



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 12, 2017
9:30 am – 2:15 pm
Legal Aid Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

MINUTES OF THE 306th MEETING

Members in Attendance

Robert Calvert, Q.C., Chair
Deanna Steblyk, Vice-Chair
Derek Cranna
Lori Bokenfohr
Ryan Callioux
Peter Carter
Linda Cook
Jim Donihee
Graham Johnson
Nancy Peck
Hilary Rose
Christine Hutchinson (elect)
Owen Edmondson (elect)

Regrets

Daryl Royer (elect)

Management in Attendance

John Panusa, Incoming President & CEO
Steve Burford
Tyler Tollefson
Lyle Toop
Brian Mulawka
Pat Bard

Call to Order

Notice having been given, a quorum was present and the meeting was duly constituted for the transaction of business. Robert Calvert called the meeting to order and Pat Bard acted as the Recording Secretary for the meeting.

Robert Calvert extended a welcome to the incoming board members, Christine Hutchinson, Owen Edmondson and Daryl Royer. Introductions were made around the table.

Consent Items

1. Approval of Agenda

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The Agenda be approved.

The motion was carried unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes of :

- 305th General Meeting
- June 2, 2017 Teleconference
- June 29, 2017 Teleconference
- July 28, 2017 Meeting

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The Minutes of the above meetings be approved with an amendment to the 305th General Meeting.

The motion was carried unanimously.

3. Meeting Dates for 2018

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The proposed meeting dates be approved with the amendment to the September 2018 meeting.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Meeting dates for 2018 are:

- Tuesday, February 6, 2018
- Tuesday, April 17, 2018
- Friday , June 1, 2018 - 9:00 am – Teleconference to review Audited Statement
- Friday, June 29, 2018 - 9:00 am – Teleconference to review Annual Report
- Tuesday , September 11, 2018 – General and AGM
- Tuesday, December 4, 2018

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

Business Items

4. CEO and Operations Report

John Panusa provided an overview of, and responded to questions related to, the CEO Report, noting in particular that: (1) an early installment of grant funds was requested from Alberta Justice and upon a signed letter from the Chair confirming there would be a board-approved action plan to address the on-going budget pressures, the funds were provided to LAA by September 1, 2017; (2) an off-site Strategic Planning Session of the Executive team is scheduled

for September 14/15, 2017 and will be brought back to the Board for discussion at the December meeting; (3) an Audit Manager, Richard Caag, has been seconded through the Executive Exchange program and commenced work on September 11, 2017. He will be conducting internal audits as well as an internal audit plan. Findings will be provided to the Finance & Audit Committee for consideration; (4) to facilitate the organization in working as one, an internal Conflict Policy is being drafted; (5) improvement to access to LAA services was made through a pilot Human IVR. This pilot has staff answer calls and triage clients to the right area of service and advises callers who do not fall within the service scope of LAA. This pilot was very successful and will be implemented full time on October 1, 2017, administration is also exploring on-line referral websites noting that BC Legal Services provides this service. LAA administration will be taking a site tour in the near future; (7) in response to the employee engagement survey results, administration has created staff focus groups, processing improvements, job shadowing, more visible executive team, identifying leaders, increased communication to staff through the intranet with CEO and Executive updates, Leadership connection, and an “ask the CEO” section on the intranet. This has resulted in positive feedback from staff; and (8) administration is continuing to build relationships with stakeholders continues.

Tyler Tollefson provided an overview of, and responded to questions related to representation and advice services, noting in particular that: (1) a Jordon Summit is being held on September 20, 2017 and it is attended by 50-60 participants from various stakeholders. The meeting will focus on LAA initiatives, indigenous initiatives, moving cases through the legal system, Jordan Impact on Legal Aid, and Restorative Justice; (2) a Roster Representation Committee has been developed to solicit information from the roster lawyers on challenges they may be facing and to discuss/consult on changes or enhancements in LAA processes; (3) LAA has a good Privacy Officer and processes are in place with regular reporting; (4) John Panusa was invited to Siksika for a signing ceremony. He was well received and invited to join the opening ceremonial dance; and (5) the Federal Government provided funding for a Metis Youth Coordinator to work with the Metis Settlements youth workers to assist youth with legal issues. LAA is moving ahead with posting the position and keeping the Metis Settlement appraised of the progress.

Lyle Toop provided an overview of, and responded to questions related to Client Services, noting in particular that: (1) there is focus on implementing more efficiencies such as Live IVR with the hope of dealing with clients better through a triage and shorten phone wait times; (2) optimize collection from clients as set out in the cost savings document; (3) LAA is looking into preparing a Zen room as well as mental health and suicide training to assist staff who are feeling stressed from dealing with clients and their legal issues.

Steve Burford provided an overview of, and responded to questions related to Finance and Technology, noting in particular that: (1) payment for private bar has increased, certificates issued have decreased and this is being monitored closely; (2) an Audit Manager and Facilities/Procurement Manager are being retained on contract; (3) the development of the 2018/19 budget has commenced; (4) a review of credit card usage is underway and a Policy will be brought to the Board for consideration; (5) the exiting strategy for Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC) and Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG) from CRM program will be completed by the end of the fiscal year; and (6) the IT department is building in-house knowledge and getting away from contract staff at a reduced cost.

5. Cost Saving Measures

Robert Calvert provided the background resulting in cost savings measures advising that the Board had approved 2017/18 Budget to be submitted to Alberta Justice. In July, administration identified issues where the expenditures would exceed budget, resulting in an emergency Board meeting. It became necessary to request early installment of grant funds from Alberta Justice and upon a signed letter from the Chair confirming there would be a board-approved action plan to address the on-going budget pressures. The letter was signed and the funds have been provided to LAA. Administration prepared an action plan which was considered by the Finance & Audit Committee with input from Graham Johnson and Ryan Callioux.

John Panusa recognized the tremendous effort put in by the leadership on the Cost Savings projects. He noted that drivers that LAA cannot control are the tariff rate, FEG's and scope of services. Accurate ways to control costs, that can be measured, are the tariff rate and FEG's.

Hilary Rose reported that the Finance & Audit Committee reviewed four possible cost savings measures proposed by management and recommend to the Board that the four measures be approved for in-depth analysis. A lengthy discussion was held with respect to the Cost Savings Measures, and

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The Board of Directors approve proceeding with in-depth analysis of the four cost saving measures proposals with the inclusion of a further proposal to reduce the tariff rates by 5%.

The motion was carried unanimously

6. Board Committee Reports

a) *Finance & Audit Committee*

Hilary Rose extended her thanks to Ryan Callioux and Graham Johnson for their assistance at the Finance and Audit Committee on the Cost Savings Measurements. The next steps will be planning long term solutions.

b) *HR Committee*

Linda Cook was pleased to advise that there was no report from the HR Committee for this meeting.

c) *Governance Committee*

Derek Cranna reported that the Governance Agreement Committee is working in the background and with Robert Calvert and the Executive and liaising with the Law Society of Alberta. Items have been identified to take to the Governance Agreements negotiations.

d) Nominating Committee

Lori Bokenfohr reported the Nominating Committee conducted interviews on June 12 and 27, 2017. Graham Johnson and Lyle Toop attended the interviews in informational and support roles. The Nominating Committee unanimously recommended the appointment of Christine Hutchinson, Owen Edmondson, and Daryl Royer. The Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta subsequently appointed the three candidates to the LAA Board of Directors.

7. Financial Statements

Steve Burford provided an overview of, and responded to questions related to, the July 2017 Financial Statements, noting in particular that: (1) the financial statements have been reviewed by the Finance & Audit Committee; (2) focus is on strategies to get back to financial security; (3) an offer to the Director of Finance will be made soon; and (4) all statutory obligations have been met for the period in question.

8. Appointment to the High Cost Cases Committee

This item was set over to be dealt with at the AGM under item 8. Appointment of Board Committees.

ACTIONS ARISING

9. Directives to Management and results

John Panusa reported that the directives report is self-explanatory and invited any questions. No questions were raised.

Next Meeting

The next General Meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, September 28, 2017 Teleconference commencing at 4:30 p.m.

In Camera

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The Board move in Camera.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Upon motion moved and seconded, it was resolved that:

The Board move out of Camera.

The motion was carried unanimously.

The Chair thanked Linda Cook, Lori Bokenfohr, and Derek Cranna for their service and commitment to the Board of Directors and LAA. He noted that they each sat on several committees during their tenure and were valuable assets to the organization as a whole. He noted that while Derek Cranna was no longer a Board member, he would continue to serve on the Governance Committee. Robert Calvert presented each outgoing member with a plaque as a token of the Board's appreciation.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:15 pm.