other Services:** *Walk-in Services* and *Birth to Six program* have zero wait time. *Intake Services* is within one-week wait time while *Single Therapy Sessions* is a two-week wait.
- **School-Based Services:** Increased pressure and longer wait times, particularly in Care and Treatment classrooms. Some wait times exceed one year, largely due to age, grade, and classroom fit constraints. Data may appear inflated because placements must match specific age and grade groupings. Clinical managers will be meeting to address these pressures.
- **TRAILS Program:** Strong uptake following launch of the new TRAILS groups. Increased referrals have resulted in some waits of over 100 days. Capacity constraints are linked to staffing availability for evening sessions. Current capacity supports one group per age category; running two concurrently is not yet feasible.
- **Tele-Mental Health:** Continues to be extremely busy. Receives approximately 80–100 referrals per month. Annual referrals range from 1,200–1,400, making AFS the busiest coordinating agency in the province.

ii. *Community Services Update*

Lisa provided a summary of the Community Services report in Brenda's absence. She emphasized that significant pressure on physical space across programs was an organizational risk. Other highlights include:

- **Rebound Program:** Recently relocated from Kina Awiiya to Parkland. New space is nearly half the size, limiting the ability to deliver full programming. Alternative spaces are actively being explored.
- **Supervised Access Program:** Notice received that services at Chapel Avenue must relocate by the end of June.
- **Non-Residential Attendance Centre (NRAC):** Given two weeks' notice to vacate temporary space at Chapel Avenue due to Youth Hub construction needs. Temporary contingency options include relocating programming upstairs at the Youth Hub or cancelling some other morning programming if necessary.
- **Fraud Incident:** An incident of fraud involving approximately **\$30,000** was disclosed. Incident was related to a Student Nutrition Program (SNP) payment. Police, investigators, insurance, finance, and senior leadership are involved. Staff were cautioned to be vigilant with email requests and to verify payment-related communications carefully. Further details will be provided by Jake and Ali as the investigation proceeds.

b. Finding a Better Way (Extraordinary Service)

i. Privacy

No privacy breach.

Complaints

Two complaints received (one client, one family member); both investigated, addressed, and documented.

Serious Occurrence

- There were 34 serious occurrences – 19 AWOLS, 4 medical refusals, 3 weather-related service disruptions, 7 assaults, 1 aggressive behaviour.
- A serious incident occurred at Live-In Treatment the day prior to the meeting and will be reflected in April data.
- Staff involved received medical support and follow-up.

ii. Lead Agency

- Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) Conference is scheduled for April 19 to 21.
- Northern Lead Agencies will meet separately to discuss regional challenges and advocacy priorities.
- Bill and Jane will be attending. Additionally, several new leadership team members will attend for the first-time.
- Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway Project focuses on universal standards of care for live-in treatment programs and establishes a coordinated referral and access system. A hub-and-spoke model is planned, with AFS as a spoke site.

iii. Accreditation

- Conditional accreditation report has been received.
- Several standards require follow-up and clean-up.
- Deadline for compliance: **mid-September.**
- A bi-weekly meeting schedule has been established with the accreditation lead.
- A detailed work plan has been drafted and will be circulated.
- Board involvement required: Review and approval of updates or additions to select policies. To reconvene with the small working group comprising Wes, Bill and Rick. Target approval of policies by the June board meeting.
- Emphasis placed on documenting Risk Management, Continuous Improvement plans, Operational Plan – evidence of active discussion in agenda and minutes.

iv. Ontario Health Team (OHT)

- No update

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

i. New Funding and Initiatives/Partnership Updates

- A \$2,000 donation to the Youth Hub was received through Rotary/UCAB/Haley's Wings.
- Donation made in memory of a young person lost to suicide.
- Youth Hub has recorded over **10,000 visits** to date.
- Rotary expressed strong interest and support after presentation.
- **THRIVE partnership:** Expansion of collaboration with Speech and Language Pathology. Participation in a government-funded grant with George Hall. Integration of trauma services with speech and language supports.
- **Birth to Six Program:** New collaboration with YMCA to provide training and support to summer and March break camps, and focus on supporting children with sensory and behavioural needs.

d. Level Setting

i. French Language Service/Culture Linguistics

- Administrative staff have progressed to Level 1 French.
- Preparations underway for upcoming MCCSS and MOH quality improvement reporting.
- AFS is close to eligibility for full French Language Services designation, pending confirmation on one remaining standard.

ii. Youth and Family Engagement

- **Family Engagement:** Two new participants have been confirmed. Group now includes four members. First meeting to be scheduled.
- **Youth Engagement:** Planning fundraisers (paint night, pass fundraiser) to attend Disable the Label Conference. Development of a youth survey underway, pending approvals. Board members were invited to participate in future engagement activities and presentations.

iii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Updates

- Lisa noted attendance at a Christian Movie Night, and Sault College Pow Wow.

e. Reconciling our Truth

- Upcoming activities: Earth Day (April 22) led by Indigenous Outreach Worker.
- Children's Mental Health Week with Indigenous opening.
- Discussion underway regarding a shared Indigenous Elder with THRIVE to expand capacity.

7.0 Ongoing Business

a. Review Terms of Reference

Deferred

8.0 Other Business

9.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm